

# REVELATION 15-16

## SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH

### OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION OF THE SEVEN ANGELS CARRYING THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (15:1)

A PICTURE OF THE REDEEMED (15:2-4)

THE SEVEN ANGELS CARRYING THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (15:5-6)

WORSHIP IS TEMPORALLY SUSPENDED IN HEAVEN (15:8)

THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (16:1-21)

In Revelation 15 and 16 we read about the seven bowls of wrath poured out upon the earth. Some view these judgments as destruction of the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, while others take a symbolic approach and see it as God's final act of destruction against evil. The approach followed in this treatise interprets this as seven plagues poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth during the Tribulation. Chapter 15 serves as an introduction to the bowl judgments in Chapter 16

INTRODUCTION OF THE SEVEN ANGELS CARRYING THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (15:1)

The wrath of God upon the inhabitants of the earth is coming to an end. These seven angels are carrying the last seven plagues. (*Note: The term seven represents completeness, the wrath of God upon the earth will be complete after these seven plagues*). God's wrath is directed against unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). Christ took the believer's wrath on the cross (1 Jn. 2:2), it is clear in the next two chapters that the sinner will personally feel the wrath of God.

A PICTURE OF THE REDEEMED (15:2-4)

*The Location of the Redeemed.*

They are standing on "a sea of glass mingled with fire." This "sea of glass" is a crystal area that was before God's Throne. The identity of the redeemed: they had "gotten the victory." These victorious saints were martyred because they stood firm against the Anti-Christ and his program. Even though they faced defeat at one point (13:10) they now stood victorious.

*The Song of the Redeemed.*

“...they sing the song of Moses...and the Lamb.” This song is birthed out of deliverance and divine judgment. Two views on the Song of Moses

- Refers to the Exodus from Egypt where Israel was delivered and the Egyptian army drowned (Ex. 15).
- Refers to Moses’ Song in Deuteronomy 32, see verses 39-43.

The Song of the Lamb refers to the deliverance of the redeemed and God’s judgment upon the inhabitants of the earth. The song speaks of His works “Great and marvelous are thy works.” His ways “just and true are thy ways.” His worth “For thou only are holy.”

#### THE SEVEN ANGELS CARRYING THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (15:5-6)

*Their Origin (15:5-6a).*

They came out of “the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony” (5). It was called this because “it contained the ark with the law of God which testifies against sin (Ex. 25:16, 21; 30:36; 34:29; 37:21).

*Their Description (15:6b.)*

They were clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.” These were garments of the high priest. The angels were going forth to serve as God’s priests in administering His judgment.

*Their Responsibility (15:7).*

They were given the seven bowls. The Greek word for bowls is *phialas* and refers to shallow saucers. These were the same type of bowls that were used in the Temple. The bowls were filled with the wrath of God which they were to pour out upon the earth (16:1-21)

#### A. WORSHIP IS TEMPORALLY SUSPENDED IN HEAVEN (15:8)

While the angels are pouring out the wrath of God on the earth, no man is able to enter into the heavenly temple. *(Note: It must be kept in mind that the Temple was where the Mercy Seat was located. It could represent the fact that God’s mercy will be cut off to the inhabitants of the earth until the bowl judgments have been completed).* The Lord has been patient and longsuffering towards those who commit evil (2 Pet. 3:9), however a day is coming when His grace and mercy will give way to His wrath.

#### THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH (16:1-21)

The seven bowl judgments represent the final outpouring of God’s wrath upon the earth. They are introduced at the end of Revelation 15, John says, “And one of the four living creatures gave

unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled” (7-8).

*The First Bowl of Wrath—Sores Fall upon the Worshippers of the Beast (16:2).*

The Greek word for sores *helkos* referred to what we know as ulcers. This could be what Job had to deal with in Job 2:7-8.

*The Second Bowl of Wrath—Sea Turned to Blood (16:3).*

This second angel pours his bowl upon the sea and this is responsible for killing every living thing.

*The Third Bowl of Wrath—Rivers and Fountain of Waters Turned to Blood (16:4-7).*

The righteous and eternal God turns the rivers and fountain of Water to blood. Since the beast and his worshippers were responsible for killing the saints, God gave them blood to drink. In Revelation 6:10 the martyred saints cried out, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.” When the third bowl is poured out, we see the answer to their prayers (see verse 6).

*The Fourth Bowl of Wrath—Sun Scorches Men (16:8, 9).*

The sun will be heated to excess and begin to burn men’s skin. As a result of these bowl judgments, men’s hearts are further hardened. They continue to blaspheme God and refuse to give Him the glory. The armies of the earth will be summoned to the battle by the unholy trinity.

*The Fifth Bowl of Wrath—Darkness Covers the Beast’s Kingdom (10, 11).*

This darkness will be similar to that of the plague of darkness in Egypt (Ex. 10:21-23). Despite the excruciating pain, men still refuse to turn to the One who can deliver them.

*The Sixth Bowl of Wrath—Euphrates River Dries Up (12-16).*

The Euphrates River dries up (12-16). The Euphrates River will dry up to prepare the way for the kings from the East to converge on Israel for the Battle of Armageddon (see Rev. 9:12-16). In verses 13-16 John gives a prelude to the Battle of Armageddon. He describes three unclean spirits coming out of the mouth of the dragon (Satan), beast (Antichrist) and the false prophet. These devilish spirits will summons the kings of the earth to Armageddon. A beatitude is pronounced in verse 15 blessing those who are watchful and hold on to their righteous garments, they will be delivered from being naked and shamed.

*The Seventh Bowl of Wrath—a Great Earthquake and Hailstorm (17-21)*

With the outpouring of the seventh bowl, the words are heard from the Temple, “It is done” (17). The last of 21 judgments has been executed. When Jesus died on the cross He cried out, “It is finished.” These words come from the phrase *tetelestai* and means “paid in full.” The last payment for sin was made and man’s redemption was purchased. Here a loud voice says “It is done.” Just like “It is finished” meant sin was paid for in full, “It is done” means that the wrath of God has been fulfilled. The opening of the seals, blowing of the trumpets and pouring out of the bowls means God’s righteous judgments have been fully executed and “It is done.”

The greatest earthquake in history known to man will take place (18-20). Notice the effects of this earthquake:

- The great city was divided into three parts— there is some controversy as to whether this great city was referring to Jerusalem (11:8) or Babylon (16:19).
- The cities of the nations fell.
- The islands and the mountains were shaken out of place.
- There will be a great hailstorm, each piece of hail weighing a talent (a Greek talent weighed about 86 lbs. and a Jewish talent weighed about 120 lbs.).