

These last days of the tribulation involve plagues of sores, rivers of blood, and a scorching sun. Throughout this trouble, it is easy to miss the blessing couched within these curses. Yet the Lord calls us to hope, for even those who were not prepared for the rapture may still be saved during this time and prepare themselves for Jesus' second coming. As Jesus says in Revelation 16:15, "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

Revelation 16 — The Final Bowl Judgments

Revelation 16 brings us to the final outpouring of God's judgment upon a rebellious world. Chapter 15 introduced the seven angels who were given the seven last plagues. They came out of the heavenly temple clothed in pure white linen, and the temple was filled with the glory of God. No one could enter until these judgments were completed.

Now the command is given.

"Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, 'Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.'"

This is not random destruction. This is the holy decree of a righteous God. The judgments are deliberate, measured, and purposeful. They prepare the way for the return of Jesus Christ to establish His righteous reign.

I. The First Bowl — Painful Sores (Revelation 16:2)

"So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image."

Here we see a distinction. The plague affects those who have aligned themselves with the beast. God knows those who are His. Throughout Scripture, He has demonstrated His ability to distinguish between the faithful and the rebellious.

In Egypt, when plagues fell, there was darkness over Egypt but light in Goshen. When the angel of death passed through the land, the doorposts of homes covered by the blood were spared.

The principle remains: God is just. He does not act blindly.

Application:

Alignment matters. Worship matters. Loyalty matters. Every person ultimately chooses whom they will trust and follow. There is no neutral ground.

II. The Second and Third Bowls — Waters Turn to Blood (Revelation 16:3-7)

"Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died."

"Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood."

The oceans are struck. Then the freshwater supplies. The result is catastrophic. Life in the sea dies. Drinking water becomes undrinkable.

John hears the angel of the waters declare:

“You are righteous, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.”

Heaven affirms the righteousness of God’s judgment.

Notice something important: heaven does not protest. Heaven does not question. Heaven declares, “You are righteous.”

Application:

Many today ask, “Will God be fair?” The answer is yes. Perfectly fair. Abraham once asked, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” The answer has always been the same.

We may not understand every detail, but we can trust His character.

III. The Fourth Bowl — Scorching Heat (Revelation 16:8–9)

“Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.”

Men are scorched with great heat.

And what is their response?

“And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.”

This is sobering. Judgment alone does not produce repentance. Hard hearts can grow harder.

Scripture reminds us:

“Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”

It is not terror that transforms the heart. It is grace.

Application:

If God’s kindness has touched your life, respond now. Do not wait for hardship to soften you. Respond to mercy.

IV. The Fifth Bowl — Darkness (Revelation 16:10–11)

“Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.”

Darkness falls on the kingdom of the beast. Just as Egypt once experienced a darkness that could be felt, so now the rebellious world experiences spiritual and physical darkness.

Yet again:

“They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.”

The problem is not lack of evidence. It is refusal to yield.

Application:

Revelation 16 shows us the danger of a hardened heart. The longer we resist truth, the easier it becomes to reject it.

V. The Sixth Bowl — The Gathering for Armageddon (Revelation 16:12–16)

“Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.”

Demonic spirits go out to gather the kings of the earth for battle.

“For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

There is spiritual deception at work. Political power and demonic influence converge.

And in the midst of this, Jesus speaks:

“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

Even in the darkest hour, there is a call to watchfulness.

Application:

Stay awake spiritually. Guard your life. Walk in holiness. Live in expectancy.

VI. The Seventh Bowl — “It Is Done” (Revelation 16:17–21)

“Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, ‘It is done!’”

This is the final stroke. Thunder, lightning, and the greatest earthquake in human history shake the earth. Cities fall. Islands disappear. Mountains collapse. Massive hailstones fall from heaven.

Creation itself convulses under the weight of accumulated rebellion.

And yet, once more:

“Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.”

The rebellion of the human heart is laid bare.

The Character of God in Judgment

This chapter is not meant to cause fear for those who belong to Christ. It is meant to reveal:

1. God is holy.
2. God is patient.
3. God is just.
4. God will ultimately remove evil.

He takes no pleasure in judgment. He sent His Son so that none would have to face this wrath.

Jesus bore the judgment for sin at the cross. He shed His blood to redeem us. When He cried, "It is finished," He accomplished salvation. And when He rose from the dead, He proved that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

The bowls of wrath fall because the offer of grace was rejected.

A Challenge for Believers

- Live alert.
- Walk in holiness.
- Trust the righteousness of God.
- Do not be shaken by world events.

History is not spiraling out of control. It is moving toward the visible reign of Jesus Christ.

Keep your garments clean. Stay near the Lord. Watch and pray.

An Invitation to Those Who Have Not Yet Trusted Christ

Revelation 16 is a warning, but it is also mercy. The fact that it is written is grace. God has revealed the end so that you can choose wisely now.

You do not have to face wrath. Jesus already faced it for you.

He died in your place. He rose again. He offers forgiveness, new life, and eternal hope.

Turn to Him. Confess your sin. Trust in what He accomplished on the cross. Receive Him as Lord.

Today is the day of salvation.

Before the bowls fall, grace is still extended.