

WEEK 16: The Seven Bowls Revelation 16

- **Last week**
 - John witnessed the final reaping of the earth
 - Then the timeline reverses
 - He saw the Tribulation martyrs singing in heaven
 - And then he saw the 7 angels with the 7 bowls
- **The seven bowls or plagues**
 - In ch. 15 these angels carried 7 plagues
plēgē – blows, heavy afflictions, a public calamity
 - But then they were given 7 golden bowls
chrysous phialē – shallow bowls
Only used here in Revelation
 - So, are the 7 plagues and the 7 bowls the same?
 - Or are they referring to different things?
 - Let's look back at chapter 15 to find out

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished. – Revelation 15:1 ESV

- This is a summarizing statement
- It encompasses the entirety of his vision
- Including the 7 angels being handed the 7 bowls

*And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels **seven golden bowls** full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until **the seven plagues of the seven angels** were finished. – Revelation 15:7-8 ESV*

- They are one and the same
The plagues = the content
The bowls = the containers

- **The bowls poured out**

- The bowls are simply the delivery system
- It's the content that matters
thymos – passion, rage
- The burning heat of God's anger against sin

But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) By no means! For then how could God judge the world? – Romans 3:5-6 ESV

- God's anger is **always** just and right
- He **never** punishes unjustly
- Unrighteousness: this is the key word

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all **ungodliness** and **unrighteousness** of men, who by their **unrighteousness** suppress the truth. – Romans 1:18 ESV*

*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **On account of these the wrath of God is coming.** – Colossians 3:5-6 ESV*

- The world will be literally bursting with ungodliness
- And the patience of God will finally come to its end

*The Lord is slow to anger and filled with unfailing love, forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. **But he does not excuse the guilty.** – Numbers 14:17 ESV*

The First Bowl

- Poured out on the earth
- But only on those who bear the mark of the beast
- It comes in the form of painful sores
 - Describes inflamed, oozing, ulcerous sores
 - Similar to the plague God sent on the Egyptians
 - This will be a temporary, but unbearable judgment
 - Those bearing the mark of the beast will receive new "marks" from God Almighty

The Second Bowl

- Poured out on the sea
- Turning the water to blood and killing every living thing
 - This is not the first time God has done this
 - It is similar to the first plague Moses did in Egypt
 - But He has already turned 1/3 the seas to blood
 - It came at the blast of the second trumpet

*Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, **and a third of the sea became blood.** And a third of the living creatures in the sea died. – Revelation 8:8 ESV*

- But this time, the destruction is whole or complete

The Third Bowl

- Poured into the rivers and the springs
- Turning the water to blood
 - This is an intensification of the 3rd trumpet judgment

A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter. – Revelation 8:11 ESV

- God is intensifying their judgment
- He is repaying them for their sins
- And He is just in doing so, because it is what they deserve
- His judgments are just and true

*Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? **But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.** – Romans 2:4-5 ESV*

The Fourth Bowl

- Poured out on the sun
- Scorches the people with fire and extreme heat
 - Once again, God ups the ante
 - He intensifies the judgment of the 4th trumpet

*The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and **a third of the sun was struck**, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and **a third of the day might be kept from shining**, and likewise a third of the night. – Revelation 8:12 ESV*

- **Diminished light** gets replaced by **unrestrained heat**
- But they remain **unrepentant**

The Fifth Bowl

- Poured out on the throne of the beast and his kingdom (Babylon)
- Plunging them into darkness
 - What an appropriate punishment
 - This must have been eerily familiar to John

*And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and **people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil**. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. – John 3:19-20 ESV*

- The darkness that **hid** them would now **harm** them
- They were already suffering from the painful sores
- Their skin had been scorched by the sun
- Now they were plunged into darkness
- The darkness that had hidden their sin now hid their suffering
- But rather than repent, they cursed God

*God is light, and **in him is no darkness at all**. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin**. – 1 John 1:5-7 ESV*

- They received no cleansing from sin or healing from pain

The Sixth Bowl

- Poured out on the great river Euphrates
- It was dried up, in preparation for the battle of Armageddon
 - I think this is the literal Euphrates River
 - This river plays a prominent role in Israel's history
 - It was associated with the Garden of Eden

*A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. ... **And the fourth river is the Euphrates**. – Genesis 2:10, 14 ESV*

- It also formed the eastern border of the Promised Land

*On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to **the great river, the river Euphrates**..." – Genesis 15:18 ESV*

- The demonic spirits
 - They emanate from the three members of the unholy trinity: Satan, Antichrist and the False Prophet
 - They will deceive the kings of the earth
 - They will convince them to go to war against God and His Son
 - The impetus behind this battle will be **spiritual** in nature
 - But it will involve real armies made up of real people
 - This is "the great day of God the Almighty"
 - God predicted this coming day

Say to the nations far and wide:

“Get ready for war!

Call out your best warriors.

Let all your fighting men advance for the attack.

Hammer your plowshares into swords

and your pruning hooks into spears.

Train even your weaklings to be warriors.

“Come quickly, all you nations everywhere.

Gather together in the valley.”

And now, O Lord, call out your warriors!

“Let the nations be called to arms.

Let them march to the valley of Jehoshaphat.

There I, the Lord, will sit

to pronounce judgment on them all.

Swing the sickle,

for the harvest is ripe.

Come, tread the grapes,

for the winepress is full.

The storage vats are overflowing

with the wickedness of these people.”

Thousands upon thousands are waiting in the valley of decision. – Joel 3:9-14 ESV

- The valley of decision
 - An interesting description
 - Might be better translated, “determination”
 - The fate of the unbelieving world will be determined here
 - The lost will no longer have a choice to make
 - They chose to align themselves with the wrong side

Why are the nations so angry?

Why do they waste their time with futile plans?

The kings of the earth prepare for battle;

the rulers plot together

against the Lord

and against his anointed one.

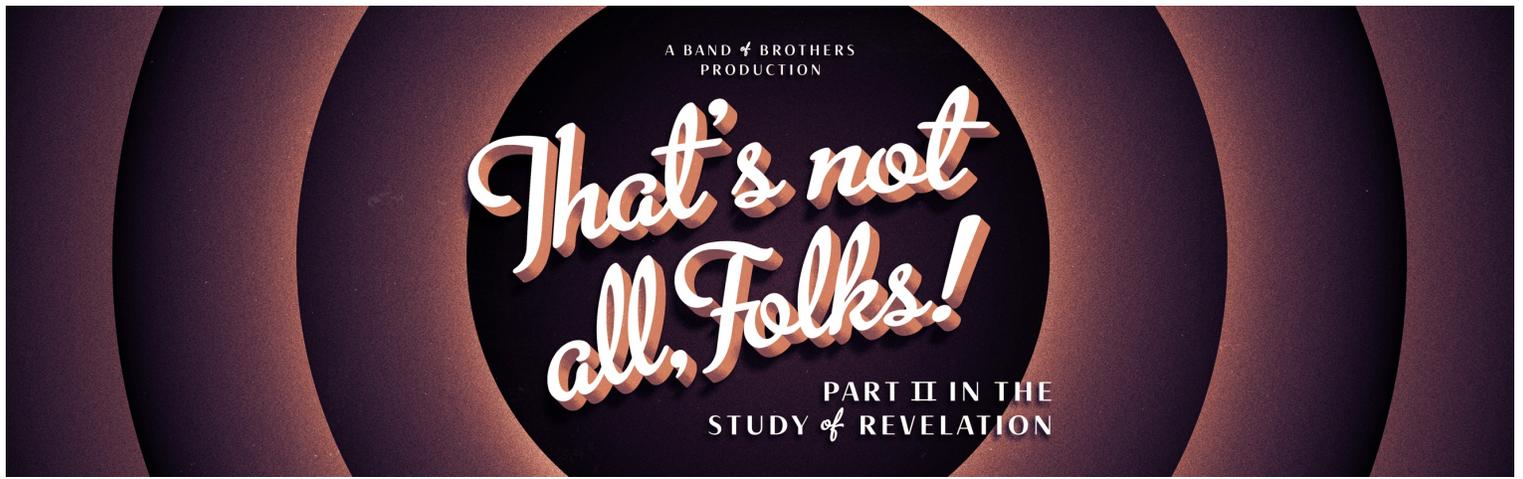
“Let us break their chains,” they cry,

“and free ourselves from slavery to God.” – Psalm 2:1-3 NLT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some ways in which we see the nations raging against God and His anointed one today? What are the signs of their anger against God?

- This chapter has repeatedly shown that the people will refuse to repent, in spite of knowing that God's wrath has come. What does this teach us about man's love affair with sin?
- Read Psalm 2:10-12. What is the message God shares with the kings of the earth and how does it relate to what happens at the battle of Armageddon?



Week 17 Homework: The Great Prostitute and the Beast. – Revelation 17

- Read Revelation 16:17-17:18. Also read pages 147-154 of the Devotionary™ study on Revelation.
- We've chosen to include the seventh bowl judgment from the end of chapter 16 with the judgment of the Great Prostitute and the Beast found in chapter 17. What reasons can you find for connecting the judgment described in Revelation 16:17-21 with the judgments found in chapter 17?

From a previous lesson, we have determined that the city of Babylon refers to the operational headquarters of the Antichrist. It will be the capital of his global empire. The closing verses of chapter 16 describe the fall of this city with some fairly outlandish descriptions. What do you think John is trying to convey by his use of these fantastic, difficult to believe scenes?

Look at verses 21 of chapter 16. What does this tell you about the spiritual condition of the people living in the city of Babylon?

- Now, as we turn to chapter 17, describe the relationship between the kings of the earth and the Great prostitute. What kinds of activities marked their relationship?

Verse 4 describes a woman dressed in purple and scarlet and adorned with expensive jewelry. What is the name written on her forehead?

What do you find significant in John's description of the woman that might help us understand her identity?

Look closely at verses 6-18. There is a lot of confusing imagery here, but the angel tries to explain all that John is seeing. Write out beside each of the following items what the angel describes as their meaning:

The Beast _____

The Seven Heads _____

The Beast that was and is not _____

The ten horns _____

The waters _____

The woman _____
