

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #45
7/11/2007

The Judgment of God, The Great Tribulation, The Great Day of God's Wrath
Chapter Sixteen - The Bowl Judgments
The Last Series of Judgments, The End of The Tribulation Period
Introduction to The Seventh Bowl Of Wrath, The Last Judgment

As we come to verse 17 of the sixteenth Chapter of **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**, it is necessary for us to pause for a moment and remind ourselves where we are chronologically in the events of the **Great Tribulation Period**. We also need to pause so we can review some of the particular characteristics of the **Bowl Judgments** which distinguish them from the other two sets of judgments which happen during the **Great Tribulation Period**.

First, as regards the chronology of the Great Tribulation Period, the Bowl Judgments are the last event to happen during this seven-year period which is concluded by the victorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ as described in Revelation 19:11-21. We do not intend to get ahead of ourselves, for we will examine each detail of what God tells us in these five verses, plus what we find in other passages of Scripture regarding this final judgment. At the end of the first verse, vs. 17, God tells us that **“it is done,”** finished.

As we have worked our way through this marvelous book, studying what our Lord has told us, we recognize that we have been confronted with many things that neither John, the writer, nor we could understand. God has told us many unique and unprecedented things which have been beyond our abilities to comprehend. We may need to remind ourselves that it is not possible for the mind of man, any man, to fully understand the nature of God nor the things of God. Yet, without any hesitation, we know that what God tells us is true, totally reliable, and must be accepted and acted upon in obedience, even when we do not understand the things He tells us.

Second, we have already seen some of the unique characteristics of these Bowl Judgments which distinguish them from the two prior sets of judgments, the Seal Judgments and the Trumpet Judgments.

First, we have learned that these Bowl Judgments are cumulative in the sense that the effects of each continue and are added to the ones which follow. **Second, we learned that the effects are ascendative.** Each one is worse than the judgment it followed. **Third, we learned that the Bowl Judgments are fulfilling.** God has given predictive information about the nature of each judgment before it happens, which is then fulfilled in the Bowl Judgment.

Because the effects of each particular judgment continue and is added to the trauma of the ones that follow, it is easy to see that the intensity of the pain, agony and helplessness increases correspondingly. The effects of the pouring out of the **First Bowl Judgment**, the **“grievous sores,”** continue. The pain and debilitation of those sores which covered the wicked from **“the top of their head to the bottom of their feet with a sore botch that cannot be**

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healed" (Deuteronomy 28:35) is still affecting the lives of the wicked Christ-rejectors, causing them misery and affecting their ability to function.

Since the **Bowl Judgments** are **cumulative** the effects of the **First Bowl Judgment** continue even as the effects of **the Second Bowl Judgment** take place. The **Second Bowl Judgment** is the poisoning of all the salt water in the world with blood, resulting in the death of everything living in the seas dying and floating to the surface and then to the beaches. The stench from the trillions of dead creatures decaying in the hot sun makes this world a miserable place.

Then, the **Third Bowl Judgment** happens and all of the sources of fresh drinking water on the earth is also turned into blood and the misery and trauma of the previous judgments suddenly is transformed into desperation as men find drinking water to be almost non-existent. The pain, trauma, and desperation of the first three judgments is then compounded by scorching heat as the intensity of the sun is increased and is made seven times hotter. What is unbearably hot at 99 degrees suddenly is forgotten when the sun produces temperatures on the earth of about 700 degrees with the **Fourth Bowl Judgment**.

The Judgment of the Fifth Bowl produces a strange, heavy darkness — something totally beyond our ability to understand. The only thing to which it can be compared is what was experienced in the land of Egypt when God sent the ninth plague upon Pharaoh and the land of Egypt (Exodus 10:21-23). However, though that strange darkness could actually be felt, it lasted only three days and affected only the Egyptians. Here, with **the Fifth Bowl Judgment** being poured out upon **"the seat of the beast and his kingdom,"** such pain is produced that the wicked **"gnawed their tongues in pain."** Here, with this judgment, the darkness covering **"the seat of the beast and his kingdom"** continues until the end.

Even following the pain which results from the heat of the seven-fold increase of the power of the sun in the **Fourth Bowl Judgment**, and then again following the pain produced by the darkness of the **Fifth Bowl Judgment**, we are told that the wicked refuse to repent of their rebellion against God. It is the last time that we read this, which apparently indicates that this is the last opportunity offered to those who reject Christ to turn from their wickedness and follow Jesus. The accumulated pain and trauma of these five bowls of judgment has not produced repentance. As is true with much of Scripture, the statements that they **"repented not to give him glory"** in verse nine and they **"repented not of their deeds"** in verse eleven indicates that, at this point, they can still be saved, but still they reject Christ. Their hearts now stubbornly hardened, they reject the only One Who could provide them

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with forgiveness and relief from their deserved suffering. It is as if God reaches those bowls down into the very lake of fire and brimstone and gives them a sample of what awaits them in hell to warn them of their impending destiny and they still choose to follow Satan to destruction.

We have lightly touched upon the **cumulative** and **ascendative** characteristics of the Bowl Judgments which distinguish them from the other two sets of judgments. The importance of recognizing these two characteristics cannot be overemphasized. Unless one approaches **the Seventh Bowl Judgment** with the awareness that the previous five Bowl Judgments are not singular and separated in their impact upon this wicked world, but added to and compounded in their effects, then it will not be possible to even begin to grasp what is actually happening with this final judgment.

In addition to the **cumulative** and **ascendative** characteristics, it is also important to mention the **fulfilling** nature of these Bowl Judgments. In an expression of His grace and mercy, God has warned man repeatedly about these judgments. He has even given smaller samples of them, such as the plagues He sent upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, upon man so that man could have some idea of what could happen. The Old Testament is overflowing with specific detailed descriptions, as we shall see regarding this **Sixth Bowl Judgment**, of exactly what is to happen. Over and over again man has dismissed and ignored God's warnings. It is important for each person to be aware of and accept a vital truth which is this:

Neither God nor what He says or does is subject to or affected by what man thinks or how man responds to Him. God is Who He says He is and never has, nor never will, mislead or lie to man. He says what He means, and means what He says. Man ignores and/or rejects God at his own peril and is responsible for his own choices and will face judgment according to his response to God.

However, before we can consider the **Seventh Bowl Judgment**, we must recognize what happens in the **Sixth Bowl of Judgment**. It is when the sixth angel pours out His **“vial upon the great river Euphrates: and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.”** And John saw **“three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon”** (Rev. 16:12,13,14,16).

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As we try to visualize what is described in the above verses, we can imagine the presentation of various strange and powerful illusions, presented by Satan and his followers, which hypnotise and manipulate those who have chosen to receive his **“mark of the beast”** and follow him. Such a scene would go far beyond any grotesque images ever conceived by even the most imaginative and creative minds. God's Word tells us that He gathers **“all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished”** (Zechariah 14:2).

These hordes of people from every nation on the earth, each one of them writhing in pain from the sores that cover their bodies, scrambling frantically to find drinking water for themselves and their horses, made mad and boiling with anger against God, rushing to Armageddon to foolishly do battle with the One they hate so much. Furthermore, Zechariah 14:12 tells us that, as they stand to do battle with the Lord God, He shall smite them with a plague and **“Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.”** It may well be that this even begins during this **Seventh Bowl Judgment**. This is in addition to what we are told in Revelation 19:15 that **“out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations.”**

These are certainly some of the most gruesome descriptions man has ever read. They are frightening and horrifying. Yet, God has given us this information so that any person who chooses to reject Jesus Christ, who chooses to ignore His warnings or to try to minimize them, will have no excuse. It is difficult to even read what God has told us. However, the burden we feel when we read it and try to visualize the events, is nothing at all when compared to what shall be experienced by those who choose not to repent and turn to Christ for forgiveness and salvation.

It is the burden of this writer to present these heavy and serious facts in as clear a manner as possible so that each person may know, as fully as possible, what God has said about the destiny of those who refuse His grace. It is this writer's prayer that all who read these words will take God at His Word and turn to Him in repentance and trust Jesus Christ to receive His grace and forgiveness.