**The Pouring Out of God's Vials of Wrath**

***Revelation 16:1-21***

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*July 28, 2024 a.m.*

Introduction: God is merciful & longsuffering, yet He is also a God of judgment. The 7 *"last plagues"* are poured out upon those who have continually rejected God's offer of mercy & grace. The first 3 & 1/2 years of the Tribulation describe "...the chaos wrought by a world completely dominated by wicked men with no good men left on earth to challenge their actions or oppose their evil plans. Truly the Christian is the salt of the earth" (Neal). The previous seal & trumpet judgments clearly present the judgments sent supernaturally & directly from God. Henry Morris states, "...the plagues are no longer primarily for the purpose of conviction & conversion but are a pure expression of the vengeance of a holy God." Note with me the reality of God's wrath, the reason for God's wrath, the response to God's wrath, & the release from God's wrath.

I. The **Reality** of God's Wrath (:1-4, 8-11, 12-14, 16-21)

The 7 vials (bowls) are poured out at the command of Christ (:1).

A. The first vial (bowl) (:2) >

1. The comparison:

a. Can be compared to the first trumpet judgment (8:7).

b. Both deal with the earth.

2. The contrast:

a. The first trumpet burned up 1/3 of the trees & all green grass.

b. This "vial" is upon the worshippers only (cf. 14:9-11, warning given)

3. The condition:

a. *"A noisome & grievous sore"* (Greek word for ulcer, cf. to *"boils"* of Ex. 9:9-11).

b. "This infection manifests itself as a loathsome ulcer of some kind, eating into the skin,

seemingly malignant & unresponsive to medical treatment" (H. Morris)

B. The second vial (bowl) (:3) >

1. The comparison is with the second trumpet (both deal with the ocean).

2. The contrast:

a. The second trumpet deals with only 1/3 of the sea (8:8-9).

b. This judgment causes all the oceans to become as blood, everything dies.

C. The third vial (bowl) (:4) >

1. The comparison is with the third trumpet (both deal with the fresh waters).

2. The contrast:

a. The third trumpet deals with only 1/3 of the fresh waters (8:10-11).

b. This judgment causes all fresh water to become as blood.

D. The fourth vial (bowl) (:8-9) >

1. The comparison is with the fourth trumpet (both deal with the sun).

2. The contrast:

a. The fourth trumpet deals with the sun, moon, & stars (8:12).

b. This judgment increases the sun's intensity (in 8:12, it was decreased).

E. The fifth vial (bowl) (:10-11) >

1. The comparison is with the fifth trumpet (both deal with darkness).

2. The contrast:

a. The fifth trumpet deals with darkness caused by the smoke out of the abyss (9:1-2).

b. This judgment is specifically upon the *"seat"* (throne) of the beast.

F. The sixth vial (bowl) (:12-14, 16) >

1. The comparison is with the sixth trumpet (both affect the Euphrates River).

2. The contrast - here the river is dried up.

3. The consequences - the way is prepared for the kings of the east (Orient).

4. The characters - *"three unclean spirits like frogs."*

5. The conflict- *"Armageddon"* (Greek word for Megiddo - Mt. of Megiddo - "slaughter").

See Joel 3:9-12; also called Valley of Jezreel - 14 miles wide, 20 miles long.

G. The seventh vial (bowl) (:17-21) >

1. The comparison to the seventh trumpet (11:15-19, deals with lightenings, earthquake, etc.)

2. The contrast - *"It is done"* (last act before Christ returns, 19:11).

3. The consequences - (a) changes topography of every nation; (b) destroys all the cities of the

earth (Babylon in detail, chs. 17-18); (c) changes but does not destroy Jerusalem (see Isa. 29:

6 & Zech. 14:4 & 8; (d) accompanied by great "hail" (= 100 lbs.) (e) prepares the earth for the

millennial reign, see Isa. 40:4-5, cf. to pre-flood conditions.

II. The **Reason** for God's Wrath (:5-7)

A. The vengeance for God's people (:5-6) >

1. The saints are worthy of rest & reward.

2. The wicked are worthy of eternal fire & eternal fatigue (cf. Heb. 10:26 & 29).

B. The vindication of God's precepts (:7) >

1. The voice out of the altar- cf. 6:9-11 (souls of martyred saints).

2. They cry out, "The judgments of God, though long delayed, are true judgments & righteous

judgments when they finally come” (H. Morris).

III. The **Response** to God's Wrath (:9, 11 & 21)

A. The ungodly (:9, 11 & 21) >

1. They blaspheme the name of God, even though they recognize the plagues are from Him.

2. They apparently believe that Satan will be able to defeat & dethrone God.

B. The unrepentant (:9 & 11) >

1. They "repented not."

2. "The wishful thinking of some that men would repent if they only knew the power &

righteous judgment of God is shattered by frequent mention in this chapter of the hardness

of the human heart in the face of the most stringent & evident divine discipline." (Walvoord)

IV. The **Release** from God's Wrath (:15)

A. Words of invitation to the unsaved >

1. *"I come as a thief"* - cf. Mt. 24:43; Lk. 12:37; I Thess. 5:2 & 4; II Pet. 3:10.

2. "The expression is used of a sudden, unexpected coming which will result in judgment or

loss on the part of the person overtaken." (Walvoord) - Still opportunity to turn to Christ?

B. Words of instruction to the saved >

1. Blessing upon the one watching - looking for Christ's return.

2. Blessing upon the one working - *"keepeth his garments"* - righteous deeds & life.

Not embarrassed, as one not properly dressed who has to run out into the street (I Jn 2:28).

Conclusion: There will be further details about Babylon's fate in chs. 17 & 18, but the next event is Christ's glorious return (19:11). How can we apply our hearts unto wisdom in light of what we see here? #1 - This should increase our compassion for the lost & impel us to get the Gospel out. #2 -

This should assure us of the righteous judgment of God. #3 - This should remind us of the need for watching for the Lord's return as well as working until He returns, ever ready when He comes (I John

2:28. How about you this morning? Are you ready for His return? Have you learned these lessons?