



REVELATION

Session 6

October 17, 2021

“Bowls of Wrath” (seven last plagues)

Revelation 15:1 – 16:21

BIG IDEA

Christians can sometimes have diverging interpretations, but what everyone agrees on is that Jesus has *overcome* the world and defeated death and Satan! And He will come back to demonstrate His dominance and *do away* with each of these once and for all.

BIBLE CONVERSATION / GENERAL INFO

We often don't like thinking about God in terms of wrath. It doesn't conjure up the nice, fuzzy feelings we have been nurtured to expect. The wrath of God often times leaves a sour taste in our mouth. But don't be mistaken. Our God, who is the one true and only God, is a God of love and of wrath. Why do we need to be reminded of God's wrath? So that we remember that as scary and dangerous as Satan and his followers are, God is infinitely more terrifying and powerful!

We just came from Admonition - an important section of Revelation (ch.8-14) which first warned us to repent and then revealed Satan and his ways. Now we enter into a new section of Revelation – Punishment (ch.15-20) which showcases God's awesome and wild power poured out. And God's power has no equivalent. He is the ultimate - not Satan. He is the one who makes and unmakes our world. He is the one with the final say. The world has gone its way, people have been warned, and evil has played its hand. It is now God's final move!

With chapters 15 and 16, we step into this next large section by starting with the last key “seven”; the seven bowls of God's wrath. This clues you into what the whole of this larger section is all about. It is all centered around the wrath of God finally being poured out and final punishments delivered. All of God's terrible and awesome power is being let loose as He finally *does away* with all things set against Him. And as He does this, those of His own company sing and rejoice! God's wrath and punishment are a terror to His enemies but a delight to the saints and angels who have longed for this blessed conclusion. We continue to see both the victory and elation of God's people intermingled with the calamity and condemnation of those against Him.

As we concentrate here on the seven bowls of wrath (the “last plagues”), notice that they align exactly with the seven trumpet admonitions (the warning plagues). In other words, what God warned us of, He is now carrying out in full. There is no more waiting.

1st trumpet and bowl are both delivered on the land

2nd trumpet and bowl are both delivered on the sea

3rd trumpet and bowl are both delivered on the rivers

4th trumpet and bowl are both delivered on the sun, moon, and stars

5th trumpet and bowl are both about human agony and a refusal to repent

6th trumpet and bowl are both about the Euphrates River and mounted troops

7th trumpet and bowl = flashes of lighting, rumblings, peals of thunder and a great earthquake

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord!” “It is done!”

These seven bowls are described as seven last plagues being delivered out upon the earth. In other words, God starts by letting loose His awesome and terrifying power upon the earth and every living thing in it. Again, these plagues should remind us of the Exodus Plagues just like the trumpets did. The only differences are that the trumpet warnings are over. The bowls of wrath have now come, and they afflict everything, not just a third, because with them God’s wrath is completed. We are seeing God as the great force He truly is! Greater than Satan. Greater than the world. Greater than death. God is the one who brings all things to an end. Satan, the world, and even death itself are nothing compared to God! And this is exactly what Jesus showed us on the cross and what Revelation further demonstrates here.

Jesus overcame these things. He defeated them. But He still hasn’t done away with them yet. They are still around and still have an effect on us. However, we who are buried with Christ and raised in the newness of His life and resurrection have His very power to overcome these things here and now as we patiently wait for Jesus to return and remove them once and for all. That is what this section of Revelation is all about: the final doing away with the world, death, Satan, and anything else which goes against God. Nothing can stand against the power of our God!

Read Revelation 15 and 16

Question #1 John calls this part of Revelation “marvelous.” What do you think of it?

Question #2 What is the most interesting thing about this session to you?

SERMON OVERVIEW

Chapters 15 and 16 of Revelation are really about one thing; the wrath *of God* poured out. For many of us that might sound like a scary thing. Truthfully, it is a scary thing. God is a being of terrifying power and deserves our reverence but let us also remember that His wrath flows from His love. God's wrath poured out is not like human wrath with all its folly, inaccuracies, and sinful motives. Rather, God's wrath is just and holy and perfect. God is a God of love and loves us so much that He burns with anger against evil.

Although He is patient with us and He is long-suffering, one day His wrath will come. So live with this truth in mind. Live knowing this ending. This is what the whole book of Revelation helps us do. And as we do this, we celebrate our victory in Jesus! Those who are in Him won't suffer His wrath. Those in Him will be spared and will be His forever.

Nevertheless, we still need to keep in mind these plagues of judgment that will come. It is important that we remember them. They remind us to take God seriously. Remember that God is far more powerful, awesome, and deserving of our respect than anyone or anything.

So, when you read Revelation or hear the voice of God, listen, and listen carefully! Hebrews 3:15 tells us "Today if you hear His voice don't harden your hearts." So, live each day as if Jesus is coming back. Live each day as if Jesus is coming this very day. This is what He is asking of us. To repent of sin and follow Him always.

Finally, remember that in the end the battle will be won. A prize awaits you; the crown of life and righteousness which the Lord will give you on that day of His great return. This great blessing of being kept and not destroyed, of being forgiven and not condemned for our sin, and of being gifted a crown because of our faithful perseverance is what being a Christian is all about. What amazing blessings we get.

Question #3 What do you think of God being wrathful? How do you feel about it?

Question #4 In Revelation 16:17 a loud voice says, "It is done!" What does this remind you of? What other moments in the bible resemble this?

OPTIONAL EXERCISE

Option 1	Option 2
<p>Bible Questions:</p> <p>Why do you think God pours out His wrath <i>upon the Earth</i> (Revelation 16:1) - upon creation itself?</p> <p>What does it tell you about creation when the islands and mountains themselves flee from Him? (Revelation 16:20)</p> <p>Reflect upon Jesus commanding the storms and waves to be still. (Mark 4:35-41)</p> <p>Reflect upon Romans 8:18-22 and how even creation itself is subject to frustration.</p> <p>Reflect on the curse on creation. (Genesis 3:17)</p> <p>Reflect on the idea of a new heaven and new earth being promised us. (Revelation 21:1)</p>	<p>Personal Questions:</p> <p>Why do you think God always operates through conduits like angles?</p> <p>Do you see yourself as someone God can and will operate through?</p> <p>How might you be able to listen to God more effectively?</p> <p>What might you be able to do now so that His voice is heard more regularly?</p> <p>How might you live each day as if Jesus is coming back? What about your life would change?</p>

PRAYER

- Intentionally Specific Prayer for this week: Pray that we would fear God more than Satan. Pray that we remember that a great day of wrath and judgment are set and that we live in the light of knowing that ending.

Next Session: Revelation 17:1 – 19:20

DIGGING DEEPER

Read Psalms 97 and 98

Reflect on these Psalms. What tie ins and similar language do you see in Revelation 15-16?

