

BOOK OF REVELATION

Part 24 – The Seven Vials Judgment of God: Chapter 16

I. INTRODUCTION

REVIEW: We concluded the third parenthetical passage in Chapter 14. In Chapter 15, we saw once again the sea of glass, representing the saints of all the ages, with their status being stable and fixed in God. We saw in our study of Chapter 15, the preparation for the Seven Vials Judgment. First we saw an even larger number of saints before the temple in Heaven and God's throne. Seven angels, whose identity is not known unto us as the scripture does not tell us, came into the temple in Heaven, the doors were closed and they given seven vials and the judgments of God were poured into these vials. Then the doors to the temple in Heaven opened and the angels came out with their seven vials. Smoke, either coming from these open vials and or from God himself, had shrouded the throne of God and the normal worship of God had temporarily ceased.

II. EXEGESIS - The Seven Vials Judgment of God

A. VERSES 1-3: COMMENCEMENT OF THE VIAL JUDGMENTS AND THE FIRST THREE VIAL JUDGMENTS.

VERSE 1: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth."

The scene picks up right where Chapter 15 left off without interruption. Now a voice, again unidentified, gives the commandment for these judgments to be poured out upon the earth. The angels, knowing what to do with their vials, proceed without hesitation to bring down these judgments upon much of creation as we will see in the next few verses.

VERSE 2: "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."

The first vial judgment is poured out by the angel upon the earth. These sores are described as being "noisome" and "grievous". According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary the word noisome means, "offensive to the senses and especially to the sense of smell" and the word grievous means, "causing or characterized by severe pain, suffering, or sorrow". These sores are very difficult to look upon or even hideous in appearance and in addition are very painful for the one having them. Very possibly the forces of Antichrist will be significantly incumbered with these sores.

Notice that these boils are similar in appearance to leprosy. Leprosy was a skin disease, specifically a specific kind of bacterial infection, that existed much more in ancient times. The identifying characteristics was boils or lumps on the skin and in advanced cases could cover the entire body. Leprosy could be spread by physical contact and under the Old Testament law, those who contracted leprosy, were upon examination by the priest were declared unclean and were to isolate themselves. If in public the one infected with leprosy, they were to cry out "unclean, unclean" so others would not touch him and possibly contract the disease.

This disease however unlike leprosy, specifically only infected those who worshipped the Antichrist and or had the Mark of the Antichrist. Notice you do not see the Antichrist mentioned being. The Tribulation Saints, both Jew and Gentile, and the 144,000 Witness did not have boils upon them. As a result, the Tribulation Saint could be easily identified and further persecuted by the forces of Antichrist.

Also this is the first judgment in the three series of judgments that God differentiated between the Tribulation saints and the lost. The previous judgment were pronounced on the whole world including the Tribulation saint and the lost. Now God differentiates between them partially to show mercy to the Tribulation saint, and possibly give them respite from persecution for a period of time from the forces and allies of the Antichrist as they will be somewhat incapacitated.

*VERSE 3: "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea;
and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea."*

Notice there is no delay or pause between the first and second vial judgments. The second vial is poured out by the angel on the sea. This judgment turned all the seas to blood and all life in the sea dies. Previously, under the second trumpet judgment, only 1/3 of the sea is turned to blood.

Revelation 8:8 "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;"

This time, the entire seas on the earth are turned to blood and all marine life dies. This would mean that the food supply on earth immediately decreases significantly.

B. VERSES 4-7: THE THIRD VIAL JUDGMENT AND GLORIFICATION BY THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN

VERSE 4: " And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood."

The angel holding the third vial pours out its contents on the rivers, waterfalls, and even natural wells on the earth. Now all the water on earth has been turned to blood. No doubt all the freshwater marine life dies following the death of all saltwater marine life. This puts even a further strain on the food supply on earth as animals and even plant life does not have any natural sources of water to sustain their lives. As a result of the second and third vial judgments, massive starvation has probably become quite widespread. This will be a very difficult time on earth with all above ground and even below water sources being undrinkable.

It is most likely that this judgment would extend to even source of waters that are in containers of various types. However this judgment will only last for a period of time and not to the end of the Tribulation. There are three distinct reasons for this:

- (1) If it did last, no life would be left on earth at all. The Antichrist would not have an army at the end of the Tribulation to oppose the Lord Jesus Christ as they would have all died of dehydration. Also all the Tribulation Saints would have died and there would be no saints to repopulate the earth in the Millennial Kingdom.
- (2) This judgment is similar in nature to the first judgment upon Egypt where God turned the all the rivers, streams, ponds, pools of water and water in containers into blood. That judgment only lasted for seven days. Seven days is enough to bring judgment upon the Egyptians but not to cause life in Egypt to perish completely:

Exodus 7:19-21 "(19) And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone (20) And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. (21) And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. (25) And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.

- (3) The sixth vial judgment, which we will study in a few verses, dries up the Euphrates River so the kings of the east can march across it with their armies enroute to the valley of Megiddo for the Battle of Armageddon. The river is referred to as having water in it and not blood.

Therefore we must conclude, that like the judgment in Egypt, that the blood all over earth after a period of time revert back to water.

*VERSE 5: "And I heard the angel of the waters say,
Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast,
and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus"*

Now we see praise to God given by the angel who just poured out the fourth vial judgment upon the rivers, streams, creeks, waterfalls, and wells of water upon earth. The angel is declaring (1) That God has always existed and always will exist and (2) He is totally righteous for bringing down this judgment because of the righteousness and justice of a perfect and holy God.

*VERSE 6: "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."*

Now the angel that poured out the third vial judgment gives the reason why God has judged the earth so harshly. The Antichrist and his massive number of followers have killed many of the Tribulation Saints either through outright execution or even torture. The persecution of Christians has gone on throughout the Church Age as well and God has been saving up these judgments to bestow upon mankind in perfect judgment for the crimes of mankind against the Saints of the Church Age and the Tribulation.

*VERSE 7: "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so,
Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."*

Now another angel near the altar joins the angel who poured the third vial in praise to God for the same reasons. What you do not see here is the saints, the sea of glass, joining them in praise to God at this point. The saints before the throne are no doubt sad to see so many being judged by a righteous and holy God, and are overwhelmed by viewing these judgments. They see the millions who will die and go out into a Lake of Fire without God and they are simply overwhelmed.

C. VERSES 8-11: THE FOURTH AND FIFTH VIAL JUDGMENTS.

*VERSE 8: "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun;
and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire."*

The judgments now resume, only after a brief pause where the angel holding the fourth vial gives praise to God for his judgment and justice. The angel holding the fourth vial pours out its contents into the Sun and not the earth this time. Somehow the intensity of the Sun is affected and the vial judgment sends great heat upon the earth from the Sun. We are not sure if the angel, with the contents of this vial judgment, increases the energy output of the Sun, increases the size of the Sun or moves the earth closer to the Sun. It could be any of these but only God knows for sure.

*VERSE 9: "And men were scorched with great heat,
and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues:
and they repented not to give him glory."*

The temperatures on earth become almost unbearable. Many of the land animals, trees, and even grass, flowers, and other foliage will most likely be destroyed due to the extreme heat itself or dehydration resulting from the heat. At this point much What is the reaction of those who have rejected God on earth? They are unmoved towards repentance after these judgments just like after every other judgment that has preceded these judgments, with the exception of the remnant Jews who survived the seventh trumpet judgment in Revelation 11. Remember, mankind has been sent strong delusion so that they would believe a lie and for the most part have worshipped the Antichrist, his image, and have taken his mark. Also note, that the Tribulation saint and the 144,000 Jewish witnesses, are not immune to the effects of the last three vial judgments. They must suffer through them just like those who have rejected God's and His offer of salvation. The one difference being that the 144,000 Jewish witnesses cannot die from these judgments but all the other Jewish and Gentle Tribulation saints can die and many will no doubt die from the effects of these judgments. However, these saints will never have to suffer ever again, but the lost who die at this time their suffering is just beginning.

*VERSE 10: "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast;
and his kingdom was full of darkness;
and they gnawed their tongues for pain,"*

The angel holding the fifth vial pours out its contents upon the headquarters of the Antichrist and upon his kingdom and severe darkness and pain was inflicted as a result of this judgment. For the second time, the Tribulation Saint and the 144,000 Jewish witnesses are spared from this judgment. However enough of the earth's surface would be darkened and if this darkness is long enough, what plant life survived the drought and then scorching heat of the third and fourth vial judgments, could very well end up being fatally compromised or even being destroyed. Remember, plant life takes in carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. Animals life and human beings take in oxygen and produce carbon dioxide. If that were to happen there would be a considerable depletion of oxygen on the earth and it could become difficult to breathe.

This judgment is also different from the Fourth Trumpet judgment where the light intensity of the sun, moon, and stars decreased to 1/3 their normal level and affected the whole earth. Under that judgment the whole earth was affected both Tribulation saint and the lost.

Revelation 8:12 "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

This judgment is similar in nature to the ninth judgment upon Egypt where God brought total darkness upon the land of Egypt. Also notice that God's direction of the judgment against the Egyptians only, and not upon His own, the children of Israel.

Exodus 10:21-23 “(21) And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. (22) And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: (23) They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

VERSE 11: "and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

Again you do not see any sign of repentance. Those that serve in the kingdom of the Antichrist continue their blasphemy of God. From our previous study the word "blasphemy" means to vilify. Those who serve in the kingdom of Antichrist will vilify or make God out to be the villain and the Antichrist their hero. Those who worship and follow the Antichrist have been deceived, are willing to be deceived, and as a result have been sent "strong delusion" that they should believe the lies of the Antichrist. This pattern is consistent throughout the entire Tribulation period, with the exception of those who accept Christ as Saviour through the witness of the 144,000 Jewish witnesses and the witness of other Tribulation saint.

D. VERSES 12-16: THE SIXTH VIAL JUDGMENT AND THE THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS.

VERSE 12: "And the sixth angel poured 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."

The angel holding the sixth vial pours out its contents upon the river Euphrates and it is dried up. On the surface that might seem insignificant but the Euphrates River has a tactical military and economic importance in that part of the world.

The river Euphrates begins in the mountainous country of eastern Turkey, runs through eastern Syria, continues down through the middle of Iraq and meets the Tigris River in southern Iraq and runs down to the Persian Gulf. The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers provide water for this area of the world and was known in ancient times as "The Fertile Crescent" and the seat of civilization. Abraham came from the Ur of the Chaldees, which was located in "The Fertile Crescent". The snow melt from the mountains in eastern Turkey provide the water supply for these rivers and in times past the lands around the Tigris and Euphrates would often flood during the times of heavy snow melt and that flooding periodically made the areas around these rivers into nutrient rich fertile land in an otherwise arid and dry part of the world. That is why it was known as "The Fertile Crescent". The Euphrates River is the last natural barrier between ancient Persia and the lands to the north, modern day Iran and Russia, and the land of Israel.

Due to dams being built in recent years flooding is not the issue it used to be but due to the recent wars in this region these dams that been in danger of damage or even destruction. Most likely during the Sixth Seal judgment that included a massive worldwide earthquake, many of the dams in this area will have been severely damaged or destroyed and this area again could be heavily flooded. Due to the trumpet judgments and vial judgments preceding this damage to these dams may have not been complete or even impossible to carry out. With the flooding, much of the area would be too soggy to support armored vehicles or tanks properly.

With the Euphrates and the areas around it being dried up, the armies from the kingdom of the Antichrist would be free to proceed across and continue to their rendezvous in the Valley of Megiddo for the Battle of Armageddon coming soon from this point in time.

VERSE 13: "And I 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."

Notice here that Satan is imitating the three angelic messengers with their three distinct messages with three distinct messengers and messages of his own. This unclean spirit comes out of the mouth of Satan, another unclean spirit comes out of the mouth of Antichrist, and the third and final unclean spirit comes out of the mouth of the False Prophet. He is spreading through these "unclean spirits" to foster his final deception to reinforce the deception that he has already spread upon the earth. There may be some that are considering repentance, after the vial judgments that have happened so far, but this last round of deception insures the Antichrist will have a large army to fight the Lord Jesus Christ at the Battle of Armageddon, upon His return.

VERSE 14: "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."

The passage identifies who the unclean spirits are. They are fallen angels who choose to serve Satan when rebelled against God right after the creation of the earth. The majority of them had been in chains in the bottomless pit but were released from their chains during the Fifth Trumpet judgment and participated in the Fifth and Sixth Trumpet judgments. Now they are active once again accomplishing two goals at the same time: (1) Performing miracles to continue the Satanic deception against God and (2) Deception of the rulers of the ten kingdoms of the Antichrist and influencing them to follow the Antichrist to go to the Megiddo for preparation for the Battle of Armageddon.

VERSE 15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

Now we see a pause here and the Apostle John records a reminder for the Tribulation saints. Even though their circumstances seem bleak, the Lord Jesus Christ is encouraging the Tribulation Saint to continue in the faith no matter what the cost. The expression, "I come as a thief" is a reference to the manner of His coming. To the lost world, His coming will be a total surprise. When a thief comes, he comes unannounced and in total surprise. That is the way the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be at the end of the Tribulation. The Tribulation Saint will know within a few days or weeks the day of his arrival but the lost, due to their deception, it will be a surprise that they will not expect at all.

The expression "... He that watcheth keepeth his garments" is a reference to the Tribulation saints observing and keeping his faith with due vigilance. The word "watcheth" is in the King James Bible durative tense. The English language does not have a durative tense. The "eth" at the end of a word is a durative tense. A durative tense is a tense that is present and continues into the future.

The Tribulation saint is promised a blessing to be vigilant and continue to be vigilant. However on the other hand if he lets down his guard, he will be like one who gets his clothing removed suddenly and as a result is naked and and ashamed of himself.

VERSE 16: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

The word "Armageddon" comes from two Hebrew words and carries the meaning "mount of rendezvous". In other words it is mountain where the rendezvous or assembly takes place. This verse is the only reference in the Bible to the word "Armageddon"

This location is within the greater Valley of Jezreel and is approximately 80 miles north of Jerusalem in northern Israel. This part of Israel at the time these notes are written is the agricultural center of the modern State of Israel. This is the location of many military battles of the past, including the battle that King Josiah fought against the Pharaoh Necho of Egypt, mentioned in 2 Kings 23:29 – 30, and 2 Chronicles 35:20 – 35, and a battle between the British and the Ottoman Empire near the end of the first World War. It is considered by some to be one of the greatest strategic battlefields in the world. It is also where trade routes between several nations come together. Whoever controls this area can control great areas of territory.

This is the location where the Battle of Armageddon will be fought. This is the final battle between the Lord Jesus Christ and the forces of the Antichrist. We will study this in detail in Chapter 19.

E. VERSES 17-21: THE SEVEN VIAL JUDGMENT AND THE PREPARATION FOR ARMAGEDDON

*VERSE 17: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air;
and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven
from the throne, saying, It is done."*

The seventh and final vial judgment is poured out by the angel into the earth's atmosphere. The first part of this judgment is a voice, which by the phrase "great voice" indicates a voice that is loud and commanding, that comes out of the temple in Heaven from the throne. This is very possibly the voice of the Father or Lord Jesus Christ as the Apostle John cannot see the view around the throne due to the smoke in the temple that would be present until the seven vials of judgment had been poured out upon their intended target, mostly on the earth.

*VERSE 18: " And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings;
and there was a great earthquake,
such as was not since men were upon the earth,
so mighty an earthquake, and so great."*

The next effect of the seventh and final vial judgment is that voice, thunder and lightning were seen combined with a great earthquake that is worldwide and greater than any earthquake since the creation. This earthquake would be greater than the world wide earthquake in seal judgment six that destroyed 1/4 of the world's population.

Revelation 6:12 "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;"

*VERSE 19: "And the great city was divided into three parts,
and the cities of the nations fell:
and great Babylon came in remembrance before God,
to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."*

This verse confirms to us that this earthquake will indeed be worldwide. The "great city" could possibly refer to Jerusalem but the scripture does not tell us for sure. However the city of Jerusalem is most likely where the Antichrist will rule from being his image is setup in the Jewish temple he has defiled. The cities of all the nations are destroyed is indications of just how strong this worldwide earthquake will be.

VERSE 20: "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

The worldwide earthquake also leveled all the mountains and moved all the islands on earth out of their customary place. This would indicate that the tectonic plates on earth may have been supernaturally shifted quite significantly and that itself would cause the massive earthquake just described. This is also in fulfillment of prophecy in the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 40:4-5 "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: (5) And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

*VERSE 21: " And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven,
every stone about the weight of a talent:
and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail;
for the plague thereof was exceeding great."*

The worldwide earthquake is accompanied by a the greatest hail to ever fall on the earth. A talent was used as a measure of weight in New Testament times and is roughly comparable to a range of 70-130 pounds. It is hard to imagine hailstones weighing near or over 100 pounds in weight. However we see here that mankind for the most part once again rejects the grace of God and vilifies God. They make God out to be a villain even though He has given them many chances to repent, before and even during the Tribulation. Sadly they will have no part of the love and grace of God.

III. APPLICATIONS

- God's judgment upon the earth at this time will total, without mercy, and complete. God will not extend His mercy forever. It is better to accept His mercy now, while it is still available.
- We see even that the Tribulation saint is spared from two of these judgments. They are paying for the consequences of not accepting Christ until after the Rapture but God still shows them mercy during these judgments by sparing them from two of them, giving them respite they will need. God will give you times of respite during your trials as well.
- The world is being deceived by Satan and his forces and is sadly willing to be deceived.
- Our warfare is not physical but spiritual!!
- We are to remain vigilant and remain on guard with our Christian life and testimony so we will not be caught off guard and then ashamed!!