

Revelation 16:1-9 The Seven Bowls of Wrath

These bowls are similar to the plagues of Egypt in Exodus 7-11.

This chapter shows us what happens when God's trumpets of judgment are ignored (Rev.8-10). The trumpets were given to warn people to repent. Because they harden their hearts and refuse to repent, they bring on themselves God's wrath.

Trumpets are for warning for repentance (Rev. 9:20-21) but bowls are for God's wrath – which is final.

[1] Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."

The seven bowls are gold because they are used in the service of God. They are full to show the extent of God's wrath. (Rev 15:7)

Please note: "For believers in Christ the afflictions of the flesh are never bowls of wrath (Rom 8:28). Hence, we read that this plague affected only those who had the mark of the beast. Rev 13:15-17" – William Hendriksen

The seven bowls follow the four and three pattern. The first four (vs.2-9) affect nature while the final three (vs.10-21) describe cataclysmic events at the end of time. The seven bowls follow the pattern of the entire book. The first four bowls affect earth while the last three relate to the spirit world.

[2] So the first angel went and poured his bowl on the earth, and foul and evil sores came upon the men who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

The First bowl is poured upon the earth and affects those who bear the mark of the beast and worship its image. These are people whose minds and hearts are akin to the beast.

[3] The second angel poured his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a dead man, and every living thing died that was in the sea.

The second bowl is poured into the sea.

Rev 16:4-7 *The third bowl relates to inland waterways. God's ways are just and right.*

God "exercises righteous retribution" for the death of the martyrs for Christ (v.6). As we read these verses, we should think of the souls of the martyrs under the altar (Rev 6:9; 8:3-5). Now, it is the altar that replies (v.7)

[4] The third angel poured his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of water, and they became blood.

[5] And I heard the angel of water say, "Just art thou in these thy judgments, thou who art and wast, O Holy One.

[6] For men have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink. It is their due!"

[7] And I heard the altar cry, "Yea, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are thy judgments!"

Rev 16:8-9 *The fourth bowl completes the calamities on earth. The bowl is poured on the sun.*

The unrepentant harden their hearts and remain unrepentant. They cursed the name of God. Cursed here probably means blasphemed.

[8] The fourth angel poured his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch men with fire;

[9] men were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues, and they did not repent and give him glory.

Their unwillingness to repent may indicate that these bowls are not at the end of time only. Throughout history God has used calamities to call people to repentance (Note especially Amos 4:1-13). Amos 4 describes similar calamities that God used for repentance, but they refused to turn to God.

This hardness of heart continues to this day.