

## REVELATION 15

### *Seven Angels with Seven Plagues*

As we move through the Book of Revelation, we are taken back and forth between Heaven and the Earth. We are allowed to witness scenes of joy in Heaven, and we are confronted with scenes of judgment on the earth. In Heaven you see scenes of worship. On the earth, you see scenes of wrath.

In this chapter we are once again taken into Heaven. In these eight verses, which comprise the shortest chapter in the Book Of Revelation, we are allowed to see a vision of Heaven as God prepares for His final judgment of the tribulation earth. There has already been great suffering as the judgment of God has been unleashed on the earth. When these judgments are poured out on the earth, they serve to increase the agony of the wicked. We are given a glimpse of Heaven as it prepares for final judgment. Up to this point, God has mingled mercy and judgment. Up to this point God has been leaving the door to repentance ajar. Now humanity has made its final choice. The world has chosen Satan over God and judgment is coming. There will be no more mercy. There will be no more opportunity. There will be no long suffering or grace. There will only be judgment and the wrath of God for all those who have rejected Jesus Christ.

***1 I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God’s wrath is completed.***

John tells us that he saw “**another sign**”. The word “sign” is the same word translated “wonder” in Rev. 12:1 and 3. In Rev. 12:1, saw a “woman” representing the nation of Israel. In Rev. 12:3, John saw a “great red dragon” representing Satan. In these verses, John sees “seven angels” who will be God’s instruments of final judgment upon the earth.

John tells us that this vision is both “**great and marvelous**”. The word “great” speaks of something that is “important and astonishing.” The word “marvelous” has the idea of “something to be wondered at”. John is calling our attention to this vision because what is happening here is something important and amazing. You see in the last chapter, we saw the horrifying judgments of God as they were visited on earth. Here, we are allowed to see the judgment from Heaven’s perspective as it prepares for judgment.

John sees seven angels and these angels have “**the seven last plagues**”. The word “plague” means “a hitting, or a wound”. What we see here is God’s hitting the earth and wounding it in judgment. The lashes of God’s whip of judgment had begun to fall on this world system and there is nothing that can stop the damage that is about to be inflicted on those who have rejected the Gospel of grace.

When these seven judgments are poured out on the earth, they will complete the judgments of the Tribulation Period. Verse 1 says that through these judgments the wrath of God is “**completed, or filled up**”. This phrase translates the Greek verb “*telos*”. This is the same word used by Jesus when He was dying on the cross. Just before He died, He cried, “*It is finished*”, John 19:30.

The word is very expressive and it was used in many ways in that society. Servants used it when they had completed an assignment. Artists used it when they had put the finishing touches on a work of art. Merchants used it when a deal had been struck. Often the receipt would contain this word. It meant that the debt had been paid in full.

Homeowners used it when they had paid the last payment on their mortgage. They would often inscribe the word on a plaque and nail it to the front of the house, revealing to all that the final payment had been paid. Jesus used this word on Calvary to let everyone know that He had finished the Father's work and that redemption's price has been fully and finally paid. Praise God, salvation is finished! It is used here to signify completion as well. When these seven last plagues are poured out, God's judgment on this world will be finished.

***2 And I saw what looked like a sea of glass glowing with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name. They held harps given them by God. 3 and sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. 4 Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."***

Even as Heaven prepares to unleash judgment upon the earth, there is rejoicing in Heaven. Every time we look into Heaven, we see the same thing. We see the saints of God rejoicing in the presence of their Redeemer. These saints are standing on a "**sea of glass**" mingled "**with fire**". This glassy sea speaks of God's judgment as being firm and fixed. On this earth, the sea is constantly and is never still. This sea, however, is solid and unmoving. It symbolizes the judgment of God is fixed and it cannot be altered. It is "mingled with fire" to remind us that God is a God of wrath Who is in the process of judging this world.

If you will remember, there was a "laver" outside the tent of the Tabernacle. Before the priests entered the tent they were required to wash in the laver. It symbolized cleansing and forgiveness of sin. Our "laver" today is the blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:9) I thank God that there is a place of forgiveness and restoration today. But, for the lost sinner, this sea reminds us that it has become too late for repentance. Judgment is set and fixed. Man has reached his limit and God is about to pour out His wrath on a lost and sinful world. What a horror awaits the "earth dwellers"!

However, the Heaven dwellers are rejoicing, and with good reason. These are the Tribulation saints that we met way back in Rev. 6:9-11, and 7:9-17. These are people who heard the Gospel when it was preached during the Tribulation. They heard the call of God and they repented of their sins, and they were saved. Many of them were called upon to give their lives for Jesus. Many died horrible deaths at the hand of the Antichrist. Now, they are home in Heaven, safe, secure, and saved, and they rejoice in the victory that they have been given. While those who dwell on the earth suffer under God's wrath, these saints of God stand perfect and saved in the presence of God, and they praise Him for His grace in salvation. Heaven will be a place of praise and glory to the Lord! I look forward to being in a place where praise and prayer is welcomed and unhindered.

v. 3-4 These Tribulation saints lift their voices in song to praise the God Who redeemed their souls. We are told that they sing two songs. They sing the song of "**Moses**" and they sing the song of the "**Lamb**." The Song of Moses is found in Ex. 15:1-18. It is the first song in the Bible. The Song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:2-4) is the last song recorded in the Bible. The Song of Moses was sung by the children of Israel when they had been delivered from Egypt and Pharaoh. The Song of the Lamb is sung by the saints of God when they are delivered from Antichrist. The Song of Moses was sung by the Red Sea. The Song of the Lamb is sung on the glassy sea. The Song of Moses was to praise God for bringing His people out.

The Song of the Lamb is sung to praise God for bring His people in. Both songs are songs of redemption and praise for the God Who excels in delivering His people from sin and sinners.

Let's take a moment to examine this song.

1. v. 3 They Sing Of His Deeds/Works – They sing of the God Who works in power and moves in glory.
2. v. 3 They Sing Of His Ways –They sing of the God Who's ways are always right and just.
3. v. 4 The Sing Of His Holiness – They exalt His greatness and magnify the God Who alone is worthy to be praised!
4. v. 4 They Sing Of His Worship – They sing of the God Who is worthy to receive worship, and will receive the worship of all mankind (Phil. 2:10).
5. v. 4 They Sing Of His Wrath – They sing of the God's righteous acts, and He alone is worthy to judge sin and sinners because He alone is holy and just.

These saints have been through a terrible time, but they found God to be a faithful God. He saved them. He kept them. He carried them home to glory. They now stand in His presence and lift their voices in song to the God of their salvation.

Heaven will be a place of praise, it will be a place filled with singing. I like "good" singing here. It really can set the mood for the worship service, but in Heaven, our songs of praise will be lifted to a new level. We will sing in perfect pitch and harmony, and we will sing songs of praise to the God Who saved us from our sins and from His wrath. We will sing "Oh My My" and really mean it.

***5 After this I looked, and I saw in heaven the temple—that is, the tabernacle of the covenant law—and it was opened. 6 Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. 7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.***

The scene changes and our attention is focused on the Tabernacle in Heaven. What John sees here is the original Tabernacle. The one Moses built in the wilderness was patterned after this heavenly place of worship. It is from this Tabernacle that God's judgment issues forth onto the earth. This place John sees is called "***the temple of the covenant law***". The Law that was handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai. The ancient Law set God's standard for living. Through the Law, God manifested His glory and His holiness. The Law also showed the sinfulness of man. The Law was given so that people might understand the holiness of God and what He expected from people. The tables of the Law were placed in the Ark of the Covenant as a permanent witness to Israel of the holy demands of a righteous God.

Here in Heaven John sees that the Law is still in force! The Law of God has always served as God's standard of righteousness. And it always will! Man has tried to alter or change the standards of God, but they are carved in stone and they are unchanging. People have broken the Law of God and the Law demands that people be judged. God will defend His righteousness and judge all those who violate His Law. That is what is about to take place in the next chapter.

By the way, Jesus came to fulfill the Law for all those who will put their faith in Him (Matt. 5:17). He has not abolished the Law, but He has fulfilled it for those who are saved, (Col. 2:13-14). When a person's faith rests in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are not required to keep the Law to please the Lord. They are, however, expected to live holy lives for the glory of God! The Law no longer stands in judgment over the redeemed saints of God, for in Jesus, we are seen as righteous (2 Cor. 5:17).

v. 6-7 The Seven angels appear out of the Temple in Heaven. They are clothed in "pure and white linen". This signifies their holiness and it reflects the holiness of the One they serve. They wear "golden sashes" around their chests. This speaks of the majesty and glory of the God they serve. These angels have in their hands the seven last plagues that will be poured out on the earth given to them by one of the four living creatures. We first met them in Rev. 4:4-8. They exist to glorify the God of all creation. These creatures give the angels seven bowls filled with God's wrath. The plagues of the Tribulation will be carried out because of God's wrath and anger against sin and sinners.

The seven angels are given seven "vials" or "bowls". These bowls are said to be "**full of the wrath of God**". The wrath of God has reached the busting point. Up until now the wrath of God has been like water flowing over a dam. The damage has been severe, but the dam has held back the worst part. In these verses, the dam of God's wrath is about to break and the waters of judgment are going to drown both sin and sinner. (As Rev. 14:10 says). Judgment is coming and there will be no escape.

In 1899, Johnstown, PA was a growing steel town located on the Little Conemaugh and Stony Creek Rivers. It had a population of some 30,000 people. On May 31, 1899, at 4:07 PM, after a night of heavy rains, the South Fork Dam burst. When it did, 20 million tons of water came crashing down the narrow valley. Boiling with huge chunks of debris, the wall of flood water grew at times to 60 feet high, tearing downhill at 40 miles per hour, leveling everything in its path. When the dam broke and the water came hurtling toward Johnstown, the people heard the roar and understood what had happened. Thousands tried to escape but were soon overtaken by the waters. When the next day dawned, over 2,200 people were dead. Some of the bodies were not uncovered until years after the flood. There was no time to escape and there was no means of escape. Johnstown was destroyed without mercy in a matter of minutes.

That is but glimpse of the horror that is coming upon this world when God's wrath is poured out. The dam will break and judgment will fall. You need to be sure that you are in Jesus and secure from the wave of wrath that will soon come upon this lost world. God's wrath had been building against sin ever since Adam and Eve sinned in Eden. One day the wrath of God will boil over and absolute judgment will be the end result. The only refuge a sinner has, whether it is now or in that future day, is the blood of Jesus Christ.

v. 8 The Temple that was standing open has been closed. No one is allowed to enter because it is filled with the glory and presence of Almighty God. This image indicates that the day of mercy is passed. The door will be opened again during the Millennium, but it has been closed for the duration of the Tribulation and will not be opened! Man's access into grace and salvation has been cut off. The door has been closed and God is going to judge sinners and there is nothing they can do to stop Him. It is too late to pray. It is too late to repent. It is too late to change. It is too late for anything! There is no more hope, no more grace and no more opportunity. The door is shut and it will not be opened again!

In Matt. 25:1-10, Jesus tells a parable about 10 virgins. Five are wise and five are foolish. The five wise virgins were ready when the bridegroom came and they entered in with Him and His Bride. The five foolish virgins were not ready. They had no oil in their lamps and while they were gone to get their oil, the door was closed, and they were shut out of the wedding chamber. That parable will be a reality in many people's lives one day. Do not let it be true in your life! You need to be sure that you know Him! You need to be sure that you are saved. God is offering salvation to whoever will come to Jesus. In that day, He will offer salvation to no one. All He will give then is judgment, wrath and damnation. Get in while the door is still open!

## REVELATION 16

### *The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath*

In Revelation there is a series of three judgments that are executed in seven stages each. First, the seven Seal Judgments, then the seven Trumpet Judgments and finally the seven Bowl Judgments. As the judgments progress, the intensity and severity of the judgments increase.

We have arrived at the final set of judgments. In Rev. 15:7 it shows one of the four beasts giving to seven angels seven bowls "full" of the wrath of God. Just as a reminder, the word "full" means "to swell". It is the image of a dam, under pressure, nearing its bursting point. This is a good description of the wrath of God. Ever since Adam sinned in Eden, the wrath of God against sin and sinners has been building. The grace and mercy of God has served as a powerful dam, which has held that wrath in check. In the judgments of the Revelation, the dam of God's wrath bursts forth, and a Christ-rejecting world is swept away in the wave of judgment that pours forth.

Up to this point, God has always tempered His wrath with grace/mercy. As the prophet Habakkuk, prayed in Hab. 3:2, "*in wrath remember mercy.*" However, now God would not show mercy because the time for judgment has come. There will be no mercy any longer. The wrath of God is about to be poured out in full force. God is preparing to commence His final judgment of the earth.

In Rev. 14:10, John writes, "*They too will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured out full strength into the cup of His wrath.*" Now, in these verses, the world is about to experience the undiluted wrath of an offended God.

***1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth."***

In verse 1 God issues the command for the angels to begin pouring out the bowls filled with His wrath upon the earth as the "Final Judgment Commences".

***2 The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.***

When the first bowl is poured out, all those who have worshiped the beast and who have received his mark are afflicted with sores on their bodies. The word "sore" literally means "an ulcer". It has the idea of an open, running, ulcerated place on the skin. It probably refers to an oozing boil. A lot like Monkey Pox today. These sores will be extremely painful, festering and incurable. No doubt the greatest medical minds of the age will do their best to find a cure, but they will fail. There will be no cream, no treatment, or drug that will bring relief to the people suffering from these boils. God is clearly revealing the condition of these lost sinners. He is putting on display the corruption of their hearts (on the inside) through the sores on their bodies (the outside). These people have rejected God, and His Son, so now they must face Him in judgment!

These festering ulcers bring to mind the ancient plagues in Egypt. The sixth of those plagues is found in Ex. 9:8-12. In that plague, the people of Egypt suffered from incurable, painful boils all over their bodies. This seems to be the same kind of physical problem Job experienced as well in Job 2:7. Just as it was in ancient Egypt, these boils only afflict the enemies of God. Those who are trusting the Lord are spared this judgment.

**3 The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead person, and every living thing in the sea died.**

When the second bowl is poured out, the waters of earth's oceans are corrupted and become like the putrid, blood of a corpse. Back in Rev. 8:8-9, when the second trumpet judgment was administered, one-third of the ocean was affected. Here, the event is worldwide.

When this plague is poured out, every creature in the sea will die. The seas will become vast cemeteries. Beaches will no longer attract the sun worshipers and the pleasure seekers. The beaches will smell with the stench of death. Instead of crowds of sunbathers on the beach, the world's beaches will be choked with the rotting carcasses of billions of dead sea creatures.

This kind of plague has been seen in miniature in our world. Occasionally, something called the "red tide" will occur. John Phillips, vividly describes this phenomenon in his commentary on the Revelation. He says, *"From time to time, off the coast of California and elsewhere, a phenomenon known as "the red tide" occurs. These red tides kill millions of fish and poison those who eat contaminated shellfish. In 1949, one of these red tides hit the coast of Florida. First the water turned yellow, but by midsummer it was thick and viscous with countless billions of dinoflagellates, tiny one-celled organisms. Sixty-mile windrows of stinking fish fouled the beaches. Much marine life was wiped out, even bait used by fishermen died upon the hooks. Eventually the red tide subsided, only to appear again the following year. Eating fish contaminated by the tide produced severe symptoms caused by a potent nerve poison, a few grams of which, distributed aright, could easily kill everyone in the world. An unchecked population explosion of toxic dinoflagellates would kill all the fish in the sea. (Exploring Revelation, 190-91)*

Except now when this occurs, the entire world will be affected. When you consider the fact that 70% of the surface of this planet is covered in ocean, you can see how great of a plague this will be. Imagine the impact this will have on the environment. Most of the rainwater the earth receives comes from moisture that evaporates from the oceans of the world. No more evaporation means greatly diminished rainfall on the earth. This will cause a drought of worldwide proportions. Also, this world is largely dependent upon the oceans for its food supply. Billions of people receive the abundance their daily food supply from the ocean. Without this source of food, millions will face starvation. Not only will food supplies be drastically affected, but so will commerce and shipping. The socio-economic impact of this plague will devastate the earth.

God is tearing down all the things that people take for granted. First, their health is destroyed. Then, the oceans are destroyed. The coastal regions of every nation in the world will become abandoned wastelands as the oceans are transformed into vast seas of death.

**4 The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: "You are just in these judgments, O Holy One, you who are and who were; 6 for they have shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, and you**

***have given them blood to drink as they deserve.” 7 And I heard the altar respond: “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.”***

When the third bowl is poured out, the fresh water sources of this world are also stricken. Again, we saw this in miniature back in Rev. 8:10-11, when one-third of the world’s fresh water supplies were poisoned when a comet, a meteor, or some other heavenly body fell into them and they became bitter (wormwood).

Here, they are turned to blood. By the time this plague is poured out on the earth, millions of martyrs have been slain by the Antichrist and his forces. Millions of saints have had their blood shed by the enemies of God. Here, the Lord honors their desire for blood by giving them blood to drink. When Jesus was here, His first miracle was to turn water into wine. That miracle was designed to draw people to Himself. Here the Lord turns the water into blood to remind men of Him. One by one, the Lord is removing every prop, every comfort, everything mankind leans on for support and takes for granted.

Also, this plague reminds us of the first of the ten plagues in Egypt. In Ex. 7:20-24, the fresh water in the land of Egypt was turned to blood and men searched in vain for water to quench their thirst. Again, in this judgment, every source of fresh water in the world is turned to blood. Whether it is a spring, a well or a municipal water system, the world’s fresh water supply will be taken away.

Our bodies can survive several weeks without food, but only about three days without water. Imagine a world with no water! A faucet is turned and instead of cool, clean, thirst-quenching water, out pours putrid, foul, deadly blood. No doubt death from disease and thirst will skyrocket during these horrible, evil days.

Note: When this plague comes, the angels praise God for His wisdom in sending this judgment. The world is merely reaping what it has sown. ( Gal. 6:7-9) The world has been guilty of murdering God’s people, God’s preachers and God’s Son, and now they are given blood to drink in return.

Another angel declares the righteous nature of God’s judgments. Our human minds cannot comprehend the judgments of these verses. We shrink back from them and think that they are horrible. We recoil when we think about people having to suffer like people will suffer during the Tribulation. We might even believe that there must be a better way. However, one day, when we are home in glory, and our minds have been transformed and glorified, we will see things from God’s perspective. Then we will understand just how hateful and horrible sin truly is. We will feel as God feels; we will think as He thinks, and we will understand. In fact, I am certain that we will voice our own “Amens” as He judges the world that has denied Him and defiled His creation. We will understand that the time for judgment has come. We will know that the only thing that has held judgment off for this long has been the pure grace of God. When judgment comes, we can rest assured that God will judge the right individuals in the right amount in the right way. He can do nothing but the right thing. As Genesis 18:25 says, “*Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?*”

***8 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire. 9 They were seared by the intense heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.***



The fourth plague touches the sun. Its heat is allowed to burn the bodies of people. The word “scorch” means “to be burned with heat; to be tortured with intense heat.” By some means, God will allow the heat of the sun to be intensified and the bodies of men and women will be burned.

This universe is an amazing place. God created everything and placed it exactly where it needed to be. The sun is some 93 million miles away from the earth. It sits at exactly the precise distance to allow life to exist on this planet. If the sun were any closer, we would be burned up. If the sun were any farther away, we would freeze to death. God placed it exactly where it needs to be.

The sun is also a giant nuclear reactor. It is so large that 1.3 million of our earths could fit inside of it. It is hot too. The surface of the sun is nearly 10,000 degrees. If that heat were to hit the earth full force, the planet would burn up instantly. Surrounding the earth is a band of radiation called the magnetosphere. This radiation band filters out the rays of the sun, allowing exactly the right amount of heat and light to enter our atmosphere. Wow! I am sure happy that all this just happened during the “Big Bang” 😊

During this plague, God will either turn up the heat of the sun or allow more of its heat to enter the earth’s atmosphere. As a result, people will experience intense burns in the bodies. You think that the pain of sunburn is an intense, nagging pain. Imagine having that pain intensified many times over. Imagine the agony that will result from this plague.

Since the dawn of time the Sun has risen every morning and sat every evening. It has yielded life-giving, dependable heat and light for thousands of years. One day, mankind will awaken to a sun that will blaze down in flaming heat. It will scorch their bodies, but it will be nothing compared to the pain they will feel when they are cast into fires of Hell. This is just a warning of something far more terrible and final!

As we read the Bible and we understand that these plagues are God’s judgment on sinners who refuse to come to Him for salvation. These plagues are designed to judge those who have defied a holy God at every turn. We read it and we understand the source and the solution. What strikes me as amazing is the fact that these people understand what is happening too. They understand that God is behind these plagues. Instead of repenting in the face of His wrath, they stand in continued defiance to Him and His will. The Bible tells us in verse 9 that they “*curse/blaspeme*” the name of God. They shake their puny fists toward God and speak evil of His holy name! They have the audacity to blame Him for their troubles and suffering. Of course, that has been the human way since the dawn of time. Even in Eden, Adam and Eve sought to blame their problems on others, Eve blamed Adam, Adam blamed God because of the snake He put there, and the snake didn’t have a leg to stand on (Gen. 3:11-13). That trend continues today. Grown men and women are running around blaming their parents for the problems they have in life. If they are angry; if they are substance abusers; if they have other problems in their adult lives, they lay the blame at their parent’s feet. Homosexuals blame God for their perversion. They claim God made them the way they are. That is foolish! Homosexuals are not born that way! That lifestyle is a choice! Husbands blame wives; wives blame husbands; and everybody blames everybody else for their problems. Even under judgment men will blame God for what they are suffering. But the problem is not with God.

The problem is clearly stated in verse 9, “*but they refused to repent and glorify Him.*” They refused to repent of their sins to the glory of God, and they are paying a heavy price for their choice. They have no one to blame but themselves! In the same way, if you fool around and die and go to Hell, you will have

no one to blame but yourself. You could stop anywhere/anytime and call on the name of God and trust Him for salvation, If you do not, you will have nothing but judgment to look forward to!

The time for repentance is now. If you are not saved, you need to come to Jesus today. You need to be saved today! If you carry a burden for those who are headed to this horrible time called the Tribulation, the time to pray for them, the time to tell them is now. If you are saved and want to praise Him for delivering your soul from death, Hell and judgment, today would be a good time to do just that.

So, let's transition now to the final passages in this chapter. In Revelation chapter 5 the Lamb of God took a seven sealed book from the hand of His Father. This book represented the title deed to planet earth. Jesus owns this world because He created it out of nothing. He owns this world because He redeemed it when He died on the cross. When Jesus took that seven sealed book, He began to open the seals. When He did, the Tribulation Period began on the earth.

By the time we reach these verses, the world has been smiting under the wrath of a holy God for seven years. Now, the Tribulation is about to come to an end. As the final three seals are opened, God prepares to conclude His judgment of this world and its inhabitants.

When the events of these final three judgments are concluded, Jesus Christ, the King of Kings will return to the earth in glory and power. He will take possession of the throne of this world, and He will rule in righteousness. These three last plagues set the stage and prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.

In these verses the Lord God begins the process of final judgment upon the earth. Let's look at now the final three vial judgments and the lessons they teach.

***10 The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in agony***

Up until now the Beast has been somewhat sheltered from direct attack. When this fifth bowl is poured out, it is directed at the very seat of his power. Like Pharaoh in ancient Egypt, the Antichrist, with all his power is helpless against the judgment of God Almighty. This plague begins at the very throne room of the Antichrist and then spreads to cover his entire kingdom. He may be a powerful ruler, energized and supported by Satan, but he is helpless to defend himself against the God of Heaven!

When the fifth bowl judgment is unleashed upon the world, the world is suddenly engulfed in darkness. This darkness is not the darkness we normally think of, it is absolute blackness. The darkness will be so complete that nothing can penetrate it. Surely this darkness represents some change in the way light reaches the planet. It also suggests that the power grids that we use to light the earth will be done away with. Whatever causes this darkness, it will be severe, and it will be complete.

This supernaturally imposed darkness is a tangible representation of the spiritual darkness that has already engulfed the world. The world has already rejected the Light of the World, the Lord Jesus, because they loved darkness rather than light, (John 3:19). This world chose moral, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional darkness over the Light that was available in the person of Jesus Christ and in the Word of God. They favored darkness over Light and God gives them more darkness than they ever bargained for!

We are also told that when this darkness descends, men will literally chew their tongues because their pain is so great. The combined misery of the sores in their bodies; starvation from the ruined oceans; the lack of drinkable water and terrible burns they have suffered from the intense heat of the sun, all combine to cause the inhabitants of the earth to writhe in pain. What we see here is a tiny glimpse of Hell. God is letting the Antichrist and his followers know what is waiting on them because they have rejected Jesus. Once, when speaking of Hell, Jesus said this, "And throw that worthless servant outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 25:30). What we see here is a small glimpse of what those who reject Jesus will face when they go to Hell.

If you have never been saved, you need to pay attention to what the Bible is saying! There is a real place called Hell and real people spend a real eternity in real judgment there. Do not turn your back on the Light! Come to Jesus and be saved or one day you will find yourself in a horrible place called Hell!

**11 and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.**

When the plagues come; when the pains come; you would think that people would have enough sense to repent of their sins and turn to God. Not these people! They shake their puny fists in the face of God and they curse Him and blaspheme Him! What a tragedy! But, what a window into the human heart. There are those who tell us that mankind is bad, but that there is a spark of the divine within him. The fact is, man is totally depraved! There is no spiritual good in mankind at all, (Rom. 3:10-23). Man, left to himself, will only grow more and more corrupt, (Eph. 4:22).

If this judgment proves anything, it proves the absolute sinfulness of humanity! It proves that man is a terrible sinner and that salvation is totally the work of grace! It proves that even when mankind is confronted with the power and judgment of God he will not always repent of his sins. It proves that salvation requires direct, divine intervention. If God did not come to us on a personal basis, convict us of our sins, quicken our dead spirit, and save us by His grace, (Eph. 2:1-10), we would all go to Hell. You see, the same rebellion and hatred of God would be revealed in you and me were it not for the grace of God!

When people do die and go to Hell, we have the image of them trying to get saved, as they confess their sins and cry out to Jesus. I do not believe it will be that way! Look at the Rich Man in Luke 16:19-31. There is no hint of remorse over the life he lived. There is only sorrow over the sentence He received. When people go to Hell, they will lift their voices in blaspheme against God. They will curse Him and even His judgment will not bring them to a place of repentance. May God help this sin-cursed, fallen world/people.

***12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. [China] 13 Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon (Satan), out of the mouth of the beast (Anti-Christ) and out of the mouth of the false prophet.***

**14 They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty. 15 "Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed." 16 Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.**

The sixth bowl is poured out on the earth, and it sets the stage for the battle of Armageddon. When this angel pours out his bowl, we are told that the Euphrates River will dry up. The Euphrates begins in Turkey, at Mount Ararat, and flows south through Iraq, and then into the Persian Gulf. This river, which is over 1,700 miles long and 3,600 feet wide at places, has been for centuries, the dividing line between the east and the west. As we know, no river really poses a problem for a modern mechanized army, but God will remove every obstacle and prepare the way for a massive invasion of Middle East.

How will the river be dried up? Considering the fact that the oceans and all fresh waters have been turned to blood, and the amount of rainfall the earth has received has been dramatically reduced; some have speculated that water levels would be far lower than normal anyway. Add to this the fact that many dams have been built along the river, it would be very easy for human engineers to cut off the water. However, the fourth bowl intensified the heat of the sun. This would cause the snow and the ice cap on Mount Ararat to melt, causing the Euphrates to overflow its banks. Either way, it will be the result of divine intervention. God will speak and the waters of the Euphrates will cease to flow so that a massive army can pass.

We are told that an vast eastern army will use the highway created by the drying up of the Euphrates River to move toward Israel. The intention of this army is the total destruction of Israel. The phrase "kings of the east" literally means "the kings of the rising sun". This reference has caused many to speculate that China and her allies will be the source of this army. Back in Rev. 9:16, the Bible speaks of an army that numbers some 200 million. Only one nation on earth could raise an army of that size: China.

However, I would like to propose a different interpretation. The way things are shaping up in our world, we are headed toward a showdown between the Islam and the Jews. Ever since the United Nations took Palestinian lands and gave it to the Jews, there has been conflict in that region, The Arab nations that surround Israel have repeatedly tried to oust the Jews from Palestine; they have failed in every attempt. Though outnumbered some seven to one, the Israelis have defeated their Arab enemies every time they met on the field of battle. This has created great hostility in the hearts of the Arab nations. Imagine returning home to land that had been in your family for centuries only to find someone else living there and you and your family evicted with no place to go. The Arabs hate the Jews and they long for the total destruction of the nation of Israel. I think that is what we are seeing in these verses. While Islam paints itself in colors of peace and love, the religion also calls for the deaths of all Jews and Christians. Anyone who is not a Muslim is an infidel in their eyes, and infidels must either repent or die. It would be for radical Islam to field a massive army bent on the annihilation of the Jews and their state. It may be Islam that leads a final, fatal Jihad against the nation of Israel.

When this judgment is poured out, three frogs are seen coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the Beast and the false prophet. Frogs are unclean creatures and are used here to refer to evil spirits, or demons. The mouth is the source of influence. So, it seems that Satan will inspire the words of these hellish world leaders and they will whip their followers into a frenzy for a final assault against Israel.

They are able to form a coalition between the world's armies. This final war will be satanically inspired and energized.

V-15 – On the heels of this judgment a heavenly announcement is made. Ever since Jesus ascended back into Heaven, it has been prophesied that He would return, ( Acts 1:9-11). Prior to this Christ did return and He received His bride into Heaven. That was the Rapture. This verse is referring to the Second Coming. Jesus is telling His precious people to hang on for just a little longer. He is at the door! The saints of God are encouraged to keep the faith for a few more days, the Lord is coming! He is coming like a thief. The world will not see the signs, but He will come in an instant and bring judgment with Him. Jesus lets His people know that their waiting will soon be over.

v. 16 Armageddon – This army has been assembled by Satan to destroy the people of God. The devil still thinks that he is in control! A quick glance at the Scripture paints a different picture altogether. Verse 14 tells us that this army is being gathered “to the battle of that great day of God Almighty”. Then, verse 16 says, “They gathered them together...” Satan may think that he is in control of these events, but the real Ringmaster is God Himself. He gathers the nations of the world in the valley of Megiddo so that He might engage them and destroy them in one moment of time.

Armageddon means “the hill or city of Megiddo”. Megiddo is located in the “Plain of Esdraelon” (Also called the Valley of Jezreel). This location is the site of some famous biblical battles. It was here that Barak and Deborah defeated the Canaanites, (Jud. 4-5). It was here that Gideon defeated the Midianites, (Jud. 6-8). This same valley is the place that both King Saul and his son Jonathan were killed in battle, (1 Sam. 31). King Josiah also met his death in the valley of Megiddo, (2 Chron. 35). It is here in this place that Napoleon Bonaparte described as “a natural battlefield” that the final battle of the earth will be fought. In this valley the armies of the earth will come together to try and destroy the King of Kings, and His people.

***17 The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, “It is done!” 18 Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. 19 The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. 20 Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. 21 From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell on people. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible. [But did not repent]***

The seventh bowl is poured out. When it is, the awful wrath of God and His judgments against the earth are ended. Also, in this final judgment, this world system is destroyed. Since the dawn of time man has moved in rebellion to God. He has rebelled in his personal life, his public life, his political life and his productive life. In these verses, that entire world system is brought crashing down and man is left with nothing! Let's look in as Babylon is plundered.

v. 17 – As this bowl is poured out, a voice from the throne says, “***It is done!***” This statement signals the fact that judgment has reached an end. The Lord Jesus is on His way. He is prepared to take back everything Adam lost in the fall. He is preparing to claim everything He purchased at the cross.

Jesus is about to receive the glory He is due. When Jesus was on the cross, He cried, "It is finished!" There He announced His victory. Here, He cries, "It is done!" He cries out in judgment. He is letting us know that we have reached the end of judgment; glory is just around the corner.

v. 18-21 – God has been in the process of judging the earth all the way through the Tribulation. Wave after wave of divine wrath has washed over this world and its inhabitants and still this world system stands in continued defiance to the will of God in Heaven. Here, in one final stroke, God destroys the last vestiges of human power. In one final judgment, God removes the last of man's props. God destroys everything that mankind has built and glories in. In a moment of time, the world is brought to its knees.

A Great Earthquake Devastates The World . Earthquakes have always been a part of living in this world. Earthquakes happen around the world on a daily basis. Most, thankfully, occur unnoticed by the inhabitants of the world. Some, however, have brought profound loss of life and severe damage.

*"The earthquake and tsunami that hit Seward, Alaska in 1964 was so massive it deposited a cargo ship on the top of a mountain several thousand feet inland. Fourth Avenue, the main street in Anchorage at the time, dropped 15 feet, swallowing whole cars into a crevasse. The entire Anchorage neighborhood of Turnagain slid into the Cook Arm of Prince William Sound."* And that was only a 9.0 quake!

This earthquake will be greater than the power of any quake ever measured. The devastation will be immense! The Cities Of The Earth Are Affected – v. 19 – "The Great City" probably refers to Jerusalem. That ancient city suffers terrible damage. The rest of the cities of the earth are devastated. Washington, New York, Los Angeles, Tokyo, London, Moscow, Paris, Rome, all the cities of the earth are destroyed in one fell swoop. All the centers of pleasure, economics and power are taken away in a moment of time. The Antichrist's power, and the seat of the False Prophet's power, will be destroyed, and the system behind it.

v. 20 – The entire topography of the world will change. The continents will shift; islands will be swallowed up in massive tsunamis; the mountains will crumble and disappear. The Lord is preparing the world for His millennial reign!

v-21- Gigantic Hailstones will fall on people. A talent was the amount of weight that a full grown man could reasonably lift. A talent weighs somewhere between 100 and 125 pounds. Can you imagine 125 pound balls of ice raining down from the sky? Everything that is left behind from the devastating earthquake will be pulverized and the earth will be covered with shards of ice. Any crops that are in the fields will be destroyed. Cars, houses, everything of value will be totally wiped out by this terrifying plague. However, even after all they have been through, the inhabitants of the world refuse to repent. They continue to blaspheme God. It is hard to imagine that the human heart can be so hard. Yet, the condition of sinners under judgment proves that lost people are totally depraved and will not repent.

I thank God that He came to me in grace and saved me. He called me to Him! What love! What grace! What a Savior! He was good to me even when I was in rebellion to Him. Jesus is coming! His Word warns us for people to be ready. We do not know when He will come. He may come today in the Rapture. Or He may come for you today in death. If He were to come for you today, would you be ready? Or would you be caught unprepared? You need to get ready to leave this world. If the Lord has saved your soul and you know that to be so, the best thing you could do is bow before Him in humble thanksgiving right now and praise His name. Sing How Great Thou Art