

REVELATION 16:1-11

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Revelation chapter 16 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we come to Revelation chapter 16, we see the last of God's judgments being poured out upon a Christ rejecting world.

We have seen the seal judgments and with these seven seal judgments we saw one-fourth of the earth's population destroyed. In fact, it was just with the first four judgments we saw that.

Then came the seven trumpet judgments and even more devastation upon the inhabitants of the earth, the earth dwellers or those who reject Jesus Christ and have given their lives over to the Antichrist.

And when you look at those judgments, they pale in comparison to what is coming in the bowl judgments!

Remember what we read last time back in Revelation 15:1, **"Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete."**

And as we will see, these bowl judgments will be poured out in a rapid-fire succession and when they are completed the wrath of God is finished, it is complete, and He will establish His Kingdom on this earth!

In fact, after these bowl judgments we have the battle of Armageddon, and we see that with the return of Jesus in Revelation chapter 19

Keep in mind that Revelation chapters 17 and 18 go back and fill in some of the details of the destruction of religious and economic Babylon.

And yes, God's Word, the Bible is and has been a source of comfort, peace, joy, hope and-so-on, for people throughout the ages. It truly is a beacon of light in a world that is filled with darkness.

But the Bible is also a book of judgment!

Malachi 4:1 tells us, **“For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,’ Says the LORD of hosts, ‘That will leave them neither root nor branch.’”**

You see, God is righteous and thus, sinful man must be dealt with – either by the shed blood of Christ who cleanses man of all their sins or in their own righteousness, which are like filthy rags before God, and they will be judged!

And like I have said, when these bowl judgments are being poured out, they are going to go forth in rapid-fire succession. And the reason that they can't linger on for months and months is that when you see what these judgments are poured out upon, no man would be able to survive!

Here is something else that I will throw out there for you. At this point in the Tribulation Period, with these bowl judgments being poured out, it seems like man has passed the point of no return in regard to salvation.

Remember what we read in Revelation 14:6-7, **“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth - to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people - saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.’”**

Here, at the end of the seven-year Tribulation Period, we see a final call by God to the people of this world to come to Him and to accomplish this, we see an angel bringing the everlasting gospel to the earth dwellers! You see, **“the hour of His judgment has come.”** And if they don’t repent here, they are lost forever. God has given them every opportunity to turn to Him, but man’s heart is hard, and this last rejection of God is their final rejection of God.

And think about it. At this point all have now heard the gospel message and they are now rejecting it and thus, there is no reason to delay this judgment, the bowl judgments because they did have a chance to repent, but now it is over.

It is as Paul said in Hebrews 10:26-27, **“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.”**

It is not that they never heard the Gospel message. They heard it and rejected it and now the final judgment of God is coming upon these earth dwellers prior to the battle of Armageddon!

Listen to how The Living Bible puts these verses we read in Hebrews chapter 10. It says, **“Think how much more terrible the punishment will be for those who have trampled underfoot the Son of God and treated his cleansing blood as though it were common and unhallowed, and insulted and outraged the Holy Spirit who brings God’s mercy to his people.”** Hebrews 10:26-27.

Let me share this with you, it gives us insight to what we see happening here in this world and in the Tribulation Period. We are told,

The 1999 crash of golfer Payne Stewart's plane was a bizarre incident. He and five companions boarded a twin-engine, \$2.4 million Learjet which left the runway at 9:19 AM.

There were two pilots, and all seemed fine when they checked in with air traffic controllers a few minutes later.

But for unknown reasons, the pilots apparently lost consciousness shortly before they were to turn west toward Dallas, and when they couldn't be raised by air traffic controllers, two Air Force jets went aloft to investigate.

No one was at the controls.

There was no movement in the cockpit, and the windows were fogged, suggesting that the cabin had depressurized and become chilled with stratospheric air some 45,000 feet above the earth.

One of the Air Force pilots said, "It's a very helpless feeling to pull alongside another aircraft and realize the people inside that aircraft potentially are unconscious or in some other way incapacitated. And there's nothing I can do physically from my aircraft even though I'm fifty to one hundred feet away, to help them at all."

When one of its two engines finally ran out of fuel, the plane roller-coasted through the clouds, heading toward final, cataclysmic destruction.

One air safety investigator said that airplane depressurization can be "very insidious."

He explained that the problem could slowly deprive the crew of its ability to know what was happening.

“It could be one of those things where you’re feeling happy, and you don’t know what is going on.”

Picture humanity on a runaway airplane, on a collision course, with only moments of time remaining.

Yet people are so caught up in their pleasures and pressures and pursuits that they don’t realize the urgency of their plight.

- Nelson’s Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations & Quotes, p 501

Yes, we do see that in the world today, people are doing what is right in their own eyes and what we see manifested is all the wickedness and evil that comes from the heart of man. And they have no idea that they are going to crash and burn apart from Christ!

And that is where we are at in Revelation chapter 16. Man is out of control, in rebellion against God, and they don’t even realize that the wrath of God is soon to be complete, the culmination of God’s judgment is going to be poured out against a world that has rejected Him and His message of salvation. They have passed the point of no return and they can no longer be saved. A very sad picture indeed!

Now, to get the flow, let's begin reading back in Revelation chapter 15, starting in verse 5 and that will lead us to our study this evening. We are told, **"After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed."**

Revelation 15:5-8.

With that as our background we will pick up our study this evening in Revelation chapter 16, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as He is about to pour out His wrath with these seven bowl judgments!

REVELATION 16

VERSE 1

There are many ideas out there about who this **"loud voice"** that is calling for these bowl judgments to be poured out is.

Some feel that this is an angel or some other angelic being. I don't think so.

The reason I feel that way is because what Revelation 15:8 tells us, **"The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed."**

God alone is in the Temple and that tells me that it is God who is speaking these words of judgment, calling for these angels to **“Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.”** Revelation 16:1.

Now when we talk about the wrath of God or the judgment of God upon people, many don't want to talk about it. In fact, they will ignore the judgment of God and focus on the love of God, the mercy of God, the grace of God.

Their thinking goes like this, ***“If God is a God of love, and He is, then He would never send anyone to Hell, He would never judge anyone. Remember, God is a God of love!”***

I hate to say this, but that is very true. God does not send anyone to Hell!

Now before you get upset with me, listen carefully.

God does not send people to Hell; man goes there because they reject the free gift of life that God has given to them, and that gift is found in Jesus and in Him we have the forgiveness of our sins.

Thus, if you reject the gift you have decided for yourself where you are going, and you can't blame God. He is giving to you what you want, an eternity apart from Him!

Sin has separated man from God. I think we all understand that.

And thus, there has to be a payment for that sin, the breaking of the Law you might say.

We also have to keep in mind that God is righteous, He is fair, there is no wickedness or darkness in Him at all.

And His love for us is so great that He sent His only begotten Son to pay in full the penalty for our sins. And as we come to Christ our sins are forgiven, they are cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more. There is no record of any of your sins! Your past sins, your present sins or your future sins have all been paid for by the shed blood of Jesus Christ!

But, if you reject Jesus, then you are guilty before God and since God is a righteous judge, He has to sentence you to pay for your sins in the Lake of Fire for eternity, outer darkness, which apart from the light of God, there will be darkness for them!

But that is a choice on man's part, and we see the longsuffering of God, the patience of God, as even towards the end of the Tribulation Period He sends an angel for one last time with the everlasting Gospel, so people have a chance to turn to the living God and be spared the judgment of God!

I hope that is clear. Yes, God is a God of love, but He is also a righteous judge and that is what we are seeing here in Revelation!

You see, God's holiness and justice require Him to execute judgment upon those who refuse to bow the knee to Him and receive His message of Salvation into their lives.

Outside of Christ they are still in their trespasses and sins and unable to approach a holy and righteous God in that condition.

Thus, the bowl judgments have come upon them.

And as we shall see and as I have said, these judgments do not take place over a long period of time, but towards the end of the Tribulation Period they will fire off in rapid succession!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

And by the time we finish up with these last seven judgments, God's wrath upon a Christ rejecting world will be complete!

Now I am not sure why, but there are those who are confused by what this word "earth" means.

Let me show you what I mean. One writer, in his commentary has this to say about what this word might mean, and you can see his confusion when you just don't take this literally.

This is what he thinks,

- Poole says earth might mean *some parts of the earth*.
- Poole says earth might mean *the common people*.
- Poole says earth might mean *The Roman Empire*.
- Poole says earth might mean *The Roman Catholic clergy*.

I don't think this is difficult. And, as you can see, if this word, "earth" doesn't mean the literally earth, no one is going to be able to tell what in the world it means.

I will keep this simple. When it says "earth" the Lord is speaking about the "earth" or the entire planet and all the people on this planet.

Now, again, as we shall see, these bowl judgments are very similar to the trumpet judgments spoken of in Revelation chapters 8 and 9, only on a more intense scale.

And granted, some are a little different, but once again, the devastation of these seven bowl judgments is beyond anything we have seen so far. And this is as bad as it gets, except for the Great White Throne Judgment and those who have rejected Christ will end up in the Lake of Fire for eternity!

Erwin Lutzer put it like this, *“One minute after you slip behind the parted curtain, you will either be enjoying a personal welcome from Christ or catching your first glimpse of gloom as you have never known it. Either way, your future will be irrevocably fixed and eternally unchanged.”*

What I want you to see here is that everything man has placed his trust in outside of God, will be affected, taken away from him. And we will see that more in Revelation 17 and 18.

VERSE 2

Here is the first bowl judgment and in this first bowl judgment we see this **“foul and loathsome sore”** that came upon some of the inhabitants of the earth.

And please understand, this is not a little rash where you go to the drug store and buy some Gold Bond cream or something to take it away.

The Greek implies that this is a festering sore that is painful, and it is incurable!

Now, what causes this sore?

There is much speculation to what causes this sore from radiation exposure from nuclear fallout to the depletion of the ozone layer that can increase the incidence of skin cancer as people are exposed to more ultra-violet radiation, and-so-on. And I think that whole ozone layer depleting lie has gone away, at least for a time, but I think this is related to something more than that.

I don’t know for sure what God is going to use to bring about these loathsome sores upon people, but the Scriptures seem to indicate what it may be.

Let me ask you this. Who are the only ones that have been affected by this **“foul and loathsome sore”**?

The only ones affected by this **foul and loathsome sore**” are those who have received the mark of the beast.

Why is that?

I believe that God is distinguishing between those who are His and those who are not!

Thus, it could be that these **foul and loathsome sore**” are some kind of allergic reaction to this mark of the beast.

That is a possibility, but keep in mind that God can do it any way that He wants because He is God!

What I want you to see and understand is that these sores are festering, they are painful, and they are incurable like I have said. Can you imagine day in and day out having these sores, this pain, it is hard to do anything and yet, because of their rejection of Jesus, the wrath of God has come upon them!

Now keep in mind that this is just a temporal judgment of God; it is not an eternal one that has come upon them. But make no mistake about it; it will be horrible to say the least.

But it is not over for them, for there is the eternal judgment that is coming and Revelation 14:9-11 is one portion of the Scriptures that tell us what it will be like.

We are told, **“Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.’”**

In other words, those who have rejected Christ, those who follow the Antichrist during the Tribulation Period, will enter into eternal punishment because they have not received the cleansing blood of Christ into their lives by faith!

Now let me share this with you. And please understand that I don't believe he is right. And the point I want to bring out as I read this to you is that sometimes we can go too far trying to make something not just literal but also symbolic, and I think that is exactly what this writer does, as you will see.

Ray Stedman, in his commentary on Revelation, wrote,

As under the trumpet judgments, these visitations are both literal and symbolic.

They actually do occur as described, but they have a hidden meaning as well. They reveal something that otherwise would be unknown.

The land that the first bowl is poured out on, as we have already seen, represents Israel.

There will be a judgment within the land of Israel. It indicates that this falls upon apostate Jews who follow the beast, who are deceived by his lies and propaganda and who accept him as the Messiah.

The judgment is in the form of sores - painful and ugly boils that break out all over the body.

For a time, as a young man, I had a series of boils on my body, and I remember well how terribly painful and ugly they were. These sores break out suddenly and without apparent cause.

We are seeing foreshadows of such today, as for instance, the great plague of AIDS which has come suddenly upon our world. No one knew of it before; it suddenly appeared.

These are forms of God's judgment, sent to teach us to look at ourselves and what is happening in society. They picture a terrible inward corruption, creating mental torment and ugly moods which result in the destruction of life. That is certainly the picture here.

- bit.ly/3pCxRRE

First of all, where is this bowl judgment poured out upon?

It says, "**So the first angel went and poured out his bowl upon the earth . . .**"

Revelation 16:2.

So by saying that yes, this is a literal judgment but it is also speaking specifically of Israel and apostate Jews is wrong, that is not what is being said. It is a judgment upon the earth, and it will affect earth dwellers, both Jews and Gentiles who have received the mark of the beast and thus, there is no longer a door of salvation open for them!

I hope that is clear.

VERSE 3

Remember back in Revelation 8:8-9 where we saw 1/3 of the sea's contaminated by this object that resembled a great mountain and as it crashed into the sea 1/3 of the living creatures were destroyed and 1/3 of the ships in the sea were destroyed.

Again, this is not the same judgment, but it is affecting sea life like we have seen, but it is much worse!

You see, here in Revelation chapter 16, in this second bowl judgment, we see that ***EVERY*** living creature in the sea died!

That is not good.

About 70% of the earth is covered by water and if the sea's died, it would bring about a worldwide catastrophe, as the sea is a major source of food.

And can you imagine the stench from this!

But not only that. The major source of our oxygen, the air we breathe comes from the ocean life. Scientists believe that phytoplankton contribute between 50 to 85 percent of the oxygen in Earth's atmosphere. Probably more on the higher end, but it is hard to measure this.

Most people think that it is our forests that produce all the oxygen we breathe, not true. In fact, back in 2019 when the rain forest in the Amazon was burning, the grave warnings were that 20% of the oxygen we breathe is being destroyed and we are doomed.

No we are not doomed. Again, most of the oxygen we breathe comes from the oceans! So if they are destroyed, life on planet earth could not last too long!

And yes, it is not going to affect the world's oxygen supply immediately, but it will slowly decrease and again, that is why I don't believe this happens long before the end of the Tribulation Period.

Now how does this happen?

People love to speculate, but God is God, and He can do it any way that He pleases.

But even though we are not told, some believe that the oceans of the world will be destroyed by a phenomenon known as the *red tide*.

I am not sure of this, but it is possible. Of this red tide, John Phillips writes,

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 [long line] 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.

- John Phillips, Exploring Revelation, 190-191

Again, it is a possibility; God can use natural things in a supernatural way to accomplish His purposes.

But, however God does it, it will be devastating!

And like I have said, this has to occur towards the very end of the Tribulation Period because man could not live with all the oceans of the world dead, turning to blood!

Since I worked in hospitals and have dealt with dead people, their blood thickens when they die.

We are told here that the water will thicken, like dead men's blood! Not a good thing.

One writer put it like this. He wrote, *"To the amazement, horror, and despair of the world, the oceans will no longer be fluid, but will become thick, dark, and coagulated, like the pool of blood from someone who has been stabbed to death."*

Also, Henry Morris gives to us this insight. He wrote, *“In this toxic ocean nothing can survive, and soon all the billions of fishes and marine mammals and marine reptiles and the innumerable varieties of marine invertebrates will perish, thus still further poisoning the oceans and contaminating the sea shores of the world. The oceans will have effectively completed their age-long function in the earth’s physical economy, and will die. As God had created every living soul in the waters (Genesis 1:21), so now every living soul died in the sea.”*

Think about the effects of this. Not only will the oxygen supply be affected, but so too will the food supply as much of the world’s food comes from the oceans and the seas.

Ray Stedman makes this point of what he thinks this is, and again, I don’t agree. But listen to what he says and then I will comment on this.

He wrote,

The sea, we have seen before, represents Gentile nations, especially those around the Mediterranean Sea within the old Roman Empire.

The sea literally becomes blood red. We have already seen foreshadows of this in the phenomenon scientists call the “red tide,” which occasionally appears in the Caribbean and other seas protected by land masses.

A microorganism increases suddenly and turns the waters blood red, and all life that is in the area dies. It is what is described here.

It may not occur in all the oceans of the earth. I think that would make life impossible on the globe.

Probably this is referring to the Mediterranean Sea.

But if an oil spill like that in Alaska creates such terrible havoc, what will it be like when the whole of the Mediterranean falls victim to this red tide?

- bit.ly/3pCxRRE

First of all, this does not represent the Gentile nations alone. It can't!

Why do I feel that way?

Because of what God told these angels, “... **‘Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.’**” Revelation 16:1.

You see, on the earth not just on the Mediterranean Sea and how would that affect the Gentile nations? Most would not be affected by this if that is what it is saying, and it is not!

This judgment is upon the oceans of the world, and it is devastating. But we are not done, not yet! As we will see, ***“The contamination of the world’s oceans will be an environmentalist’s worst nightmare. But the destruction of the world’s remaining fresh water supply will be a catastrophic, staggering blow to fallen humanity.”***

VERSES 4-7

Here is the third bowl judgment and it is once again devastating!

If you remember, back in Revelation 8:10-11 we saw 1/3 of the fresh water supply contaminated by this star called Wormwood that comes crashing into it.

Now, as bad as that will be, it pales in comparison to this third bowl judgment.

Here we see all the fresh water supply being destroyed, it is turned to blood!

Obviously man cannot live very long without fresh water and thus, this is happening at the very end of the Tribulation Period.

Of this judgment Clarke made these interesting comments. He wrote, ***“They thirsted after blood and massacred the saints of God; and now they have got blood to drink!”***

In other words, what you sow you will reap, and we will talk about that more in a few minutes.

But first let me also make this point here.

They have rejected Jesus Christ; the fountain of living water and thus, God has given to them what is left – contaminated water that does not bring forth life, only death!

Now as you read that, as some read of these devastating judgments, they may argue that God is not being fair, that this judgment is not right, it is too severe!

Is that true?

Well, we don’t have to guess or make assumptions because in Revelation 16:5-7 we see two angels make a proclamation in the midst of this judgment about how fair, how righteous God is in what He is doing.

Remember what we read, **“And I heard the angel of the waters saying: ‘You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due.’ And I heard another from the altar saying, ‘Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.’”** Revelation 16:5-7.

Now, even in saying that, some may still argue that God is not being fair, His judgment is not right.

But that would be contrary to what the Scriptures tell us of God.

In fact, there is not only one angel proclaiming that God's judgments are fair, they are righteous, but, like I have said, there are two angels proclaiming this message.

Why two angels?

Because the Scriptures tell us that by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter is established. (Deuteronomy 19:15)

And so, with these two witnesses, the matter of God's righteous judgment is established!

In Psalm 145:17 we read "**The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.**" (KJV).

David is telling us that there is nothing that God does which is not right. Everything He does is righteous, and it is fair.

Now we do understand that many times, as we look at the things that are happening around us, how the bad live on and the good die young, how the bad get rich and the good are poor, for example, and that doesn't seem fair.

We must never lose sight of the fact that God says in His Word that what He does is fair, it is right, and even though we might not understand it, we must trust Him. It is called faith.

It is as Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us, "**Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.**"

Now, in Revelation chapter 16:6, God's judgment is poured out upon those who "**... have shed the blood of saints and prophets.**"

Who are these people who have been martyred for their faith?

Those who have come to know the Lord during the Tribulation Period!

In Revelation 19:1-2 we are told, **“After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.’”**

Also, in Revelation chapter 18 we are told, **“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her! . . . And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”**

Thus, we see that what you sow, you will reap!

They have shed the blood of the saints and in return for their rebellion against God, the martyrdom of His people, shedding their blood, He gives them blood to drink.

It is as Isaiah 49:25-26 says, **“But thus says the LORD: ‘Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible be delivered; for I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children. I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine. All flesh shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.’”**

Again, you will reap what you sow, and we see that here in Revelation as those who had shed innocent blood will now have to drink it down, the fresh water supply has been turned to blood!

And in this we see a kind of poetic justice, and that is played out throughout the Scriptures.

Remember when Pharaoh instructed that the newborn Hebrew male babies were to be drowned in the river. In the end, it was Pharaoh and his army that were drowned in the Red Sea!

Then there was wicked Haman who comes up with a plan to destroy the Jews and he builds these gallows in the hopes of hanging Mordecai on, a Jew whom he despised. And yet, in the end God has wicked Haman hung on the same gallows he prepared for Mordecai.

For King Saul, he refused to obey the command of God and wipe out all of the Amalekites, not leaving a man, woman or child left. And because of his failure to obey, later on in his life he was killed by an Amalekite!

J. Vernon McGee summed it up like this for us. He wrote, ***“My friend, whatever God does is righteous and holy. If you don’t agree with Him, it is too bad. You are wrong, not God. Imagine a little man standing up and saying, concerning the Creator, ‘I don’t think He is doing right.’ I have a question for the person who would make a statement like that: ‘What are you going to do about it? In fact, what can you do about it?’ If you are not in agreement with God, you had better get in agreement with Him. God is righteous in everything He does.”***

One more point before we move on and that is found in Isaiah 26:9, which says, **“With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”**

The people of this world are living in an unrighteous lifestyle, but here, in these judgments of God the world will see and understand what true righteousness is.

They will see that these judgments are fair, and they will not be able to have an excuse for their rebellion against Him.

In fact, we don't see these wicked people complain that God's judgments are unfair, because they are not!

And that was only the third bowl judgment, there is more to come, much more! And in the end, we will see the heart of man, and it is not good!

VERSES 8-9

In the fourth trumpet judgment we saw 1/3 of the sun, the moon and the stars struck.

But here, in Revelation chapter 16 we see that God will cause the sun to scorch people with great heat.

And this is not just a heat wave, it is a scorching heat! No air conditioner will solve this judgment from God.

When I was in college I lived in Arizona and I can tell you that when it is 115 degrees outside, that heat is scorching.

You could not walk outside barefoot because the pavement is so hot! In fact, you could cook an egg on the pavement!

This is worse, and this scorching heat will be poured out upon mankind!

How does this happen?

We don't know for sure what God is going to do, but some say that this could be speaking of the sun going into a supernova, a stage that a star goes into before it burns out.

As it goes into this supernova, also called a red giant, it increases in intensity the amount of heat that is given out. This is a possibility.

Also, some say that there is a change in the magnetosphere, which protects us from the radioactive particles that emanate from the sun and travel at some 3,000 miles per second.

45% of these particles are filtered out through the Van Allen Belts or the magnetic fields. If these were disturbed, men could be scorched by the radioactive particles.

This too is a possibility.

Personally, I don't think either will happen.

Now the reason I say that is this is once again a supernatural event.

You see, in the Greek the implication here is God will “**... scorch the men with fire.**”

Also, we read, “**And the men were scorched with great heat . . .**”

In other words, these men are the same men spoken of in Revelation 16:2, speaking of the first bowl judgment. Those who received the mark of the beast, and as I have said, the salvation issue is over. There are believers and those who have received the mark of the beast, unbelievers.

So those who will be scorched by the sun are those who receive this mark of the beast and who worship the beast, not believers. It is selective and only God can do that.

Remember what we read in Malachi 4:1, “**‘For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘That will leave them neither root nor branch.’**”

Thus, I believe this judgment will only affect the wicked, like I have said!

And in response to these four bowl judgments, we see what the wicked will say, “**... they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.**”

They fully understand where this is coming from, and they just chose not to repent and get right with God.

We see this same attitude in the sixth seal judgment where we are told, **“And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’”** Revelation 6:15-17.

What is the problem with these men?

Why do they refuse to repent?

What is wrong with them?

The world likes to tell us that we are a product of our environment we grew up in and thus, it is not our fault.

For all who lean in that direction, you are wrong.

I am not saying you can't be influenced by these things, but you do have a choice to make, that path you will chose to go down.

You see, the problem is not the environment, but it is our heart!

Adam and Eve had a perfect Father, God.

They lived in a perfect environment, the Garden of Eden.

And yet they still blew it and they too tried to blame God for their problems.

Adam blamed this woman that God had given him; he was blaming God that she was no good from the start!

Eve blamed the Devil, she said that the Devil made her do it!

And God did not agree with their conclusion but held them responsible for their actions.

Sin was at the door of their lives, and they chose to open the door and let it in.

These people in the Tribulation Period had sealed their fate already by taking the mark of the beast and worshipping the Antichrist. They rejected the Lord Jesus Christ!

But people today have choices to make. And if you are looking for a scapegoat for why you do what you do, forget about it.

All the excuses you may have for why you acted in a certain way are invalid before God. You are just responding to what is in your heart and you chose to do those things.

That means you can't blame your parents, your friends, your boss or whatever for the way you are acting.

God is bigger than all of that, it is your heart that is stopping you as it stopped these men here in Revelation.

Remember what Paul said in II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

Walvoord gives us this insight as he wrote, *“The wishful thinking of some that men would repent if they only knew the power and 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 and evident divine discipline.”*

And I love what Albert Einstein said. *“It is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man.”*

How true that is. That is why only God can change our hearts and He will not do it until we come to Him and ask Him, ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins and to be Lord and Savior of our lives. He wants our love, and He shows us His love for us!

VERSES 10-11

In the fifth trumpet judgment we saw the demon locust come out of the bottomless pit and darken the sky with their presence.

But here we see the darkness complete. And this darkness is poured out upon the throne of the beast, his kingdom.

Now why don't they just turn on their lights?

Because it seems to affect the energy sources. In other words, there will be no lights, and it would seem to indicate no light at all, not even candles!

Now some feel this is just local, upon his kingdom, but it may also be world-wide, for his kingdom will encompass the whole earth. And I think that is the idea here.

And don't come to the conclusion that this is just a dark night, where we see no moon or stars due to a heavy cloud cover.

Again, this is a supernatural judgment of God that causes such a blackness that people cannot see each other, it is a darkness that can be felt.

We saw this in the ninth plague in Egypt, and we read of this in Exodus 10:21, which says, **"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.'"**

Now I don't know how many of you have been to Meramec Caverns in Missouri, but I have an idea of what that kind of blackness is all about when we were there many years ago.

At this cave they have a huge chamber that is well lit with artificial light.

During the tour they turn off the lights for a few minutes and before they do, they warn you to grab a hold of a loved one, for in a minute, you will not see them.

And I have to admit that I was a little skeptical until they turned off the lights and I couldn't see my own hand in front of my face. It was an eerie feeling, a darkness that could be felt!

Yes, this darkness covers the throne of the beast as well as His kingdom, which covers the whole earth, and this darkness is sudden and unexplainable. Well, they know where it is coming from as we will deal with in a minute.

This type of darkness has happened before. Let me give you a few examples and no one has been able to explain them.

- *This is not the first time such a phenomenon has occurred. In the middle of the day on May 19, 1780, the entire region of New England was covered by darkness - a day which has become fixed in New England history as The Dark Day. The mysterious blackout lasted for several hours.*
- *In the early afternoon of March 19, 1886, a similar zone of darkness moved across central Wisconsin, causing the sky to turn from a bright cloud-dappled blue to midnight black in the space of about a minute. This darkness blanketed several villages and towns to the west of Lake Winnebago and lasted about ten minutes.*
- *Similar unexplained occurrences of sudden darkness have occurred in Memphis, Tennessee (December 1904), Louisville, Kentucky (March 1911), and other places and times in the United States and around the world.*

What is interesting about these events is what they have in common.

First, no one was ever able to explain these events in terms of a known phenomenon, such as an eclipse, or something like that.

Secondly, most of the people who were there and experienced this darkness were filled with terror. They thought the end of the world had come.

Maybe God was just giving them a warning of what is coming so that they would repent and turn to Him!

I also believe that this darkness here in Revelation could be a prelude of Hell itself, ***“outer darkness”*** where there will be ***“weeping and gnashing of teeth.”***

And again, they refused to repent, and they were in excruciating pain from the previous judgments they encountered.

It is amazing the hardness of man’s heart, even when they recognize that God is bringing this judgment upon them for their refusal to turn to Him so their sins can be forgiven.

But for these people, they had passed that point of no return, and they could not be saved.

And I guess that does lay to rest the argument that says that if men could see God’s work clearly, they would turn to Him and repent!

Obviously, that is not what we see here in the book of Revelation.

They still refuse to repent, and their rebellion is going to climax in a war that they are going to be involved in, a war against God!

Remember as we opened up this evening with the story of the runaway airplane. That is humanity today, on this runaway airplane you might say, on a collision course with only moments of time remaining.

And we need to be praying for God’s grace to be poured out and break those shackles of sin that have them bound, keeping humanity from turning to the only one who can save them, Jesus!

This world is running out of gas, they are out of control, and the only hope is Jesus!

Next time we will finish up this chapter by looking at the sixth and seventh bowl judgments!