

**Suburban Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School**  
**Revelation Bible Study**  
**Chapter 16**

**Introduction (1:1 - 3:22)**

(Including Seven Letters to the Seven Churches - preparation / call for repentance)

**The Inaugural Vision of Heaven, Introducing the Message (4:1 - 5:14)**

**The Prophecy (6:1 - 16:21)**

1. First Sevenfold Vision of History from the Cross to the End - Seven Seals (6:1 - 8:5)
2. Second Sevenfold Vision of History from the Cross to the End - Disorders in nature accompanied by sufferings of evil afflict humanity - Seven Trumpets (8:6 - 11:19)
3. Interlude - The Cosmic War between Christ and Satan, between God's saints and the forces of evil (12:1 - 14:20)
4. Third Sevenfold Vision of History from the Cross to the End: Plagues of God's Wrath as God's Judgment is poured out on the human race (15:1 - 16:21)
  - A. Preparation for the Last Plagues: Introduction of the Seven Censer-Angels (15:1-8)

- B. The First Five Bowls of God's Wrath (16:1-11)
- C. The Sixth Bowl of God's Wrath: Armageddon (16:12-16)
- D. The Seventh Bowl of God's Wrath: The End (16:17-21)

**The Conclusion: The End and the New Heaven and New Earth (17:1 - 22:5)**

**Epilogue (22:6-21)**

We have now reached the last of the seven-fold visions which are the heart of Revelation. A brief overview of the three seven-fold visions:

<b>First Vision (6:1 - 8:5)</b> [Seven Seals]	<b>Second Vision (8:6 - 11:19)</b> [Seven Trumpets]	<b>Third Vision (15:1 - 16:21)</b> [Seven Bowls]
First Seal: White Horse (6:1-2)	First Trumpet: Hail and Fire (8:6-7)	First Bowl: Ugly / painful sores (16:2)
Second Seal: Red Horse (6:3-4)	Second Trumpet: Mountain cast into sea (8:8-9)	Second Bowl: Sea to blood (16:3)
Third Seal: Black Horse (6:5-6)	Third Trumpet: Star falling (8:10-11)	Third Bowl: Fresh water to blood (16:4-7)
Fourth Seal: Pale Horse (6:7-8)	Fourth Trumpet: Darkened third of moon and stars (8:12)	Fourth Bowl: Scorching sun (16:8-9)
Fifth Seal: Saints under the altar crying "How long!" (6:9-11)	Fifth Trumpet: Shaft of Abyss opened (9:1-11)	Fifth Bowl: Kingdom of Beast in darkness (16:10-11)
Sixth Seal: The end (6:12-17)	Sixth Trumpet: Four angels released (9:13-21)	Sixth Bowl: Armageddon (16:12-16)
Seventh Seal: Silence (8:1)	Seventh Trumpet: The End and its Joy (11:15-19)	Seventh Bowl: The End (16:17-21)

**Some Thoughts about the Three Sevenfold Visions** (reprinted from study notes on Chapter 6)

- Not given for the purpose of predicting particular events in human history.
- Portray conditions, circumstances, situations, environments, and contexts in which people find themselves during the time period covered.

- They give a predictable view of the human condition in suffering and defeat because of human evil and rebellion against God, and a predictable knowledge of God's terrible judgment.
- Like the Seven Letters to the Seven Churches, it is another call for us to live a life of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.
- Why three visions?
  - o Multiple opportunities to grasp the deeper message of Revelation - repentance, faith, witness, praying "Come, Lord Jesus!"

### Voice from the Temple (16:1)

- Must be the voice of God - see end of chapter 15 for the clue that no one can enter the temple until the Seven Bowls are completed
- Note that while there is great similarity between this third seven-fold vision to the previous two, *things are intensified as a reminder*:
  - o The severity of God's judgment will increase as the end of this world nears.
  - o This is God's final warning of the seriousness of His judgment at the End. Now is the time to repent - Now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2)

### First Bowl (16:2)

- Reminiscent of the plague of boils / blisters that struck Egypt (Exodus 9:8-12)
- See also Job in Job 2:7-9

### Second Bowl (16:3)

- Reminiscent of the First Plague on Egypt - Nile turned into blood and all the fish therein dying (Exodus 7:19-21)
- Many sorts of ecological disasters can be pictured from this verse

### Third Bowl (16:4-7)

- Very similar to Second Bowl (this time it appears fresh water is turned to blood)
- Contrast the Third Trumpet (8:10-11) with the Third Bowl. The Third Trumpet - star falling - caused only *a third* of the water to turn bad. Here the picture is much more grim as all the fresh water is affected.
- Interesting that this Third Bowl elicits a response from one of the angels. It appears it is the angel that has just poured out the Third Bowl (although the NIV - and many others with it - could be interpreted as a different angel) - literally it is the "angel of the waters."
- The response is to say the Lord is right in what He is doing. "You are just in these judgments."
  - o The world and mankind with it are increasingly becoming more and more evil. God is right and just to bring about these horrific plagues. What God determines and judges stands!
  - o Remember how the Lord's "judgment" has also personally affected us *in Christ!* God's judgment about us *in Christ* is that we are forgiven, loved, redeemed, children of God. What God determines and judges, stands! See these great passages, among many others:
    1. John 3:17-18

## 2. Romans 8:1

### Fourth Bowl (16:8-9)

- God gives the sun power to scorch people with fire
- In the Third Bowl we heard / saw how the angel responded. Here we see how mankind responds, with blasphemy and cursing God for the problems man has brought upon himself! (Do you hear the hints and hushes from the Garden of Eden???)
- Sadly, mankind refuses to repent and glorify God. God is glorified the most in the repentance and salvation of the sinner. Why / how? When a sinner repents and believes in Jesus Christ God is praised (and not man), the cross of Christ is lifted higher as the means of salvation (and not the meager attempts of man to earn God's favor), and God is seen as whom He desires to be seen: a gracious, loving and forgiving God. This grace, love and forgiveness are available only in Christ! (See John 3:17-18 from above).
  - o God is not like the sports fan who sings "Nana nana hey hey goodbye!" God is, in the words of Jesus, like the Father of the Prodigal Son waiting for him to return.
- The comments about mankind here (Revelation 16:8-9) is in general, humanity as a whole. This does not preclude the possibility that some may repent and believe in the true God.

### Fifth Bowl (16:10-11)

- God strikes Satan and his kingdom (followers) with the effort to get people to repent. Sadly, not as many repent as could / should!

### Sixth Bowl (16:12-16) - Battle of Armageddon

- The name "Armageddon"
  - o This name appears only here in all of Scripture.
  - o Simply English transliterated from Greek which was a transliteration from Hebrew. In Hebrew this phrase means "mountain (or "mountainous terrain") of Megiddo."
  - o Megiddo is well known in Scripture:
    1. At Megiddo Barak and Deborah defeated Sisera (Judges 5:19)
    2. At Megiddo Ahaziah king of Judah died after battle with Jehu, king of Israel (2 Kings 9:27)
    3. At Megiddo Joram king of Israel was killed in battle (2 Kings 9:23-29)
    4. Josiah was killed at Megiddo by Pharaoh Neco and the army of Judah defeated (2 Kings 23:29-30)
    5. Megiddo is very close to Mt. Carmel (Elijah and the false prophets of Baal - 1 Kings 18)
  - o One Bible commentator notes that this place of dirt has seen battles from "one fought by Tuthmosis III in 1468 BC to Lord Allenby in 1917 AD"<sup>1</sup>
- Overall, this Sixth Bowl is very similar to the Sixth Trumpet (see chart above). This is the last battle between the forces of evil and the church.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Mounce in *The Book of Revelation*, p. 301. This is quoted in Louis Brighton's commentary on Revelation, p. 423.

- Like the Sixth Trumpet, here the Euphrates River plays a part. Remember that in Biblical times, *in the context within which John receives his vision and shares it with the church for the ages*, most of the enemies of Israel come from the east! It is no surprise, then, that in this graphic / prophetic vision John sees the battle between the forces of evil and the forces of Christ as encroached upon the Middle East. In no way does this passage of Scripture portend to some great military battle yet to be fought in the Middle East (as if mankind hasn't fought there enough!). To take this position neglects and weakens our real fight against the Devil and his brood of liars!
- The unholy trinity (dragon, beast, false prophet) return - see notes back in Revelation 12 and 13. This is symbolic for all the forces arrayed against Christ and His church.
- The enemy's intent for this battle is to distract and destroy the message of salvation in Jesus Christ, to destroy faith in Him. But the enemy will not prevail!

### Seventh Bowl (16:17-21)

- "It is done!" (Although it would make for a great Bible study, this is NOT the same word that Jesus uses moments before He dies upon the cross and says "It is finished." Different word here in the original language of the New Testament.)
- The voice of God here speaks for finality. It is said, it is forever spoken, never again to be changed!
- Whereas the Seventh Trumpet (see chart above) gave a much more cheery picture of the end (looking at it from the perspective of the believer), here the Seventh Bowl gives us the total horrific picture. What is the most horrible thing you have seen? Multiply that by a thousand's thousand and it won't come close to what John describes for us.
- And yet, even with the final events leading up to the end, mankind as a whole refuses to repent!

### Reminder:

- 1) Email your questions to Pastor Bill: [billm@deeplyrootedtogrow.org](mailto:billm@deeplyrootedtogrow.org)
- 2) You can access these study guides on the church website. Navigate under "Ministries" to "Bible Studies" to the download page for the Revelation study.