REVELATION 16

The Seven Bowls of Wrath

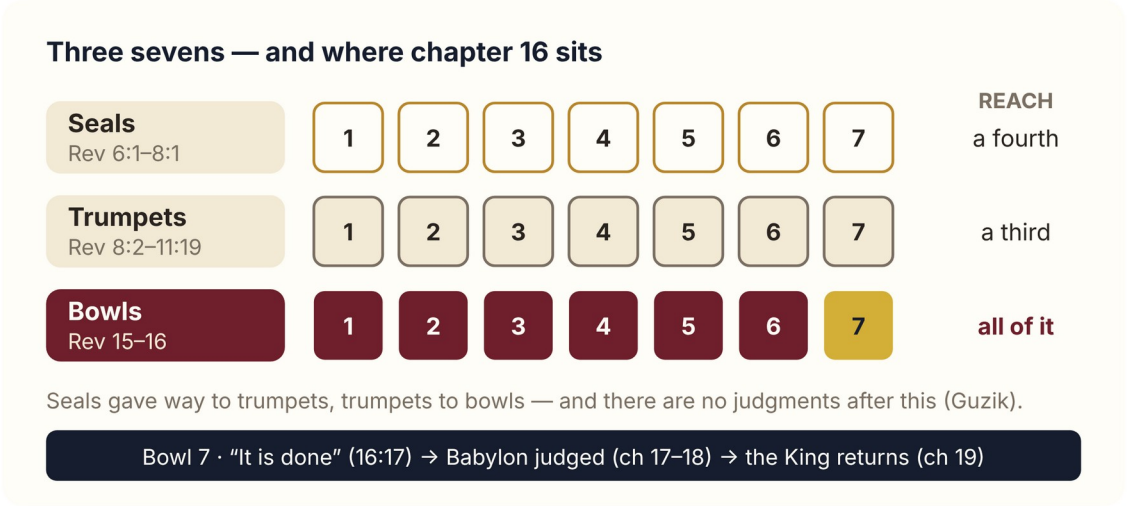
> *“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”*
> REVELATION 16:15

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · WITH TSARFATI · MACARTHUR · GUZIK · JEREMIAH

Where John has brought us

1. Revelation 15 ended with heaven's temple filled with smoke from the glory of God, so that no one could enter, and seven angels holding seven golden bowls — judgment loaded but not yet poured.

2. The pattern is familiar. The bowls strike the same targets the trumpets did — earth, sea, waters, sun, darkness, the Euphrates — but the trumpets touched a third, and the bowls take everything.



Sores, Seas and Rivers of Blood

They poured out blood; God gives them blood to drink

REVELATION 16:6

for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it."

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur hears God's own voice from the temple — no one else could be inside that smoke-filled sanctuary (15:8).

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik refuses to make "earth" mean anything but earth. If the words don't mean what they say, no one can tell what they mean, and the plain sense is the trustworthy sense.

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati sees Egypt behind every plague in this chapter. The first sore matches the boils that fell on Pharaoh's people, but this time it falls on those who chose the beast's mark over the mercy of Messiah.

ἐκχέω
EKCHEŌ · "POUR OUT"

The verb of the whole chapter. The angels are told to "pour out" the bowls (v1), and every angel after that pours his.

A Third, Then All

The trumpets touched a third; the bowls take all of it

TARGET	TRUMPETS · CH 8–11	BOWLS · CH 16	EGYPT
1 Earth	a third of earth burned	sores on beast-worshipers	boils, Ex 9
2 Sea	a third of sea to blood	all the sea to blood	blood, Ex 7
3 Waters	a third of waters bitter	rivers and springs to blood	blood, Ex 7
4 Sun	a third of sun struck	the sun scorches men	—
5 Darkness	abyss opened, sky dark	beast's kingdom darkened	darkness, Ex 10
6 Euphrates	four angels released	river dried, frogs sent	frogs, Ex 8
7 Air	the kingdom proclaimed	"It is done" · great hail	hail, Ex 9

Trumpets: 8:7–9:21, 11:15. Bowls: 16:2–21. The God who judged Pharaoh has not changed.

The bowls strike the same targets as the trumpets, but totally, and nearly every one replays a plague on Egypt.

Scorching Sun, Darkened Throne

Judgment falls; repentance does not rise

REVELATION 16:8

The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire.

DAVID JEREMIAH

Jeremiah calls this the tragedy inside the terror: pain alone saves no one. These men know exactly who has the power over these plagues — they name Him even as they curse Him — yet they will not turn.

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur notes the precision of the fifth bowl.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik will not explain the darkness away as mere political collapse; Egypt's ninth plague was literal darkness that could be felt, and this is a preview of the outer darkness (Matt 25:30).

μετανοέω

METANOEŌ · "REPENT"

To change one's mind, to turn around. It is the chapter's most chilling word, because it only appears with a "not."

The Euphrates Dried and Armageddon

Demons gather the kings; Jesus interrupts with a promise

REVELATION 16:15

("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.")

AMIR TSARFATI

For Tsarfati the Euphrates has always been a boundary in Scripture and in history, and its drying opens the road for armies from the east to converge on Israel.

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur is careful with the word "battle." Armageddon is better understood as a campaign — the war of the great day of God, the Almighty — staged at Megiddo and finished when Christ returns in chapter 19.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik distinguishes three great prophetic battles: Gog and Magog against Israel (Ezek 38–39), Armageddon against the returning Christ (Rev 19), and the final revolt after the Millennium (Rev 20:7–10).

Ἁρμαγεδών

HARMAGEDŌN · "MOUNTAIN OF MEGIDDO"

John gives the name "in Hebrew": Har-Magedon, the mount of Megiddo.

“It Is Done” — the Seventh Bowl

The greatest earthquake, the heaviest hail, the hardest hearts

REVELATION 16:19

The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

DAVID JEREMIAH

Jeremiah sets the two shouts side by side: “It is done” from the throne answers “It is finished” from the cross.

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati reads Babylon the great, judged by name in verse 19, as the end-times world system. The verdict is announced here in chapter 16; the sentence is carried out in full in chapters 17 and 18.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik calls Revelation 16 the “great” chapter: great voice, great heat, great river, great day, great earthquake, great city, great Babylon, great hail — great evil met by a great God.

γέγονεν

GEGONEN · “IT IS DONE”

One Greek word, the perfect tense of ginomai: “it has come to pass” — it stands accomplished. On the cross Jesus said tetelestai, “It is finished” (John 19:30), and salvation’s work was completed.

Finished and Done

Two declarations, one Lord

FROM THE CROSS

Τετέλεσται

"It is finished"

John 19:30

wrath borne by the Substitute
redemption completed

FROM THE THRONE

Γέγονεν

"It is done"

Revelation 16:17

wrath poured on the world
judgment completed

In 21:6 the same words open the water of life:
one phrase ends judgment, the other begins glory.

"It is finished" from the cross completed redemption; "It is done" from the throne completes judgment.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Same verb, both directions.

Ekcheō (G1632) is the angels' "pour out" (v1) and the world's pouring out of the saints' blood (v6): what the earth poured out, God pours back.

2

Total, not partial.

The trumpets struck a third; the bowls strike everything — every sea creature, every river, the whole kingdom of the beast.

3

Earth means earth.

If the words don't mean what they say, no one can tell what they mean; the plain sense is the trustworthy sense.

4

Three blasphemies, two refusals.

Men blaspheme in verses 9, 11 and 21, and twice they did not repent — judgment exposes the heart; only grace changes it.

More to carry

5

Pain is not an evangelist.

With Spurgeon: suffering can carve a stone into a more sightly shape, but it never turns stone into flesh.

6

Egypt, twice over.

Sores, blood, darkness, frogs and hail — every plague here has an Egypt behind it, because the God who judged Pharaoh has not changed.

7

A campaign, not one battle.

Armageddon is the war of the great day of God, staged at Megiddo and finished when Christ returns in chapter 19.

8

Done answers finished.

Gegonen from the throne (v17) is the judicial twin of tetelestai from the cross (John 19:30).

Talk it through

1. Twice the chapter says men did not repent — after sores, heat and darkness. What does that teach about what suffering can and cannot do?

2. The angel of the waters calls God righteous right in the middle of the wrath (vv5–7). Why does heaven stop to worship here?

3. Why does Jesus break into the Armageddon report with “I am coming like a thief” — and what are the clothes the blessed man keeps?

4. The frogs come out of mouths (v13). Where does deception reach you through speech — what you hear and what you say?

5. “It is done” (v17) and “It is finished” (John 19:30): which declaration are you standing under, and how do you know?

CLOSING

The door of the temple stays shut until the wrath is finished — but the door of mercy still stands open today. Do not wait for the bowls to do the persuading; they never will. Stay awake, keep your garments, and carry the good news to the people closest to you while it is still called today.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides, reflection journal and film: see the Revelation study page.