

Chapter 16

'Seven Vials of Wrath'

These are the final plagues of the 'tribulation', and they come one after the other. They take place in the last 3 1/2 years of Daniel's 70th Week, and are completed at the time Christ returns to earth (Rev.19). How long any one of them might last is not revealed.

The Father has committed all judgment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, He is in complete command. And He says to the seven angels, 'Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth'. **Note:** These judgments will come upon those who have taken the 'mark of the beast' and are worshiping his image. Too, they will come after the angel has flown through the heavens warning people not to take the 'mark'.

I. First Vial - Noisome and Grievous Sores (foul-smelling, offensive). 'These putrefying sores are worse than leprosy or cancer. Moses predicted a judgment upon Israel similar to this, which has not as yet been fulfilled (Deut.28:15,27,35). Moses said these curses would come upon those who disown God and throw off allegiance to Him' (Seiss).

II. Second Vial - Seas become as blood of a dead man (v.3). Some believe this speaks of the Sea of Galilee or the Mediterranean Sea. Others believe it to mean the seas of the world. This is not speaking of war, with the blood being that of the maritime. **Note:** The inference is that the creatures in the sea died, not because of the loss of their blood, but because the waters of the sea became 'as the blood of a dead man'.

III. Third Vial - Rivers and Fountains become blood (v.4). The entire 'water supply' of the earth will be cut off, with nothing but blood to quench the thirst. **Note:** Some believe this refers only to the waters in the area of the beast worship. (I disagree.) They which shed the blood of saints and prophets are now given blood to drink, 'for they are worthy'. (They deserve it.)

IV. Fourth Vial - Men scorched with great heat from the sun (v.8). God intensifies the heat of the sun to such a degree that men are scorched by its heat. (Read Mal.4:1.) Jesus said, 'For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened' (Matt.24:21,22). Yet, we know that the Lord takes care of His own. 'The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night' (Ps.121:6).

- Yet, with all of this, men will not repent.

V. Fifth Vial - Thick darkness upon the seat of the beast (v.10). This is the 'day' of which Joel said, 'A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness' (Joel 2:1,2). (Read Isa.60:2; Joel 2:31; Amos 5:18.) Jesus said, 'But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light' (Mk.13:24). Because of the terrible pain, men will chew their tongues from pain. **Note:** There are differences of opinion as to where the 'seat of the beast' might be. Some say Rome; others, Babylon; still others, Jerusalem. (I believe it to be Jerusalem.)

VI. Sixth Vial - Euphrates River Dried Up (v.12). This is a literal reference to the literal Euphrates River. The river is a border between the 'east' and 'west', and is 1800 miles long. Because of its width and depth, it would be a very difficult undertaking for an army to pass over. **Note:** The 'Garden of Eden', where the human race had its beginning, was near the Euphrates River, as was Babel, where earthly government began its rebellion against God. Thus, human history, as we know it, will come to an end where it all began.

- God rolled back the Red Sea making it possible for the Israelites to cross over safely - while the Egyptians perished. The same thing will happen here. The drying up of the Euphrates River will provide a way for the armies of the nations of the east to be gathered to Israel for the 'judgment of the nations' that await them.

VII. Three Unclean Spirits - like frogs (v.13). They go out from the mouths of the unholy trinity, which consists of the dragon (Satan), beast (Antichrist), and false prophet - and they will perform miracles, deceiving leaders of the world to come to fight against Christ, to prevent Him from taking over rulership at His advent.

- Remember: Some 'miracles' are not necessarily of God. That's why it is said, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world' (I Jn. 4:1).

VIII. Behold, I come as a thief (v.15). Important to Note: Christ does not come to His Church as a thief, since the Church will be looking for Him. Paul said, 'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief' (I Thes.5:4). Yet, He will come as a thief (someone people wish to keep out) to the world.

IX. Seventh Vial - Great Earthquake and Great Hail (vs.17-21). This earthquake causes the cities of the nations to fall: Babylon, London, Paris, Tokyo, Moscow, New York, etc. Too, the islands will disappear and mountains will be removed (swallowed up).

- Jerusalem will be divided into three parts. **Note:** In speaking of that day, Zechariah tells of a dividing of the land, in which two parts shall be cut off and die, and one part shall be left (Zech.13:8,9). This is the very time that Christ will return and stand on the Mount Olivet, and it will cleave asunder, with one part toward the north and one part toward the south.

- The 'hailstones' will weigh about 100 to 150 pounds each. Surely, a mass destruction!

Note: The 'Seventh Vial' concludes the wrath of God poured out, and ends with the Battle of Armageddon.

- What a 'joy' it is to know we don't have to be here during these terrible judgments. We're promised, as Christians, that we are not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thes.5:9). Amen!