

# Eschatology

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## The Plot for the 70<sup>th</sup> Week The Bowls of God's Wrath

Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and he will reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11:15)

The sounding of the seventh trumpet marks a significant milestone in the book of Revelation. It sets in motion the final events leading up to the return of the Lord Jesus and the establishment of His earthly millennial kingdom.

The seventh trumpet not only announces consuming judgment on unbelievers, but also the coronation of Jesus the King. In the Old Testament, trumpets were frequently sounded at the coronation of a king (2Sam. 15:10; 1Kings 1:39; 2Kings 9:13; 11:12-14).

"Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished." (Rev. 15:1)

In Revelation 15 John details for us an awesome scene in heaven; around the tabernacle of God are the faithful believers, who refused to worship the beast, worshipping and praising God. John paints us a marvelous picture of the landscape surrounding the tabernacle and we can almost hear the joy and singing as we read this. However, as this chapter unfolds, three motives for the final outpouring of God's wrath become evident:

1. The Vengeance of God (15:1-2)
2. The Character of God (15:3-4)
3. The Plan of God (15:5-8)

Two items revealed in this scene that are important for us to understand:

1. In vs. 7, “the seven angels receive **seven golden bowls** full of the wrath of God.” The Greek word for “bowls” refers to shallow saucers. The imagery is not that of a stream being poured out gradually out of a pitcher, but of the whole contents of the shallow saucers being hurled down in an instant flood of judgment.
2. In vs. 8, we see that “the temple was filled with **smoke** from the glory of God and from His power”. This smoke, an emblem of majesty (Exodus 19:16-18), also symbolized God’s glorious presence in the OT tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35; 1Kings 8:10-11; Isaiah 6:1-4). The smoke in vs. 8 also symbolizes God’s wrath. Note that no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues were finished. The glory cloud will remain in the heavenly temple until the earth is completely purged and prepared for the King and His kingdom.

### **The Third Woe**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Bowl (Rev. 16:2)

“Loathsome and malignant” translate two general Greek words for evil. Used together, they stress that the sores will be festering, painful and incurable. These sores will bring unrelieved physical torment to those who have rejected God. The sores will not affect believers.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Bowl (16:3)

Unlike the second trumpet judgment that affected only 1/3 of the sea, the 2<sup>nd</sup> bowl judgment will affect 100% of the earth’s seas. Since the seas make up 70% of the earth’s surface, the effect of this will be worldwide.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Bowl (16:4-7)

Again, the third trumpet affected only 1/3 of the fresh waters whereby the pouring out of the 3<sup>rd</sup> bowl will affect 100% of the fresh waters. No one on the face of the earth will be able to use, purify or drink water!

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Bowl (16:8-9)

In contrast to the first three angels, who poured out their bowls on the earth, the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun. Searing heat will scorch men so severely that it will seem that the atmosphere is on fire. Those who will be scorched are the same “**people who had the mark of the beast and who worshipped his image**” (16:2).

Again, instead of being repentant of their sins, the people most in need of the Savior will continue to harden their hearts against Him who can provide relief.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Bowl (16:10-11)

This judgment is directed to the Antichrist himself. However, the effects of the judgment will be worldwide darkness and a pain so intense that it causes the unrepentant people to “**gnaw**” on their own tongues.

Worldwide darkness is elsewhere associated with the judgment of God (Isaiah 60:2, Joel 2:2, Mark 13:24,25). God also turned out the lights and turned up the suffering in Egypt (Ex. 10:21-29). And as in the days of Pharaoh, people will continue to blaspheme and harden their hearts against God instead of repenting.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Bowl (16:12-16)

Unlike the previous five bowls, the sixth has no specific assault on humanity but prepares for what is to come, the battle of Armageddon.

When the sixth bowl was poured out, chronologically, the time of the Second Coming is very near. One of the major features of the period just before the Second Coming is a war in which various parts of the world come together to battle the Lord Himself. God’s drying up of the Euphrates River is not an act of kindness toward the kings from the east, but one of judgment. They and their armies will be entering a deadly trap. The evaporation of the Euphrates will lead them to their doom, just as the parting of the Red Sea led to the destruction of the Egyptian army.

Vs. 13 and 14 shows the influence that the unholy trinity (Satan, Antichrist, and the false prophet) has on the people. The “**unclean spirits**” are depicted as “**frogs**” to emphasize their vileness. Frogs were unclean animals according to Old Testament dietary laws (Lev. 10:11,41). Persian mythology viewed them as plague-inducing creatures. The demons are thus described as slimy, cold-blooded, loathsome beings that seduce the eastern kings to meet their doom.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Bowl: (16:17-21)

The seventh bowl is the final outpouring of God's wrath on sinners in this present earth. It will be the worst calamity in the world's history. Its first effects were on the earth's atmosphere, and then it will also have a devastating effect on the earth itself. God will punctuate this final judgment against sinners with an earthquake that will be so severe, the topography of the earth will be completely changed.

To grasp the fullness of what will happen to the earth study the 7<sup>th</sup> bowl with Zechariah 14:4-10; Isaiah 35:1; 40:4:

The massive earthquake will split Jerusalem into three parts, beginning a series of geophysical alterations to the city and its surrounding region that will conclude when the Lord Jesus returns:  
The Mount of Olives will split in two, and a new valley running east and west will be created. A spring of water will flow year-round from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean and Dead Seas, causing the desert to blossom like a rose. Jerusalem will be elevated, and the surrounding region flattened into a plain. Thus, the purpose of the earthquake as it relates to Jerusalem is not to judge the city, but to enhance it.

Whereas the 7<sup>th</sup> bowl blesses and prepares Jerusalem for the Millennial Kingdom, the cities of the other nations fell. Specifically singled out is Babylon the great, which “**was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.**” As the capital city of Antichrist's empire, Babylon especially will be made to drink the cup of the wine of His wrath.

The final effect of the earthquake is to prepare the earth for the millennial rule of Jesus. Islands, which are undersea mountains, will disappear. The mountains on land will be flattened, thus completing the process that began during the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-14).

As devastating as this judgment will be, the unsaved people who survive this earthquake will be pelted with 100-pound hailstones, and still unrepentant, the survivors of the hailstorm will blaspheme God and continue to harden their hearts towards Him.