

THE VIALS OF THE WRATH OF GOD

Revelation 15 & 16

REVELATION CHAPTER 15

¹And I saw ¹another sign in heaven, ²great and marvellous, ³seven angels having the seven last ⁴plagues; for in them ⁵is filled up the wrath of God.

²And I saw as it were ⁶a sea of ⁷glass ⁸mingled with fire; and ⁹them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, ¹⁰stand on the sea of glass, ¹¹having the harps of God.

³And they sing ¹²the song of Moses the servant of God, and ¹³the song of the Lamb, saying, ¹⁴Great and marvellous are thy works, ¹⁵Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of ¹⁶saints.

⁴Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for ¹⁷all nations shall come and worship before thee; ¹⁸for thy judgments are made manifest.

⁵And ¹after that I looked, and, behold, the ²temple of the tabernacle of the ³testimony ⁴in heaven was opened:

The saints are God's spiritual temple – 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-23; 1 Pet. 2:5-9; Rev. 3:12; 11:1-2.

⁶And ⁵the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in ⁶pure and white linen, and having their breasts ⁷girded with golden girdles.

⁷And one of the ⁸four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden ⁹vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

⁸And ¹⁰the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

REVELATION CHAPTER 16

¹And I heard ¹a great voice out of ²the temple saying to the seven angels, ³Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

²And the first went, and poured out his vial upon ⁴the earth; and ⁵there fell a ⁶noisome and ⁷grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of ⁸the beast, and upon them which worshipped ⁹his image.

Chaps 15 and 16 The Seven Vials of the Wrath of God

Chap 15 – The Redeemed on the Sea of Glass

The Rejoicing Redeemed

¹ Links with Rev. 12:1,3. Christ and redeemed assume power in political heaven.

² Divine purpose fulfilled – triumph of saints. Cp. V.3.

³ The seven spirits of God operating through human agencies.

⁴ plegas – to flatten by pounding or smiting. Bring Divine wrath upon enemies of Israel, saints and witnesses.

⁵ RV – “in them the wrath of God is finished”.

⁶ Nations – Isa. 57:20-21; 17:12-13. John sees final vision first and then the judgements leading to it.

⁷ An adjective not a noun - hyalinen = glassy, smooth and transparent.

⁸ Perfect tense = an action past, i.e. which had been mingled. Judgements are past – sea now tranquil.

⁹ Saints victorious over Catholic system in its various forms.

¹⁰ i.e. elevated to authority over nations.

¹¹ Identifies the saints in glory – Rev. 5:8-10; 14:1-4. Bro. Thomas – “The saint himself is the harp of Diety”.

¹² Refers to the words and context of Ex. 15 – Symbolic of Armageddon and aftermath. Cp. Ps. 118:14-22.

¹³ Cp. Deut. 32:44 (context Armageddon). See song Rev. 5:8-10.

¹⁴ Links Christ's works with sign of V.1.

¹⁵ Cp. Rev. 4:8. Hebrew – Yahweh Elohim Sabaoth = He who will be mighty ones of armies”.

¹⁶ ethnon – nations.

¹⁷ See Isa. 66:23; Mal. 1:11.

¹⁸ Isa. 26:9-10.

The Temple Opened in Heaven

¹ Details now given of how God's judgements lead to consummation seen in V. 1-4.

² Gr. nave = the Most Holy. The realm of immortality set before the saints - now occupied by angels.

³ Gr. marturion – witness. Cp. Num. 17:7. The saints in glory witness to God's power.

⁴ Refers to establishment of the Millennial government of Christ.

⁵ The saints are the 7th angel (Rev. 16:17). The angels who minister to them (Heb. 1:14) represent them during the first 6 vials.

⁶ Represents the righteousness of the redeemed – Rev. 19:8.

⁷ Cp. Rev. 1:13. Gold = tried faith (Job 23:10; 1 Pet. 1:7).

⁸ 4 Living creatures represent military/kingly role of saints (Rev. 4:6). Last seen Rev. 6:7 in era when ecclesia succumbed to apostasy. Reintroduced to complete judgements on the Apostasy.

⁹ Gr. phials – bowls.

¹⁰ History – Ex. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10; Isa. 6:4. Priests could not minister = no mediation for nations until judgements complete.

The Seven Vials of Divine Wrath Poured Out

1st Vial – The French Revolution AD 1789

¹ A Divine voice responding to cries of saints for vengeance. Provides details of 3rd Woe – Rev. 11:15,18.

² This is where the 7 angels came from – Rev. 15:6. Represents the final consolation set before the saints.

³ The decisive events of history are not left to chance. See Dan. 4:17.

⁴ The territory of the Roman Empire (Rev. 8:7).

⁵ ginomai – Lit. “there came to pass”.

⁶ kakos – evil.

⁷ poneros – hurtful. Lit. “an evil, malignant ulcer”. The French Revolution was a local ulcer that soon infected the whole of Europe through the career of Napoleon.

⁸ The Holy Roman Empire – Rev. 13:11.

⁹ The Papacy as a political power – Rev. 13:15-18.

³And the second angel poured out his vial upon ¹the sea; and it became as ²the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.

⁴And the third angel poured out his vial upon ¹the rivers and fountains of waters; and ²they became blood.

⁵And I heard the angel of the waters say, ³Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, ⁴and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

⁶For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and ⁵thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

⁷And I heard ⁶another out of the altar say, Even so, ⁷Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

⁸And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon ¹the sun; and ²power was given unto him ³to scorch men with fire.

⁹And men were ⁴scorched with great heat, and ⁵blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and ⁶they repented not to give him glory.

¹⁰And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon ¹the seat of the beast; and ²his kingdom was full of darkness; and ³they gnawed their tongues for pain.

¹¹ ⁴And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

¹²And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon ¹the great river Euphrates; and ²the water thereof was dried up, that ³the way of the ⁴kings of the east might be prepared.

¹³And I saw three ⁵unclean spirits like ⁶frogs come out of the ⁷mouth of ⁸the dragon, and out of the mouth of ⁹the beast, and out of the mouth of ¹⁰the false prophet.

The Temple Guard (1 Chron.9:17-35; 2 Chron.23:19)

1. On duty every night – 240 Levites & 30 Priests.
2. Set to watch 24 gates of Temple and its courts.
3. To be awake to prevent entry of unclean & forbidden.
4. Wore distinguishing garment of white linen.
5. On duty from dusk to dawn – Temple captain (Acts 4:1) made his rounds at any time – guard had to rise and salute in particular way.
6. Guards sleeping were arraigned & stripped of garment before other guards – departed in shame.

¹⁴For they are ¹¹the spirits of ¹²devils, working ¹³miracles, which go forth unto ¹⁴the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the ¹⁵battle of that great day of God Almighty.

¹⁵ ¹⁶Behold, I come as a ¹⁷thief. Blessed is he that ¹⁸watcheth, and ¹⁹keepeth his garments, lest he walk ²⁰naked, and they see his shame.

¹⁶And ²¹he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue ²²Armageddon.

¹⁷And the seventh angel poured out his vial into

2nd Vial – Britain Rules the Sea – 1793

¹ Britain dominated the sea from 1793. Napoleon's successes were restricted to Catholic Europe as God intended.

² The British blockade of Europe cut off the circulation of trade by sea.

3rd Vial – Napoleon's Victories in the Alpine District - 1796

¹ Refers to northern Italy, Switzerland and adjoining mountainous area, the scene of 3rd Trumpet (Rev. 8:10).

² The lakes region became the battleground for Napoleon's campaigns against Austrian power in Italy between 1796 and 1800. He won 26 battles in 1796 and 1797.

³ Because the judgements were against the Catholic heartland where many of God's servants had been persecuted and killed.

⁴ Bro. Thomas retains this translation. Some texts have *ho hosios* – "thou holy one".

⁵ Napoleon's campaigns were divine vengeance on the Catholic system and refigured the judgements to come by Christ and saints.

⁶ Harks back to the prayer of Rev. 6:9 many centuries before. Shows the power of prayer.

⁷ Heb. Yahweh Elohim of armies – militant title of God. See note Rev. 4:8.

4th Vial – Napoleon's Wars Against Holy Roman Empire - 1805

¹ Symbol of sovereign power of a political universe – the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

² Not in Gr. text – should be "it" (Bro. Thomas).

³ "with" is en – in, within. Fire = war (Isa. 42:24-25). Napoleon drew men into wars that scorched them.

⁴ Napoleon's victories over Austrian, Russian and Prussian armies in 1805 and 1806 brought disaster for the allied powers.

⁵ By continuing to support the Papacy – the object of divine judgements through Napoleon.

⁶ The nations with Catholic sympathies did not recognise God's judgement.

5th Vial – Holy Roman Empire Dissolved – 1806-1809

¹ The Beast of Rev. 13:11 – Holy Roman Empire – two horns = Emperor and Pope. Both severely impacted by Napoleon's victories.

² Holy Roman Empire was abolished in 1806 and Pope taken captive and exiled in 1809.

³ Emperor and Pope both humiliated.

⁴ After Napoleon defeated in 1815, allies restored Papacy and Austrian Empire. Catholicism was revived in Europe.

6th Vial – Turkish Empire Dried Up – Frog Spirits – Armageddon

¹ Symbol for Turkish Empire. Cp. Rev. 9:13-14. Turkey source of Euphrates.

² Gradual evaporation from 1820 onwards.

³ The Land of Israel. Cleared of Turk in 1917. Will be the 'way' of Christ's attack on Babylon (v.19) – Cp. Cyrus - Isa. 41:2; 44:27; 45:1-4.

⁴ anatole helios – "kings who are out of a sun's rising". Mal. 4:2. Glorified saints with the antitypical Cyrus (Christ).

⁵ Corrupt ideology or teaching (1 John 4:1-3). Spirits of the French Revolution – Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

⁶ Heraldic symbol of French. Adopted by Pharamond 420, Childeric 456, Clovis 466-511. Franks inhabited marsh lands of Westphalia. Apt symbol for loud voiced, mud-raking, harsh and persistent agitators.

⁷ Symbolises the voice of government.

⁸ Symbol for eastern Roman Empire with headquarters in Constantinople – Rev. 13:4; Dan. 8:23-25.

⁹ Symbol for Holy Roman Empire (central Europe) – Rev. 13:11.

¹⁰ The Papacy in Rome – false teacher (1 Cor. 14:3).

¹¹ Ideas or teachings – 1 John 4:1-3.

¹² daemons – term is used of madness and insanity (John 7:20).

¹³ semeion – signs, marks, tokens. RV – "working signs", i.e. of the times.

¹⁴ "world" is oikumene – the inhabited world (Roman world). Lit. "kings of the habitable whole" (holos – everywhere); i.e. first Europe, then the whole world.

¹⁵ polemos – war (RV) - of 40 years duration.

¹⁶ V.15 is a parenthesis. Christ interrupts to provide a personal warning and exhortation based on the Temple guard.

¹⁷ Unsuspected – Matt. 24:43; Luke 21:34-36; 1 Thess. 5:2.

¹⁸ gregoreo – to keep awake, watch.

¹⁹ tereo – to watch over, preserve, guard, observe attentively.

²⁰ No covering for sin.

²¹ The sixth angel under Christ.

²² arema – a heap of sheaves; gai – in a valley; dun – judgement. Cp. Joel 3:1-2; Zech. 14:1-2. Hebrew name = Hebrew place.

7th Vial – Conquest of the Nations

<p>the ¹air; and there came ²a great voice out of ³the temple of heaven, from ⁴the throne, saying, ⁵It is done.</p> <p>¹⁸And there were voices, and ⁶thunders, and <u>lightnings</u>; and there was ⁷a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.</p> <p>¹⁹And ⁸the great city was divided into ⁹three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her ¹⁰the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.</p> <p>²⁰And every ¹¹island fled away, and the ¹²mountains were not found.</p> <p>²¹And there fell upon men a ¹³great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of ¹⁴a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.</p>	<p>¹ Political firmament – Eph. 2:2; 6:12. ² Cp. Joel 3:16; Isa. 30:30. ³ Symbol for Christ and saints in Zion. ⁴ The throne of David re-established. ⁵ Based on Ezek. 39:8. Armageddon is first stage of victory. ⁶ Symbols for warfare and judgements – Rev. 10:4; 4:5. ⁷ Political earthquake (3rd of Apocalypse – Rev. 6:12; 11:13). Results in Kingdom being established.</p> <p>⁸ Roman dominion of Europe – Rev. 11:8; 14:8. ⁹ Cp. V.13. The order of destruction – Dragon (Russia); Beast (Europe); False prophet (Papacy). ¹⁰ Cp. Rev. 14:10.</p> <p>¹¹ Represents isolated powers/kingdoms subdued under Christ – Ezek. 39:6; Isa. 49:1; 51:5; 60:9. ¹² Kingdoms (like Babylon) Jer. 51:25. ¹³ Cp. Josh. 10:11-14 (Zech. 14:3). See “war” (v.14). ¹⁴ Thought to be around 100 pounds (45 kgs). Approximate weight of an immortal. Symbol for saints – Isa. 30:27-30.</p>
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