

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"Vials of Wrath"

Revelation 16:1-11

Introduction

1. The previous chapter and the present one are full of the closing act of God in judgment upon the earth. The time of total support for His holiness has come!

2. When mercy and grace are refused, judgment comes! Here it is in full intensity. The source is the very holy of holies (v. 1). This shows that it is God's holiness which is the key to the outpouring of wrath! The holiest of all has been aroused into action. The judgment does not come from the throne, but it is from His holiness which burns with intensity against apostasy and sin.

3. The voice of God speaks. Here is intelligent communication. The imperatival form for "pour out" is used. It demonstrates the fulness of the judgment involved. When God speaks and moves, no one moves--not even in heaven (15:8). This is one of the most solemn events in history!

4. With sincerity, take time to give total concern for the events recorded. Each one comes with a thump from heaven upon a Christ-rejecting world. The time for sin to get the thrust of ultimate earth judgment has come.

1. FIRST VIAL v. 2.

There is no word "angel" in each instance of the vials in Greek. The ordinal number is used to show the rapid succession of each of the plagues. The fifth vial still has the sores of the first, so things move quickly. Beasts are apparently omitted from the first vial, for only "men" (generic term) is used. The vial is poured out on those who have the beast mark and those who worship his image (cf. chap. 13). The word "sore" is only found here and Luke 16:21. It is hideous and incurable (Deut. 28:27, 35). The rebels take hell on earth, but soon they will be damned for eternity! This plague is like one in Egypt (Ex. 9:8-12).

2. SECOND VIAL v. 3.

This vial is also like a plague in Egypt (Ex. 7:14-25) and like the second trumpet (8:8, 9). The waters become corrupt like (as) a dead man. The trillions of sea creatures die and float in horrible rottenness in the water (Isa. 13:12; 17:6; 24:1-13). Few men will go on to the millennium for there is complete destruction here (cf. 8:9). No naval battle is here, but a picture of total water pollution like a murdered man wallowing in his own blood!

3. THIRD VIAL vv. 4-7.

Here the fresh water supply is judged. Measure for measure is given for shedding blood. The verb "given" (v. 6) is perfect tense. There is sustained judgment rendered by this verb form. Both an angel and the altar speak up in defense of God. All sympathy is given to Him for His terrible wrath. The blood of martyrs is now being paid for with blood! God is noted as being: 1. righteous, 2. eternal, 3. Lord, 4. God, 5. Almighty, 6. true, 7. some MSS have added holy in the vocative. The judgments of God, therefore, are declared to be in total consistency with the character of God. The sinful crowd is "worthy" of the judgment meted out to them! This is a terrible antithesis to another verse in Revelation (3:4) relating to the saints. Oh, that sinners and worldly "Christians" would take heed to the Word of God. Judgment is just ahead!

4. FIFTH VIAL vv. 8, 9.

The sun may indeed lose its energy, but it never will burn out until God is through with it! Here the sun is activated against men. This is like the fourth trumpet (8:12). Nothing can be hid from the sun's heat (Psa. 19:6). It will burn as an oven (Mal. 4:1, 2). Such punishment does not bring men to their knees. They repent not, hence, punishment which is deserved hardens the heart of man. God-haters do not change! The beast has no power to help his subjects at this time! Men not won by grace are never won!

5. SIXTH VIAL vv. 10, 11.

Here is a vial like the ninth plague (Ex. 10:21-23). The sores and pain of the first vial persist till now. The beast and his kingdom are the thrust of this effort. No alleviation to the problems of men. If so now, what must outer darkness be like?!?! The sinners knew it was God Who sent the plagues because they blasphemed HIM! Hence, conscience never can be quenched! If no repentance here, surely there will be none in hell! Yet, fools hope for some sort of conversions after death, beyond the grave. No salvation in hell. Hell is forever. It is persistent punishment for rebellion against a holy God.

Conclusion In the light of the facts presented, there is only one conclusion: flee to Christ today while there is yet time! Let these truths make you tremble in His presence. Before the judgment falls, be safe in the ark of safety-- Christ our Lord!