

The Tribulation – Part 13

We're studying in the book of Revelation. We're looking at different sections of the Bible, of course, but primarily in the book of Revelation. Today, we're going to start in Revelation 16. But you know, it seems like we've been studying this forever, and the tribulation is certainly long. We know that the tribulation that's coming upon this Earth is going to be seven years. I can't wait to quit studying about the tribulation, because I'll tell you why. We won't be here. Those of us who know Jesus as our Savior, we're not gonna be here.

But, you see, it's important that we do study, and we do study the entire Word of God. But this has been a long study and we really haven't covered everything, and we're not gonna cover everything. I'm just covering some of the things that will happen during the tribulation and the great tribulation.

We've looked at the Antichrist, the beast, and I haven't said a lot about the false prophet. The false prophet is the one who will cause the world to wonder after the beast. In other words, the false prophet is going to be the religious leader, but later on, as we study the book of Revelation, we see how that the beast himself takes on this responsibility of being the religious leader during the great tribulation. He's going to take over and he's going to actually try to convince people that he is God himself.

This is rapidly coming to a close now as we study the seals. We've looked at that and we've studied the trumpet judgments, and now we're coming into what's called the vial judgments. Some people call this the bowl judgments. I look at the King James and look at what it's called, vials.

And Revelation 16:1, ¹*And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.* You see, from the temple, a great voice is heard and this voice must be God's. And the voice is undoubtedly the voice of God which is described as coming out of the temple and as being a great voice. The seven angels to whom are given the seven plagues in the seven vials are now commanded to pour out their divine judgment upon the Earth.

The seven vials introduced here, and as we keep reading, they're introduced and itemized in this chapter. They have often been compared to the seven seals and to the seven trumpets. There's undoubtedly a lot of comparison here between the trumpet judgments and the judgments inflicted by the pouring out of the vials of the wrath of God, which we're getting ready to study.

Both the trumpets and the vials, first in the series, deal with the Earth, and the second with the sea, and the third with the rivers and fountains of water, and the fourth with the sun, and the fifth with darkness, and the sixth with the Euphrates River. And then we see the seventh with lightnings, thunders, and a great earthquake.

The seven vials compared to the seven trumpets reveal several differences. The first four trumpet judgments deal only with one-third of the Earth. And then we look at the vial judgments and they appear to be universal in their application and greater in intensity. God is, once again, tightening up. He's trying to get man to realize who He really is, who man really is and who God really is, that God is God and He wants man to turn to Him.

The first four trumpet judgments deal only with one-third of the Earth, and the vial judgments appear to be universal in their application with greater authority. And then we see that the vial judgments proceed out of and constitute the seventh trumpet just as the trumpet judgments proceeded out of the seventh seal.

As we look at this, the judgments in the trumpets and the vials come in rapid succession, and they all will be completed within a short period of time toward the close of the great tribulation. God gets to a point and He says enough is enough. And the vial judgments are the climax of God's divine dealings with a blasphemous Earth. They blaspheme God. The vial judgments lead up to the Second Coming of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We've read Revelation 16:1 about the angels. Now let's read Revelation 16:2: *And the first went... And this is the angel... and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.*

Terrible judgment falls upon men who have the mark of the beast, and there's a distinguishing contrast here between the first vial and the first trumpet. In the first trumpet in Revelation 8:7, we see that it burns up a third part of the trees and all the green grass. Here, the judgment is specifically upon men and is directed to a particular group of men, namely, the beast worshippers who have received the mark of the beast.

The judgment is described also as a bad, malignant sore, in other words, a boil or ulcer in verse 2 there. The judgment is in the form of a physical affliction of unusual severity that brings widespread suffering. As we look at this, confirmation that the vial judgments occur late in the great tribulation is given in the record

that the first vial judgment falls on those who are worshippers of the beast's image. The image apparently is established in the early part of the great tribulation. It's the last three and a half years of the seven-year period preceding the Second Coming.

Almost everyone seems to comply with the demand that all men worship the beast and receive his mark. The only ones who escape the judgment that we're reading about here are those who refuse the mark of the beast, those who trust in Jesus Christ in those evil days.

We want to go back to Revelation Chapter 13 for just a moment, and I'd like to read something there. The people are forced to worship the beast. Remember in Daniel how that Daniel was told, "You've got to worship, you've got to do this, you've got to do that. You've got to worship the king's image," and all of this. As we think of this, there's a contrast here because mankind here in this section of Scripture is forced to worship the beast. Some people won't take the mark of the beast. They will refuse to worship this beast just as Daniel refused to worship the image of the king back in Daniel.

Revelation 13:14-17 says: *¹⁴And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

This is speaking of the false prophet. He's causing people to worship the beast, the image thereof, and in verse 15 it says: *¹⁵And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. ¹⁶And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and*

poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: ¹⁷And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Remember now that the first vial comes upon those people who have this mark of the beast. It does not come upon those people, evidently, who do not have the mark, those people who still believe in Jesus Christ here.

The second vial is found in Revelation 16:3, as we read: ³*And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.* If you go back and you study the trumpet and the seal judgments, you'll see there's a comparison here, but it's greater here because the sea becomes as blood and literally it became blood as of a dead man. Every living soul in the sea dies. If you remember and you go back and you'll see in a former judgment how that one-third of the sea was affected and how that one-third of the living creatures in the sea died, but here, everything living in the sea dies.

The judgment of the second vial is universal and as we think of the second trumpet in Revelation 8:8 and the second vial, they seem comparable to the first of the ten plagues in Egypt. I mentioned this before. In Egypt the plagues that came killed all the fish in the Nile River and made the water unfit to drink. The area of the judgment is similar to that of the second trumpet where one-third of the sea is turned to blood and one-third of the creatures in the sea died. Here, the judgment is universal as most of the Earth is covered with water. That's the second seal.

Now the third seal comes in Revelation 16:4-7: ⁴*And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they*

became blood. ⁵And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. ⁶For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. ⁷And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

In other words, God is holy. God is righteous. He's making right decisions here. Physical affliction we see in verse 1 and the second part of verse 6 here seems to stem from spiritual apostasy. They kill the prophets; they kill the people who know Jesus Christ, those people who will be saved, and they seem to get killed here, but this is the reason for this third vial; it's judgment upon those who have killed the Christians or the people who have trusted Christ, and this is spiritual apostasy. I would call it criminal apostasy of killing the saints of God.

God's judgments are absolutely correct, true, and righteous. God makes no mistakes. At this point John hears one described as the angel of the waters deliver a justification of God for His judgment, and the angel is apparently a holy angel who has some jurisdiction over water. There is a remarkable variety of ministries assigned to angels as recorded in Revelation. The angel declares that, because men have shed the blood of saints and prophets, God is righteous in judging them, and in kind and in that they are given blood to drink. Just as the saints are worthy to rest and receive reward, the wicked, too, are worthy of divine chastening and judgment.

We keep reading and studying the Word of God and we find within these judgments that have come upon mankind that God is faithful and true. He will only allow this to go on for so long and we're rapidly

approaching the end of the tribulation as we study these judgments.

Judgment is coming and you need to receive Christ today. I pray that you do not go through some of these terrible things that are coming upon this Earth, and you need to make room in your heart to receive Jesus Christ as Savior. You need to be ready to say, "Jesus, come into my heart. I receive You as my Lord and Savior. I want to go to Heaven. I love You, Lord, and I want to see You personally one day."

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