

Scene Five: Seven Bowls

The Wrath of God

In this scene we're going to see the complete and final judgment of God on Rome, the manifestation of Satan's power at this time. The time for longsuffering is over.

We don't like to talk about the wrath of God. We like to talk about the loving, merciful, graceful nature of God. We've been deceived with this image of God like Santa Claus. That's just ridiculous. We've got to come to an understanding of the righteousness of God.

In this country we have a court system with judges, who make judgments. And they have got to be there. Punishment has to be dealt, it is right. We've bought into this worldview that we should be allowed to do whatever we feel like without restriction or punishment. That's not reality. In this section of the book, we're going to see a very raw scene of the devastating effects of sin.

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We play with sin like it's some sort of game. We've got to recognize the seriousness of sin – it brings *nothing* but death and destruction. The good news is we can overcome it.

A Sea of Glass

Again we read about this **sea of glass** (*see 4:6*). This is an interesting symbol we see a number of times throughout the Revelation. We'll discuss it briefly, but just take note of it again, because we're going to see its importance later.

This sea of glass, as we've seen before, speaks of the approach to God. It's a reference to the bath of purification for the priests in the Old Covenant (Exodus 30:17-21, 2 Chronicles 4:1-5). They had to be cleansed before coming to serve before God. The fire either has to speak of God's work refining and purifying His people *or* the destruction of evil. Frankly, I think they go hand in hand. This means the saints have moved closer to the throne.

Moreover, this is an allusion to the crossing of the Red Sea in the Exodus. Here, the sea has been crossed and the enemies destroyed. The sea stood between God's people and victory, which is why it was opened. In the Exodus crossing, the first thing Moses and the people do after they are safely across is sing a song. This is the first time God's people are recorded as singing. Likewise here, God's people sing a song of praise after God does great things.

The Judgment Completed

After this, seven ministering angels come out of the tabernacle after meeting with God. To me this is like a cabinet meeting or something, where the doors are closed and everybody's wondering what's being discussed.

So out come these last seven plagues. These remind us of the plagues of Egypt, as did the trumpets just a ways back. Yet where the trumpets were partial judgments, these are complete. The bowls are being poured out in their entirety. We see that the trumpets are each being taken to their full measure, rather than partially.

God is merciful and long-suffering. *But everything has an end.* Here is the time when their course is run – and it's time for judgment to be poured out – no more warnings. Right now we can repent, and we can turn our lives over to God at any time. But eventually that time will be over. We cannot make excuses or wait until a convenient time to pay attention to God – He calls us to act now, before it's too late.

Throughout all this – *God is righteous.* **It is good that He is judging these works.** All through the trumpets of warning – the ungodly did not repent. Here, in the final outpouring of His wrath, they continue to curse and blaspheme His name, set in their ways – *never repenting.* They wanted the blood of the saints, so God gave it to them. They spread evil, so God lets that evil destroy them. Over and over again, we see God's righteousness in His actions – He is just and true to **deliver us** from evil.

The Euphrates is dried up, so that the kings from the east may come in and do battle. The Euphrates is the symbol of a boundary. The river protects the evildoers, so God breaks it down. Even today, God takes down barriers that protect evil. No nation or individual doing evil will last forever. Eventually, the time will come when all barriers will be let down, and they will be destroyed by their own evil. Read any literature about Rome (or any other great nation) and you will see that their death blow was internal corruption.

Matthew 12:25-26 - "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?"

Christ assures us He is coming, and reminds us to keep our garments. Remain clothed in Him, and victory is eminent.

Finally – "It is done!" There's an earthquake mightier than any other, thunderings and lightings – the language of judgment. There are hailstones falling from the sky. Hundred pound hailstones. This is almost funny to me to picture it, but really – imagine it! This would be complete devastation. And the wrath of God is complete.

Now in the scenes to come, we're going to see a little more clearly what has just happened. God's going to reveal the details about the fall of "Babylon" and assure the victory of the saints.

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If you have questions or need anything at all, please feel free to contact me anytime.

If you don't have a church family to call home, I hope you'll come with us.

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