

The Celebration of the Conquerors (15:1-4)



*For those of us in Christ, God's wrath is a thing to be celebrated.

*The first thing John sees is a scene of worship. Each of the letters to the seven churches ended with various promises to those who would conquer or overcome. Here we see those people who have conquered gathered together praising God for the fulfillment of those promises.

*On earth, these saints had many trials and tribulations. During their trials, they may not have been able to see a way out. However, now that they are in heaven, on the other side of the sea, they can look back and see God's protection and deliverance.

Preparation for the Seven Bowls (15:5-8)



*God's sanctuary is opened but no one can enter until His wrath is completely poured out.

The wrath of God accomplishes something so that God's people will finally be able to enter his sanctuary. When the angels come out of the sanctuary with bowls of wrath poured out... it cleanses all of creation, making it a sanctuary in which God intends to dwell with his people forever. And this is such good news! You and I don't want to have to live forever in a world tainted by evil, rebellion, idolatry, and immorality. And we won't have to. God is determined to get all of the ugliness and evil cleaned out before we enter our forever home. Pouring out his wrath is God's glorious way of cleansing and preparing a home for us.

~Nancy Guthrie~

Pouring Out the Bowls of Wrath (16:1-21)



***First Bowl:** Harmful, painful sores; represents psychological and spiritual torment

***Second and Third Bowls:** Seas, rivers, and springs become blood; represents famine and poverty; fitting punishment for those who shed the blood of the saints

***Fourth Bowl:** Scorching heat from the sun; represents fire of God's anger resulting in drought, famine, and hunger

*In spite of their suffering, people refuse to repent, choosing to curse God instead.

***Fifth Bowl:** Poured out on the beast, and the kingdom was plunged into darkness; God is exerting His authority over Satan and his forces; could represent spiritual darkness (2 Cor. 4:4; John 3:19-20)

***Sixth Bowl:** Euphrates River dried up; fulfillment of prophecy that Babylon would be judged through the drying up of the river; results in an army gathering at Armageddon (aka Mount of Megiddo-Israel's battlefield against evil nations) to launch an attack on God

-Whether this is a literal battle or not, there will always be conflict between good and evil, conflict that will not be resolved until Christ comes again. When He does come, He will overthrow evil and the forces of righteousness will reign victorious.

-Christ's second coming will be like a thief in the night. We must prepare our hearts now, making sure that we're clothed in His righteousness so that we won't be caught "naked and exposed" in our sin (Matthew 24:42-44).

***Seventh Bowl:** Poured into the air, spreading over the entire corrupt world system that stands in opposition to God

*We see in this lesson the two different responses to God's wrath. For unbelievers, God's wrath leads to misery and woe and cursing God. For believers, however, God's wrath leads to rejoicing as we see the enemies of God overthrown and evil vanquished to make room for a pure, perfect dwelling place with God.

*Great and amazing are your deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!
Who will not fear, O Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship you,
for your righteous acts have been
revealed.*

Revelation 15:3b-4