

He Reigns: When Mercy Closes and Wrath Flows: The Bowls of Final Judgment

Week 11

Text: Revelation 15–16

Big idea: Revelation 15–16 shows us the holy, righteous, and final wrath of God. His justice is not reactionary, it is righteous. His judgment is not cruel, it is calculated. Mercy delays, but it does not deny. The time to respond is now.

Have you ever ignored a warning label?

- “Don’t use this toaster in the bathtub.”
- “Remove child before folding stroller.”
- “Do not iron clothes while wearing them.”
- “Coffee is hot”

These labels exist because... somewhere, someone did it.

We laugh at warning labels—until we realize the Bible has one too.

Revelation 15 and 16 is not a symbolic fairytale or sci-fi apocalypse, it’s God’s final warning label to a world that keeps saying, “Don’t tell me what to do.”

But here’s the catch: This warning isn’t funny.

Because when the bowls are poured, there’s no reset button.

This is when mercy ends.

This is when judgment begins.

And this is the moment when the world finally meets the God they’ve mocked.

So today... don’t yawn through the warning. Don’t laugh off the labels.

God’s wrath is real. But so is His grace—right now.

I. The Calm Before the Storm – Worship in the Midst of Wrath

“Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing...”

- **Read Revelation 15:1–2.**
- A. Heaven Prepares for the Final Plagues**
 - “Great and marvelous”, worshipful awe, not horror (**v.1**).
 - Seven angels with the last plagues = “**completed**” wrath.
 - The “sea of glass mixed with fire” reflects holiness and judgment blended.

- This is not man's reaction, but heaven's approval of God's justice.

B. The Song of the Overcomers

- **Read verses 3-4.**
- The saints sing both the Song of Moses (**Exodus 15** – deliverance from Egypt) and the Song of the Lamb (deliverance through Christ).
- Even in judgment, God is worshiped for His holiness and justice.

Warren Wiersbe: *“Worship is heaven’s response to the holiness of God. If we only worship for what God gives us, we will not worship when He judges.”*

C. The Temple Filled with Smoke

- **Read verses 5-8.**
- No one can enter; intercession has ended (**v. 8**).
- Like **Exodus 40:34–35** and **Isaiah 6:4**: smoke = manifest presence of God.
- This is the divine shut-off point: grace pauses, judgment proceeds.

John MacArthur: *“This is the last time in Scripture heaven is silent. God is not absent—He is active in wrath.”*

Application

1. We must not treat God's warnings like suggestions.

- Conviction you keep dismissing is not going away.
- That “still small voice” you keep muting is mercy, not nuisance.
- If God keeps putting His finger on the same issue in your life, it's not nagging, it's grace.
- Ignored warnings don't disappear; they escalate.

2. Worship reveals what we really believe about God.

- It's easy to worship God when He's blessing you.
- It's revealing when you worship Him even when He's confronting sin.
- If your worship collapses when God offends your preferences, your God may be too small.

Do you worship God for who He is—or only when He does what you like?

II. The Bowls Are Poured – Judgment Without Mixture

- **Revelation 16:1-21.**

Reminder: The Church is not present for the bowls (**1 Thess. 5:9; Rev. 3:10**). These judgments fall after the rapture, in the second half of the Tribulation (Great Tribulation period).

A. Wrath Is Total and Targeted

- **Bowl 1:** Painful sores on those with the mark (**v.2**)
- **Bowl 2:** Sea turns to blood—death of all sea life (**v.3**)
- **Bowl 3:** Rivers turn to blood (**v.4**)
- God is judging those who shed the blood of saints (**v.6**)
- **Bowl 4:** Scorching heat from the sun (**v.8**)
- No relief, and still... no repentance.
- **Bowl 5:** Darkness and pain (**v.10**)
- Spiritual and physical torment—but still, men gnaw their tongues in agony and curse God.

J. Vernon McGee: *“The same sun that melts wax hardens clay. Judgment reveals what grace has been holding back.”*

B. The Hardened Response of a Doomed World

- They blaspheme instead of repent (**v.9, 11, 21**)
- This isn’t ignorance, it’s intentional rebellion.

C. The Final Preparations for Armageddon

- **Bowl 6:** Euphrates dries up to prepare the way for kings from the east (**v.12**)
- A symbolic and literal setup for the Battle of Armageddon.
- Demonic deception leads the nations to gather against God (**vs.13–16**)

John Walvoord: *“This final global rebellion will culminate not in human victory, but in divine intervention at Christ’s return.”*

D. The Seventh Bowl – “It Is Done”

- A massive earthquake splits Jerusalem and collapses cities.
- 125-pound hailstones fall—symbolizing absolute, unstoppable divine judgment.

Jonathan Edwards: *“When God rises in wrath, the earth trembles, and men cannot stand.”*

Application

3. Delayed consequences are not cancelled consequences.

- The bowls come after centuries of rebellion, patience, and mercy.
- Just because sin hasn't cost you yet doesn't mean it won't.
- Just because culture celebrates it doesn't mean God ignores it.
- Ask yourself: "If God judged this today, would I still defend it?"
- Grace delays judgment, but it does not delete it.

Delayed wrath is still wrath. Just because it hasn't fallen yet doesn't mean it's not coming.

4. Hard hearts don't soften automatically under pressure.

- **Revelation 16** shows people suffering... and still blaspheming.
- Pain doesn't always produce repentance.
- Hard hearts often double down instead of turning around.
- Suffering doesn't make people holy... humility does.
- If correction makes you angry instead of reflective, that's a warning sign.
- The absence of repentance under pressure reveals how hardened sin can become.

III. Three Timeless Truths from the Bowls of Wrath

A. God's Justice Is Unavoidable

- He warned. He waited. He reached out.
- When He judges, He is still holy, still good, still faithful.

A.W. Pink: *"A God who is not wrathful over sin is not holy."*

B. God's Mercy Has a Deadline

- The bowls represent the completion of God's wrath; nothing is left to pour.

Warren Wiersbe: *"When grace is ignored and truth is trampled; judgment is not cruelty—it is justice."*

C. God's People Must Warn the World

- We're not here to guess about timelines. We're here to preach repentance before it's too late.
- If we believe this judgment is real, how can we stay silent?

Application

5. God's justice isn't cruel, it's clean.

- The bowls are "without mixture"—pure, undiluted judgment.
- God doesn't overreact.

- God doesn't lose His temper.
- God doesn't judge impulsively.
- If God says something is wrong, it's not because He's harsh—it's because He's holy.
- A God without wrath would also be a God without justice.

6. The world's refusal to repent doesn't excuse the Church's silence.

- Heaven pours bowls after warnings are ignored, not before.
- Truth withheld is truth denied.
- Love that never warns isn't love; it's avoidance.
- If you believe judgment is real, silence is not humility, it's fear.
- Who has God placed in your life that you've been avoiding telling the truth to?

7. Spiritual apathy is more dangerous than open rebellion.

- The people in Revelation 16 don't misunderstand God... they reject Him.
- The greatest danger isn't hatred of God. It's indifference toward Him.
- Ask honestly: "Am I actively surrendering, or slowly coasting?"
- Faith that is coasting will harden quietly.

Spurgeon: *"Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself, be sure of that."*

8. Judgment is final.... BUT grace is available now.

- Once the bowls are poured, there is no pause, no appeal, no entry.
- You won't negotiate with God later.
- You won't explain your way out.
- You won't delay your decision anymore.
- If you're waiting for a better moment to respond to God, this is it.
- Grace has a window and **Revelation 15–16** tells us it closes.

9. Your belief's (Theology) shapes your urgency.

- If hell is real, love must speak.
- If judgment is inevitable, comfort cannot be our priority.
- A church that believes in Revelation but lives casually contradicts its own confession.
- Urgency is not panic—it's clarity.

10. We don't run from wrath...we run to Christ.

- The bowls don't exist to scare believers; they exist to point to the cross.
- Jesus absorbed the wrath so you wouldn't have to.
- The cross is where judgment and mercy collide.
- You can't outrun the holiness of God... but you can run into the arms of the Savior.

Closing

“Ignored warnings don't vanish—they escalate.”

“Delayed judgment is still judgment.”

“Grace pauses wrath—but it doesn't cancel it.”

“Hard hearts don't soften automatically under pressure.”

“The bowls fall when mercy is finally refused.”

We can't outrun the wrath of God... but you can run into the mercy of Jesus.

Invitation

To unbelievers: Don't wait for a wake-up call in judgment. Respond to the call of grace today.

To the church: If we believe this is coming, we need to be busy warning others.

To the weary believer: You're not appointed to wrath. Stand tall. Stay faithful. Stay urgent.

Prayer