

## Doctrinal Summary of The Tribulation: The Seven Bowl Judgments

In Revelation 15:7 John records the giving of seven bowls to seven angels that are full of the wrath of God about to be poured out upon man during the tribulation.

“Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.”

The word “wrath” is translated from the Koine Greek word θυμοῦ (“thu-mou”) which literally means, “eruptive expression of oneself through intense and violent activity, based on initiation.” The basis for an eruptive expression of oneself is the prolonged boiling of one’s feeling or desire. Thus, wrath is the eruption of what has been building over time. God’s wrath is never flippant, but is always based upon His slowness to wrath as He provides an abundance of opportunity for man to repent prior to judgment (cf. Ps. 103:8; 2 Pet. 3:9). Yet, God does indeed pour out intense and violent activity in judgment for sin.

Revelation 15:1 reveals the nature of the bowls as the final part of God’s judgment on unrepentant man.

“Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.”

The word “finished” is translated from the Koine Greek word ἐτελέσθη (“eh-te-les-thae”) which literally means, “it really is acted upon in a point in time to complete the execution of what one set out to accomplish.” God’s wrath began to be poured out in the tribulation through the seven seal judgments and seven trumpet judgments and it is completed through the seven bowl judgments. Thus, the seven bowl judgments are the final judgments of the tribulation and bring to a full accomplishment God’s judgment of unbelieving man for their rejection of Him.

The seven bowl judgments are seven plagues (cf. Rev. 15:1) which afflict tribulational unbelievers both directly and indirectly. The first bowl produces a “loathsome and malignant sore on the people,” affecting those who had the mark of the beast (cf. Rev. 16:2). The second bowl pours out into the sea, turning it to blood and killing all sea life (cf. Rev. 16:3); such death would undoubtedly produce a horrendous stench and provide a miserable environment on earth. The third bowl pours out God’s wrath into the rivers and the springs, turning them to blood as well (cf. Rev. 16:4) making the waters of the earth undrinkable. The blood plagues of the second and third bowl judgments are used in direct judgment for the death of prophets and saints (cf. Rev. 16:5-6). The fourth bowl pours God’s wrath into the sun which receives the ability to scorch men with “fierce heat” (cf. Rev. 16:8-9); yet those under its flame became increasingly hardened against God. The fifth bowl pours out God’s wrath upon the throne and kingdom of the beast, plunging it into darkness that driving its worshipers to self-harm (cf. Rev. 16:10). The sixth bowl pours out God’s wrath into the Euphrates, drying up its water so that a military campaign can become feasible upon Israel (cf. Rev. 16:12). The seventh bowl is poured out into the air, unleashing God’s wrath into the sky producing lightning, thunder, and the greatest earthquake in world history. Catastrophic destruction of earth ensues as God pours out the fullness of His wrath upon the kingdoms and unbelievers of the earth (cf. Rev. 16:17-21).

These seven bowl judgments prepare the way for the Second Advent in which Jesus Christ sets up His millennial kingdom enroute to ushering in eternity.