

Chapter 16:

In verse 1 God instructs the angels from the temple to go and pour out the 7 bowls of God's wrath upon the earth. The 1st angel goes out and pours his bowl upon the land. Ugly-festering sores break out on anyone that has the mark of the beast and worships the Antichrist. I believe it is specifically called out here "...with the mark of the beast..." as there may still be some on the earth that have not accepted the mark. This could only be speaking of the 144,000 sealed Jews but may also include additional people who have managed to stay away from the requirement of the mark somehow.

The 2nd angel pours out his bowl on the sea and it turns to blood. Every living thing in the sea, salt-water bodies, will die. Can you imagine how this will look and smell? The 3rd angel will pour his bowl on the rivers and springs, fresh-water bodies, and they become blood. There will not be any water to drink, all the food that comes from these water bodies will die. All plant life and animal life that depend on water will thirst and perish. It will be a world of rotting flesh, unimaginable odor, and barrenness.

After pouring out his bowl, the 3rd angel states to God that He is just in these judgments. Since the Antichrist and his followers were drunk on the blood of the Christians they killed, God is going to make them to drink blood. Those that were on the altar respond to the angel's statements acknowledging God's actions are just. The 4th angel poured his bowl on the sun and it scorched people with fire. It is safe to assume that those sealed by God are safe from these judgments and being provided for from God. Notice in verse 11 how everyone will "curse the God of heaven", but they still refuse to repent.

The 5th angel poured his bowl on the throne of the Antichrist. Most likely this is in Jerusalem where the image of the beast has been set up in the temple but could be Babylon or another physical location. The point of this is that the entire earthy kingdom of the Antichrist will plunge into darkness. Between the sores, the constant pain, no water and food, and now darkness, people will understand great misery and confusion. People will know this is from God. They will literally gnaw their tongues in agony and will still not repent. Keep in mind, we do not know the period of time these events will cover. Will it be one after the other in immediate succession? Will each event last for a period of time and then the next event takes place? I believe we could study the plagues that occurred in Exodus and get an idea of what it could look like. I haven't yet found anything that would tell us exactly how these bowl judgements will unfold.

The 6th angel poured his bowl on the Euphrates River. Its waters were dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east. John then sees 3 impure spirits: 1 from Satan, 1 from the Antichrist, and 1 from the False Prophet. John describes these spirits as resembling frogs. They go out and ready the kings of the earth to gather for Armageddon. Not sure exactly why they represent frogs. Could be that Satan uses this imagery to falsely represent divine intervention like what was seen in Exodus. It could be John speaking figuratively of how quickly they leaped from nation to nation gathering troops.

Verse 15 is a reminder from Jesus. In the NIV and some other translations, these words are in red. *“Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.”* When Jesus returns it will be like a thief, we will not know when it is going to happen. The person who “...stays awake and remains clothed...” speaks of believers who have made themselves ready and is clothed in righteousness. “...go naked and shamefully exposed.”, speaks to judgment and being accountable for the things we have done.

The 7th angel poured his bowl upon the air and God proclaims “It is done”. There are flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and the worst earthquake that had ever occurred. Babylon, the great city, is split into 3 parts. Cities collapse all over the world and Babylon receives the wrath of God. Mountains will not be able to be found, as they have collapsed, and islands are described as disappearing. This is likely either from flooding or because water has disappeared and it is no longer an island, perhaps from extreme crustal shifting. We also see huge hailstones falling on people. These hailstones are described as weighing about 100 lbs. each. Again, we see people acknowledging and cursing God.