

“THE FIRST THREE BOWL JUDGMENTS”

REVELATION 16:1-7

OCTOBER 4, 2026

LAST SUNDAY: The Prelude to the Bowl Judgments

TODAY: The First Three Bowl Judgments

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Are the Bowl Judgments literal or symbolic?
2. Are the Bowl Judgments natural or supernatural?
3. Are the Bowl Judgments the same as the Trumpet Judgments?
4. If God is love (1 Jn. 4:8, 4:16), why is He so angry?

STEPHEN CHARNOCK:

“A love of holiness cannot be without a hatred of everything that is contrary to it. As God necessarily loves Himself, so He must necessarily hate everything that is against Himself; and as he loves Himself for His own excellency and holiness, He must necessarily detest whatsoever is repugnant to His holiness because of the evil of it ... He can no more cease to hate impurity than he can cease to love holiness.”

JOHN STOTT:

“God’s anger is absolutely pure and uncontaminated by those elements which render human anger sinful... The wrath of God ... is His steady, unrelenting, unremitting, uncompromising antagonism to evil in all its forms and manifestations.”

A. W. TOZER:

“The holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the health of the creation are inseparably united. God’s wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hates the polio that takes the life of her child.”

*These judgments seek to bring about punishment AND repentance.

OUTLINE:

- 16:1-2, The First Bowl: Harmful and Painful Sores
- 16:3, The Second Bowl: Saltwater Becomes Like the Blood of a Corpse
- 16:4, The Third Bowl: Freshwater Turns to Blood
- 16:5-7, The Explanation of the Third Bowl

16:2/ THE FIRST BOWL: HARMFUL AND PAINFUL SORES

1. PRETERIST (**past**): Supernatural judgment upon the people of Jerusalem (or Rome?) in the first century who have rejected Christ. Could also result from lack of sanitation in an epidemic.
 - Dt. 28:27, 35, “The Lord will strike you with the boils of Egypt, and with tumors and scabs and itch, of which you cannot be healed ... from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head.”
2. HISTORICIST (**timeline**): The gradual overthrow of the pope’s control of France, resulting in sores of the human body or of society (corruption, killing of Roman Catholic priests, etc.)
3. IDEALIST (**spiritual**): Sores of the human body or symbolically, the overthrow of Rome.

4. FUTURIST (**future**): As Egypt suffered literal plagues, so will the whole world. This could be caused by the hand of God (supernatural) or by natural means (war).

16:3/ SECOND BOWL: SALTWATER BECOMES LIKE THE BLOOD OF A CORPSE

1. PRETERIST (**past**): This occurred on the Sea of Galilee (inflicted by the Roman armies).
5. HISTORICIST (**timeline**): Symbolically, judgment upon the navies of nations that supported the papacy (France, Spain, Portugal) in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
6. IDEALIST (**spiritual**): The sea symbolizes all of humanity being judged (sea battles, tsunamis).
7. FUTURIST (**future**): This is the thickened, reddish-black blood of dead people (or what it looks like). The judgment may not refer to all seawater, but to the Mediterranean Sea.

16:4/ THIRD BOWL: FRESHWATER TURNS TO BLOOD

1. PRETERIST (**past**): Pollution of water sources in Jerusalem (or Rome?) Streams of blood actually flowed through Jerusalem in AD 70.
2. HISTORICIST (**timeline**): This was fulfilled in a few ways:
 - a. The invasion of Attila the Hun, AD 370. Blood rivers ran throughout Europe.
 - b. The French expansion of their empire under Napoleon.
 - c. Blood of the saints: Waldensians, Lollards, Hussites, Lutherans, Huguenots (12th – 16th century persecuted believers)
3. IDEALIST (**spiritual**): The people of the Roman Empire killed by rivers (drowning, poisoning)
4. FUTURIST (**future**): Literally, water turns to blood. Symbolically, church persecutors will die.