

The Final Countdown (15:1–16:21)

Chapter 15

- Preview of the final outpouring of God's wrath on earth
- Imagery and metaphors from account of plagues on Egypt
- Opening scene - mass worship service
- John sees what appears to be a sea of glass mixed with fire (Rev. 15:2, Rev 4)
- Fire frequently associated in Scripture with God's judgment
- Saints rejoicing because their prayers for God to avenge their persecutors (Rev 6) are about to be answered
- Imagery taken from the Passover (Exodus 12)
- Saints described as "blameless" (14:5)
- Jesus "rescues us from the wrath that is coming" (1 Thess 1:10)
- The Promised Land of the old covenant becomes the New Jerusalem of new one (Rev 21–22)
- Song of Moses (Exodus 15) and song of the Lamb (Rev 5)
- Song expresses the themes of God's faithfulness, deliverance of His people, and judgment of His enemies
- Portals of the temple open and seven angels emerge
- One of the four living creatures hands each angel a golden bowl full of the wrath of God
- Immediately, God's glory, fills the temple like thick smoke. C.f. Moses (Exodus 36–40) and Solomon (1 Ki 8:10– 11)

Chapter 16

Interpretations:

Preterist view - interpret Revelation solely from the perspective of the first century.

Historicists - interpret Revelation along the lines of history between the 1st century and the second coming of Christ.

Idealists – interpret Revelation as purely symbolic - ongoing struggle between good and evil.

Futuristic – will take place at the end times "Day of the Lord".

Bowl imagery taken from the OT rituals associated with the tabernacle and temple (Exodus 24:6; Leviticus 1:5, 3:2, 7:2).

- Theological connection between expiation (i.e. making amends or reparation for wrongdoing and guilt) and retribution (punishment for wrongdoing).
- God's holiness, like a refining fire, consumes the blood offered as an atonement on the altar. C.f. Jesus' blood as an atoning sacrifice.
- Bowls in Revelation 16 serve a different purpose: They're vessels not of expiation, but of punishment.

Bowl 1: See sixth plague of boils in Egypt (Exodus 9:10–11).

Bowls 2 and 3: The sea and fresh water turn to blood – see the first plague on Egypt, Nile turned to blood (Ex 7:19–21).

Momentary interruption - angel seeks to justify God's action - "You are just in these judgments ... "Principle of Ex 21:23–25, "an eye-for-an-eye, a tooth-for-a-tooth."

Bowl 4: The sun scorches the earth.

Bowl 5: Beast's kingdom is plunged into utter darkness. "People gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores."

Bowl 6: The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East.

C.f. Red Sea (Exodus 14) and Jordan river (Joshua 3–4).

Isaiah 11:15

The sixth bowl dries up Euphrates allowing easy access to the Holy Land for invasion force coming from the east who clearly have a hostile intent toward them – battle of Armageddon.

Note word of exhortation (Vs.15)

Bowl 7: Earthquake splits open the earth and a massive hailstorm pounds Babylon the Great - devastation is complete.