



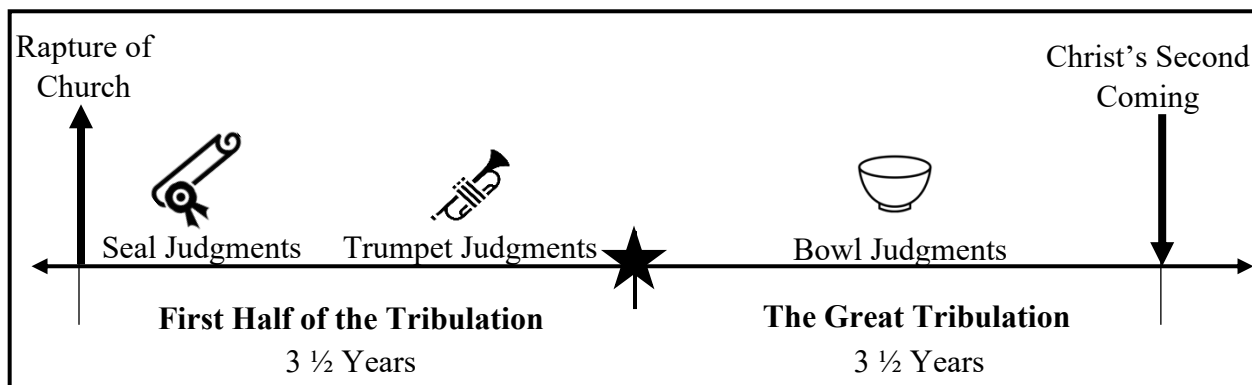
Eschatology – A Study of the End Times

Lesson 18: The Seven Year Tribulation Period, Part 5

Introduction

We have covered the first three and a half years of the seven-year future tribulation period. We have looked at the seal judgments, the trumpet judgments, the rise of the antichrist and the false prophet, who will take over the world. With the antichrist in power, things on earth are going to get extremely worse. In fact, this is what Jesus warns about in the gospel of Matthew (Matt. 24:21). In this lesson, we will consider the increase in deception during this period, heaven's anticipation of the end, and the seven bowl judgments.

Timeline of Tribulation Judgments



The Escalation of Deception

As one can imagine, with the intensification of the judgments that are to follow, there will be no shortage of deception that will characterize this period. We understand that this is because the antichrist has taken over and is leading the world against God. The antichrist will be in control, and no one will be able to do anything apart from coming under his authority. Many will do so willingly and will take the mark of the beast and will worship him as if he is a god.

The antichrist will be energized and empowered by Satan, who is a liar and a deceiver (John 8:44). Because of who Satan is, the antichrist will be of the same mold; he too will be characterized by lies and deception (2 Thess. 2:8–10). Tragically, all the unbelievers will follow suit. They will reject God's gracious opportunities to turn from their sins. They will reject the

truth and will want no part of it. They will do so because they love their sin so much that they will continue in their foolish ways. But it is also because Satan has blinded their eyes to the truth (2 Cor. 4:4). Therefore, God will send a strong delusion so that they will believe that which is false (2 Thess. 2:11).

The Anticipation in Heaven

Before the last judgments are unleashed, John is shown what happens in heaven in anticipation for what is about to happen on the earth (Rev. 15:1). Seven angels are introduced and are described as having seven plagues. These seven will complete God's wrath, which He began with the seals. That is why it says, "because in them the wrath of God is finished."

With the end drawing near, the apostle John sees the tribulation saints who have been martyred because of the persecution of the antichrist, sing songs of praise to God as a response to what will take place. Although they suffered martyrdom, they are deemed as victors. The victorious saints are seen with harps ready to sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:2–3). They will sing this song as an act of worship to celebrate God's victory over evil.

The victorious saints extol God in this song and praise Him for His great deeds, His sovereignty and power, His justice, truth, glory, and holiness (Rev. 15:3–4). The Song ends by stating that all the nations will come and worship God. At this point, the nations are still in rebellion against God. But soon the King will receive worship from even them.

The rest of Revelation 15 reveal that these seven angels prepare for the end (Rev. 15:5–8). One of the four living creatures give the seven angels seven golden bowls, full of the wrath of God. The giving of these bowls function as the commissioning of the seven angels.

Seven Bowl Judgments

Having consider the anticipation in heaven, we now come to what is going to take place on the earth. What we observe is that the seven bowl judgments will be unleashed upon the entire earth. These will be God's most catastrophic judgments.

- **First Bowl Judgment** (Rev. 16:2) – The first angel pours out his bowl on the earth and malignant sores are unleashed on the people who have the mark of the beast. These sores are reminiscent of the Exodus plagues. I believe part of it is to remind believers that God is sovereign over these judgments, and that as God protected His people then, He will be protecting His people from His judgments during this time.
- **Second Bowl Judgment** (Rev. 16:3) – The second angel pours out his bowl, and the seas are turned into blood. This should also point us back to the Exodus and the ten plagues. But this is also similar to what happened with the second trumpet judgment. However, there a third of the sea life were killed. But with this bowl judgment, it will be even more intense. The rest of the sea life will be gone.
- **Third Bowl Judgment** (Rev. 16:4) – The third angel pours out his bowl and the fresh water is turned into blood. So not only all the oceans, but all the rivers and springs are turned into blood. The destruction to all water supply will cause unimaginable suffering and hardship. As this bowl is revealed, John hears two separate voices. First, he hears the

angel in charge of the waters proclaim that God the Holy One is just in His judgments (Rev. 16:5–6). Though God’s judgments are terrifying and deadly, they are righteous because God is Holy and acted in righteousness. It is appropriate for God to judge sinners for their wickedness. That is why the angel say these frightening words, “They deserve it.” Then in verse 7, there is a second voice that John hears. It is the altar of incense symbolizing the prayers of God’s people. They too praise God the Almighty as true and righteous in His judgments. So, this is what sinful mankind deserves because they poured out the blood of the saints and prophets.

- **Fourth Bowl Judgment** (Rev. 16:8–9) – Unlike the first three angels who pour the bowls on the earth, the fourth angel pours it on the sun. The sun scorches the earth with intense heat. In response, the people curse God and refuse to repent (Rev. 16:9b). Until this point, only the antichrist has been said to blaspheme God. But here we read that his followers embrace their master’s evil character.
- **Fifth Bowl Judgment** (Rev. 16:10–11) – This judgment was directed towards the beast’s throne. Therefore, darkness engulfed his kingdom, which caused inconceivable pain to everyone in the world. John says that the pain they incur in the darkness will be so intense that it will cause them to gnaw their tongues in agony. Again, the people’s response is unchanged. Because of their stubborn and hardened heart, they do not repent. Instead, they double down by blaspheming the God of heaven because of their pains and sores.
- **Sixth Bowl Judgment** (Rev. 16:12–16) – The sixth angel pours out his bowl and dries up the Euphrates River. This was to prepare the way for the kings of the east. This will be in preparation for the battle of Armageddon as military forces from all over the world would gather together to make war against God. But God drying up the river will be an act of judgment on His enemies. This will be a setup for these armies to be destroyed. The power behind these armies will be the unholy trinity. They will send deluding spirits to influence the leaders to gather the armies to this place for battle.
- **Seventh Bowl Judgment** (Rev. 16:17–21) –When the seventh angel pours out this bowl, it is poured upon the atmosphere. Satan is referred to the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). God is cleansing the former domain of Satan and his demon workers. All facet of life has been impacted through all the bowl judgments. As the final bowl is poured out, there is a voice from the divine throne saying, “It is done.” This pronouncement signals that God has accomplished His plan, bringing an end to the evil in the world. The effects are that there is a global earthquake, which brings about massive destruction and devastation, the great city splits in three, and the cities of the nations fall. The scene culminates in verse 21 with a hundred-pound hailstone falling on people. As with the previous responses, the people do not repent, rather they blaspheme God.

Application

1. Praise God for His righteous judgments
2. Humbly turn to the God in repentance