

# Revelation Ch15v1-Ch16v17 - Justice is Done

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, let's open our Bibles, please, to Revelation. Revelation chapter 15 and 16.

So we're going to read not all of it.

Just follow along with me. I'll direct you as we go along. Revelation chapter 15. And we'll read from verse 1.

I saw in heaven another great and marvellous sign. Seven angels with the seven last plagues. Last because with them God's wrath is completed. And I saw what looked like a sea of glass glowing with fire and standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name.

[ 1 : 31 ] They held harps given them by God. And they sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb. Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty.

Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy.

All nations will come and worship before you. For your righteous acts have been revealed. Let's jump to chapter 16, verse 1.

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth.

The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshipped its image.

[ 2 : 35 ] The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea and it turned into blood like that of a dead person and every living thing in the sea died. The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers of springs of water and they became blood.

Then I heard the angel in charge of the water say, You are just in these judgments, O Holy One, you who are and who were. For they have shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve.

And I heard the altar respond, Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments. The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire.

They were seared by an intense heat and they cursed the name of God who had control over all these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.

The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast and its kingdom and was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

[ 4 : 03 ] 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. Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs.

They came out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are demonic spirits that perform signs and they go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them for the battle on that great day of God Almighty.

Look, I come like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains closed so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.

Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne saying, It is done.

Well, if you just turn back to Revelation 12, we're going to start there. And I'm just going to pray again for us.

[ 5 : 18 ] Father, we thank you for our church family here.

We thank you for the church family in Egberth and in Jalan and the many church families that are meeting around the world this very day.

We thank you for the freedom we have to do this. No threat of any police or anybody closing this meeting down.

But yet as we gather, we want to remember those who are in very difficult and hard situations. And we pray that as they hear your word and as they perhaps sing, sometimes singing quietly so that they're not heard, that you would encourage them this day.

Build them up in their faith. Strengthen them. That they will be courageous to stand strong for you. And so we pray, Father, that as we hear your word, we too would be encouraged to persevere, to keep going and to trust you in all things.

[ 6 : 49 ] Amen. Well, we're at war. Look at chapter 12, verse 17.

Then the dragon, who we know as Satan, was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring.

Who are the offspring? Well, those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.

Satan is at war with the church against Christians. And the battle is brutal and it's bloody.

Salmoun, who is a colleague of Mickey, the man who we support in Kashmir. Salmoun runs a community radio program that attracts lots of gospel inquiries and seeks to serve the community in other practical ways.

[ 7 : 59 ] Well, I got a message this week to say that Salmoun, Mickey's colleague, was brutally attacked by 14 men in a sustained and clearly targeted public beating.

Despite what happened to him, they're not stopping their ministry. But they've asked for prayers, for courage to keep going.

Every day around the world, one in seven Christians face severe persecution, beatings, abductions, imprisonment.

In fact, over 5,000 believers will die for their faith in the coming year. But this war that we've been talking about over these last few weeks, we know is also on our doorstep.

Every day as we go to work or go to college or wherever we find ourselves, we are under pressure to compromise our faith. Why talk about Jesus or why declare, this is what the Bible says, when we know it's only going to end badly.

[ 9 : 13 ] Say nothing. Go with the flow. Just keep the head down. It may be subtle, but the battle is real.

So how do people like Solomon keep going under such pressure? How do we, as Karageline Baptist Church, how do we stay faithful in the battle?

How do we keep on going? Well, chapters 15 and 16 of Revelation to where we turn now show us what we can look forward to, which will give us motivation and give us encouragement to persevere and to keep on.

Look at chapter 15, verse 1. I saw in heaven another great and marvellous sign. So here we're at one level where we're aware of the war that rages here on earth.

But once again, we're taken into heaven to see the world in history from God's perspective. And what do we see as we enter into heaven?

[ 10 : 29 ] Look at the rest of verse 1. We see seven angels with the seven last plagues. Last, because with them God's wrath is completed.

You see, what we're seeing here is that God's full and final judgment is about to come. Look at verse 2. And I saw what looked like a sea of glass glowing with fire.

Now, sea in the Bible represents chaos and destruction. And here, as we look closely, the sea is smooth, isn't it?

It's like a sheet of glass. But at the same time, it's glowing with fire. You see, God is about to bring a calm to the powers of darkness.

He's about to still the forces of evil with the fire of judgment. God isn't unsettled or paralyzed by the chaos that we see all around us.

[ 11 : 40 ] God isn't panicked by Satan's war. Satan and his minions do not have the last word. God does. So, verse 7.

Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.

Well, what are they for? Well, look at chapter 16, verse 1. Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, Go pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth.

You see, a day is coming when the wrath of God, like a torrent, will be poured out on all those who oppose Christ and destroy his church.

A day is coming when justice will be done. Now, as we together think about God's wrath, his judgment being poured out, how do you feel about that?

[12:58] What do you think? Are you anxious? Are you worried? Are you fearful at the thought of what is going to happen?

Well, if we are Christians, we are to see it as something that is good and right. It's something we are to long for and look forward for in anticipation because as we see God's judgment, yes, on the one hand it will be terrifying for God's enemies, but it will be joyful for God's people.

Terrifying for enemies, but joyful for the church. so as we see God's judgment, as we see his full and final judgment being poured out, it will mean a celebration of God's just and righteous acts.

As God's wrath is about to fall, surprisingly, the first thing we encounter or we see is that there is a celebration going on. Look at the picture before us in verse 2, chapter 15.

I saw what looked like a sea of glass glowing with fire, and standing beside the sea, who's there?

Those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name.

[14:36] And they held harps given to them by God, and sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb. God's people, by the sea, where it is calm, where all the chaos has been stilled, there they are standing victorious over their enemy, and they're singing songs of praise.

They're celebrating God's just and righteous acts. Look at verse 3, look at the song. They sing, great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty.

Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. End of verse 4, all nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

Now, doesn't that sound a bit strange to you? When was the last time we sang a song of celebration and in praise of God's judgment coming, how can you celebrate God's judgments?

Well, there's two things we can learn from this song. First, God judges to save. You see, this isn't the first time that we come across this scene here that we read about in verse 2 and 3.

[16:04] God's people by the sea standing victorious over their enemy and singing songs of celebration.

Does that ring any bells to you? Well, look with me back to Exodus chapter 14. Exodus chapter 14. What we find here is that God's people are in slavery under the cruel tyrant Pharaoh. He's treated them brutally. He's had them killed.

He's had them beaten. And despite many warnings, many plagues, Pharaoh was refused. So God responds with yet more a final judgment.

We can read what happens at the end in chapter 14. God's people are on their way out of Egypt towards the Red Sea. But in front of them is the sea and pursuing behind them rapidly are the pursuing enemies.

[17:11] What's going to happen? Well, chapter 14, verse 21. As they come to the sea, then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with the strongest east wind and turned it into dry land.

The waters were divided and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground with a wall of water on their right and on the left. The Egyptians pursued them and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.

Verse 26. Then the Lord said to Moses, Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen.

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing towards it and the Lord swept them into the sea.

Verse 30. That day the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore.

[18:33] You see God brings his judgment and his people are saved. God's wrath is being poured out on these tyrants, on these who have caused so much injustice to a people so that they might in turn experience salvation.

And in response, Moses leads the people in songs of celebration. As they turn round and look and see their defeated enemy swept up in the sea, they begin to sing.

Look at chapter 15 verse 1. I will sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted, both horse and rider he is hurled into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and my defence. He has become my salvation. You see they are celebrating God's just and righteous acts.

Now let's go back to Revelation chapter 16. You see this isn't just the song of Moses.

[ 19 : 48 ] Look at verse 3. This is the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb. This is telling us that a day is coming when the Lamb, the risen Lord Jesus is going to come again to bring his judgment.

Not just on one people or just in one particular place as was the case with Moses. But it's a judgment that is going to fall on all people in all of the world.

Just as the waves of judgment came crashing down on Pharaoh and his armies, so God's judgment will come crashing down on all his enemies. It will be a day of justice.

Everyone will be held accountable. Every wrong will be put right. As we think of all the injustices going on in the world right now, whether it's the war in Ukraine, or whether it's an innocent victim being burgled, all will be put right.

Everything that we have said and done will be laid out before the judge. All of our achievements and successes, all of our failures and all our secrets, nothing will be hidden.

[ 21 : 17 ] Everything will be laid bare. And on that day, God's full and final judgment will fall. And heaven will sing in celebration, great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty.

Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. All the nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

Justice will be done. You see, justice is good news. isn't it? Because we all long, every one of us, long for it all to be put right.

Even now as we think of hurts that have been done to us, or big things that we see going on in the world, we long for it all to be put right. But also means a day when we will stand before God.

Justice not only means wrongs corrected, but it means punishment will be received. God's full and final judgment will fall and when it does, all of heaven will celebrate God's just and righteous acts.

[ 22 : 44 ] The question is, is this something you and I celebrate? is this what we're looking forward to? Well, when God's just and righteous acts fall, there will be things we can celebrate as his people.

As God's full and final judgment comes, it will mean the vindication of God's suffering and persecuted people. as Satan goes to war against the church, there has been and there will be many casualties.

Many have suffered opposition and persecution. Innocent believers speaking out for Jesus and standing for the truth get beaten, but they are not forgotten.

Through God's judgments, God's people are vindicated. we see this in two ways. First, God hears our cries.

Turn with me, please, back to Revelation chapter 6. You may remember this prayer, this cry from God's people.

[ 24 : 06 ] Revelation chapter 6 shows us what Christians are to expect. Verse 9. When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.

So here we have a picture of all God's people who have been faithful in their witness, faithful to the point of death. They persevered in hard times.

And verse 10. They called out in a loud voice, How long, sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?

When will we get justice for all that has happened to us? For all the wrongs that have been done? when is justice going to come?

Well, look at God's response in verse 11. Then each of them was given a white robe, a sign of their acceptance before God, and they were told to wait a little longer until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.

[ 25 : 36 ] What an answer. How long, Lord? When are you going to put right all these wrongs? Oh, just wait a little bit longer because there are yet more people to die for their faith.

In fact, more believers have died for their faith in the last 100 years, than in the last 2000 years combined. Brothers and sisters in Christ, people just like you and I, but just living in a different

context, intentionally and violently put to death because they love Jesus and they love other people enough to tell them about Jesus.

And the cry goes up, how many more? When will justice be done? How long until this brutal and bloody war is over?

Well, God hears the cries of his people. God listens to those who in their death cry out for justice. justice. Let's go back to chapter 16.

Because here we see that God does answer with justice. The waiting that he had told his people is over. Here is the ultimate answer to those who've been martyred for their faith.

[ 27 : 16 ] Chapter 16, verse 1. I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth.

Now, notice here the way that judgment comes, verse 3. The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea and it was turned into blood, like that of a dead person.

And every living thing in the sea died. The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water and they became blood.

But why all this blood? Well, it's graphic imagery for what these people have done to God's people and what God is going to do to them.

God's message is clear. Look at verse 5. Then I heard the angel in charge of the water say, you are just in these judgments, so holy one, who were, who are, and who were.

[ 28 : 21 ] For they have shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve.

God hears their cry for justice. He hasn't forgotten. He says, you shed the blood of my people, so I will now come and shed your blood.

you killed and murdered my faithful servants. You left wives without a husband, children without a mother, churches without pastors, you cut them down, so I will pour out my wrath on you.

in chapter 6, they cried out, how long sovereign Lord, holy and true until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood.

Well, God's full and final judgment falls as we hear another cry, verse 7. The same people respond, and I heard the altar respond, yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.

[ 29 : 35 ] God is not a bloodthirsty tyrant who just enjoys doing these sorts of things. No, God is fair and right.

And as we look forward to God's full and final judgment to come, we know that God will vindicate his suffering and persecuted church. And it also means that he hears your cries.

And he doesn't forget your cries. And all the difficulties and the hardships that you have gone through as a believer, as you've taken your stand and as you've sought to witness for him and all the pushbacks.

God hears your cry. And God will vindicate the suffering and persecute the church. So there can be a celebration because God vindicates his people.

But there's another reason we can celebrate. With the full and final judgment will come the destruction of God's unrepentant and evil enemies.

[ 30 : 49 ] Satan's war with the church is severe. But God will see that that war will end with the destruction of all his enemies.

But before it comes there is a call to repentance. You see when we read and as we think about God's wrath being poured out the accusation can be that's not fair.

people didn't have a chance. They didn't know. Well God's judgments are always true and just.

He is fair. God has given warning to the world through the devastating disasters that we experience in the world every day. All the wars, all the violence, the floods and famines that we read and hear about, they're all signs that this world that we live in is broken and it's not right and that God is coming in judgment.

But he's also given the testimony of the church as people have witnessed for him. And so God's judgments are poured out, verse 9.

[ 32 : 04 ] They were seared by an intense heat. Again, I don't think this is necessarily literal but just a description of God's final judgment. verse 11.

And they cursed the name of God who had control over these plagues. But they refused to repent and glorify him.

Verse 11. And cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

them. You see, it's not that people don't have opportunity. It's not God who's hard. It's people who have become hard hearted.

With every call for repentance, for some, there is a deepening refusal to listen to God. God can't be charged with being unfair or unkind.

[ 33 : 08 ] When God's wrath is poured out, no excuse can be made. You see, people who refuse God, who refuse the Lord Jesus Christ, at the end of the day, only have themselves to blame.

in fact, what will happen is there will be a gathering for judgment. You see, as history moves along, it's moving towards a final and ultimate battle.

Look at verse 14. Verse 14, they, that is, Satan and the powers of darkness and evil, their demonic spirits that have performed signs and they go out to the kings of the whole world, leading them astray, to gather them for battle on the great day of God Almighty.

You see, Satan remains opposed to Christ and his church and as he goes about his work, it's as if he's gathering all those who hate Christ and hate his church and he's bringing them all together for battle.

And included in that are those who have refused to repent, verse 16. Then they gathered the kings together in that place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

[ 34 : 34 ] Now Armageddon is not a literal location, but it's imagery for the war between the church and Satan. It's not a physical battle, but it's a spiritual battle that rages on.

We know about it right now when it intensifies as we get closer to the time of Christ's return. The prophet Zechariah spoke about this final battle and what was going to happen and what it would be like.

Here's what he said. On that day, on that final day, when all the nations are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem, that is God's people, an immovable rock for the nations.

And all who try to move it will injure themselves. And on that day, the Lord will shield those who live in Jerusalem. On that day, I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.

So we have the scene set, don't we, here in Revelation. Satan and his minions, all the kings and all the rulers that have taken their stand against God over all of history.

[ 35 : 57 ] All those who've refused and will not repent, will gather for battle against Christ and his church. But as they gather for war, God's not taken by surprise, for he is gathering them for judgment.

And on that day, God's people will be like an immovable rock. And all who come against them, it's as if they will injure themselves. Verse 17, on that day, the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne saying, it is done.

That's the result. In the end, there really is no great battle. The victory is decisive and complete. Jesus, the king, wins over all his enemies, and they are all destroyed.

It's over. The war finished. No more Satan, no more suffering. You see, as we long for God's full and final judgment to come, we know that when it does, God will destroy unrepentant and evil enemies.

Now, as we think about this, God's wrath being poured out, how do you feel? We asked the same question at the beginning.

[ 37 : 41 ] Are you anxious? Are you worried? Are you fearful? It's actually a terrifying thought to think that this is how it will all end.

You see, we all want justice, don't we? But the thing is, we don't want justice to fall on me. We want God to deal with all our enemies, but we want God to make exceptions for me.

God, fire on those people, but mercy on me. God's full and final judgment is fearful.

people. But here's the thing, it doesn't need to be. There is a place of safety and security that will keep us and keep all who come to Christ safe on the day of judgment.

Look at verse 17. Did you hear that cry, that loud voice from the throne? throne? It is done.

[ 39 : 00 ] We've heard that cry before, haven't we? Not from the throne, but from the cross.

Remember what Jesus shouted from the cross as he breathed his last?

It is finished. It's done. done. It's over. You see, at the cross, as Jesus died, as we so often sing, the wrath of God was satisfied.

The judgment that you and I deserve and that the whole world deserves was poured out on Jesus. That means that all, anyone and everyone who is repentant can rest in the security of the cross. As the waves of judgment come crashing down, it is Christ with his arms open wide that absorbs it all. The full and final judgment of God for you and for I falls on him.

And so we can celebrate God's just and righteous acts. We can celebrate that God's vindication destruction of his people will be right.

[ 40 : 21 ] We can celebrate, yes, the destruction of all God's enemies. But it also means that we too have someone and somewhere to point other people.

Not just us, but we can bring people to Jesus. We can show them that in this God, we have one who will bring grace and mercy.

God's God's God's God's God's God's God's God of justice who will hold all to account and he will correct every wrong and put all things right.

Yes, we have the sure and certain hope of sharing in that final victory and that is the message God's church is to bring. That is the weapon we use in this war.

A weapon of grace and mercy, forgiveness, Christ who died for you and for me so that justice could be done.

[ 41 : 26 ] You see, if we are Christians, God's judgment is good and right. It is something to long for. It is something we can celebrate.

the vindication of all God's suffering and persecuted people and the destruction of his unrepentant enemies.

Let's pray together. Father, we confess that we live life so much by our own thoughts and our own ideas.

But would you please give us afresh this vision. help us to look into heaven itself and to see what you are going to do.

And help us that we might be a people who continue to run to Jesus, our rescuer, our saviour.

Thank you, Father, that your justice was poured out on him, that he took the blame for my sin, so that I can point others to Jesus, that they too might find grace and mercy, forgiveness, us, and that they too can look forward to justice being done.

[ 43 : 26 ] Father, help us to live our lives in the light of your word. Give us strength and encouragement, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.