

# Seven bowls of wrath

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Date: 01 June 2025

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[ 0 : 00 ] A mega voice. In verse 9, they were seared by the mega, the great heat.!

So great was the quake. The great city split into three parts. God remembered Babylon the great.

And in verse 21, the hailstones from the sky, mega, great hailstones fell.

And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail because the plague was so mega, so great.

So the word great often does occur in Revelation, but it's particularly concentrated in this chapter.

It's a great chapter, but I think it's quite hard to deal with, sort of as a speaker.

I think where's the comfort and encouragement in this chapter? It's actually very solemn, isn't it? But as we have prayed and as we continue to pray, may God bless us thinking about this and enable us to understand it in such a way that we can live the Christian life better.

[ 1 : 28 ] Excuse me. The context of this, the immediate context is in verse, is in chapter 15, where we have the victorious army of the Lamb in verse, chapter 15, verse 2, standing on or next to the sea of glass which glowed with fire.

Standing on or beside the sea, those who have been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name. They held kithera, harps given them by God, and they sang the song of God's servant Moses and the Lamb.

And let's see if we can sing in advance, as it were, a little bit of that song, 972. Now then, what has this done?

So let's look at this passage together. I've got quite a lot of material and I sort of struggle to get it tamed.

So what I'm going to suggest is, even if I haven't finished going through as much as I wanted, we'll stop at half past seven, come what may. I'd like to ask some questions and get your reactions to what we've been looking at.

[ 2 : 44 ] And if we do that for five, ten minutes and we can perhaps close with a prayer and aim to finish at 20 to eight, something like that. Does that make you happy with that?

So just to introduce this again, click. Just asking generally what sort of view we have of life, or if we're Christian people, what sort of Christianity we have.

Is it only for this life? Many, many people live only for this life. That's as far as they can see.

And so Christianity becomes something of like social action. And being kind to people becomes very important.

Affirming people are just being sort of nice. And on that sort of Christianity, there's a thing called universalism. And universalism says, well, everybody will go to heaven, I suppose.

[ 4 : 01 ] And then you have to sort of, with the possible exception of one or two outstandingly, notoriously bad people like Jimmy Savile and Hitler. That sort of Christianity, people do have that.

And then there is saying that, well, what about death? What happens after death? And those of you who remember the death of Princess Diana, there was all sorts of semi-pagan ideas about her floating above the sky and going to heaven.

Death is something we don't have to think about too much. It's something that will be okay when it comes. And people comfort themselves and say, I'm not as bad as other people.

I've tried to live a good life. I'm basically a good person. I should be okay, I hope. Now then, is that the Christianity of the Bible?

Well, this chapter challenges that. So what about sin? Is the God who really exists so indifferent about sin that he says everybody's okay except Jimmy Savile and Hitler?

[ 5 : 15 ] Is that really, that makes him slightly less moral than we are? Because you worry about your sin, don't you? Do you not think that you haven't always been the person you should have been?

And what about being a Christian? Is it, is being a Christian just being nice to people and trying your best? So on that score, what about Christianity being a radical thing?

Something that reaches to the very depth of our being right into our very hearts. Isn't that what Christianity needs to be? We can't, and it's very different to the ordinary life that people live in the world, using that in the technical sense that the Bible does.

So is the Christian message simply be as nice to other people as you can, and God will say that's fine and pat us on the head. Or actually, as the book of Revelation portrays it, is there not actually a massive spiritual battle going on all around us, in which we are either on one side or the other?

That's a very different picture. And that, I would like to persuade you, is the picture that the book of Revelation paints, and this chapter in particular. So, just to remind us of the way this book works, it's a book in the Bible, so it's important.

[ 6 : 47 ] It's for our edification, that means being built up. It's for our survival, so that we don't go off track. It's for our progress as Christians, so that we go forward.

And it describes the Christian life as a fight. Apocalypse, apocalypsis means unveiling. Unveiling, it's actually showing us the truth behind the appearance, sort of unblinding us.

It is in the form of a letter, and it is in the nature of a letter to the seven churches in Asia in the first century, to be relevant to the seven churches in Asia in the first century.

They were in the Roman Empire, and as Steve was very helpfully reminding us this morning, the role that the Roman Empire had in relation to Christianity changed.

In the episode that we had this morning, the Roman Empire was a friend to the gospel, but that wasn't going to be the case all the way through. So, it is in the form of a prophecy.

[ 7 : 53 ] It tells us it's a prophecy. It says what is going to happen, and in the immediate context, Rome was going to change to become an enemy rather than a friend.

But the horizon of the book stretches right to the end of the world, and it tells us and them how we are to live now in that space between the time of writing and the time of the end.

So, that's the space we all live in, and the book tells us what we should be seeing, how we should be living, how we should be fighting. And just again to remind us of the particularities of the book, it has a certain way of communicating.

I sometimes put it that there is a sort of accent to the way he speaks. We have to get to know his accent. So, some of the things that we learn is further on in the book is not further on in time, necessarily.

So, he presses the rewind button. We also learn that this literature is very carefully constructed. We learn that he uses symbols. That's how he wants us to understand him.

[ 9 : 05 ] If we think that he's speaking literally, we've misunderstood him. The same way that when Jesus talked about looking out for the leaven of the Pharisees, he didn't expect people to take him literally.

That wasn't what he was meaning. And John, too, uses metaphors and symbols. He uses symbolic numbers, for example. Some of the symbols that he uses refer to the context at the time of writing. So, just as nowadays we are probably a bit nervous about Russia, Ukraine, or perhaps the people in Taiwan are nervous about China, in the days of the Roman Empire.

They would have been nervous about the Persians and their armies around the river Euphrates. And he uses that symbolism of the current context.

But also he uses symbolism from the Old Testament, what we call the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures. And that is certainly true of what we're looking at this evening. And I'd like us to spend some time looking at the symbolism that he uses.

[ 10 : 20 ] Now, the chapter is quite a heavy one. It isn't the only chapter in the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation, we need to remind ourselves, begins in a Christ-centered way.

It begins with a vision of the risen Lord Jesus. And it shows us the Lamb upon the throne. It addresses the contemporary situation of the churches in the next few chapters.

And it ends with the heavenly city, the triumph of the Lamb, the bride of the Lamb, and the heavenly city God comes down to live with men, with people.

So, the chapter that we're in is in that context. The risen Christ and the triumph expressed in his redemption of the church and the glorification of the church.

So, the chapter that we've got is part of the picture, but we must remind ourselves it's not the whole picture. Right. So, let's just go back to chapter 15.

[11:24] So, you've got your Bible. It's helpful to remind yourself of what goes on in chapter 15. I, of course, chapter 15 and 16 fit together, you see. I saw in heaven a great and marvellous sign, seven angels with seven last plagues.

And the plagues are in bowls, and the original word for bowl is a fial, which is why we were singing the harps and with fials, or vials as we have it.

A vial is a container, a bowl, and that's why the song was referring to these bowls. Although, the church doesn't hold the bowls, it's the angels that holds the bowls, in fact.

But anyway, seven bowls with seven last plagues. So, there's the angels and there's the bowls, and we're told that this is the last.

So, with this, the wrath of God is completed. It has the theme of God's judgment, and as we said last time, it doesn't make the Christian life centre on fun. It's not all about me, but it is vital truth.

[12:29] And without this, there is no gospel, and there is no honourable, just God upon the throne, and there is no verdict on evil.

It either becomes trivial or meaningless, or it just laughs back at justice. And that was what we looked at last time. And there's a little picture of the army on the sea, and they have been victorious over the beast, and this image, and the number of his name, and they're singing this song, which was the song of Moses and the Lamb.

The song of Moses and the Lamb. So, let's just stop and give weight to that. There's the victorious army of the Lamb, and they're singing. Well, they might be singing with harps and with vials, their standard great thong, or they might be singing, if they're jazz fans, when the saints go marching in. I want to be in that number, when the saints go marching in. But I thought we could stop here, and we could sing, Worthy the Lamb, which is number...

What number is it? Now, in the chapter that we read, we had...

[14:01] Sores, water turned to blood, sun darkened...

Sorry, sun scorching darkness. Who can tell us what he is referencing here, because he hasn't made these up from nothing.

They come somewhere else in the Bible. The plagues. And where were the plagues? In Egypt. So, let's take a moment to go and look at the plagues in Egypt in Exodus chapter 7.

I might end up repeating myself, but who can tell us what was at stake? What was the idea behind the plagues?

It was in order to produce a result, and Moses, who was instrumental in the plagues, had asked Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, for something which he wasn't prepared to give.

[15:18] What had Moses asked for? To let his people go. Let my people go. When Israel was in Egypt's land, let my people go. Oppressed so hard they could not stand, let my people go.

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land. Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go. And the ten plagues, which I've got up there on the screen, are all about that.

Let's just flip through them. Right, here we go. 7.24. Let's see if we can pick these up.

In chapter 7.24. Well, chapter 7, verse 19. The Lord said to Moses, tell Aaron, take your staff, stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over the streams and canals, over the ponds and the reservoirs, and they will turn to blood.

Blood will be everywhere in Egypt, even in vessels of wood and stone. In verse 24, the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water, because they could not drink of the water of the river.

[16:33] And the next plague, I'm trying to do this quickly, chapter 8, verse 1, you can see that it is, what's that plague? Frogs. And even after the water got turned to blood, and then the frogs, in chapter 8, verse 15, the frogs came and then they went away.

Did Pharaoh let the people go? No. And there's a particular expression about the way he said no. The hardness of his heart.

And this is a story about the hardening of the heart. To tweak it just a little bit, initially Moses' request is a little less drastic.

I think it's just, is it just let them go for a short time and then come back again or something like that? I forget exactly. But it's less drastic. And Pharaoh won't do that.

He hardens his heart. Does it say, he hardened his heart and would not listen, just as the Lord had said. And then the next plague in 8, verse 16, is what?

[17:48] Gnats. Yes. Is gnats the same as mosquitoes? I don't know. A plague of gnats. And verse 19, the magician said to Pharaoh, this is the finger of God, but, but what?

Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen. So more hardness of heart. And then the next one in chapter 8, verse 20, is a plague of flies.

Yes. We don't like a house full of flies. And verse 24, dense swarms of flies poured into Pharaoh's palace. How awful. And then Pharaoh changes his mind and verse 25, he says, go sacrifice to your God here in the land.

Well, he makes a concession, shall we say. But that wasn't good enough. And verse 32, this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go.

So there's this constant sort of negotiation. Yes, no. And in the end, he changes, he hardens his heart.

[18:58] Now, is there in 8, verse 12, 8, no, let's carry on.

So I've got little pictures of blood and frogs. Of course, I'm going to use those pictures later. The next plague is in chapter 9, which is plague on livestock.

Yeah. And one particular thing that we notice here, chapter 9, verse 7, I've got the right verse, that not one of the animals of the Israelites had died, yet his heart was unyielding and he would not let the people go.

So with some of these plagues, they're specific to the Egyptians and the Israelites are spared completely. It doesn't affect them with some of the plagues. I don't think it says that for all of them. And then 9, verse 12, what have we got? What's the next? Boils, yes. It doesn't sound very nice.

[20:08] It says, take handfuls of soot from a furnace and let Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. It will become fine dust over the whole of Egypt and festering boils will break out on people and animals.

But in verse 12, what happened? The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron just as the Lord had said to Moses.

So there's actually quite a subtlety here that the sense that the Lord is working underneath this and you can say the Lord is hardening Pharaoh's heart. I mean, Pharaoh is hardening his own heart but underneath this the Lord is so orchestrating things that you could say he hardened Pharaoh's heart.

So there's my pictures again. There's the boils. And then the number 7 is in chapter 9, verse 13.

What have we got there? Hail. Hail, yes. Pretty devastating if you've got a standing crop and they get bashed down by the hail.

[21:14] And it says in verse 31, the flax and the barley were destroyed since barley was in the air and the flax was in bloom. The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed because they ripened later.

And the effect of this in verse 35 of chapter 9. Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the people go just as the Lord had said.

That's hail. And I've got a visual for hail because I'm going to need it later. And in chapter, and then the next one is chapter 10 which is what happens in chapter 10, verse 1.

Locusts. Yes. The Lord said to Moses, go to Pharaoh for I've hardened his heart the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these signs of mine among them and you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them that you may know that I am the Lord.

That's an interesting text, isn't it? That seeing the way God operates here shows who he is that I am the Lord. So we've had locusts and what happens in verse 20, chapter 10, verse 20?

[22:34] The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he wouldn't let the Israelites go. So the locusts actually had gone but having got relief he thought, oh, that's okay. That's fine.

I won't let these people go. And that was plague number 8 and plague number 9 in verse 21?

Darkness, which covered Egypt for three days.

It's an interesting three-day thing, isn't it? And Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, go worship the Lord. Even your women and children may go with you. Only leave your flocks and herds behind.

And he says, well, no, that won't do. We need the flocks and herds. And the Lord, verse 27, the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. He was not willing to let them go. Pharaoh said to Moses, get out of my sight.

Make sure you don't appear before me again. The day you see my face, you will die. Just as you say, Moses replied, I will never appear before you again. And in chapter 11, there is one more plague and this is the decisive one.

[ 23 : 39 ] Before this happens, they can't leave. After this happens, they can't stay. And what happens in chapter 11? Yeah, the death of the firstborn.

This was set up as a battle of firstborn sons. Israel is my firstborn son. Let my son go that he may worship me. And if you don't let my firstborn son go, I will smite your firstborn son.

Sort of a battle of the firstborn sons. And in chapter 11, that's, it all got to this point and that is the sort of crucial point.

Chapter 11, verse 10, Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country. But after the death of the firstborn, in chapter 12, verse 31, in the middle of the night, Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, get out, up, leave my people, you and the Israelites, go, worship the Lord as you have requested, take your flocks and herds as you've said and go and also bless me.

So, before the death of the lamb, they couldn't go and after the death of the lamb, they couldn't stay. That's the way God works. Before the death of the lamb, we can't be saved.

[ 25 : 02 ] After the death of the lamb, his people must be saved. And, is there a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites in terms of the angel of death visiting their houses and imposing death on each house?

Is there a distinction? Yes. No. Yes, no. Okay, that's good. so, no. It's because the angel of death comes over the Israelites and the Egyptians but it's only because of the blood that the Israelites are saved.

And you said, that's what I was going to say. Oh, you were going to say. Right, okay. Yeah, it's interesting that this death penalty, God doesn't have a favoritism on that.

All of the, all of sin are worthy of death but for the Israelites he provides a substitute that the lamb dies instead. So, we could, if we were singing then, we might be singing worthy the lamb in a slightly different sense but it all hinges on the lamb.

So, we've got locusts and darkness and the lamb. And, did you notice which of those themes were taken up in the book of Revelation?

[ 26 : 24 ] They weren't all taken up but, which ones? And you could just shout out, which ones? The hail is in the book of Revelation. Yeah. The frogs is in the book of Revelation.

The darkness is in the book of Revelation. The water to blood is in there twice. Yeah. The boils is in there.

Yeah. Sorry? Locusts. Yes. Yeah. Why do you think he thinks this is an appropriate model or a set of ideas to use in when he's talking about the time between Christ's ascension and Christ's coming? Perhaps that's a bit of a difficult question. Do you want to think about that? He thinks this is an appropriate illustration or an appropriate language to use and he takes it from a specific situation in Egypt all those years ago and he says this is a God-given way of understanding this part of human history.

Let's come back to that. Yeah. It is about judgment, isn't it? There were judgments on Egypt and maybe there's more that we could tease out about the appropriateness of it.

[ 28 : 07 ] Anybody want to say anything at this point? We probably come across. It's kind of what I was saying this morning. They didn't just want to get out of Egypt.

They wanted to go out of Egypt so they could worship the Lord. They did. The beast was trying to prevent those people from worshipping. Trying to prevent them from doing anything. So in a sense it's about freedom and the territory of the beast.

That's an interesting thought, isn't it? Because you very helpfully said this morning that being a Christian isn't just getting rid of the bad things in our lives and then having nothing.

It is actually saying I will now embrace something else. So that's I think it's both. I think the Bible does talk about putting to death and killing but also turning to and being enlightened.

I mean vivification and then mortification so being made alive and put into death. Going back to your question, in Exodus it's almost kind of like a picture of redemption isn't it?

[ 29 : 13 ] it's a paradigm for our salvation isn't it? Yeah. In terms of what it means for us. I think one can read things 10 and things like that.

Yes, it is a model of redemption isn't it? And the New Testament redemption doesn't completely reinvent the model, it sort of fulfills it and fills it out and improves on it but it doesn't obliterate it, does it?

I mean the Bible looks back at Exodus as being a really significant spiritual theological thing that we're to look back to.

Let's move on and I put how does this help us understand the world we're in? Let's hold that thought for a moment and let's look at theology of the plagues in Egypt.

This is what I thought about that. first of all they all make sense in terms of the Egyptian ecosystem. In Ghostbusters, the original Ghostbusters, there was a demonic cookie, was there like a big, what was he?

[ 30 : 33 ] It was like a Michelin man who stomped all over the city. which would be completely out of keeping in Egypt.

What God uses for judgment is things that fit the Egyptian situation. So, contamination of the water, pests like frogs and flies and illnesses, you know, it didn't make them glow in the dark or something like that, it produced boils and locusts is a very real part of the eastern ecosystem and when it gets out of hand you really are in trouble.

Locusts and darkness, well I suppose, I mean God could have used a sandstorm or he could have used any supernatural thing but darkness is something that we are accustomed to.

So, God used things that made sense in terms of the Egyptian ecosystem and the question were they judgments and the answer is yes.

And why are they judgments and the answer was because Pharaoh was supposed to. He's hardened his heart, yeah, he wouldn't obey the Lord. What were the judgments designed to achieve?

[ 31 : 52 ] They were designed to freedom, yeah, let my people go, thank you, and by getting Pharaoh to change his mind by ramping up the pressure, by ramping up the pressure.

What do they actually achieve? They do get out of Egypt, yes. And there's another achievement actually.

It's through the death of the first one. Pharaoh does harden his heart and he becomes a model of hardness of heart. heart. He gets a harder heart. You could almost think that to begin with he would have been a bit more pliable, but going through this sequence he ends up absolutely rigid and it's not God's fault in that sense.

He's decided at each step to say no to God. And if you do that, at each step it becomes a bit easier to say no to God, doesn't it?

You say, well, I'm not that interested, I'm really not interested, or no, I'm never going to go there and I hate God. Each little step gets you harder and it's a sort of warning not to take each little step.

[ 33 : 13 ] And the Lord is shown to be the Lord. You will know that I am the Lord. The Lord demonstrates his patience, his power, his salvation and his glory.

And the people are of course released from bondage. So for the Lord it's a win-win situation and it's a glorious display of God's sovereign grace and mercy and power.

Let's do a comparison. So the, we're now in the book of Revelation, Revelation, and the seven bowls bear comparison with the seven seals and there was another seven things like this.

Do you remember what they were? The trumpets. Yes. So let's make a comparison with them. So Revelation chapter 6 is the seven seals.

chapter 6 verse 1 I would say is conquest.

[ 34 : 21 ] That's the first seal. These are the seals. Chapter 6 verse 3 that's the second seal is like civil war. Chapter 6 verse 5 the third seal is like inequality where you can get the rich people get their stuff but the poor people don't get their stuff.

And in chapter 6 verse 7 the fourth seal is the things that follow on from war which is famine and plague and that sort of thing.

So the first four of those go together and in chapter 6 verse 9 there is a proportion can anybody spot what the proportion is?

It's a fraction. Chapter 6 verse 9 an arithmetical statement I'm sorry chapter 6 verse 8 a quarter just hold that thought a quarter.

So those first four go together the four horsemen and there are four hits on the ecosystem the inhabited world and the proportionality is a quarter.

[ 35 : 44 ] And then you've got the fifth seal which is when they cry out how long and the sixth seal is the final end chapter 6 verse 12 all the islands move every mountain is removed from its place and they say in chapter 6 verse 17 the great day of verse 16 fallen has hide us from the face of him

who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb for the great day of the wrath has come and who can withstand it.

So that's the very end of history there. But then it rewinds with an interlude in chapter 7 of what happened to the believing people.

Well the church is rendered indestructible and we find it described as a specific number 144,000 and also a non-specific number a great multitude that no one could count and both those things are true about the church.

So that's the interlude that goes in there and I suppose we could say that what we're to learn from this is assurance that all these things are going on around us wars rumours of war famines plagues and yet God's church is secure and God knows his people and he won't let them be lost and they will be safe brought through to the very end and that's a great assurance isn't it the lamb is opening the seven seals so history is in his hands so I think that's a great assurance anyway that's the seven seals God is still on the throne there was a chorus God is still on the throne and he will remember his own though trials may press us and burdens distress us he'll never will leave us alone God is still on the throne I can't remember how it goes on that but do you remember that one it's a proper chorus song that's I mean even if I don't remember the tune or all the words that's the right thing to remember isn't it

God is still on the throne the lamb upon the throne let's look at the so that's a quick look at the seven seals let's look at the seven trumpets and the seven trumpets are in chapter eight and you find them in for example in chapter six verse seven the first angel sounded his trumpet there came hail and fire mixed with blood it was hurled down on the earth a third of the earth was burned up a third of the trees were burned up all of the green grass was burned up so where does this hit land what part of the cosmos the earth yeah or the land and what's the proportion this time a third so that's more than a quarter isn't it a third is bigger than a quarter so we're actually becoming bigger as we go on through so there's the trumpets and the structure of this another four hits on the ecosystem verse seven is the land verse eight is the sea which gets turned into blood verse ten is the springs of water and the rivers that's drinking water and then verse twelve is the sky a third of the sun was struck so you've got the land the sea the drinking water and the sky so that's the whole ecosystem in those first four and the proportionality was a third yeah and this time we get an interlude between six and seven and the interlude this time is the ministry of prophecy so John receives a scroll which he eats and then he prophesies to many peoples nations and languages that's in chapter 10 verse 11 and then putting this another way around as two witnesses in chapter 11 which are like the classic

[ 40 : 10 ] Elijah and Elisha or John the Baptist and Jesus or Moses and Aaron they come in twos and here there are the two witnesses also pick up on some other ideas from the Old Testament and the point of these trumpets is that people should repent I'm just looking for the verse can anybody help us with the verse that says they should repent yeah I've got it it's chapter 9 verse 20 the rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent at the work of their hands they did not stop worshipping demons and idols of gold silver bronze stone and wood idols that cannot see or hear or walk nor did they repent of their murders their magic arts their sexual immorality or their thefts and the trumpets as I hit the ecosystem here as we get demonic locusts in verse chapter 9 that's trumpet number 5 chapter 9 verse 1 and demonic cavalry from

Euphrates you remember the reference to Euphrates chapter 9 verse 13 release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates and we get sort of weird cavalry coming and all of this is designed to bring people to repentance and some people do repent when we get to the end of this section chapter 11 verse 13 at that very hour there was a severe earthquake a tenth of the city collapsed 7,000 people were killed in the earthquake and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven so there is some sense in which people do turn to the Lord I think that's how we're supposed to take it and the seventh trumpet is just final victory of people giving thanks to God so that's the seven trumpets for repentance and we've just got time to get to the seven bowls of wrath which is where we were heading in the first place so this is now chapter 16 which we read and we compare it with the seven trumpets and the seven seals and the seven bowls of wrath so is the structure the same first bowl chapter 16 verse 2 where does that bowl land on the land yeah 16 verse 2 that's land that's like the other one did 16 verse 3 this is bowl number 2 where does this land on the sea yep and 16 verse 4 is the third bowl where does this one land springs of water this is drinking water and in verse 8 this is bowl number 4 where does this one land as it were on the

sun on the sky so it's the same pattern as the other one land sea drinking water sky so it's a similar thing but it's now quicker and there's no sense of proportionality it just strikes everything so we're moving through the book from a quarter judgment to a third judgment and now this is full volume judgment and that's the way the book is heading so those four go together and the proportionality I don't know why I put a quarter there that's wrong isn't it I need to change that there's the sores there's the blood and there's the sun scorching it's said in one of the psalms that the moon will not strike you by night nor the sun by day and here they do get scorched by the sun and then the next bowl is in verse 12 the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates its waters were dried up to prepare the way for kings from the east and then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs we'll go into that another time but let's have I got that right have I missed one out I missed out number five which is in verse 10 that was darkness and I think

I need a frog there's the frog and the seventh bowl is in chapter 16 verse 17 you've got the flashes of lightning the rumblings the peals of thunder and a severe earthquake which is a little combination that you get in other places the loud voice or the mega voice said it is done and in verse 19 the great split city split into three parts the cities the cities of the nations collapsed God remembered Babylon the great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath so that's the final wrath and I'll just say that there was two interludes here and they're very short there's I think we could say there's an interlude in verse 5 which is this the angel in charge of the waters saying something and I think there's another little tiny interlude in verse 15 which is well it's it's one of the blessings the seven blessings in the book of

Revelation and this is blessing number three and presumably this is the Lord Jesus speaking it isn't attributed it just it's just quoted behold 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 let's look at that next time let's just as we finish look at verses 5 to 7 and I'm going to ask you what do you think is the theme of those verses verses 5 to 7 God's wrath God's justice God's justice tease that out anything else about his wrath or his justice vengeance is mine I will repay says the

[ 47 : 14 ] Lord this is something specifically God God's wrath I think is talking about the accuracy if you like or the the appropriateness of God's justice so in verse 6 they have shed the blood of your holy people and the prophets and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve you are just in these judgments verse 5 verse 7 true and just are your judgments I think it's pointing out that God's justice is spot on it's fair it's not unfair it's not malicious it's not capricious it's not God having a bad day it's not God losing his rag it's not God just being cross like we sometimes get it's absolutely fair and just and right and good and he's giving people what they deserve if you poured out the blood of the saints you'll be given blood to drink it's the appropriateness and the rightness of God's justice and we honour God for that don't we he is a

God of fairness rightness truthfulness he judges justly shall not the judge of the whole earth do right now there's I have to skip ahead because I've sort of run out of time here but retributed I can't say it retributive justice is getting paid back exactly what the person deserves and so let's just take this in a couple of ways for people who have not turned to Christ they get exactly what they deserve there's nothing unfair about it they can't turn around to God and say we haven't dealt with me fairly because God does exactly what is right and just the people who knew more people who knew less people who had more opportunity people who had less opportunity God will take that all into account and he will judge rightly and justly and I think this helps us when we're bereaved actually we what will happen to my mum and my dad

I don't know but whatever it is God will do it right he will be fair there'll be no reason to say to sort of send anything to the complaints department God will do what is right that's really important and it's honourable isn't it that's that's a good thing but what about us so does God give people in Christ exactly what they deserve no no because Christ on the cross bore the wrath that we deserved and that makes it different and I think it might be helpful to think it puts us in a different context so we are judged the Lord will reward the things that we have done and assess what we have done and he will take into account the sacrifices that people have made and the motives that they have used and if they've done things that weren't recognised but God saw them

God will take that into account well done good and faithful servant all that sort of thing you know you are faithful with small things you'll be given more things and so on God will look at the heart intention but this is all looked at in a context please imagine yourself to be a father or mother of a little child and the little child has a crayon and a piece of paper and scrolls on that a little thing that

looks like a circle with bits sticking out of it and gives it to you and says daddy here's a picture of you that I've done for you now then you assess that in a context don't you you don't say what a load of rubbish call that a picture you don't do that do you you look at it in the context and you you look at the context of what the child could do and what the motive!

and because this is your child you say that's absolutely lovely I really do appreciate that that is so nice and it touches your heart that this little one has given you this scrawly thing and I think that perhaps helps us to understand how Christ deals with us we offer to him our scrawly good works our very imperfect service and yet it comes from the heart because that's been put in our hearts and he assesses it in that way and we are we believe in God's grace that even the things that even we do will be rewarded and God finds pleasure in the scruffy offerings that we bring him because he's worked grace in our hearts and we're his children and I think that's a helpful thing to think and perhaps just one more 1 John 1 9 about

[ 53 : 03 ] God's justice and I haven't kept my promise because I've gone over time 1 John 1 verse 9 if we take verse 8 if we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us folks we are not good people if we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us if we confess our sins he is faithful and what's the next word just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness and here is a function of God's justice if Christ died for my sins already God will not unjustly punish me again if Christ has already borne the wrath for me and he is just to forgive us our sins it's not that he's merciful

I mean he is merciful but here it is his justice by which we are forgiven and that's a very strong argument to encourage us isn't it to encourage our hearts to repel the accuser to encourage us in the Christian life sorry I have gone over time we will stop I hope that's been helpful so