

The Bowls of God's Wrath

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Preacher: Charlie Yang

[0 : 00] Good morning, everybody. It is my joy, it is my privilege to be able to preach to you God's Word this morning, and to fill in for Sean, who is out at a pastor's conference, correct?

Yes. And so our passage today is in the book of Revelation, from Revelation chapter 16. We're going to do the whole chapter today. Revelation is in the back of your Bible, and if you've been with us these last few weeks, you would know that we've been going over some pretty, pretty heavy topics. We've been talking about judgment, heaven, hell, and the wrath of God, and these are heavy and weighty topics, but it's important for us to preach on them because God thinks it's important for us to know that's why he gave it to us in his Word. So let's preach, or let's pray together. Heavenly Father, Lord, I pray that you would bless the preaching of your word this morning. Lord, your Word is sweet in our mouths, but bitter in our stomachs as we think about the implications. Lord, I pray that your Word would work mightily through me today.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So let us read the text today. So if you are willing and able, please stand for the reading of God's Word and follow along as I read from Revelation chapter 16.

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the several angels, go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God. So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came among the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea. The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers, and the springs of water, and it became blood. And I heard the angel in charge of the water say, just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments.

For they have shed the blood of the saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve. And I heard the altar saying, yes, Lord God, the Almighty, true and just are your judgments. The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory. The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

[2 : 50] 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. And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs, for their demonic spirits performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed.

And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, it is done!

And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth. So great was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found.

And great hailstones, about 100 pounds each, fell from heaven on people, and they cursed God for the plague of the hail because the plague was so severe. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

Please be seated. In 2023, the AAA Foundation examined police reports from across the country and found that there were over 300 police recorded incidents, 100,000 police related injuries, and 6,400 deaths from drowsy driving.

[4 : 37] It's obvious that if you drive while you're sleepy, you are playing with fire. But still, an estimated 400,000 teen drivers admit every week to drowsy driving.

People make light of the fact they're driving a 1,000-pound bowling ball of glass and metal, and they fall asleep at the wheel. And so what is that? Some people also make light of God's judgments.

God's weighty judgments are coming, and people are asleep, so to speak, at the wheel of life. God's feet. So therefore, we have passages like this, passages full of shocking, vivid, gruesome imagery that are meant to wake us up and slap us in the face like a kick of caffeine that we may not be caught sleeping.

Sean has preached over similar passages like this over the several months, and something we've established is that these events are not meant to be understood as corresponding directly to historical events.

So we're not supposed to look at the four horsemen released from the seals and try to name specific historical figures that the four horsemen correspond to. We look at the sea being turned into blood.

[5 : 52] We're not supposed to say, like, that's this particular volcano erupting and pouring ash and a red algae bloom. So that's not the point. It's more likely that this text is meant to be interpreted symbolically, because this is the genre of apocalyptic literature.

And the text is also supposed to have significance for the readers of that day, so it doesn't make sense for them to be thinking about a volcano eruption, let's say, 2,000 years after this was written. It's more appropriate to say that these judgments that we see describe the already, but not yet, judgment of God against the world and those who do not worship him.

They cover the whole time from the death and resurrection of Christ, where Jesus gains the authority to open the seals, and they cover the whole span of the church age up to the last days when God will reveal his judgment and make the new heaven and the new earth one, which is what we always see in the seventh judgments.

So there are three sets of seven judgments. There are the seven seal judgments, the seven trumpets, and now we are at the seven bowls, and you can think of them as an escalating, spiraling image.

It's like getting on one of those teacup rides at Disneyland that goes around and around, but it speeds up as you go. There's an escalation of the events. Because this is the third of three, that means we're looking at the end.

[7 : 16] Three is the number of completeness. Seven, as we have also seen in Revelation, is also a picture of perfection and also a type of wholeness. But it's also seven judgments here because the beast, which is described in chapter 13, has seven heads.

This beast is the representative image of all the kings and the people who would rise up and take the place of Christ against God and who would persecute and harm God's people. But God puts out seven plagues, which translated into Hebrew and Greek can both mean plague and blow.

Seven blows blasting off one head at a time. However, in the midst of this description of judgments, of blood and fire, there is a cry of encouragement out from the mouth of Christ himself.

We see it in chapter, or sorry, verse 15 of chapter 16. He tells them to stay awake and keep their garments on. And we know this comes from Christ, not just because you're a red letter Bible, probably highlighted in red, but because he says almost the exact same things in Matthew 24, 42.

He says, Stay awake, for you do not know what day your Lord is coming. You must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. So that means these bold judgments are not just an occasion for glorifying God and acknowledging his power, as we've seen in chapter 15 last week, but it is also, today, it is a call for repentance.

[8 : 52] This idea that waking up and staying awake is equivalent to repentance actually comes from Revelation chapter 3 in Christ's letter to the church in Sardis. He says that he knows their works, they have a reputation of being alive, but are dead.

Wake up and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your work complete in the sight of my God. Remember then what you have received, keep it, and repent.

If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. So waking up, in Revelation 16, refers to not being lulled into the sleep of sin.

That's our main takeaway for today, to not be lulled into the sleep of sin, but instead repent because of the severity of God's judgments and the nature of his judgments. We see from his judgments that these bold judgments show that it is complete and total, that they are upon those who do not repent, they are upon those who are deceived, and they are final.

So let's start with the first three bowls. The first three bowls show that God's judgments are total. They encompass the whole being.

[10 : 09] Revelation 16.2 says, the first angel poured out his bowl on the earth, and sores came out among the people. Specifically, they came out upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and who worshipped its image.

The mark is a parody of God's mark. God marks and seals those who belong to him. Their foreheads bear his name. The beast in mimicry also puts his mark on those who follow him.

So there are only two camps. What this first tells us is that, and I want to be very clear about this, these judgments that we see are not upon Christians. All the wrath that God would have against Christians is instead poured out on Jesus on the cross.

But that doesn't mean we can't still pay attention to God's wrath as it appears in the world today and as he declares it in the future. Something we also notice about these, the first judgment, is that there are no limitations or qualifications.

The first trumpet judgment, which bears some similarity to this, caused a third of the green grass and the trees to be burned up. It only affected a third of the world, but here it's everyone.

[11 : 28] The plague of sores refers back to one of the plagues of the Exodus. Moses threw soot into the air and when it came down, sores broke out among the people of Egypt. Likewise, we see Job.

In the book of Job, he's struck by Satan and he is covered in sores and all he can do is lie down and scrape his boils with a pot shard and ash.

This connection between sores and ash makes sense because, at least here, because the golden bowls that are poured out are bowls of burning incense. Early in Revelation 5, it says that the prayers of the saints go up before the Lord and they're in this golden bowl of incense on his altar.

So every time you pray that the Lord would show his justice on earth, every time you pray the Lord's prayer and say, your kingdom come, your will be done, an angel scoops a little more incense into that bowl and one day that bowl will be tossed out on the world.

Ash will fall out and sores will break out. Again, this isn't specifically saying that in the end times everyone will get these terrible blisters but it is saying that God's judgment will be a crippling physical judgment.

[12 : 51] The magicians in the days of Moses could not stand. It says they could not stand before Moses because of the pain of the sores. Likewise, Job is brought to his feet.

Now, some people think that hell is just for the soul but Paul in Acts 24, 15 actually mentions that there is a resurrection of the dead and the unjust. Everyone in that last days will be raised again.

They will have bodies that are capable of physical pain and they will not be raised to eternal life as believers but eternal death. If you ever run a lot or started running after a long time not running, you probably got blisters on your feet and you know it hurts to even walk.

You don't even want to get up out of bed or put on socks. If you've had canker sores or ulcers, you can't even drink water. That's what we see with the first bowl.

The second bowl is about the angel pouring out a bowl into the sea and it becomes like the blood of a corpse and every living thing dies that was in the sea.

[14 : 05] This also ties directly to the second trumpet. In the second trumpet an angel throws a burning mountain into the sea and a third of the sea became blood.

A third of the living creatures in the sea died and a third of the ships were destroyed. And again, this isn't speaking to some global climate disaster but it's among other things referring to financial disaster.

That might seem a little strange but we actually see later in Revelation 18 that the merchants who live in the city of Babylon which is Babylon is representative for every culture and world system that opposes God.

They wail when Babylon's ships are destroyed because the wealth of Babylon was by its ships. The sea is therefore a symbol of its vehicle of wealth.

Babylon lures people in with a promise of wealth apart from God. Babylon says you don't need God you just need money. All your problems will be solved when you pursue money and not God.

[15 : 16] But Babylon here worships wealth so God kills its wealth. In the last days God will not be impressed with your 401ks your crypto wallets He will not be placated with a bribe.

That's what the second bowl is alluding to. The third bowl is similar but this time it is a bowl poured out into the rivers and the springs of water.

This also connects us back to the third trumpet. With the third trumpet a star falls called wormwood into the rivers and it makes them bitter. And the symbolic image there is of the things of life that are pleasant being turned bitter by God's judgment.

So there's a proverb that speaks of a woman a forbidden woman an adulterous woman who lips drip honey and her speech being smoother than oil but in the end she is as bitter as wormwood sharp as the two-edged sword her feet go down to death.

The picture of rivers and springs usually refers to hope and life. If you have fresh water you can live. And so bitterness with wormwood refers to the good pleasures of life like sex being turned into adultery corruption and lust.

[16 : 43] But with the trumpets it was just a third with the bowls it is all the waters. If you have no fresh water you are dead. that's it.

For now perhaps even the the most hardened unrepentant person still can enjoy a sunset.

They still enjoy the taste of bread the freshness of the air. That will be over. this is a sentence of hopeless bitterness unto death.

This is perhaps the most severe of the first three judgments and it's so severe that an angel seems to have to explain and cry out and tell the world why this is happening.

How could it be so bad? He cries out and says in verse five just are you a holy one who was and is for you brought these judgments.

[17 : 49] These judgments can come because God is just and he is holy. If God was not just then he would not be a good God. If God was not just and he let evil run rampant in the world he would not be worth worshipping.

he is also holy which means he is high he is set apart and above all else and our sins against him bear incredible guilt and they are worthy of such punishments.

And it's not just sinning against God that's the problem but even allying yourself with the one who sins against God. You might not be a Christian and you're here today and you read verse six and it says that they have shed the blood of saints and prophets and you have given them blood to drink.

It's what they deserve and maybe you have not personally persecuted a Christian but there's only two sides in this war. It is true that Christians are salt and light.

We wherever we go we have a purifying presence among other people but that relationship cuts both ways. 1 Corinthians 15 27 says do not be deceived bad company ruins good morals.

[19 : 15] The war is always on whether you acknowledge it or not. And so it is that the saints who are under the altar as we saw earlier in Revelation they cry out in verse seven and say yes Lord God the almighty true and just are your judgments.

they agree. They agree. They agree. So with these first three judgments let's look at how severe how complete they are and not be lulled into conformity with the world and its pleasures.

if you think about why people sleep in the answer is sort of obvious you can sleep when you don't have anything to worry about. I remember when I was in college I would try to have a good sleep schedule and I would set my alarm like an hour before my first class but then I would just hit that snooze button over and over again until the last possible second I would bolt onto my bike and then just sprint on my bike all the way to class and and I could do that or I did it because I trusted my ability to bike fast and I trusted my ability to catch up should I miss something in the class.

These three judgments see they target the things that make people think they can stand without God. People take pride in their bodies in their wealth in the little pleasures of life but God will take all of those things away.

He will cut them down all the way through so that's one of the first reasons to stay awake because God's judgments are on everything.

[20 : 59] We should also stay awake because the judgment is on the unrepentant. This is a theme we see with the next two bowls. Bowl four it says the angel poured out his bowl in the sun and the heat from the sun intensifies and it scorches people with fire.

So it is at this point the link between the trumpets and the bowls becomes a little less precise but there's still some continuity bowls and trumpets four, five, and six all refer to fire and darkness and spiritual entities.

Now this fourth bowl and the image of being scorched with fire is a reference to the heat of God's discerning judgment. Fire throughout the Bible is a symbol of God's wrath against sinners.

Isaiah 33 says the sinners in Zion are afraid trembling has seized the godless, seized the godless, who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burning?

Besides just being powerful and painful, fire destroys and it burns away that which is impure. So that's why we also see it refers to, it can also refer to the purification of Christians.

[22 : 10] 1 Peter 1.7 says that the tested genuineness of your faith more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

So to the unrighteous fire burns away everything. To the righteous they have the silver and gold from the righteousness of Christ left over. And people feel even in this day a little bit of that heat.

People I have talked to a few people who say they don't like going to church and they don't like Christians because they feel like they're too judgy. They don't like to be judged. Don't judge me, bro.

People don't like being told they're living the wrong way. That they're in sin. But whatever that irking that itch and that little spark that's cutting at their conscience now is but a fraction of the turmoil.

That spiritual inner pain will become a real total inferno on the last day. Bowl five instead of speaking of fire actually speaks of darkness.

[23 : 23] So the angel pours out his bowl onto the throne of the beast and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Again, a reference to one of the plagues of Egypt. In the fourth trumpet one third of the heavenly lights and the stars were darkened.

But this time again we have an escalation. Now we have a total darkness. And it's not a pleasant darkness that people drive 14 hours to go see.

It's the bowl of the spiritual anguish of the separation from God. Sean spoke on this a few weeks ago that God's judgment is both referred to with fire and light and darkness and cold.

Jesus says that hell is a place where the worm does not cease and the fire is not quenched. But he also calls it a place of outer darkness where there is gnashing of teeth and this might refer to the chattering of your teeth because you're shivering.

It makes me think of the fictional depiction of being launched into space without a space suit. This isn't how it works in reality but in fiction you end up in space your space station explodes or something and the part of your body that's facing away from the sun freezes.

[24 : 46] And the part of your body that's facing the sun sizzles and burns. that's what God's judgments are like.

They are like being both at the same time facing God's fire and facing the eternal oblivion of darkness.

You would think with judgments these this severe like this that people would change their minds. You know I know people who go on a run and after their knees hurt and their back gives out they just stop and turn back and a little pain is enough for them to give up but not these people.

Verse 8 says they did not repent and give him glory. Verse 11 says they cursed the God of heaven for their pain and the sores. They did not repent of their deeds. they know who is behind us.

They acknowledge that God is the one who is in control but they do not repent. This is a warning to us to be careful.

[26 : 08] So ask yourselves is there some sin in your life that has been nagging your conscience that you haven't addressed that you think you can wait on you're sleeping on it.

Look address it now. Address it now because the people who face the wrath of God are the people who do not repent. The people who do not repent are the same people who will not repent.

Now this isn't to say that you lose your salvation if there's some kind of sin you don't address in your life. It is appropriate to confess before God the sins we know about and the sins we don't know about and trust that Christ's grace is more.

But if you are aware of sin and you do not do anything about it be careful. Never underestimate the ability of your heart to harden.

I think we all like music here and we probably all have our favorite songs but one of the best ways to take our favorite songs and make them into our most hated songs is to use them as an alarm. I used to love the song called Together I think by Clean Bandit.

[27 : 15] Clean Bandit and it was our I put it on snooze and it was great to wake up in the morning the first few times but after a few months I came to hate that song.

After ten plagues ten plagues not even seven ten plagues Pharaoh continued to harden his heart he did not repent and every time you hit that snooze button on your conscience you make it that harder to wake up.

So wake up now because his judgments are on the unrepentant. The sixth bowl tells us that we should repent because his judgment is on those who are deceived.

An angel pours out his bowl on the great river Euphrates and the water dries up and these frog spirits crawl out of the mouth of the dragon the beast and his false prophets like an unholy trinity of spiritual forces in opposition to God and these spirits they go out and they gather the people for war at the city of Jerusalem and now I know it doesn't say Jerusalem in verses 12 through 16 but throughout the Old Testament there are references to such a battle at the walls of Jerusalem.

We sung through Psalm 46 actually I think that's in line with what we're seeing here and verse 16 specifically refers to a place in Hebrew that is called Armageddon Armageddon and this word today usually refers to some kind of terrible event and this is where they get it from from the Bible and throughout history some people have believed that it refers to the plain of Megiddo the plain of Megiddo was a place where many important battles took place in the history of Israel but it is a plain there's no mountain there it's more likely that this is referring to the word Mo'ed and Har means mountain so Har Mo'ed means the mountain of the assembly it's the place where God gathers his saints and Jerusalem is built on one or two mountains depending how you count it now I don't want to go too much into details of this battle because John actually goes into them more in Revelation 19 through 20 so I'll just suffice to say for now that it is possible that this is referring to a specific future climactic historical event

[29 : 32] Zechariah 12 14 speaks of this battle and he speaks about how the they which is the people of Israel will look upon him who they have pierced that's Jesus and that the Lord's feet will set down on the Mount of Olives so it's possible to look for historical events it's not the point of the passage because Jesus explicitly says in verse 16 he is coming like a thief thieves do not make appointments so the point is not to go look look at the turmoil in Israel today and say Jesus is coming because he can come anytime I think the right response is actually to look at these kings and look at the response to the kings and we see that these kings are deceived the theme of deception is sown throughout these verses first of all there are frog spirits and frogs again are one of the plagues of Egypt the frogs came out of the Nile and went to all the houses and they died in the houses which is disgusting and the plague of the frogs was one of the few plagues that the magicians of those days were able to reproduce and they convinced

Pharaoh that God wasn't to be taken seriously second they walk along the dried river of the Euphrates if you have one of those maps in the back of your Bibles you would see that the Euphrates if Israel is here and Babylon and Assyria are here that the Euphrates hooks over the north and so if you were going to go and travel to fight Israel you would go along and come down from the north so that's why they're the kings of the east but they come from the north and the last time an army assembled against God and walked along a dried land they were crushed like the Egyptians as they tried to walk along the Red Sea it was a trap symbolically this battle refers to the defeat of one of the greatest idols of humanity which is its military power people think governments think they can kill Christians they can set laws against them and they can defeat them but God is the

Lord of hosts which means the Lord of armies of heaven a single angel in 1 Kings 18 kills 180,000 people in a single morning and he has hosts of angels these kings are deceived thirdly we also see that these demonic spirits perform signs like the false prophet chapter 13 says that he performs signs like making fire come down from heaven and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on the earth we may have in view actual pseudo miraculous events Jesus talks about people coming to him and saying Lord Lord haven't we cast out demons in our context perhaps it is more appropriate just to say that signs are anything that tell you that living without God is the right way to live that's what signs do they point and they say you're on the right track so a person who lives a life of ignoring God ignoring his commands but still prospers is being deceived by such signs so for example you can cheat on your taxes and you'll have a slightly larger bank account than normal and you have your sign the sign that God didn't strike at that moment is a sign that you're on the right path you can sleep on it and sin is alluring there are so many signs that tell us that the way of

Christ is not the right way so do not be deceived Jesus cries out behold I am coming like a thief blessed is the one who stays awake keeping his garments on that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed I mentioned in the beginning of the sermon that staying awake refers to repenting and that was from the letter to the church at Sardis being naked can also the image of nakedness and being exposed is found in the letter to Laodicea Jesus counsels them to buy from him white garments so that they may clothe themselves and the shame of their nakedness may not be seen those whom I love I reprove and discipline so be zealous and repent so stay awake or wake up means to repent put on garments means to repent both of these there's a connection between all of these and these white robes are the same white robes that the saints who have washed their clothes in the blood of the lamb wear they are people who act out their faith they have confessed Jesus as their Lord and Savior they confess that he rose from the dead and he will come again and their clothing matches their confession they live it out now Charlie you may say hey

I mean don't I already have Christ's garments like if I believe aren't I aren't I saved already like why do you need to tell me I might be naked and exposed doesn't Jesus say that he gives his sheep eternal life and no one is able to snatch them out of his hand and that's true all those things are true but we the question we need to answer is how it is that Jesus keeps in his hand what are the things that help you stay in that grip and those things are warnings like this there's actually a subtle difference between what he says to Sardis and Laodicea those are some of the most scathing letters that any of the churches receive but he tells them to wake up and to put on clothes but here it's a little different he tells them to stay awake and to keep on your clothes so again he's talking to saints now and he's saying don't go back keep what you have wide is the path that leads to destruction it is littered with big neon casino lights that say stay here this is the right way to go but the narrow path has its own signs the narrow and straight path has signs that say do not stray eternal life is ahead and it's because the life of a

[35 : 55] Christian begins with repentance and it continues with repentance repentance and I talked about repentance a lot so let me explain more what actually is repenting in the Greek it means to change your mind but the mind is just a bigger thing that it means to change your whole person change directions and to take steps in the opposite direction so again it is worth it to ask are there sins that are nagging your conscience that you have not only confessed before God but also taken hard and inconvenient steps in the other direction Jesus says referring to the lust of the eyes that if your right eye causes you sin tear it out and throw it away for it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell if your right hand causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away for it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell one of the most common struggles with a lot of

Christian men today and a good deal of women is that of porn and many people struggle with porn and a good deal of these people have never found victory because they haven't been cutting off their hands they haven't taken radical steps you know I knew an apartment building of 14 guys who were going to a church they were all in some same small group and they this was in college and they did not have internet in the whole building they didn't have internet because they wanted to fight for purity so for three years of college they lived on campus or sorry off campus at UC Berkeley and they had to go onto campus if they wanted internet was it convenient no but was it wise yes maybe you're struggling not with something as obvious as porn or stealing or sexual immorality or maybe it's a sinful unaddressed heart attitude that you have some people describe themselves as naturally angry naturally bitter they're just easily addicted people that's just who

I am but that's not who are we supposed to be we're supposed to be conformed to the image of Christ to aim for the upward call of Christ take radical steps against your sin there are a lot of steps that a lot of practical things you can do at first at least confess before God and consider also confessing before man get accountability partners pray pray fervently pray the Lord's prayer that every day the Lord would lead you not into temptation also it's worth meditating on and memorizing specific scriptures so if you do struggle with some kind of sexual immorality memorize Psalm 51 which talks about David repenting after sitting with Bathsheba if you struggle with anxiety memorize Psalm 23 about the Lord being your shepherd if you struggle with anger and bitterness memorize 1 Corinthians 13 about love being patient and kind not irritable and resentful and bearing all things now is the time to wake up because when the last day comes that's it that's what that last bowl tells us an angel pours out his bowl into the air and a loud voice cries from the temple likely

God's or Christ it is done it'll be over one day he pours it into the air because the air is everywhere and because the air is the because the devil is called the prince of the power of the air this is the final blow against him we see much other imagery in Revelation 17 through 21 that we've seen elsewhere flashes of lightning rumblings and peals of thunder in verse 18 are seen throughout Revelation and they refer to God's immediate presence there's also mention of an earthquake a great earthquake that splits a city into three and when I was younger I thought that's not too bad like if something breaks into three parts you just put it back together but that's not what happens with cities a city that is broken into three cannot be repaired Babylon is made to drink the cup of

God's wrath which we saw in Revelation 14 and we'll see in greater detail in Revelation 18 and the islands and the mountains flee both islands and mountains are terms used to refer to nations that oppose God throughout the Old Testament Babylon is that destroying mountain the word coastlands you might see that in the Old Testament it can also be translated as island it always refers to the adversaries of God there is no more his enemies are gone they is that of hail which might be a little strange why is hail the worst thing here and it could be a reference to the last of God's great plagues before Israel enters the promised land so in Joshua 10 11 five kings one of the kings is actually the king of Jerusalem they assemble against Israel and they do battle against them but Israel defeats them and as they're running away

[41 : 37] Joshua 11 says as they fled before Israel while they're going down the ascent of Beth Horan the Lord threw down large stones from heaven as far as Esca and they died more there were more who died because of the hail stones than the sons of Israel killed with their sword so you might have wondered what happened to that battle didn't the kings show up to fight John actually tells us he tells us that hail stones fell and everyone died and God won and the fact that this is the last of God's plagues before they entered the promised land is relevant here God is about to establish his new kingdom his new earth his new heaven forever and ever and this is the last blow yet again even though it's over even though God has revealed himself even though God has decisively destroyed all those who oppose him there are still people who continue to curse the name of

God verse 21 says they curse God for the plague of the hail because the plague was so severe is that unfathomable look at God's wrath it is like having sores from the tip of your head to the bottom of your feet is like being forced to drink blood is like being burned with fire is like being abandoned on a cold night is like being struck by hailstones that weigh a town or a hundred pounds yet despite that there will be people who will not repent they will not wake up so we need to stay awake sin can seem so alluring and the battle can seem long if you're like me you probably you like sleep you like to rest and after a tired day you want nothing better to just close your eyes and this war against sin can be long can feel like day after day the temptations never end but we can keep those drooping eyelids open by keeping them fixed on

Christ we should look to Christ the founder and perfect of our faith who for the joy set before him endured the cross despising the shame is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God Jesus went before us in the garden of Gethsemane the night before he was crucified he told his disciples to stay awake and pray that they would not enter into temptation very likely the temptation to flee and to deny him they failed but Christ stayed awake and he prayed and he overcame on that cross he drank the full wrath of the fury of God poured out but he is now alive and he is sitting at the right hand of the throne of God and he will come again one day and he will come with great judgments but with also great blessings blessed is the one who stays awake he comes with the blessing of eternal life blessing of freedom from pain the blessing of being in his eternal presence forever and ever the presence of the one who's good who is righteous who is true who is this is a wonderful blessing it is the blessing of a master who comes back home who finds his servants not asleep but awake and he blesses them and what does he tell them well done my good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your master let's pray heavenly father we thank you for your son who could stand before you none but because we are washed in the blood of

Christ because we have been given his garments we can dare we can dare oh lord what a blessing it is that you have given us your word keep us vigilant lead us not into temptation deliver us from the evil one in Jesus name we pray amen