

The First Angel Poured His Bowl and Ugly and Painful Sores Broke Out

16: 1-2

DIG: Who commands the angel to pour out the seven bowls of wrath? Why are these plagues worse than those ushered in by the trumpets? How do the ugly and painful sores affect those who have taken the mark of the beast?

REFLECT: What great life lesson have you learned out of adversity? When have you been blessed out of some horrible event? How can you help others who might be going through the same thing right now? Don't waste your sorrows!

After hearing a loud voice commanding the seven angels to pour their seven bowls of God's wrath upon the earth, John saw the angels instantly obey. However, they didn't simply crowd at the edge of heaven and dump their bowls like a mob of kindergartners in a food fight. We see them act, one at a time, in an orderly and somber manner. Clearly, these final bowls of wrath will be poured out in the very last days of the Great Tribulation.

Then I heard a loud voice from the Temple in heaven saying to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth" (16:1). This voice must be that of Yeshua, for all others will be excluded from the Sanctuary until the seven plagues have accomplished their purpose (15:8 CJB). Like the ten plagues in Egypt, all seven plagues will be supernatural acts of ADONAI. There will be no natural or scientific explanations for these plagues. They will hit far too fast for any explanation other than Jesus Himself. In fact, there is only one brief pause, just long enough for one of the holy angels to affirm that the bowl judgments are just and righteous (16:5-7).³⁵⁴ As the first angel leaves the Temple in heaven, his great bowl overflowing with God's wrath (Psalm 79:6), he flies swiftly, dumping its contents here and there, this continent and that continent, until every portion of the earth receives some of its bitter concoction. Finally the bowl will be empty and its dreadful mixture will start to take effect.

Ugly and painful sores will break out on those who live on the earth (16:2a). This reminds us of the plagues in Egypt (see my commentary on Exodus Bp - Moses Tossed Soot in the Air and Festering Boils Broke Out All Over Egypt). The two Greek words *kakos* and *poneros* mean ugly and painful. When used together they emphasize the sores will be oozing

and incurable. All the great scientists of the world will be frantically trying to find a cure, but to no avail. The god of science will fail. But being a counterfeit son in every way, the antichrist will boast in his ability to heal and being "the great physician." And for a while, with the help of the false prophet, it will seem to be true, as people flock to him for healing. But his inability to heal his people of the **ugly and painful sores** sent by **the Lord** will demonstrate beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is a liar. Despite the pain of the **sores**, hearts of the people, like Pharaoh's, will remain hard. They will not turn away from their sins to glorify **God (16:9)**, but will curse **Him** to the end **(16:21)**.³⁵⁵

*Armageddon is coming. Who in their right mind would choose to side with the antichrist in his fight against ADONAI? Yet millions are making such a decision each day when they reject such a great salvation (Hebrews 2:3) as that offered by the Father through His Son, Jesus our King. For this is the heart of what Armageddon is all about. It is the world saying, "We will not bow our knee (Philippians 2:10a) to anyone. We are too proud. We are too mighty. We are too important."*³⁵⁶

This plague did not merely affect a third of mankind (9:15) as the sixth trumpet judgment had done, but affected all the people who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image (16:2b). Because they had refused to worship the true God and Creator, Jesus Christ, but rather choosing to worship the image of the beast, the hour of His judgment will come upon them (14:6-7). Will they put the mark of the beast on their bodies? Then the LORD will add His own mark to their bodies. But His mark would truly reflect the ugly character of the god they worshiped. Were they afraid of what would happen to them if they refused the mark of the beast? Then ADONAI would send them some painful sores that will merely be a down payment on what will be awaiting them in the lake of fire (20:15). From that point on, no one who will receive the beast's mark will be able to forget the consequences of the dreadful choice he or she will have made.³⁵⁷

Only the people who accepted the mark of the beast and worshiped his image will be affected. Those who rejected the mark out of their devotion to Messiah will be immune. And this will only infuriate them all the more against Jesus Christ who will inflict His judgment upon them. There will be no more hiding. It will be obvious who has chosen the true Son and who has chosen the counterfeit son. Everyone will be exposed because those sores will be so hideous. Moses spoke of these when he said: ADONAI will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. He will afflict your knees and legs with painful boils that cannot be cured, spreading from the soles of your feet to the top of your head (Deuteronomy 28:27, 35).

And since **those who live on the earth (6:10, 8:13, 11:10, 13:8, 13:12-14, 17: 2 and 8)** will not be able to attack **Yeshua** directly, they will take out their anger and great bitterness against the Jews. At this point the Jews will refuse to pledge allegiance to the beast, not because they are saved, but because he is trying to kill them. They will be hunted down, arrested, tried for not taking on the mark of the beast and executed. By the end of the Great Tribulation **two thirds** of the Jews **will be** killed, and **one third will be** saved when they recognize **Messiah** for who **He** is and ask **Him** to come back (**Isaiah 53:1-12; Zechariah 13:3**).