

# The Third Angel Poured Out His Bowl on the Rivers and Springs of Water and They Become Blood

16: 4-7

**DIG:** Why will people have to drink blood during the Great Tribulation? What will the conditions be like at that time? Who will be blessed during the Great Tribulation?

**REFLECT:** When was the last time you spoke in God's defense? When was the last time you mocked God? Is the LORD of heaven's angelic armies omnipotent in your life? Or do you still take hold of the steering wheel and wrestle control away from Him? What areas do you still try to control? What can you do to let go?

As the wicked people of the earth reeled at the realization that their lives were being torn apart with the poisoning of the sea, they turned inland in the hope of finding drinking water from **the rivers** and lakes. But just when they were about to console themselves, **the third angel poured out his bowl**, and the same dreadful judgment that was visited upon the sea also affected **the rivers and lakes**, and they also became blood (Revelation 16:4; Exodus 7:17-21; Psalm 78:44). **The third bowl judgment will be worse than the third trumpet judgment. Whereas in the third trumpet judgment one-third of the fresh water was destroyed, under the third bowl judgment the remainder of the fresh water in the rivers and springs will also become blood.**

The poisoning of the sea will wipe out 96 percent of the human water supplies, leaving only 4 percent of the fresh **water** supply from **the rivers** and lakes. Needless to say, the fresh **water** will be in dangerously short supply. The third trumpet judgment resulted in the poisoning of a third of the world's fresh **water** (8:10-11). **God's** two witnesses will have **the power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during** the last forty-two months of the Great Tribulation, **and they have the power to turn the waters into blood** (11:6). The Bible does not say *like* blood. It says **the waters turned into blood**. The four angels also temporarily restrained **the earth's** winds also causing drought (7:1). With no wind to move the clouds, the hydrological system will be shut down and no rain will fall. All this will have a devastating effect on both **the earth** and **the people**.

The destruction of what is left of **the earth's water** supply will make human survival very difficult. Evidently, the water from **the rivers** and lakes, even though changed to **blood**, will not be as toxic as **the water** in the sea because **people** will be able to **drink** it (16:6). I am sure it will be bitter and repulsive, but they will get it down to survive. There will be no fresh **water** to **drink**; no **water** to wash their oozing sores caused by the first **bowl** judgment; no **water** to quench their thirst from the scorching heat that the fourth **bowl** would shortly bring. Things will be so bad that **people** will wonder how a **God** of compassion, mercy and grace could send such a judgment. And so there is a brief interlude to the series of **bowl** judgments, as an **angel** speaks in **the Lord's** defense.<sup>361</sup>

**The act elicits two declarations. First**, in 16:5-6, the guardian **angel** assigned to pollute the **water** declares the righteousness of **ADONAI's** judgment in this act. Since **people** have shed the **blood** of **God's** people and the prophets, they will be given **blood** to drink.

**The angel** in charge of **the earth's waters** will look at this judgment and declare it to be well deserved. Then I heard the **angel** in charge of the waters say: You are just in these judgments, You who are and Who were, the Holy One, because You have so judged (Revelation 16:5; also see Psalm 19:9 and 145:17). **The rabbinic writings often refer to God as HaKadosh, barukh hu, the Holy One, blessed be He. For example, in the well-known Aleinu prayer is recited near the end of each synagogue service, "We bend the knee, bow and acknowledge before the supreme King of kings, HaKadosh, barukh hu [the Holy One, blessed be he] . . . that He is our God, there is none else." Here too the reference is to God the Father, but according to Acts 2:27 and 13:35, quoting Psalm 16:10, the term also applies to the Messiah.**

**John** hears this testimony and he makes sure we hear about it also. In fact, it is a testimony that everyone needs to hear and take to heart. **God** is righteous and holy; therefore, **He** is just when **He** judges sin. Since **He** is also a merciful **God**, **He** is willing to forgive man's wickedness, but only because the terrible penalty for wickedness has been demanded already, when **Yeshua** died as **God the Father's** sacrificial **Lamb**. But when men deliberately trample the **Son of God** under foot and treat the **blood** of the **B'rit Chadashah** as an unholy thing, then there is no sacrifice for sins left (Hebrews 10:26), and **the Lord's** holy wrath must be poured out.<sup>362</sup> To refuse grace is to choose wickedness, and **Messiah** will allow this for a time. But mankind should remember the consequences of such a foolish choice. **YHVH** will not be mocked (Galatians 6:7b).

The angel proclaims that the Christ-hating, God-rejecting people receiving the bowl judgments will bear the overwhelming burden of guilt. They poured out the blood of Your people and Your prophets, so you have made them drink blood. They deserve it (Revelation 16:6 CJB; also see Isaiah 49:26)! Just as Moses burned the golden calf in the fire, ground the gold to powder, and scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it (Exodus 32:20), so the unbelievers in the end times be forced to drink blood. The sin, as it were, will be poured into their bodies along with the blood to symbolize that they would have to bear the burden of it just as a woman who was suspected of adultery was obligated to drink of the bitter water that brought a curse (Num 5:11-31).

Even though most will not take part directly in the killing, they will be in agreement with it. Like the citizens of Auschwitz, Chelmno and Treblinka, they will let it happen without lifting a finger. Those who live on the earth will rejoice when the two witnesses are finally killed by the antichrist (11:10), and they won't protest in the least when the beast begins his bloody campaign to annihilate all those who will not worship him or his image.

It has always been that way. The corrupt religious leaders of the Jews didn't drive the nails into Messiah's wrists, but they led the people into crying out: Let His blood be on us and on our children (Matthew 27:25). Jesus confronted the people of His own day about the shedding of the blood of the righteous in earlier times when He said: And upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the Temple and the altar (Matthew 23:35). Those of any age who reject Yeshua are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace (Heb 6:6).

Likewise, those who give in - even by their silence - whenever believers are ridiculed or silenced, will be, in effect, their persecutors. To the most educated and religious people of His earthly generation, Christ said: You shut up the Kingdom of Heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. . . And you say, "If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets." Fill up, then, the measure of sin of your forefathers! You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell (Matthew 23:13 and 30-33)?

Believers have had their **blood** spilled from **Abel** to today, but none will be slaughtered like the righteous during the *Great Tribulation*. Therefore, it will be especially appropriate that the final generation of murderers should be forced to **drink the blood** that **they** take such pride in shedding. **They** will especially **deserve it**.

**The second declaration** comes from the **golden altar** of incense, further affirming the assessment of **God's** righteousness being revealed through His **judgments**. Then I heard the alter respond, "True and just are your judgments" (16:7b). In 6:9-11 John had described the martyrs from the early part of the *Great Tribulation* as being **under the altar**. Then John heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar (9:13), the same **golden altar** of 8:2-5 that symbolized the prayers of the *Tribulation* martyrs crying out for vindication. Then they cried out in a loud voice: **Sovereign Ruler, HaKadosh, the True One, how long will it be before You judge the people living on the earth and avenge our blood? Each of them was given a white robe; and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow-servants should be reached, of their brothers and sisters who would be killed, just as they had been (6:10-11 CJB).**

Here their prayer is answered. Since that time their number will have been **completed** with multitudes more yielding up their **blood** in the first half of the *Great Tribulation*. Thus, from the start of the second half of the *Great Tribulation* there would be no more martyrs. Now was the time the righteous **under the altar** had been yearning for. One can only imagine their mounting excitement as the final series of **bowl** judgments are poured out over **the earth**. They see the ugly and painful sores being inflicted on mankind. Then suddenly the sea, rivers and springs start turning into **blood**, everywhere, always reminding them of **the blood** they had shed. The souls waiting **under the altar** could not contain themselves any longer. In unison, a great cry rises from their resting place under the heavenly **altar**, "The **judgments** of **God**, though long delayed, are righteous and **just**, and they have finally come (**Genesis 18:25; Job 8:3, 20; Romans 2:5 and 3:5-6**)!"

The fitting name to give this great **Judge** is: **ADONAI, God of heaven's angelic armies (16:7a CJB)**. It is the same name that **Jesus** used to describe **Himself** to **John (1:8)**, and the name praised by the twenty-four elders before the throne in heaven (**11:17**). It is the same name that was attributed to the great and marvelous **One** on the sea of glass (**15:3**), and to **Him** who the four living creatures worshiped (**4:8**).

This ability enables **the God of heaven's** angelic **armies** to **overcome** seemingly impossible problems. In **Genesis 18:10-14**, for example, we read of **ADONAI's** promise that **Sarah** would have a son, even though she was past the age of childbirth. This promise had been given twenty-five years earlier, and it had not yet been fulfilled. When **Sarah** heard the promise again, she laughed. **The Lord** responded by saying: **Why did Sarah laugh and say, "Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?" Is anything too hard for the Lord?**<sup>363</sup> Friend, what seemingly impossible problem are you facing today? Whatever it is, don't face it alone. In talking to **His** apostles, **Yeshua** said to them: **I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world (John 16:33).**