



**Week Nine – Revelation 15-16**  
**Community Group Study Guide for the week of May 2, 2021**

**Suggested Reading:** Revelation 15-16 prior to meeting

**Study Revelation 15:1-8, “Seven Angels With Seven Plagues.”** Choose some or all of these questions to answer and discuss:

1. What is your favorite hymn or worship song? Why?
2. How did John describe the part of heaven revealed to him? ([15:2](#))
3. What were the saints in heaven doing? ([15:2-3](#))
4. What attributes of God are praised in the "song of Moses"? ([15:3-4](#))
5. What are some ways to praise or worship God?
6. How can we use singing in our worship of God?
7. What is one practical step you can take to include singing more in your worship of God?

**Life Application Bible Notes**

[15:1](#) The seven last plagues are also called the seven bowl judgments. They actually begin in [chapter 16](#). Unlike the previous plagues, these are universal, and they will culminate in the abolition of all evil and the end of the world.

[15:3, 4](#) The song of Moses celebrated Israel's deliverance from Egypt ([Exodus 15](#)). The song of the Lamb celebrates the ultimate deliverance of God's people from the power of Satan.

[15:5-8](#) This imagery brings us back to the time of the Exodus in the wilderness when the Ark of the Covenant (the symbol of God's presence among his people) resided in the Tabernacle. The angels' garments are reminiscent of the high priest's clothing, showing that they are free from corruption, immorality, and injustice. The smoke that fills the Temple is the manifestation of God's glory and power. There is no escape from this judgment.

[15:8](#) John saw the Temple filled with the glory and power of God. The key to God's eternal glory and power is his holiness ([4:8](#)). God's glory is not only his strength but also his perfect moral character. God will never do anything that is not morally perfect. This reassures us that we can trust him, yet it places a demand on us. Our desire to be holy (dedicated to God and morally pure) is our only suitable response. Our eternal reign with Christ won't begin until all evil is destroyed by his judgment. We must wait for his timetable to be revealed.

Following Christ, the Lamb, "wherever he goes" requires heroic effort to carry out Christ's commission to face oppression and even death if required. Too many shrink back when the work is difficult or the future looks bleak. Join those who take their stand with Christ and against sin. The "special offering" refers to the act of dedicating the first part of the harvest as holy to God ([Exodus 23:19](#); see also [James 1:18](#)).

**Study Revelation 16:1-21, "The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath."** Choose some or all of these questions to answer and discuss:

1. What is the most pain you have ever experienced?
2. What instructions did the loud voice give to the seven angels? ([16:1](#))
3. What did the angel in charge of the waters say about the judgments being poured out? ([16:5-7](#))
4. What blessing was pronounced in the middle of this outpouring of judgment? ([16:15](#))
5. What makes the judgments described here—horrible as they are—perfectly just?
6. How can we "keep our clothes white"?
7. What is one step you can take this week to fight spiritual laziness? Life Application Bible Notes

### **Life Application Bible Notes**

**16:1ff** The bowl judgments are God's final and complete judgments on the earth. The end has come. There are many similarities between the bowl judgments and the trumpet judgments ([8:6-11:19](#)), but there are three main differences: (1) These judgments are complete whereas the trumpet judgments are partial; (2) the trumpet judgments still give unbelievers the opportunity to repent, but the bowl judgments do not; and (3) people are indirectly affected by several of the trumpet judgments but directly attacked by all the bowl judgments.

### **Seven times in Revelation, God promises blessings upon the believers.**

#### *Reference*

#### *Verse*

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| <a href="#">1:3</a>   | "God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says."   |
| <a href="#">14:13</a> | "Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they are blessed indeed, for they will rest from their hard work; for their good deeds follow them!"                      |
| <a href="#">16:15</a> | "Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed."  |
| <a href="#">19:9</a>  | "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb."   |
| <a href="#">20:6</a>  | "Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years." |
| <a href="#">22:7</a>  | "Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book."  |
| <a href="#">22:14</a> | "Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life."  |

**16:6** The angel acclaimed God for his justice in dealing with those who had killed the martyrs. God's wrath may be hard for us to accept. In a moral universe, however, God must ultimately oppose and destroy evil. Those who join the revolt against God suffer with their leaders. We must avoid the misconception that God must be fair and kind in his dealings with humanity. This view of justice is merely a projection of a human idea. People who believe this notion appeal to tolerance and forgiveness and assume that God must play by our rules. In reality, God sets his own standard of justice. He uses his power according to his own moral perfection. Thus, whatever he chooses or decrees is fair, even if we don't understand it or like it. Those who rebel and reject God are not rejecting a "lifestyle option"; they are rejecting truth and justice itself.

**16:7** The significance of the altar itself responding is that *everyone and everything* will be praising God, acknowledging his righteousness and perfect justice.

**16:9-21** We know that the people realize that these judgments come from God because they curse him for sending them. But they still refuse to recognize God's authority and repent of their sins. Christians should not be surprised at the hostility and hardness of heart of unbelievers. Even when the power of God is fully and completely revealed, many will still refuse to repent. Don't wait until "just the right time" before turning to God. Do it now while you still have the chance. If you continually ignore God's warnings, you will eventually be unable to hear him at all.

**16:12** The Euphrates River was a natural protective boundary against the empires to the east (Babylon, Assyria, Persia). If it dried up, nothing could hold back invading armies. The armies from the east symbolize unhindered judgment.

**16:13, 14** These evil spirits performing miraculous signs, who come out of the mouths of the unholy trinity, unite the rulers of the world for battle against God. The imagery of the demons coming out of the mouths of the three evil rulers signifies the verbal enticements and propaganda that will draw many people to their evil cause. For more about demons, see the note on [9:3ff.](#)

**16:15** Christ will return unexpectedly ([1 Thessalonians 5:1-6](#)), so we must be ready when he returns. We can prepare ourselves by standing firm in temptation and by being committed to God's moral standards. In what ways does your life show either your readiness or your lack of preparation for Christ's return?

**16:16** This battlefield called Armageddon is near the city of Megiddo (southeast of the modern port of Haifa), which guarded a large plain in northern Israel. It is a strategic location near a prominent international highway leading north from Egypt through Israel, along the coast, and on to Babylon. Megiddo overlooked the entire plain southward toward Galilee and westward toward the mountains of Gilboa.

**16:16** Sinful people will unite to fight against God in a final display of rebellion. Many are already united against Christ and his people—those who stand for truth, peace, justice, and morality. Your personal battle with evil foreshadows the great battle pictured here, where God will meet evil and destroy it once and for all. Be strong and courageous as you battle against sin and evil: You are fighting on the winning side.

**16:17-21** For more information on Babylon and what it represents in Revelation, see the note on [14:8](#). The city's division into three sections is a symbol of its complete destruction.