

**Revelation 11:15–16:21**

**Memory Verse:** *The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever* (Rev. 11:15b NIV).

**Background Helps:**

The seventh trumpet (11:15-19) announces the coming of God's kingdom along with his wrath and judgment upon the wicked. Just as the opening of the seventh seal introduced the trumpet judgments (8:1), so the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15) prepares the way for the seven bowls of wrath (Rev. 15–16). However, before these seven last plagues are poured out, there is a long interlude from chapter 12 through 14. In chapters 12 and 13 the three great enemies of God's people in the last days (the so-called "unholy trinity") are introduced: the dragon (Satan), the first beast (usually identified as the "Antichrist") and the second beast (or "false prophet"—see Rev. 16:13). These three make war against the saints. Chapter 14 consists of previews of the final destinies of both the righteous and the wicked.

Then, in chapters 15 and 16, we read about the bowls of wrath. These plagues are the last outpouring of God's wrath on earth (15:1) before the return of Christ and the last judgment. By comparing, in order, the bowls of wrath with the earlier trumpet judgments (Rev. 8:6–9:21), you will see many parallels. But notice that, while the trumpet judgments were partial (one-third), the bowl judgments complete the manifestation of God's wrath on earth.

An important note: In studying Revelation, be sure to make a distinction between tribulation and wrath. The Bible teaches that even Christians will face tribulation (John 16:33; Acts 14:22) such as we find in Revelation 12 and 13. But believers are delivered from the wrath of God—compare 1 Thessalonians 1:10 with Revelation 16.


**Lesson Helps:**

Two alternative lesson aims:

1. My students will learn about the spiritual warfare of believers with Satan, so that they will stand firm against the schemes of the devil. This lesson would focus on Revelation 12–13. Be sure to cover:
  - a. Christ's victory over the devil and our share in his victory (chap. 12)
  - b. Satan's use of secular antichristian government (see the first beast in chap. 13) and false teaching (the second beast) as tools in his warfare against the saints
  - c. Our responsibility to stand firm in the face of such opposition (13:10b).
2. My students will learn about the coming wrath of God, so that they will repent of their sin and escape the wrath to come. This lesson would focus on chapters 14–16. Contrast the fate of the righteous and wicked in chapter 14, and study the bowls of wrath in chapter 16. Call your students to repentance.

**Assignment:**

 Read Revelation 17–22.

 Memorize Revelation 21:4 NIV.