

Fifth Bowl Judgment (vv. 10-11)

VERSE 10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened (Καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἐξέχεεν τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θηρίου, καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ ἐσκοτωμένη [*conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. pemptos fifth + aor.act.ind.3s. ekcheo pour out + art.w/noun acc.f.s. phiale bowl + pro.gen.m.s. autos "his" + prep epi + art.w/noun acc.m.s. thronos throne + art.w/noun gen.nt.s. therion beast + conj kai + art.w/noun nom.f.s. basileia kingdom + pro.gen.nt.s. autos "his" + perf.pass.part.nom.f.s. skotoo be darkned*]; **and they gnawed their tongues because of pain** [καὶ ἐμασῶντο τὰς γλώσσας αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πόνο [*conj kai + imperf.act.ind.3p. masaomai bite (the lips), gnaw (the tongue) + art.w/noun acc.f.p. glossa tongue + pro.gen.m.p. autos "their" + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.m.s. ponos pain*],

VERSE 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores (καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐκ τῶν πόνων αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἑλκῶν αὐτῶν [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3p. blasphemo blaspheme + art.w/noun acc.m.s. theos God + art.w/noun gen.m.s. ouranos heaven + prep ek + art.w/noun abl.f.p. ponos pain + pro.gen.m.p. autos "their" + conj kai + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.nt.p. helkos sore*]; **and they did not repent of their deeds** [καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν [*conj kai + neg me + aor.act.ind.3p. metanoeo repent + prep ek + art.w/noun gen.nt.p. ergon deed + pro.gen.m.p. autos "their"*]]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 10-11

1. As with the fifth member of the series, so it is here that God “gives the screw an extra turn.”
2. This bowl along with the sixth and seventh have more of a political orientation than any plague encountered thus far.
3. The target of the bowl is “the throne” of the beast, i.e., the one place where his power and presence reside or the seat of his rule and authority.
4. The first mention of this throne is in 13:2 which notes the dragon’s (Satan’s) gift of that dominion to his agent the Antichrist.
5. So far untouched, that center through which Satan has perverted to the max all human society into the practice of Satanism is now the target of God’s wrath.
6. The people living within the political realm of the beast will be just as helpless against this plague as Pharaoh was against the comparable ninth plague over Egypt (Ex. 10:21-23).
7. “His kingdom” is an obvious corollary to “the throne of the beast” receives the contents of this bowl.
8. The beast’s kingdom refers to the full extent of his political domain.
9. Its basic constituency consists of ten nations within the European Union.
10. By this late stage in the tribulation it includes other nations brought under the military might of the beast, but it does not include the entire world by any stretch.

11. Like the ninth plague of Egypt it is localized including the beast's capital as well as those countries he has occupied militarily.
12. The subjects of the beast kingdom "kept on chewing their tongues" which expresses a most agonizing and excruciating type of pain.
13. The darkness itself is not the immediate source of physical pain.
14. The darkness adds to psychological pain to the suffers who according to v. 11 still suffer from the psychological effects of the previous bowls.
15. In token of their allegiance to the beast and the total blackout of the soul, his subjects once again blaspheme God (cf. v.9).
16. "The God of heaven" occurs one other place in Revelation, in 11:3 where victims of the earthquake respond in an opposite manner.
17. This title recalls Daniel's address to the pride of Nebuchadnezzar.
18. The blasphemy stems from the cumulative effect of the first four plagues, as the plural "pains," suggests, but specifically the lingering effects of the first plague with its "loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast" (cf. v.2).
19. So physical and psychological pain is the reason for the gnawing of the tongue, hence the pregnant singular of "pain" in v. 10.
20. Once again, men refuse to repent of their works as noted in connection at the conclusion of the fifth trumpet (9:20-21).
21. They choose to cling to their idolatry and lawlessness in total defiance of God and in the face of overwhelming evidence that an all-powerful and righteous God is judging the world for its evil.
22. We call this motivational viscosity (the unwillingness to change one's mind when the facts stack up against a person).
23. This illustrates maximum obstinacy.
24. In the Bible it is labeled stiff-necked.
25. Suffering is intended to bring men to a change of mind but short of that it leads to the sin unto death.

The Sixth Bowl (v. 12)

VERSE 12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates

(Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἐξέχευ τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν μέγαν τὸν Εὐφράτην, καὶ ἐξηράνθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ [*conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.s. hekto sixth + aor.act.ind.3s. ekcheo pour out + art.w/noun acc.f.s. phiale bowl + pro.gen.m.s. autos + prep epi upon + art.w/noun gen.m.s. potamas river + art.w/adj.gen.m.s. megas great + art.w/noun acc.m.s. Euphrates*]; **and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east** (καὶ ἐξηράνθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἐτοιμασθῇ ἡ ὁδὸς τῶν βασιλέων τῶν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. zeraino dry out + art.w/noun nom.nt.s. hudor water + pro.gen.m.s. autos "its" + conj hina (purpose) + aor.pass.subj.3s. hetoimazo prepare + art.w/noun nom.f.s. hodos way + art.w/noun gen.m.p. basileus king + art.w/noun gen.f.s. anatole east; rising + prep apo from + noun gen.m.s. hilios sun*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 12

1. The sixth bowl, exactly like the fifth seal, has no immediately apparent visitation of wrath against men.
2. It simply looks forward and prepares to a coming visitation from the God of heaven.
3. The target of the bowl's contents is the Euphrates River.
4. This is one of the great rivers of the world that constituted the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire and the land God promised to Abraham (cf. Gen. 15:18).
5. The first mention of this river system is in Gen. 2:4 in connection with the geography of the Garden of Eden.
6. The other mention of this river is Rev. 9:14 where four fallen angels are bound waiting to be released to organize a demonic army of 200 million to kill one-third of humanity (9:14-15).
7. The drying up of this river is designed to facilitate the movement of the armies of the kings of the east so as to bring them in a timely fashion to the battle of Armageddon.
8. This is the battle to which the ruler of the earth in 19:18-21 gather to thwart the advent of Jesus Christ.
9. A comparable episode in the OT, the drying up of the Red Sea to allow Israel passage, was literal, so must this one be.
10. According to the historian Herodotus, Cyrus walked across the drained bed of the Euphrates in his conquest of Babylon.
11. At first glance, the stoppage of the river's flow appears to be in a blessing to the kings of the east, but it eventuates in their being brought into a trap just as the parted sea proved to be a trap to the Egyptians.
12. "The kings of the east" here refer to nations with vast populations like China, Indo-China and India.
13. They are oriental rulers and are represented in Bible prophecy by the spotted leopard with two sets of wings in Dan. 7:6, which is distinct from the Anglo-American lion with eagle's wings, the Russian bear, and the unnamed beast of the RRE.

Background to Verse 12 (vv. 13-16)

Propaganda Behind Mustering of Nations (vv. 13-14)

VERSE 13 **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** (*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.nt.s. stoma mouth + art.w/noun abl.m.s. drakon dragon + conj kai + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.nt.s. stoma mouth + art.w/noun abl.nt.s. therion beast + conj kai + prep ek from + art.w/noun abl.nt.s. stoma mouth + art.w/noun abl.m.s. pseudoprophetes false prophet*), **three unclean spirits like frogs** [*πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρτα ὡς βάτραχοι* [*noun acc.nt.p. pneuma spirit + adj.acc.nt.p. treis three + adj.acc.nt.p. akathartos unclean + conj hos like + noun nom.m.p. batrachnos frog*]];

VERSE 14 **For they are spirits of demons, performing signs** (*εἰσὶν γὰρ πνεύματα δαιμονίων ποιοῦντα σημεῖα* [*pres.act.ind.3p. eimi "are" + conj gar for (explanatory) + noun nom.nt.p. pneuma spirit + noun gen.nt.p. daimonion demon + pres.act.part.nom.nt.p. poieo do*];

“performing” + noun acc.nt.p. *semion sign*], **which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world** [ἃ ἐκπορεύεται ἐπὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης [*pro.nom.nt.p. ho* “which” + *pres.dep.ind.3s. ekporeuomai go out* + *prep epi to* + *art.w/noun acc.m.p. basileus king* + *art.w/noun gen.f.s. oikoumene inhabited earth* + *adj.gen.f.s. holos whole*], **to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty** [συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος [*aor.act.infin. sunago gather up* + *pro.acc.m.p. autos* “them” + *prep eis to* + *art.w/noun acc.m.s. polemos battle* + *art.w/noun gen.f.s. hemera day* + *art.w/adj.gen.f.s. megas great* + *art.w/noun gen.f.s. theos God* + *art.w/noun gen.m.s. pantokrator all-powerful*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 13-14

1. Verses 13-16 are not an interlude between the sixth and seventh bowls as have been noted between the sixth and seventh members of the previous series of seals and trumpets.
2. The section is rather a topical expansion or a commentary on v.12.
3. It shows that the leaders (“kings”) of the whole earth will join the king of the west and the kings of the east in the final great battle.
4. Verse 13 supplies an explanation of the impetus to muster such a large fighting force.
5. The three uses of the preposition *ek* (“from”) is indicative of a propaganda campaign through which the unholy trinity will fan the fanaticism of the nations at large to mount a campaign to withstand the Second Advent.
6. The influence of speech can hardly be underestimated in bringing volition to attempt the insane.
7. Satan, called here the dragon, who entered the visional activity at 12:3, 9, has been behind the scenes empowering the beast all along (13:2).
8. The beast is his prime proponent of evil all along, in the picture since 11:7 but more fully described in 13:11ff.
9. This is the first use of the name “false prophet,” but it refers to the second beast or the beast from the earth, encounter in 13:11ff.
10. This designation will be maintained throughout the rest of the book (19:20; 20:10).
11. It expresses his deceptiveness as the lying prophet who is in league with Satan’s front man (13:14).
12. False prophets, along with false christs, spring up all over the place in the last days (cf. Matt. 7:15; 2Pet. 2:1; 1Jn. 2:22; 4:1,3; 2Jn. 7).
13. This is the ultimate false prophet heading up the cult of the Antichrist.
14. From these three false mouths come “three unclean spirits.”
15. “Unclean spirits” is a common NT designation referring to fallen angels or demons (cf. Matt. 10:1; Mk. 1:23-24; 3:11; 5:2,13; Acts 5:16; 8:7), as verse 14 will make clear.
16. In John’s vision these three demons appear as that of “frogs.”
17. Frogs under the Levitical code were declared unclean animals (Lev. 11:10-11, 41).
18. Frogs recall the second Egyptian plague (Ex. 8:5); but no pestilence arises from this sending out.
19. Verse 14 clarifies the power and the mission of the three demons.

20. A parenthetical explanation introduced by *gar* (“for”) extends through “signs” and explains the power of the unclean spirits.
21. These spirits possess the same capacities to effect miracles that the second beast has in deceiving people (13:13-14; cf. 2Thess. 2:9-10).
22. Their deceptive work is reminiscent of the deceiving spirit that lured Ahab into battle (1Kgs. 22:19-22).
23. The agents of persuasion are the three demons.
24. Their mission is to persuade the existing rulers of the nations to muster armies and bring them to the Middle East.
25. The already advancing armies of the kings of the east supply an impetus for these kings to muster their forces for this great confrontation.
26. The expression “the whole inhabited world” appears in 3:10 and 12:9 with the same meaning as here.
27. The infinitive “to gather” expresses the purpose of the demonic expedition.
28. Under the sixth bowl this gathering takes place.
29. The battle proper occurs in connection with the seventh and final bowl.
30. This gathering of world forces at the very end of the tribulation is in line with OT prophetic teaching that God’s enemies would gather against Israel in the last days (Joel 2:11; 3:2; Zech. 14:2-3).
31. This is the ultimate battle predicted in Ps. 2:1-3.
32. John terms it “the battle of the great day of God the Almighty.”
33. Divine omnipotence will be fully demonstrated on this day.
34. This is the day of Christ’s coming to do battle with the Antichrist and all those forces vying for supremacy over the Land of Promise.