



THE FIRST FIVE CENSER-ANGELS

(REVELATION 16:1-11)

INTRODUCTION



FIRST VISION

SCENE 1-5 – Seals 1-5 (6:1-11)

SCENE 6 – Sixth Seal (6:12-17)
(End of this World) (NO Battle Scene)

The Interlude: Comfort and
and Protection of the Church (7:1-17)

SCENE 7 – Seventh Seal (8:1-5)
(Introduces the Second Vision)

SECOND VISION

SCENE 1-5 – Trumpets 1-5 (8:6 – 9:12)
Scene 5 (Fifth Trumpet-Angel)

SCENE 6 – Sixth Trumpet (9:13-21)
(The Great Battle)

The Interlude: The Church in Mission and
God's Protection (10:1-11:14)

SCENE 7 – Seventh Trumpet (11:15-19)
(End of this World)

The Interregnum
(Chapters 12-14)

THIRD VISION

SCENE 1-5 – Bowls 1-5 (15:1 – 16:11)

SCENE 6 – Sixth Bowl (16:12-16)
(The Battle of Armageddon)

SCENE 7 – Seventh Bowl (16:17-21)
(End of this World)

INTRODUCTION

“The severity of God’s judgments will increase as the end of this world at Christ’s return draws near. In fact, this is the overall emphasis in this third vision of earthly events. While some of the events presented in this third vision repeat those in the second, in the third vision they are all intensified in order to portray God’s final warning of the seriousness of His judgment at the End. For example, in 8:8-9, one third of the sea is contaminated and one third of ocean life perishes, but in the corresponding plague in 16:3, all seawater becomes blood and all sea creatures perish. Thus the plagues of God’s wrath in the third vision urge the human race to repent before it is too late since no one [all unbelievers] will escape the final judgment” (Brighton, Revelation, CPH, p. 409).

REVELATION 16:1-11

THE GREAT VOICE

+ *“And I heard a great voice from the sanctuary”*

– Since this voice comes from the Temple, it is the voice of God Himself, and, more specifically, of Jesus! As we are reminded throughout Revelation, it is The Christ, the One who alone can break the seals, Who is in charge of the events as the Mediator of all that unfolds on earth before His glorious Second Advent!

REVELATION 16:1

FIRST CENSER-ANGEL (V.2)



+ *“And the first went forth and poured out his censer...harmful and painful sores”* – This judgment is

reminiscent of the plague of boils or blisters that struck Egypt (Ex. 9:8-12). However, those boils then were only for a short period of time, while the harmful and painful sores from this first bowl of God’s wrath will strike humanity all through the New Testament Era. We are not to take this literally, as though the entire human race will be struck down with literal **“harmful and painful sores,”** but rather that humanity will be afflicted physically by God’s wrath in many and various ways throughout history and that these afflictions will be intensified as Judgment Day draws near!

SECOND CENSER-ANGEL (V.3)



+ “*...sea became like blood*” – However this plague shall be fulfilled, one thing is certain,

namely that increasingly the seas, the bodies of salt water, will be made unfit for people or beasts, and that some of the basic requirements for sustaining human food and the cycle by which ocean water evaporates and then provides rain to water the earth will, in many and various ways throughout history, fail.

THIRD CENSER-ANGEL (V.4)



+ “ *...river and fountains of water became blood*”

Not only will the seas be plagued throughout

history in many and various ways, so also the freshwater supply will be plagued. The point is clear in both plagues that afflict humanity’s water supply, God’s wrath will strike them in such a way that they will sometimes harm, rather than sustain, human life throughout history.

AN ANGELIC RESPONSE (VV.5-7)

+ ***“And I heard the angel of the waters saying,”*** – This indicates that God’s holy angels have been given specific responsibilities to oversee specific aspects of His creation. Here, this angel has oversight of the waters of the earth.

+ ***“Righteous are you, the One Who Is...”*** – The angel of the waters cries out in worship and praise of God, declaring that His judgments are just. God’s holy angels know all too well what our sins deserve, for they are ever in the presence of the Holy and Righteous Creator of the universe. The greatest mystery to them is the fact that God would become Man in order to save the human race from what they deserve for their sins. They gladly obey God in ministering to His chosen people, those to whom He gives faith, but they also gladly obey God in administering His wrath and judgment upon those who reject Him and remain in their sins.

AN ANGELIC RESPONSE (VV.5-7)

+ *“for the blood of saints and prophets they shed, and so now blood You have given them to drink, Deserving are they!”* – While all unbelievers will justly experience God’s wrath and punishment, it is specifically those who persecute and kill God’s chosen people which are highlighted by the angel here. They will get what’s coming to them in the End. God will vindicate His people. He will take vengeance upon those who have harmed or killed them. And, again, God is perfectly righteous and just in doing so. This is a constant theme throughout Revelation and we have seen the fact that God will punish those who afflict His people highlighted throughout (cf. 6:9-1; 8:3-5).

FOURTH CENSER ANGEL (VV.8, 9)



+ “...upon the sun...burn men with fire” – The angel pours out the fourth bowl and the sun is allowed to

scorch people with fire. This is figurative language and does not mean that the sun will literally rain literal fire down upon people to scorch them, but rather that the sun will be used to cause great pain and discomfort among the people of the earth. Remember, all of these plagues, or judgments, happen in various ways throughout the New Testament Era. Thus, we could rightly conclude that the fact that the sun has been increasingly damaging to people on earth of late could very well indicate that the End is drawing near, we must also recognize that God has allowed the sun to plague people on earth in many ways throughout history.

THEY CURSE GOD (V.9)

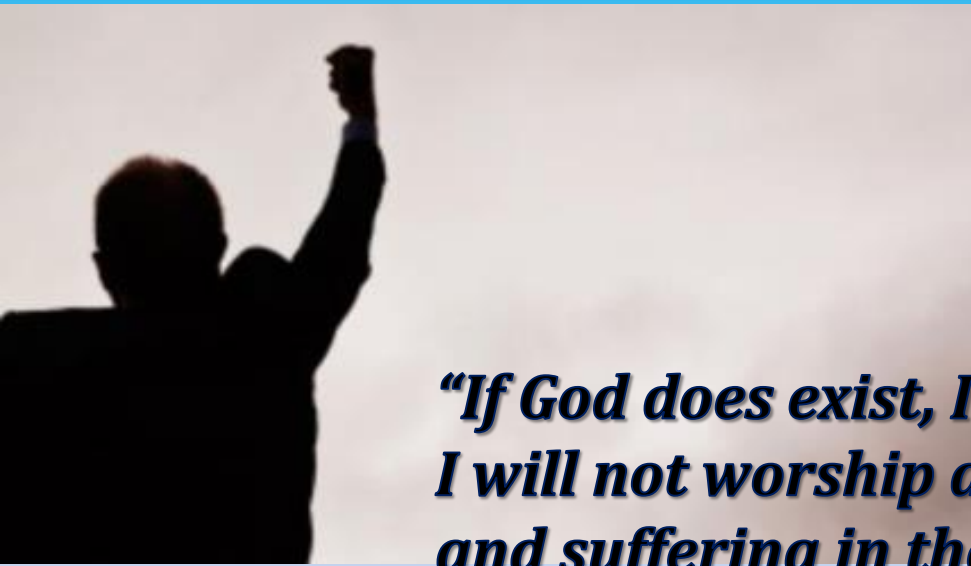


+ “...they blasphemed the name of God...did not repent to give him glory”

- The point of all of the

Censer judgments poured out onto man by God is to warn them of the Judgment to come and to call them to repentance and faith. Yet, most will miss the point entirely. When these judgments come upon them, instead of turning to God in repentance and faith, they blaspheme and curse Him. Either they acknowledge that there is a God and hate Him for making them suffer so; or they attribute their sufferings to random chance or “fate,” refusing to acknowledge God, which is just as blasphemous.

THEY CURSE GOD (V.9)



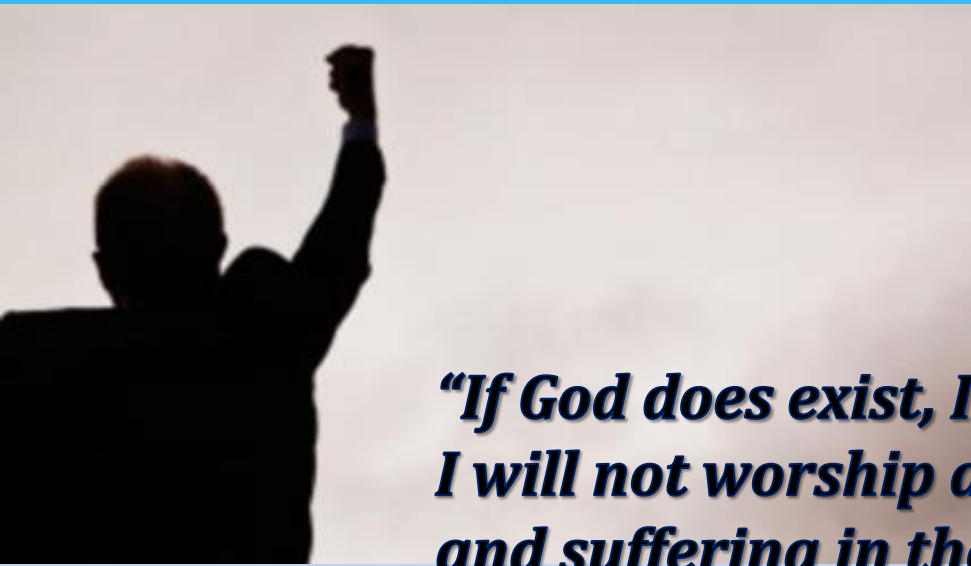
+ “...they blasphemed the name of God...did not repent to give him glory”

- People often say things like,

“If God does exist, I want nothing to do with Him! I will not worship a God who allows all this pain and suffering in the world!”

What they fail to realize is that God allows “all this pain and suffering in the world” because He cares about their eternal well-being. He uses pain and suffering to turn them from their rebellion and rescue them from the eternal pain and suffering they will experience in Hell should they refuse to turn to Him in repentance and faith. It is truly better to suffer here on earth than to suffer eternally in Hell!

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Compare Rom. 8:18-39!

FIFTH CENSER ANGEL (VV.10)



+ “...*throne of the beast...darkness*” – Since those who have “*the mark of the beast*” upon them

refuse to repent, God strikes the beast and its kingdom, which is the very object of their worship and allegiance. The beast’s kingdom is “*plunged into darkness,*” which is reminiscent of the plague of darkness brought upon Egypt (Exodus 10:21-23). However, there is a difference between the darkness then and the darkness spoken about here. In Egypt, it was a literal darkness, but here it is a spiritual darkness, symbolizing eternal death, damnation, and everlasting separation from the Light, i.e., Christ (cf. John 1:4-10).

FIFTH CENSER ANGEL (VV.10)



+ “...*throne of the beast...darkness*” -

Already in this life, those who are citizens in the beast’s kingdom will experience spiritual darkness, lacking the peace, hope, and comfort which comes only through faith in Christ. Their lives will be in spiritual disarray - in darkness - for such is the nature of the kingdom of the beast. However, the darkness they experience in this life will be nothing like that eternal darkness to come!

FIFTH CENSER ANGEL (VV.10)

+ *“...and they were biting their tongues...And they blasphemed the God of heaven...did not repent of their works.”* - God’s actions of plunging the kingdom of the beast into darkness are to awaken those who belong to that kingdom to understand the futility of their allegiance and to turn in repentance and faith to His Kingdom of Light. But, again, we are alerted to the sad fact that most people will not take heed of God’s warnings. Instead, they will grow more violent in their hatred and anger toward God. They **“gnaw their tongues in anguish”** now, but as our Lord tells us, *“they will be thrown outside into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* for eternity (Matt. 8:12; cf. Matt. 22:13; 25:30; 2 Pet. 2:17; Jude 13).

NEXT WEEK

THE SIXTH CENSER-ANGEL

