

## The Second Bowl

Revelation 16:3

The End Times

In my last post, we examined the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah. In this post, we return to **Revelation 16:3** to explore **The Second Bowl**.

***"The second one poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a dead person, and every living thing in the sea died."*** ~ Revelation 16:3 (CJB)

The second bowl judgment was poured out upon the sea. This, too, is similar to the account where Moshe and Aharon turned the waters of Egypt to blood (Exodus 7:17-21). Also, you may recall that the **Second Seal** (Revelation 6:3-4) was an account of the **Red Horse** which caused a great war with much bloodshed. The sounding of the **Second Shofar** (Revelation 8:8-9) caused one-third of the sea to become blood. This time all the seas of the whole earth are impacted.

It 's hard to imagine all the seas in the world turning to blood. This plague will involve all salt water bodies, and all living creatures in these seas will die. Because of the magnitude of this plague, there are some who refuse to believe that this could be a real plague would afflict the oceans of our world. Gary Cohen writes: <sup>1</sup>

*In 8:8-9 the second trumpet turned the sea one-third to blood, and one-third of the fish died. Here, however, the second bowl is not partial; it is universal in magnitude. It will sweep the sea, and the fish not in aquariums or otherwise separated from the sea will perish. Alas, sinful man denies God and boasts that he controls the oceans—that he is the master of his fate. God's plagues will, as in the case of Pharaoh, show all that God alone rules the world! Since Exodus 7:20-25 shows that the turning of the Nile to blood at the touch of Moses' rod was an event that actually occurred in the real world, I do not doubt for a moment that this second bowl judgment will also literally take place. Here we do not have a mere parabolic—fairy story that is intended to teach us the lesson that God will own the seas in the end; but one which will never actually happen. No, the second bowl will be poured forth, and the sea will become blood. It has been spoken; it will come to pass.*

At the time of **Yochanan's** writing, the Roman Empire lived by sea trade and most of their food came from the sea. Because travel by land was slow, Rome depended on the sea for most of its transport of goods. The key cities in the Roman Empire were the ports on the Mediterranean Sea. Rome's Navy ensured the safety of travel on the Mediterranean. But they could do nothing against God's judgment. This type of judgment would devastate a civilization. <sup>2</sup>

### Special Comparative Note on Chapter 16:3 <sup>3</sup>

#### Historicist Approach:

**Historicists** do not see this passage literally. Recall they see these plagues as a judgment of the papacy. Fulfillment of this prophecy is found in a series of great naval disasters that swept away the fleets of France, Spain, and Portugal, all Papal nations that had a navy during the late 1700's and early 1800's.

<sup>1</sup> A Layman's Commentary on Revelation by Don Jones.

<sup>2</sup> Life Application Bible Commentary – Revelation

<sup>3</sup> Material in this post is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg. Notations in brackets, if any, are my comments.

### Preterist Approach:

It doesn't appear that **Preterists** have a unified view of this passage other than the similarities with the **Second Shofar**. For those who see the second half of Revelation as depicting the fall of Rome, the difference in the extent of the two sets of judgments would be explained regarding the **shofars** being upon Jerusalem, and the **bowls** more universally upon the Roman Empire at large.

### Futurist Approach:

**Futurists** again allow for a more symbolic than literal interpretation. This bowl represents the moral and spiritual death among the nations. Stedman points out that we have already observed the phenomenon of the "**red tide**" which scientists have seen in the Caribbean and elsewhere. Microorganisms multiply precipitously turning the water a dark scarlet and killing all sea life in the affected area.

### Idealist Approach:

**Idealists** like the **Preterists** are divided over the interpretation of this passage. ***The blood of a dead person*** brings into focus the utter putrefaction of a dead society. God brings final punishment and death upon unrepentant sinners.

In my next post, we again take a break from our study of Revelation to observe **Yom Kippur**.