

## **Session 4: The Wrath of God: 7 Seals, 7 Trumpets, 7 Bowls**

Rev 6:1 - 17; 8:1 - 5, 8:6 - 9:21; 11:15 - 19, 16:1 - 21

(Scripture references based on NIV)

### **1. Key Learning Points**

- i) Understand that God's wrath is in His nature because God's wrath is
  - a) hope for the faithful
  - b) mercy for the sinful
  - c) complete for all
- ii) Let us respond by:
  - a) Remaining faithful even in the midst of tribulation by putting our trust and hope in God's complete justice
  - b) Not reveling in the punishment of the evil and sinful
  - c) Being faithful in Christ's Great commission to preach the gospel to all people, even to those who reject him.

### **2. Opening Prayer**

Dear Heavenly Father, we praise You and give thanks for the gift of Your Word to us. As we look into your judgements, we pray that Your Holy Spirit grants us open ears to hear what You want to speak to us. Grant us open eyes to witness and appreciate Your Justice and Mercy. Grant us an open heart to be convicted and moved to respond to Your Word. Empty our preconceptions, so that Christ can be truly magnified and spoken in all our sharings. We pray this in the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.

### **3. Starter Question**

*Take note not to reveal the topic or the passage for today until after discussing the following starter question!*

How would you describe God? What are some adjectives that pop into your head?

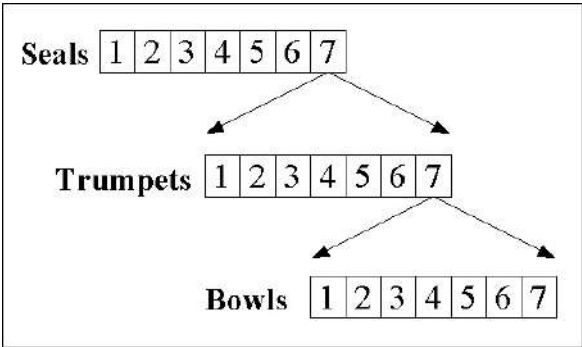
#### 4. Context

*Share some of the following information with the group after the starter question. You may pick what is most helpful and important for your group's understanding.*

Today, we will be exploring an aspect of God that is often neglected - His wrath. We will discuss this topic through exploring the three series of judgements in Revelation. The three sets of judgements are the seven seals (Rev 6:1 - 17, 8:1-5), the seven trumpets (8:5 - 9:21, 11:15 - 19), and the seven bowls (16:1 - 21).

*Although there is quite a lot of scripture covered in this session, we will not be covering all the details in the passages. Rather, the session will try to focus on how God is the author of wrath, who is the subject of His wrath, and how Christians are to respond in light of it.*

#### Two interpretations of the three sets of judgements

| Interpretation | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sequential     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Views the judgements happening sequentially as written in Revelation:</li><li>The events of the 7 seals, 7 trumpets, and 7 bowls happen one after another.</li><li>A popular sub-genre of this interpretation is the “Russian Doll” interpretation.</li><li>Much like how within one doll, it contains the next doll, which contains the next doll, this interpretation takes that the 7th seal contains both the trumpet and bowl judgements, while the 7th trumpet contains the bowl judgements.</li></ul> <div><br/></div> |

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Recapitulation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This interpretation understands that the descriptions of each are the same set of events with different lenses and emphasis.</li> <li>• The seals provide an overview and framing of judgements and its impact on God's people.</li> <li>• The trumpets convey the intensifying details and consequences of rejecting God.</li> <li>• The bowls express the completeness and finality of God's judgement .</li> </ul> |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### **How we should approach reading these judgements**

- **We need not decide which of the two interpretations is right!**
  - We may hold the two interpretations of the judgements in tension.
  - Both approaches provide helpful perspectives and we might appreciate the uniqueness of each set of judgement.
- **Avoid mapping the details of these judgements to events or persons (futurist view)**
  - Given the nature of the Revelation being prophetic and apocalyptic, its descriptions of its events should not be interpreted completely literally.
  - Consider how the Pharisees, who knew every detail of the Law, and yet rejected Jesus because they were watching out for a military and political Messiah. Contrary to man's ideas of victory, Jesus came in servanthood and humility, and triumphed over sin and death.
  - Hence, we are not to focus on fitting the visions in Revelation to what we want to see in the present.
- **Grasp the broad strokes of what God reveals of Himself and His plan through these visions.**
  - Focus on how the judgements build up the anticipation of God's victory at the end.
  - Focus on how the judgements brings conviction of sin in preparation of God's justice
  - Focus on how the judgements inform us about how the time is short and how we are to live in the present

## Overview of Session

*This table is just for the leader to get a sense of the overall direction of the session.*

| Question | How it builds our understanding                                                                               |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1        | Breaking down the scripture passages to identify the key events                                               |
| 2-3      | Identifying God as the author of His wrath<br>Identifying the actors on the scene as instruments of His wrath |
| 4        | Reflection on the reality of God's wrath                                                                      |
| 5        | Comparing the judgements to see thematic patterns across the 3 sets of judgements                             |
| 6-8      | Discussion on what God's wrath means for us today                                                             |

## 5. Discussion / Exploration

### 1) Activity 1: Break down, not Crash out

*This is an activity that will allow the group to read and explore the three different chunks of scripture in smaller groups.*

Split the YSG into 3 smaller groups and assign them a wall in the room. Each group will read and discuss only one set of judgements. Assign each group to one of the following sections of scripture:

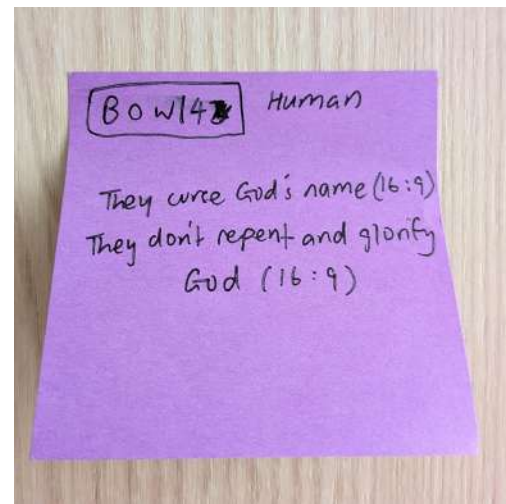
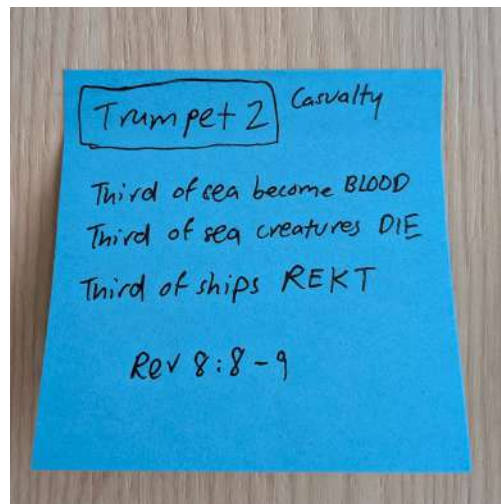
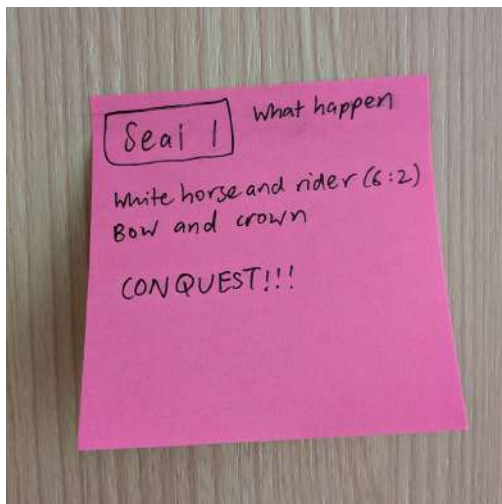
- The Seven Seals: Rev 6:1 - 17; 8:1 - 5
- Seven Trumpets: Rev 8:6 - 9:21; 11:15 - 19
- Seven Bowls: Rev 16:1 - 21

Each smaller group will receive three different coloured post-its. There will be 15 minutes given to fill in their post-it notes with details and populate their assigned wall with the following ideas from their respective passages.

- Colour A: What happens (*Seal 1, Trumpet 2, Bowl 3*)?
- Colour B: What are the casualties/damages? (*Note: not all of the judgements have these!*)
- Colour C: How do people respond? (*Note: not all of the judgements have these!*)

Each post-it note should be labeled according to which judgement (e.g. Seal 1, Trumpet 2, Bowl 4) and the relevant verses should be cited.

## Examples of post-it notes



*The details for each question have been summarized for you in the tables below. It is not necessary for each group to write down everything before moving forward. Ideally,*

After 15 minutes, give several minutes for the entire group to explore the room and read the details of what other smaller groups have put up.

### **The Seven Seals (Rev 6:1 - 17; 8:1 - 5)**

Fun fact: In biblical times, seals were a sign of ownership or authentication from kingly authority! Breaking it open is to reveal an important message from a person of power.

| Seal | What Happens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Casualties/Damages | Human Responses |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1    | (1) White Horse and Rider <b>(Rev 6:2)</b><br>(2) Holds a bow <b>(Rev 6:2)</b><br>(3) Given a crown <b>(Rev 6:2)</b><br>(4) Rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest <b>(Rev 6:2)</b>                                                                                                                                                         | -                  | -               |
| 2    | (1) Red Horse and Rider <b>(Rev 6:4)</b><br>(2) Given power to take peace from the earth <b>(Rev 6:4)</b><br>(3) Make people kill each other <b>(Rev 6:4)</b><br>(4) Given a large sword <b>(Rev 6:4)</b>                                                                                                                                     | -                  | -               |
| 3    | (1) Black Horse and Rider <b>(Rev 6:5)</b><br>(2) Holds a pair of scales in his hand <b>(Rev 6:5)</b><br>(3) “Two pounds of wheat for a day’s wages, and six pounds of barley for a day’s wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!” <b>(Rev 6:6)</b> <i>[Note: Likely refers to a time of scarcity, famine, and economic inflation]</i> | -                  | -               |

| Seal | What Happens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Casualties/Damages | Human Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4    | (1) Pale Horse and Rider <b>(Rev 6:8)</b><br>(2) Named Death <b>(Rev 6:8)</b><br>(3) Hades was following close behind him <b>(Rev 6:8)</b><br>(4) Given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth. <b>(Rev 6:8)</b>                                  | -                  | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 5    | (1) Souls of the faithful cry out from under the altar <b>(Rev 6:9)</b><br>(2) Slain for the Word of God and their faithful testimony <b>(Rev 6:9)</b><br>(3) Each was given a white robe <b>(Rev 6:11)</b><br>(4) Told to wait a little longer, until the full number of fellow martyred faithful <b>(Rev 6:11)</b> | -                  | <u>The faithful</u> called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" <b>(Rev 6:10)</b>                                                                                                                                                  |
| 6    | (1) Great earthquake <b>(Rev 6:12)</b><br>(2) Sun turned black <b>(Rev 6:12)</b><br>(3) Moon turned red <b>(Rev 6:12)</b><br>(4) Stars in the sky fell to earth <b>(Rev 6:13)</b><br>(5) Heavens receded <b>(Rev 6:14)</b><br>(6) Every mountain and island was removed from its place <b>(Rev 6:14)</b>             | -                  | <u>The kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free</u> <b>(Rev 6:15)</b><br><br>(1) hide in caves and among the rocks of the mountains <b>(Rev 6:15)</b><br>(2) hide from the face of God <b>(Rev 6:16)</b><br>(3) hide from Wrath of the Lamb <b>(Rev 6:16)</b> |

| Seal | What Happens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Casualties/Damages | Human Responses                                                |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    | (4) who can withstand the day of God's wrath <b>(Rev 6:17)</b> |
| 7    | (1) Silence in heaven for half an hour <b>(Rev 8:1)</b><br>(2) Seven trumpets given <b>(Rev 8:2)</b><br>(3) Censer of prayers of all God's people <b>(Rev 8:3)</b><br>(4) Peals of thunder <b>(Rev 8:5)</b><br>(5) Rumbles <b>(Rev 8:5)</b><br>(6) Flashes of lightning <b>(Rev 8:5)</b><br>(7) An earthquake <b>(Rev 8:5)</b> | -                  | -                                                              |

### **The Seven Trumpets (Rev 8:6 - 9:21; 11:15 - 19)**

Fun fact: In biblical times, trumpets were used to herald and announce conflict, war, or victory!

| Trumpet | What Happens                                                                                          | Casualties/Damages                                                                                                                                      | Human Responses |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1       | (1) Hail and Fire mixed with Blood <b>(Rev 8:7)</b><br>(2) Hurling down on the earth <b>(Rev 8:7)</b> | (1) 1/3 of earth burned up <b>(Rev 8:7)</b><br>(2) 1/3 of trees burned up <b>(Rev 8:7)</b><br>(3) 1/3 of all the green grass burned up <b>(Rev 8:7)</b> | -               |
| 2       | (1) Mountain ablaze thrown into the sea <b>(Rev 8:8)</b>                                              | (1) 1/3 of sea turn to blood <b>(Rev 8:8)</b><br>(2) 1/3 sea creatures die <b>(Rev 8:9)</b><br>(3) 1/3 ships destroyed <b>(Rev 8:9)</b>                 | -               |

| Trumpet          | What Happens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Casualties/Damages                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Human Responses |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                 |
| 3                | (1) A great star fell from the sky <b>(Rev 8:10)</b><br>(2) On ⅓ of rivers and springs of water <b>(Rev 8:10)</b><br>(3) Named Wormwood <b>(Rev 8:11)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | (1) ⅓ of the waters turns bitter <b>(Rev 8:11)</b><br>(2) Many people died from the bitter waters <b>(Rev 8:11)</b>                                                                                                                   | -               |
| 4                | (1) ⅓ of the sun was struck and turned dark <b>(Rev 8:12)</b><br>(2) ⅓ of the moon was struck and turned dark <b>(Rev 8:12)</b><br>(3) ⅓ of the stars was struck and turned dark <b>(Rev 8:12)</b>                                                                                                                                                                           | (1) ⅓ of the day without light <b>(Rev 8:12)</b><br>(2) ⅓ of the night without light <b>(Rev 8:12)</b>                                                                                                                                | -               |
| 5<br>(First Woe) | (1) Star fell from sky to the earth <b>(Rev 9:1)</b><br>(2) Star given key to Abyss <b>(Rev 9:1)</b><br>(3) Opened Abyss and smoke rose <b>(Rev 9:2)</b><br>(4) Locusts came out of the smoke that look like <b>(Rev 9:3)</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Horses prepared for battle <b>(Rev 9:7)</b></li> <li>b. Crowns of gold <b>(Rev 9:7)</b></li> </ul> | (1) Those without the seal of God were not killed, but tortured for 5 months <b>(Rev 9:4-5)</b><br>(2) Agony like the sting of a scorpion <b>(Rev 9:5)</b><br>(3) People will long to die, but death will elude them <b>(Rev 9:6)</b> |                 |

| Trumpet           | What Happens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Casualties/Damages                             | Human Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Human faces <b>(Rev 9:7)</b></li> <li>d. Women's hair <b>(Rev 9:8)</b></li> <li>e. Lion's teeth <b>(Rev 9:8)</b></li> <li>f. Breastplates of iron <b>(Rev 9:9)</b></li> <li>g. Wings like the thundering of horses and chariots <b>(Rev 9:9)</b></li> <li>h. Tails with stingers <b>(Rev 9:10)</b></li> </ul> <p>(5) Given power like that of scorpions on earth <b>(Rev 9:3)</b></p> <p>(6) Cannot harm grass, plant or tree <b>(Rev 9:4)</b></p> <p>(7) Only harm those without the seal of God <b>(Rev 9:4)</b></p> <p>(8) King over the creatures is the angel of the Abyss (Abaddon or Apollyon, meaning Destroyer) <b>(Rev 9:11)</b></p> |                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 6<br>(Second Woe) | <p>(1) 4 angels bound at the River Euphrates released <b>(Rev 9:14)</b></p> <p>(2) Twice ten thousand times ten thousand (200 Million) mounted troops <b>(Rev 9:16)</b></p> <p>(3) Horses and Riders look like <b>(Rev 9:17):</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | (1) 1/3 of mankind killed <b>(Rev 9:15,18)</b> | <p>(1) Those not killed did not repent of the work of their hands <b>(Rev 9:20):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continued worshiping demons and idols <b>(Rev 9:20)</b></li> <li>b. Continued murders <b>(Rev 9:21)</b></li> <li>c. Continued magic arts <b>(Rev 9:21)</b></li> <li>d. Continued sexual immorality <b>(Rev 9:21)</b></li> </ul> |

| Trumpet                  | What Happens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Casualties/Damages | Human Responses                                                                         |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Breastplates fiery red, dark blue, and sulfur yellow <b>(Rev 9:17)</b></li> <li>b. Horses heads resemble lions heads <b>(Rev 9:17)</b></li> <li>c. Mouth breathed fire, smoke, and sulfur <b>(Rev 9:17)</b></li> <li>d. Tails like snakes, inflict injury <b>(Rev 9:19)</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Continued thefts <b>(Rev 9:21)</b></li> </ul> |
| <b>7<br/>(Third Woe)</b> | <p>(1) Voice in heaven proclaim that the kingdom of the world has become Jesus' kingdom, and will reign forever <b>(Rev 11:15)</b></p> <p>(2) 24 elders fell on their faces in worship <b>(Rev 11:16)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Proclaim God Almighty <b>(Rev 11:17)</b></li> <li>b. The One who is and who was <b>(Rev 11:17)</b></li> <li>c. Taken great power and begin to reign <b>(Rev 11:17)</b></li> <li>d. Wrath has come <b>(Rev 11:18)</b></li> <li>e. Time to judge the dead has come <b>(Rev 11:18)</b></li> </ul> | -                  | <p>(1) Nations were angry <b>(Rev 11:18)</b></p>                                        |

| Trum<br>pet | What Happens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Casualties/Damages | Human Responses |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|             | f. Reward and destruction given as judged <b>(Rev 11:18)</b><br>(3) God's temple in heaven opened <b>(Rev 11:19)</b><br>(4) Ark of Covenant seen <b>(Rev 11:19)</b><br>(5) Flashes of lightning <b>(Rev 11:19)</b><br>(6) Rumbles <b>(Rev 11:19)</b><br>(7) Peals of thunder <b>(Rev 11:19)</b><br>(8) An earthquake <b>(Rev 11:19)</b><br>(9) Severe hailstorm <b>(Rev 11:19)</b> |                    |                 |

### The Seven Bowls (Rev 16:1 - 21)

Not-so-fun fact: In biblical language, bowls are very often associated with the pouring out of God's wrath.

| Bo<br>wl | What Happens                                                                            | Casualties/Damages                                                                                                                               | Human Responses |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1        | (1) Pour bowl on land <b>(Rev 16:2)</b>                                                 | (1) Ugly, festering sores broke out <b>(Rev 16:2)</b><br>(2) On the people with the mark of the beast and worshipped its image <b>(Rev 16:2)</b> | -               |
| 2        | (1) Pour bowl on the sea <b>(Rev 16:3)</b><br>(2) Sea turned to blood <b>(Rev 16:3)</b> | (1) Every living thing in the sea died <b>(Rev 16:3)</b>                                                                                         | -               |

| <b>Bo<br/>wl</b> | <b>What Happens</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Casualties/Damages</b>                                                                                                      | <b>Human Responses</b>                                                                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3</b>         | (1) Pour bowl on rivers and springs of water <b>(Rev 16:4)</b><br>(2) Rivers and springs of water turned to blood <b>(Rev 16:4)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | -                                                                                                                              | -                                                                                                     |
| <b>4</b>         | (1) Pour bowl on the sun <b>(Rev 16:8)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | (1) Sun scorch people with fire <b>(Rev 16:8)</b><br>(2) Seared by the intense heat <b>(Rev 16:9)</b>                          | (1) Curse the name of God <b>(Rev 16:9)</b><br>(2) Refuse to repent and glorify God <b>(Rev 16:9)</b> |
| <b>5</b>         | (1) Pour bowl on the throne of the beast <b>(Rev 16:10)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | (1) Kingdom of the beast plunged into darkness <b>(Rev 16:10)</b><br>(2) People gnaw their tongues in agony <b>(Rev 16:10)</b> | (1) Curse the God of heaven <b>(Rev 16:11)</b><br>(2) Refuse to repent <b>(Rev 16:11)</b>             |
| <b>6</b>         | (1) Pour bowl on the River Euphrates <b>(Rev 16:12)</b><br>(2) Water dried up to prepare way for the kings from the East <b>(Rev 16:12)</b><br>(3) 3 impure demonic spirits <b>(Rev 16:13)</b> :<br>a. From the mouth of the dragon, beast, and false prophet <b>(Rev 16:13)</b><br>b. Looked like frogs <b>(Rev 16:13)</b><br>c. Perform signs <b>(Rev 16:14)</b> | -                                                                                                                              | (1) Kings of the whole world gather for battle on the great day of God Almighty <b>(Rev 16:14)</b>    |

| Bo<br>wl | What Happens                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Casualties/Damages                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Human Responses                                                 |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
|          | <p>d. Gather kings of the whole world for battle <b>(Rev 16:14)</b></p> <p>(4) Gather kings at Armageddon <b>(Rev 16:16)</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                 |
| 7        | <p>(1) Pour bowl in the air <b>(Rev 16:17)</b></p> <p>(2) Voice from the temple, from the throne declares “It is done!” <b>(Rev 16:17)</b></p> <p>(3) Flashes of lightning <b>(Rev 16:18)</b></p> <p>(4) Rumbings <b>(Rev 16:18)</b></p> <p>(5) Peals of thunder <b>(Rev 16:18)</b></p> <p>(6) A severe earthquake (nothing like ever before) <b>(Rev 16:18)</b></p> <p>(7) Huge hailstones, weighing 100 pounds, fell on people <b>(Rev 16:21)</b></p> | <p>(1) Great city split into three parts <b>(Rev 16:19)</b></p> <p>(2) Cities of the nations collapsed <b>(Rev 16:19)</b></p> <p>(3) Every island fled away <b>(Rev 16:20)</b></p> <p>(4) Mountains cannot be found <b>(Rev 16:20)</b></p> | <p>(1) Curse God for the plagues of hail <b>(Rev 16:21)</b></p> |

*You may leave the smaller groups intact and proceed to discuss the questions 2-4 as a big group.*

## **2) Who are the actors in these 3 sets of judgements and what roles do they play?**

*The intention of this question is to begin to help youths see that the different actors are playing roles that have been given to them by God. The discussion for this question need not be exhaustive as the following question is more important.*

### **List of actors we encounter**

- 4 riders
- Angels and the 24 elders
- The beast, the false prophet, and the dragon
- A variety of creatures
- Human beings
- God the Father and Jesus

## **3) Who is the author of these 3 sets of judgements? How can we tell? Supp: Refer to Rev 6:1-2, 8:2, 15:7. What do these verses tell us about who is really in charge?**

- God is the author of these judgements, plagues, punishments. He alone is the author of His Wrath.
- All the actors on the stage are instruments of God's wrath.
  - We are told that the authority that the actors have is merely "given" to them.
  - Jesus is the one who opens each of the seals throughout Rev 6.
  - The riders are commanded to come (Rev 6:1-2), which means that they do not come of their own accord.
  - He is given the bow and the crown, which means that they are not items that the rider claims as his own.
  - The trumpets are given to the angels (Rev 8:2) by God.
  - The bowls are given to the angels and they are called "the seven bowls of the wrath of God" (Rev 15:7).

## **4) Mid-session Reflection**

*This may be one of the first times that your members consider the "wrathful" aspect of God for the first time. Do allow time for them to share their thoughts! After this discussion, share that the next part of the session will help us understand the need and purpose of God's wrath.*

### **Some possible questions to reflect upon:**

- What does it mean to us that God writes His wrath and how do we feel about it?
- How do these ideas compare to the descriptions we tend to associate God with at the start of the session?
- How can God be wrathful and loving at the same time?
- Why does God need to show wrath?

## 5) Activity 2: Compare and Contrast

Within each smaller group, ask them to split again into three tiny groups. Each tiny group should hold onto all the post-it notes of one of the colours. Then, have all the tiny groups of each colour across the three sets of judgement gather to form a new group. Each newly formed group should be holding onto all of the same coloured post-it notes.

- Colour A: What happens?
- Colour B: What are the casualties/damages?
- Colour C: How do people respond?

**Give each group five minutes to discuss this question. What patterns emerge as the judgements progress?**

*It's okay if the group is unable to identify all of the points below. The main objective here is to help the group to see that there are some themes underlying the different sets of judgements. Points under Colours B and C are more important as they relate to questions 6-8 more strongly.*

### Colour A: What happens?

- Patterns that emerge
  - The 7th judgement of each set are similar in description
    - There is repetition of the peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake
  - The 7th judgement of each set grow more dramatic from the previous
    - The trumpet judgement added hail and the bowl judgement increased severity in the 100 pound hail stone and the worst earthquake ever
  - The 7th judgements of each set seem to grow closer in intimacy with God
    - 7th seal: Altar of incense in the Holy Place (Rev 8:3)
    - 7th trumpet: Ark of Covenant in the Holy of Holies (Rev 11:19)
    - 7th bowl: God himself because we hear His voice directly (Rev 16:17)

### Colour B: What are the casualties/damages?

- The pattern that emerges is that the casualties and damages grow in severity and intensity.
- The seven seals do not explicitly state casualties.
- The seven trumpets state 1/3 casualties, and that there is pain but no death.
- The seven bowls state total casualties.

### Colour C: How do people respond?

- The pattern that emerges is that the unrepentant and rejection of God amongst the sinful grows stronger.
- Seven seals
  - Response seems to be more mild
  - Only time the faithful speak, calling for vindication from God
  - The people of the world tries to hide from God's wrath

- Seven trumpets
  - People are unrepentant and refuse to give glory to God
- Seven bowls
  - People outrightly rebel against God by cursing Him and gathering armies for battle against God

### **Summary of patterns which emerge**

- Each set of judgements brings us closer to God Himself.
- The casualties and damages sustained grows with each set of judgements.
- The unrepentant people grow increasingly rebellious in their rejection of God with each set of judgements.

*For the final three discussion questions, bring the entire group back together.*

### **6) What happens to people amidst all of these judgements? Supp: Are all human beings treated the same?**

- Recipients of God's wrathful judgement are sinful mankind and not the faithful.
- How we know this
  - The martyred saints are assured that God will judge and avenge injustice fairly (Seal 5, Rev 6:10-11)
  - Even people in power hide in fear of God's wrath (Seal 6, Rev 6:15-17)
  - Only those without the seal of God on their foreheads are subjected to the locusts (Trumpet 5, Rev 9:4)
  - Those who did not die to the plagues continued to be unrepentant (Trumpet 6, Rev 9:20-21)
  - Painful sores came upon only those with the mark of the beast and worshiped it (Bowl 1, Rev 16:2)
  - The kingdom of the beast were plunged into darkness, their gnawed their tongues in anguish, and suffered painful sores (Bowl 5, Rev 16:10)

### **7) What would the wrath of God through these judgements mean for these two different groups of people?**

- **Hope for the faithful**
  - The faithful are told to hold on with the assurance that God will judge justly eventually (Rev 6:9–11).
  - In Trumpet 5, the plagues were not allowed to harm those with the seal of God (Rev 9:4).

- **Mercy for the Sinful**

- Only one-third of creation is struck down, indicating only partial destruction. This signals God's mercy and patient forbearance towards unrepentance (Rev 8:7-12).
- The refusal of sinners to repent is starkly contrasted with the prayers of the faithful in the seal judgements (Rev 9:20-21). The response indicates that these sinners are the target audience of these trumpet judgements.
- At the closing of the 7th trumpet, the 24 elders declare that the time of judgement has come (Rev 11:16-18), indicating that the trumpet judgements are a call to everyone to prepare and repent before the final judgement.

- **Completion for All – Bowl Judgements**

- In the bowl judgements, the wrath of God is finished (Rev 15:1).
- The final set brings total judgement upon those marked by the beast.
- The intensity of the judgements, the rebelliousness of sinners, and the proximity of God peaks here.
- God's patience—holding back wrath while offering grace—ends here.
- At the 7th bowl, a voice declares that "It is done!"

**8) What does the way God executes His wrath tell us more about who God is? Supp: What would you call a legal judge who lets a severe criminal go unpunished? How about if no second chances are ever given by this judge?**

- God is just.
  - He does not subject the faithful to His wrath through the plagues (though they may suffer trials and persecution for their faith!).
  - He never fails to punish the unrepentant.
- God is merciful.
  - He pours out His wrath partially first, allowing time for people to repent, before pouring it out completely.

## 6. Main Discipleship Takeaway(s)

### **God's Wrath is hope for the faithful.**

God's Wrath brings hope to those who have been faithful. His wrath is what allows us to be confident that God is just and fair. It is the hope that all will be made right before His judgement seat.

### **God's Wrath is mercy for the sinful.**

God's wrath bears His mercy and grace, unlike sinful human wrath or anger. Amidst His anger, God continues to call the sinner to repentance. It is a call also for the faithful not to neglect the Great Commission: to bring the sinner to repentance and make disciples of all nations.

### **God's Wrath is complete for all.**

God's wrath will not be delayed for long. It will come and it will be complete for all. We are cautioned not to mistake God's mercy for compromise, or to take His grace for granted. They show the perfectness of God's wrath, that when it finally comes, it is deserved. Do not delay in repentance, remain in reverence of God always!

## 7. Application / Reflection questions

- 1) **After going through this session today, how do you feel now about knowing the wrath of God?**
  - *What are the points about the wrath of God that have convicted you?*
  - *Has this session given you a fresh perspective on God's wrath? How so?*
- 2) **Throughout this session, we constantly see the contrast between the faithful vs the sinful, in their deeds and in their consequences. Ask ourselves, would we belong to the faithful, or to the sinful?**
  - *You may use the following verses to encourage the group to consider further if our hearts are right with God and faithful to His commandments.*
  - *Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"*
  - *1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

- 3) We spoke how God's wrath gives hope to the faithful. Does today's discussion give you hope? Why or why not?
- 4) We spoke about how God's wrath gives mercy to the sinful. How should us Christians respond to this aspect of God's wrath?
- *Are there ways in which we have rejected God in our lives?*
  - *How might what we have read relate to the urgency of evangelism in our lives?*

## 8. Closing Prayer

*Following up from the last reflection question, you may consider leading the group in a time of prayer and repentance with the following prompts.*

- We come before God in repentance.
- We are convicted by our sins and confess the errors of our ways - the idolatry in our hearts, the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
- We ask for His forgiveness.
- We thank God for His love, mercy and grace, given to us through the cross of Jesus Christ and the precious blood He shed for us.
- In receiving that mercy and grace, ask God to empower us to go forth in power and in faith
- We ask for the Spirit's help to courageously declare the gospel of Christ to those who have yet to hear it.
- We pray we may be found faithful on the day of His final victory.