

Revelation Chapter 15

Revelation chapter 15 begins the preparation for the last seven vials. The wrath of God began with the seven seals (in chapter 6), and will be finished with the last seven vials. Chapter 15 is an introduction to these last seven and final plagues on mankind.

Throughout history God has poured out his wrath in judgment on early sinners. Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden brought the entire human race under judgment.

By Noah's days, people had turned so wicked, that God sent the judgment of the flood to destroy the entire world except eight people, Noah, his three sons and their wives.

Centuries of disobedience and wickedness by the Jewish people eventually led to their judgment and captivity. First the northern 10-1/2 tribes (in 722 B.C.), by the Assyrian Empire. Then the southern kingdom of Judah (in 586 B.C.), by the Babylonian Empire.

Cities named Sodom and Gomorrah was completely destroyed by God with fire and brimstone.

Now in Chapters 15 and 16 we see the final outpouring of God's wrath before Christ's return. That wrath is expressed by the effects of the seventh trumpet which was opened in chapter (11:15), which is very short and begins the introduction to those last seven judgments.

Revelation 15:1 "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

The "wrath of God" began with the seven seals (chapter 6), and will be finished with the "seven last plagues", which are the seven vials (verse 7). Chapter 15 is an introduction to these "last plagues" (see notes on 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15; compare Rom. 1:18-21).

This chapter in the book of Revelation sets the stage for the last seven vial judgments that cover the last three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation which are described (in Revelation chapter 16).

The seven angels prepare to administer the last seven Tribulation judgments of Christ (the seven vials). Vials are actually shallow bowls (these are called the bowl judgments), used for pouring libations (5:8; 1 Chronicles 28:17; Jeremiah 52:18; Zech. 9:15; 14:20). The bowls are full of the wrath of God (2 Thess. 1:7-9). God has the right to judge, because He is the Eternal incense that filled the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. Until the seven plagues are finished, no one is able to enter into the temple. The time for intercession is past; God's judgment will now be completed.

These plagues are really the wrath of God which occurs the last 3-1/2 years of the seven years of the Great Tribulation.

This "seven" just means this is the end. The wrath of the devil is bad, but to fall into the hands of Almighty God and have His wrath fall on unbelievers is the very worst thing that could happen.

These plagues will conclude with the wrath of God on sinful mankind for rejecting His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The last seven plagues indicate that these are in order and this finishes the 21 total plagues on mankind before the end of time.

Verses 2-4: The "sea of glass" was before God's throne in 4:6. The "victory over the beast" is won through faith in Christ (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 1 John 5:4-5), and refusal to submit to the Antichrist. The "song of Moses" may refer either to (Exodus chapter 15 or Deut. Chapter 32). The deliverance of Israel from Egypt prefigured the deliverance of the Tribulation saints from the Antichrist. They praise and worship God for His power and His righteousness. "All nations" will "come and worship" God in the millennial kingdom.

Revelation 15:2 "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, [and] over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

"Sea of glass": God's heavenly throne sits on a transparent crystal platform or pavement (see note on 4:6).

We see here a "sea of glass". A "sea" symbolizes great numbers of people sometimes. This could be the meaning here. This could also indicate the overcomers who have been baptized.

Rev. 4:6 "And before the throne [there was] a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, [were] four beasts full of eyes before and behind."

John was seeing the same crystal platform, but now it was mixed with the fire of God's judgment.

"Victory over the beast": All the saints from every nation, including Israel, ultimately triumph over Satan's Antichrist and his system because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

The victory over the beast has been won through faith in Christ and refusal to submit to the Antichrist. These are the Tribulation Martyrs who are rejoicing over the victory they have won. The harps indicate they are rejoicing and singing praise to God. These believers are rejoicing because their prayers for God's vengeance on their persecutors are about to be answered.

Now we see them standing on this "sea of glass". Every time we Christians see these terrible things, God reassures us of our position with Him. These believers have been up in heaven playing their harps. Notice here that these still have their "harps".

"Number of His name" (see note on 13:17).

"Harps" (see note on 5:8).

Revelation 15:3 "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous [are] thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true [are] thy ways, thou King of saints."

“Song of Moses”: Sung by the people of Israel immediately after their passage through the Red Sea and their deliverance from the Egyptian armies (Exodus 15:1-21; Compare Deut. 32:1-43). This was a song of victory and deliverance that the redeemed who overcome Antichrist and his system will readily identify with.

This "they" are the believers in Christ. The "song of Moses" and the "song of the Lamb" are the same. This is the song of redemption. God used Moses to redeem His people from bondage in Egypt. Moses had lead the people out of the land of Egypt to the Promised Land prefiguring now Jesus is leading the Saints to that Promised Land we call heaven.

Who purchased this for us? Who did all the work Himself? Jesus. His works are "marvelous". It is beyond our imagination to see a beautiful snow-capped mountain and realize that the One who created that, also loved us enough that He climbed on the cross and suffered for us. He has every right to be our King. Remember in all of this, He is not just a loving God, but a "just and true" God as well.

“Song of the Lamb” (see 5:8-14). These two songs celebrate two great redemptive events:

- (1) Deliverance of Israel by God from Egypt through Moses; and
- (2) Deliverance of sinners by God from sin through Christ.

“Great and marvelous are thy works”: This statement from the song of the Lamb extols God’s powerful works in creation as He providentially upholds the universe (compare Psalms 139:14).

Verse 3 says "Lord God Almighty", this reminds me that Jesus truly was and is our Savior, but until He becomes Lord of our life we are miles apart from Him. This name just tells us of His overwhelming power.

"Lord God Almighty", celebrates God's omnipotence, essential to the triumphant power of the last judgments and appears frequently in Revelation. This name just tells us of His overwhelming power.

“Almighty”: God is omnipotent (compare Amos 4:13).

The exclamation, "just and true" reflects the Old Testament truth that all of God's works are true and His ways just (Dan. 4:37; Deut. 32:4; Hosea 14:9).

“King of saints”: God is sovereign over the redeemed of every nation (compare Jer. 10:7).

Revelation 15:4 "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for [thou] only [art] holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

God's holy and perfect character inevitably demands that He judge (compare Psalm 19:9; Nahum 1:3, 6). After God's righteous judgment is complete, He will set up Christ's millennial kingdom on earth and the elect from every nation will come and worship Him (compare Psalm 66:4; Isa. 66:23; Phil. 2:9-11).

In Proverbs 9:10 we read "The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy [is] understanding."

We are not to fear the world or its people. We are "to fear" (Reverence), God.

This "all nations shall come and worship", is speaking of the time when Jesus will sit on a throne in Jerusalem and rule the world. There will be a yearly pilgrimage by everyone to worship. We see Jesus is the only Holy one.

Philippians 2:10-11 says "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father."

After God's righteous acts of judgment has been made manifested or revealed, the time of Isaiah will come:

Isaiah 26:33 "And it shall come to pass, [that] from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD."

Verses 5-8: The "seven angels" prepare to administer the last seven Great Tribulation judgments of Christ: the "seven vials" (compare 16:1-17; 17:1; 21:9). The vials are actually shallow bowls (Greek phiale), used for pouring libations (compare 5:8; 1 Chron. 28:17; Jer. 52:18; Zech. 9:15, 14:20). The bowls are "full of the wrath of God" (compare 2 Thess. 1:7-9). God has the right to judge, because He is the Eternal One, the Almighty. The "temple" represents the presence of God Himself. The "smoke" is like the incense that filled the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. Until the "seven plagues" are finished, no one is "able to enter into the temple". The time for intercession is past; God's judgment will now be completed.

Revelation 15:5 "And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:"

"The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony": This refers to the location of the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies where God dwells (see note on verse 11:19; compare Num. 10:11).

This "tabernacle" is the original tabernacle in heaven that the one on the earth was patterned by. Moses was given instruction by God how to build the earthly one. The tabernacle was opened by Jesus, as the temple curtain which was in front of the Holy of Holies, was torn from the top to the bottom, when Jesus died on the cross.

In an earlier vision given John, God's throne room was opened so the faithful could see in. We see here that it "was opened" (past tense). Now the heavenly tabernacle, which the earthly tabernacle was a copy, was opened to reveal the most severe earthly judgment ever on the unrepentant.

The tabernacle was sometimes referred to as the tabernacle of the testimony, so named as it contained the testimony. The two stone tablets which God had written the ten commandments on.

Revelation 15:6 "And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles."

“Seven plagues”: The final, most severe judgments from God, described in chapter 16 (see note on verse 1).

Seven golden vials full of the wrath of God. These are the "plagues" that will strike the earth in the last three and one-half years to punish those who have chosen to serve the Antichrist, doing his bidding to persecute the saints for their faith in Christ.

So many people in this current, new wave of believers think that all punishment comes from the devil and no bad thing comes from God. They better take another look at this Scripture right here. These "angels" are operating under God's orders. They have just come "out of the temple" (which shows the origination). They are clothed in white (which shows they are good angels and not demons). The gold of their breasts show that they have been in the presence of God.

“Linen ... golden girdles”: The fabric represents holiness and purity (19:14). These are belts or girdles, running from the shoulder to the waist, that each of the 7 angels wear over his garments. The sashes demonstrate riches, royalty, and untarnished glory.

Revelation 15:7 "And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever."

“Four beasts” (see notes on 4:6-8).

“Seven golden vials”: These are shallow saucers, familiar items often associated with various functions of the temple worship (1 Kings 7:50; 2 Kings 12:13; 25:15), such as wine (Amos 6:6), and blood sacrifice (Exodus 27:3). Their flat shallowness pictures how the divine judgments will be emptied instantly rather than slowly poured, drowning those who refused to drink the cup of salvation.

Here again, we see these "vials" are from God, because they are gold. These "sevens" just show the completeness of it all.

And again, we see the eternity of God in the forever and ever. They are ready to pour the wrath out on the inhabitants of the earth. God has the power to put an end to sin so that it can never exist again in His holy presence. “Wrath of God” (see notes on 11:18; 14:10).

Revelation 15:8 "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

As soon as the angels in verse 6 come out of the Temple, great smoke from the glory of the presence of God and His power and wrath fills the Temple so that neither angels nor human beings can go back into worship until "the seven plagues of the seven angels are completed."

"Filled with smoke" (compare Exodus 19:16-18; 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Isa. 6:4).

We know that in the tabernacle in the wilderness, no one could go inside. God is a consuming fire as we read in Hebrews 12:29 "For our God is a consuming fire."

During this time, no created human being will have access to the presence of God on His throne until the end of the Tribulation, for He will not be dealing with people in mercy, as is His usual custom. During the latter three and one half years of the Great Tribulation, He will deal with human beings in judgment.

This glory cloud will remain in the heavenly temple until the earth is completely purged, cleansed and prepared for the King and His kingdom that is coming.

This "smoke" is from the Majesty of God. The children of Israel were led by God Himself. We read that a fire led them by night and a cloud by day (Exodus 13:21). This is the very same presence we read of here. No mere man can enter this holy place. Jesus enters here for us and takes us with Him after we are covered by His (Jesus), blood.

God sees Jesus' shed blood, instead of us, when we enter (after we are a believer); and that shed blood is what keeps us from being burned up in God the Father's presence.

God's anger is kindled at those on the earth who have caused such sorrow to the church and the true believers, and His fury has come in His face. These plagues, as we said before, are from God. What a terrible thing it is to fall into the hands of the Living God and be judged by Him guilty and deserving of His wrath.

In Hebrews 10:30-31, we read about just how terrible it is for the sinner to fall into His hands.

Hebrews 10:30-31 "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance [belongeth] unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people." "[It is] a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Revelation Chapter 15

1. Chapter 15 of Revelation deals with the seven what?

2. What was filled with the wrath of God?
3. When is the wrath poured out?
4. What is the only thing good about the plagues?
5. What is worse than to be attacked by the devil?
6. What was the sea of glass mingled with?
7. Who stands on the sea of glass?
8. What can a sea be symbolic of?
9. How is the only way to be victorious over the beast?
10. What is God constantly reassuring the believers of?
11. What is the song of Moses?
12. The song of whom is the same?
13. What does this song call God?
14. Who is Jesus King of?
15. What does Jesus need to be in our life besides our Savior?
16. Who shall come and worship before Him?
17. What is the beginning of wisdom?
18. What was opened in heaven?
19. What was the tabernacle in the wilderness a replica of?
20. Who gave Moses the plan to build it?
21. When was the way opened in the tabernacle?
22. How were the seven angels clothed when they came out of the temple?
23. How do we know these angels were in the presence of God?
24. What were the seven vials full of?
25. What was the temple filled with?
26. In Hebrews 12:29, we read that God is a _____.

27. What do we have to be covered with to be in the presence of God without being destroyed?
28. In Hebrews 10:31, we read that it is a _____ to fall into the hands of the living God.
29. Write a description, in your own words, of what you believe the 7 plagues are.