

Revelation - Chapter Fifteen

Chapter summary – Chapter 15 prepares the end time prophetic stage with the necessary props and introductions to begin the chronological order of events again in chapter 16. It wraps up the parenthetical information that chapters 12-15 provide after the seventh trumpet was blown in chapter 11:15-19, but before it accomplishes its purpose in ushering in the first of seven bowl judgments. The information concerned the entire last half the tribulation period. The chronological order of end time events will resume in chapter 16 and take us right up to the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth in chapter 19.

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IV. the vision of the Final Days, (Chs. 6-22)

D. THE BOWL JUDGMENTS - (15:1-16:21)

- 1. Seven angels are gathered who will serve the bowl judgments, (15:1) - "THE STAGE IS SET FOR THE LAST ACT OF THE TRIBULATION PERIOD!"

INTERPRETATION:

¹ **Then** (after seeing the war that brings the tribulation period to closure), **I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous** (amazing and terrifying at the same time): **seven angels** (this time appeared), **having** (in their possession), **the seven last plagues** (which the seventh trumpet introduces in Rev. 11:15-19), **for in them the wrath of God is complete,**¹ (brought to its final conclusion or ultimate goal).

- 2. The tribulation saints sing a song of praise prior to the serving of the bowls, (2-4)

INTERPRETATION:

² **And** (after the seven angels took their places), **I saw something like a sea of glass** (probably the same one as is described in Rev. 4:6 before the throne of God, where the glass could represent the pure holiness of God), **mingled with fire** (depicting the divine judgment that must result when holiness comes into contact with sin), **and** (John also saw), **those** (tribulation saints), **who have the victory over the beast** (probably the Roman Prince as it is his image that is set up in Revelation 13:14, 15, and his mark that is imprinted upon the people who follow him, [Rev. 13:17]), **over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.**

COMMENTARY:

¹ In other words, this is not the total sum of God's wrath, but the final part that "completes" it, brings it to its conclusion. It is the final measure of God's wrath that is now being mete out in relation to its other parts that have already been dispensed. This is another reason that I do not believe that God's wrath begins in the middle of the tribulation period, which would thus then be the point of the rapture of the church as well.

³ **They** (the tribulation saints), **sing the song of Moses** (a

song of the delivered, from bondage and death, such as at the Red Sea from the Egyptians), **the servant of God** (as are these saints), **and the song of the Lamb** (a song of the deliverer from bondage and death), **saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works,** (yet they shake their fists at God and curse Him), **Lord God Almighty** (not the devil and his beasts)! **Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!**

⁴ **Who shall not fear You, O Lord,** (they will cry for the rocks to fall upon them and cover them), **and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You,** (every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord), **for Your judgments have been manifested.**²

3. One of the four living creatures distributes the bows of God's wrath, (5-8)

INTERPRETATION:

⁵ **After these things** (after they sang the song), **I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony** (the ark of the covenant containing the 10 commandments), **in heaven was opened,** (indicating that the justice of God involved).³

² *Great and wonderful are your works.*

O Lord, how great are thy works! (Psalm 92:5); The works of the Lord are great (Psalm 111:2); he has done marvellous (wonderful) things (Psalm 98:1); Wonderful are thy works (Psalm 139:14).

Just and true are your ways.

The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings (Psalm 145:17).

Who shall not fear and glorify your name, O Lord?

All the nations thou hast made shall come and bow down before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name (Psalm 86:9).

You alone are holy.

There is none holy like the Lord (1 Samuel 2:2); Let them praise thy great and terrible name! Holy is he! (Psalm 99:3); Holy and terrible is his name (Psalm 111:9).

All the nations will come and worship before you.

All the nations thou hast made shall come and bow down before thee, O Lord (Psalm 86:9).

Your righteous judgment are made manifest.

The Lord has made known his victory, he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations (Psalm 98:2). Barclay, William, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Revelation of John - Volume 2 Chapters 6-22 (Revised Edition)*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press) 2000, c1976, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.

³ The sanctuary of the tabernacle of the testimony is opened. This is the sanctuary which contains the ark of the covenant, and that ark contains 'the testimony' [10 commandments] (Ex. 25:16, 21). This sanctuary is now opened, so that we may understand that the wrath which is about to be revealed is God's wrath. (Hendrikson, *More Than Conquerors*, p. 160)

⁶ **And out of the temple** (out of the presence of God), **came the seven angels** (v. 1), **having the seven plagues** (that completes God's wrath), **clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands**, (as the priests would dress when they served the Most High God in the tabernacle—symbolizing the holiness and glory of God).

⁷ **Then one of the four living creatures** (surrounding the throne of the universe), **gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls** (saucers), **full** (unmitigated contents), **of the wrath** (anger), **of God** (which could not harm them because they were in complete accordance with the law of God), **who lives forever and ever**, (who always is).

⁸ **The temple** (after the seven angels received the bowls of God's wrath), **was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and** (as a result), **no one was able to enter the temple** (cp. Ex. 40:34, 35; 1 Ki. 8:10, 11), **till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed**, (signifying that no would be allowed to intercede before the throne of God for mercy concerning the doom about to take place upon the earth—nothing, nor no one, could stop it).

F APPLICATION:

Once we recognize the true nature of sin, we will have no difficulty in understanding God's judgment upon sin. Again denial of the awfulness of judgment results from ignorance of the nature of the holiness of God. Holiness, like perfection, is an absolute term. There are no degrees of holiness. The word "holiness" is defined as "moral and spiritual perfection." . . . One is either holy or unholy. The least flaw, therefore, defiles, and God cannot condone the smallest sin.

---M. R. DeHaan

12 ENCOURAGEMENTS TO TRIBULATION SUFFERERS

1. The Lamb will eventually reign (14:1)
2. The 144,000 will be preserved (verse 1)
3. The wicked will be warned (verses 6,7)
4. Babylon will be destroyed (verse 8)
5. Beast worshipers will be tormented (verses 9-11)
6. The saints will be faithful (verse 12)
7. The martyrs will be blessed (verse 13)
8. The rebel Jews will be removed (verses 14-20)
9. The saints will be victorious (15:1-4)
10. The nations will be humbled (verse 4)
11. God's honor will be vindicated (verses 3,4)
12. God's wrath will be satisfied (verse 7)

 INTERPRETATION:

 COMMENTARY: