

## 66. The Book of Revelation—15:1-3

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(1-12-22)

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If Chapter 14 is the 'table of contents' for Chapters 16-19, then Chapter 15 (the shortest Chapter in the Book of Revelation)—is the prelude to the final series of events that will complete the wrath of God and bring Jesus Christ back to the earth to establish His Kingdom.

Remember, we've looked at Chapter 14 which encompasses what's coming (a preview of things to come)—and now we're going to actually see these things come to pass starting in Chapter 16.

If you thought the worst was over, think again—the worst is yet to come.

So far in the book we have seen the 7-Seal Judgments; the 7-Trumpet Judgments—and now we are about to see the final and most devastating judgments of all—the 7-Bowl Judgments (aka—the 7-Bowls of Wrath) the worst of them all!

### Revelation 15:1 (NKJV)

**<sup>1</sup>Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.**

In this Chapter we have another sign in heaven—seven angels with the seven last plagues.

This is the third heavenly **sign** that John has seen in Revelation.

1. In 12:1 he saw the sign of *"a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars"* (analogous to Israel).
2. In 12:3 he saw the sign of *"a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems"* (a reference to Satan).

Now in Revelation 15:1 he sees a third sign—the sign of *"seven angels having the seven last plagues (judgments) of God."*

The terms **great** and **marvelous** are not John's way of glorifying these judgments as 'awesome' and 'wonderful' in a good sense—they are **great** in scope (they effect the whole earth simultaneously). And they are **marvelous** because when they're done the rebellion of man will finally and forever be over, paving the way for Jesus to return and establish a Kingdom of righteousness throughout the whole earth!

The sign itself consists of seven angels who had the **seven last plagues**.

*Plēgē* (**plague**) literally means *"a blow,"* or *"a wound"*—in Revelation 13 verses 3 and 12 it describes the beast's (Antichrist) 'deadly blow' to his head (wound)—a wound that only appears to kill him so that Satan can work his pseudo resurrection of him.

Thus, the **seven plagues** are not really diseases or epidemics—but deadly blows of God's wrath that will strike the world with a '*powerful, killing force.*'

It is important to note that they are called—the '**last plagues**' (wrath) which implies that the preceding trumpet and seal judgments were also a part of God's wrath. In other words, the fact that these are called the '**last plagues**' (the final blows of God's wrath) implies that there were *previous* blows of God's wrath that had been poured out before these last seven.

God's wrath extends throughout the entire Tribulation Period and is not confined to a brief period at the very end, as some argue—it's just that now they reach a crescendo—a climax!

Those who believe in the 'pre-wrath rapture of the church' have to believe that the wrath of God doesn't extend throughout the entire 7-year Tribulation Period—but only starts after the 'mid-point'—but that is a false narrative.

There is another point that we need to understand—the fact that these are the last judgments indicates that the bowls come *after* the seal and trumpet judgments in *chronological* order. In other words, all the judgments mentioned in the Book of Revelation are sequential—they are not *overlapping* judgments simultaneous to each other as some try to make them.

**Revelation 15:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, **for in them the wrath of God is complete** [not will now 'begin'].

The idea here is that for the length of the entire 7-year Tribulation Period the wrath of God has been active—but these final 7-Bowl Judgments will now "*fill up*" or "*complete*" the wrath (judgments) of God.

By this time every person who can be salvaged out of the world has been salvaged (saved) and now there is no reason for God to delay pouring out His final and greatest judgments (wrath) full strength (unmixed with mercy) on the remaining rebels including the Antichrist and False Prophet.

It's kind of interesting that, the Greek word for God's **wrath** is *thumos*—the same Greek word from which we get the word *thermonuclear*.

Again, as we saw in 14:10, there are two words for *anger* in Biblical Greek: *thumos* and *orge*.

- *Orge* is the slow building of God's anger against sin (over the centuries)—like the pressure building in a volcano.
- *Thumos* is the actual erupting of that anger in judgment.

**Revelation 15:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup>And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.

We have seen this '**sea**' once already in Chapter 4—

### Revelation 4:1-2, 6 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." <sup>2</sup> Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne... <sup>6</sup> Before the throne *there was* a sea of glass, like crystal....

- In Chapter 4 its description "*a sea of glass like crystal*" speaks of something that 'reflects' the holiness of God. Here the "*sea mingled with fire*" speaks of divine judgment proceeding from God's holiness.
- In Chapter 14, John sees the believers from the Tribulation (martyred Tribulation Saints) who had overcome "the beast" (Antichrist) and his world system (they did not take his mark or worship his name).

These are the people who "*did not love their lives to the death*" (Revelation 12:11)—in other words, they were faithful to their Savior, Jesus Christ, to the end.

Since they **did not** cooperate with the satanic system of the Antichrist or take his mark on their forehead or right hand, they were unable to buy or sell (Revelation 13:17)—and so they were totally dependent on the Lord for their daily bread.

Because of it—they were persecuted for their loyalty to Jesus, and many (but not all) will be martyred—even as Jesus said, "*But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*" (Matthew 24:13).

Some of them will be put into prison and some will be slain (Revelation 13:10)—but all of them, by God's grace, will stay true to their Savior and be victorious over the Antichrist!

"**The sea of glass**" (verse 2)—in the O.T. the laver that was outside the Tabernacle was also called the '*molten sea.*'

#### ➤ What was it and what was it used for?

When you entered into the outer courtyard of the Tabernacle the first object standing directly in front of you was the brazen (bronze) **altar of sacrifice**—the altar where sin was atoned for through the blood of animal sacrifices (substitutes).

After you passed the bronze altar of sacrifice—directly behind it and in front of the Tabernacle proper was another bronze object called the **laver**. The laver looked like a large '*bird bath*' and was used for washing after the priest had offered the animal sacrifice and before he could enter the Tabernacle proper to burn incense on the **golden altar**.

Interestingly, this was the only object (the laver) in the entire Tabernacle complex that God didn't specify any dimensions for—He left that up to the people how large or small to make it.

The reason the Lord did this was because the **laver** represents the Word of God.

After our sins are atoned for by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ (altar of sacrifice) we then, as priests of the new covenant, need to wash constantly in the water of the Word (Ephesians 5:26) so that we remain 'holy' (clean) and our practical everyday fellowship with the Lord is maintained.

And that's why God didn't specify how large to make the laver because it represented the Word of God—and we decide how much of the Word we're going to wash in every day.

(Later, when King Solomon had the Temple built, he included 10 brazen lavers each measuring about six feet in diameter.)

As we have already studied in previous studies—the Tabernacle and later the Temple were *models* on earth made to represent the real Temple of God in heaven. As I just said, before the priest could enter the Holy Place, he first had to wash in the *laver* which represented the Word of God.

But now in Revelation 4 the Church (the ‘priests’ of the new covenant) are seen in heaven with our glorified bodies that don’t sin anymore, and therefore don’t need to wash the filth of the world away each day by washing in the Word of God.

Now the *laver* is no more—but the Word of God (which it represents) is now pictured as a *glassy sea* upon which the saints of God stand (as Christians we often say—“*I’m standing on the Word*”). This signifies that the promises in God’s Word that we stood on symbolically while on earth—we now stand on literally in heaven (completed promises)!

They also have “**harps of God**” (**verse 2**)—the only people we saw with *harps* before this were the twenty-four elders (Revelation 5:8)—who represent the Church.

These tribulation martyrs are given the blessing of helping to lead the worship of God (the music of worship) in heaven—“*Yea, but I can’t play an instrument or sing!*”—You will then!

**Revelation 15:3-4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>3</sup> They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints [some translations say 'nations']! <sup>4</sup> Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."**

The host of martyrs standing upon the glassy sea are singing two songs—the song of Moses (Exodus 15), the song the Israelites sang when they came out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea; and the song of the Lamb, which is recorded here in Revelation 15:3-4.

These are the first and last songs recorded in Scripture—and both are songs of God's deliverance of His people by the blood of the lamb. When Moses and the Israelites sang the Song of Moses—they were looking back to the blood of a lamb.

This blood was put on the doorposts and lintel of their houses to keep the Israelites safe when the Angel of Death passed through the land of Egypt and saw the blood he passed over that house (hence the feast of ‘Passover’).

Any house that was not ‘protected’ by the blood of a lamb would be visited by death.

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