

67. The Book of Revelation—15:4-16:1

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As we said last time, Chapter 15 is the shortest chapter in the Book of Revelation and becomes 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 a preview of things to come—and now we're going to actually see these things come to pass starting in Chapter 16.

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.

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

Revelation 15:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ 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. ² 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. ³ **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! ⁴ 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.

In Revelation 15, the martyrs also look back to the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

They praise God for redeeming them from the power of sin and hell—a deliverance that was accomplished by the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

But they are also singing of how God delivered them (through physical death) from the wrath and persecution of the Antichrist by taking them off the earth and bringing them to heaven.

For the believer in Christ death is always more beneficial and blessed than life on the earth—

Philippians 1:23 (NKJV)

²³ For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

In America, we have so many blessings that Christians in this country often prefer life on earth to life in heaven (for Christians being persecuted in Communist and Muslim countries—that isn't true).

By the time believers in Christ enter the great tribulation portion of the final seven years of human history before the return of Christ—no one will long to remain alive on the earth for obvious reasons!

Notice that in the Song of the Lamb there is not one word about the martyrs' own achievements. They never sing, "*O Lord, how faithful we have been to you! O how worthy creatures we are!*"

No, the only pronouns in this song are pronouns which refer to God—that's heaven folks!

In heaven there will only be praise for God—not self! (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Revelation 15:3-4 (NKJV)

³They 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! ⁴Who 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."

This is the song of the martyred Tribulation saints in heaven—the song the Church will sing is recorded in Revelation 5:9-13 (check it out!)—the song that will be on our hearts when we too stand in the presence of God as 'true worshippers' (John 4:23-24)!

We will certainly not feel that we have done anything worthy of praise—we will simply marvel in awestruck gratitude and wonder at all that God has done for us—at His amazing grace!

"Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?" (verse 4)

There is less '*fear of God*' in our country today than at any time in our nation's history—so God is going to put the fear of God back into the arrogant heart of man.

Though the nations will neither fear God nor glorify Him in their insane, demonic unbelief and rebellion during the Great Tribulation Period—the day will come when they will both fear Him and be forced to acknowledge Him (Jesus) as Lord of all!

Revelation 15:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ⁶And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.

When John said, "**I looked, and behold**"—this expression always introduces something dramatically new.

As John (a Jew but not a high priest) is able to see into the Holy of Holies of the Heavenly Temple when it is opened.

- The expression “**the temple**” (Gr., *naos*) seems to refer to the Temple proper (the actual structure where the Holy Place and Holy of Holies were located).
- The expression “**the tabernacle of the testimony**” seems to be a reference to the portion of the Temple that housed the ‘*ark of the covenant*’ (the Holy of Holies).
- It is described as “**the tabernacle of the testimony**” because of the presence of the tables (tablets) of stone containing the Ten Commandments (the ‘*tablets of the testimony*’) which were placed in the ‘*ark of the covenant*’ also called ‘*the ark of the testimony*’ which sat in the Holy of Holies.
- Hence the expression—“**the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony**”—it was all built around the ‘testimony’ of God—i.e., the Word of God!

The “**pure, bright linen**” of the **angels** speaks of holiness; and the **golden bands around their chests** point to the fact that these angels are in divine service to the King (gold representing kingship) of glory—God Almighty.

Revelation 15:7 (NKJV)

⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.

The “**seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God**”, refers to “*shallow saucers*”—not ‘deep bowls’.

Bowls were part of the temple paraphernalia and were associated with the sacrifices (Exodus 27:3; 38:3).

Someone has said—“*Those who refuse to drink the cup of salvation (Psalm 116:13) will be destroyed by the bowls of wrath.*”

Because God **lives forever and ever**, He has the power to put an end to sin, so that it cannot exist again forever in His holy presence. (Revelation 21:5-8)

Revelation 15:8 (NKJV)

⁸ The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

John tells us that **smoke filled the temple**, making it impossible for anyone to enter it—**until the seven plagues were poured out on the earth**.

This reminds me of two other passages—the first one when the *Tabernacle* was dedicated to God under Moses; and the second when the *Temple* was dedicated to God under Solomon:

Exodus 40:34-35 (NKJV)

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it [the Shekinah Glory], and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

2 Chronicles 5:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and

instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever,"* that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud,¹⁴ so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

What's in view here is that these priests couldn't continue ministering—standing, they perhaps had to kneel with their faces on the ground which is the posture of true worship.

The Bible says that God *'inhabits the praises of His people'*—which means, if we want God's presence to fill our lives, our homes, and our churches—we must be people of praise!

But that means we can't 'stand erect' in His presence with pride over our accomplishments—we must be on our knees in humble reverence of His greatness and power.

Praise is a manifestation of faith—and faith is the antithesis of fear!

Faith and fear are mutually exclusive—one or the other will dominate your heart—let it be faith accompanied by praise!

Chapter 16

So once again, as we come to Chapter 16, we come to the last and greatest judgments of God that He will pour out upon this rebellious, Christ rejecting world.

The Bowl Judgments are God's "super" judgments—so I guess we could say they are His "*Super Bowl Judgments!*"

As we just said, these are not bowls in the sense that you would ordinarily think of a bowl (like a deep mixing bowl)—the Greek is actually *'shallow saucer.'*

The imagery is not that of a *stream* being poured gradually like you would pour liquid out of a pitcher—but that of the whole contents of each of these shallow saucers being dumped out quickly. In other words, these judgments won't be long and protracted—they will be quick 'rapid fire' judgments (without mercy so there's no need to lengthen them out to give people time to repent).

These 7 last plagues come one after another in just a few months' time—right before the Battle of Armageddon and Jesus' return to the earth.

The reason they come in such rapid-fire succession is because—by this point, the day of salvation is over.

No one left is going to be saved that hasn't already been saved.

Those who are still unsaved by this point have all heard the gospel message many, many times (the Two Witnesses, the 144,000 and their converts, an angel flying through the heavens...) and yet every time they heard the gospel preached to them they rejected it—so there is no reason to delay these final judgments to give people more time to repent.

It reminds me of the words in Hebrews 10—

Hebrews 10:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

Revelation 16:1 (NKJV)

¹ Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

People today will tolerate talk about God as long as it's limited to His love and mercy—but they can't understand and therefore will not tolerate a God of wrath and judgment.

Most people today don't take sin seriously and as such have a concept of God that *He* doesn't take sin seriously either. They believe that He is all love, all mercy, all kindness—and as such He would never send anyone to hell—unless they were the worst sinners in the world (mass murderers, child rapists—and of course MAGA hat wearing Trump supporters).

Their concept of Jesus is—"*Gentle Jesus meek and mild look upon this little child...*"—it's the classic Sunday School concept of Jesus.

A Jesus that walked the shores of the Sea of Galilee, patted the little children on the head and gently told them to '*turn the other cheek to their enemies.*'

And yet we read in Revelation 6:12-17—

Revelation 6:12-17 (NKJV)

¹² I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. ¹⁵ And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "**Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!**" ¹⁷ **For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"**

The "**wrath of the Lamb!?**"—those two don't even go together!

A lamb is meek and gentle, I mean—I've never seen an attack lamb!

If you want to get an animal to protect you and your family, you get a Doberman or a Rottweiler—you don't get a lamb! ("Lambo"?)

The "**wrath of the Lamb!?**"—those two don't even go together in the minds of most of the people in modern culture whose concept of Jesus was how He submitted to those who crucified Him, He didn't fight and even forgave those from the cross who put Him there, "*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*"

So, because of it, they don't believe '*their Jesus*' would ever judge sin or send people to hell.

What they don't understand is that Jesus came the first time as a Lamb to save His enemies—He is coming again as a Lion to destroy His enemies (the usurpers who refuse to receive Him as their King) before establishing His Kingdom!

Now, in each of these Bowl Judgments God is targeting something specifically—which we will look at next time.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

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