

Bowl Judgment Prelude



Revelation 15
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Revelation 15

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. ²And 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. 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."

⁵ *After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.*

⁶ *And 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. ⁷Then 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.*

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.*

v1-2 – What sign did John see in heaven?

- John sees seven angels preparing to dispense the last seven plagues that will complete the wrath of God.
- Also, something like a sea of glass mingled with fire supporting those who had victory over the Antichrist praising God.

What is this sea of glass?

Since this is in the spiritual realm, it defies explanation by our mortal minds.

- This sea is also mentioned in Revelation 4:6 where the throne of God in heaven is described so we know these Tribulation Saints are standing close to God
- The sea being like glass represents calmness, peacefulness.

How did these saints have victory over the Antichrist?

They trusted in Christ and thus refused to swear allegiance to the Antichrist which involved taking the mark of the Beast.

What do the harps represent?

They are symbolic of creative expression that glorifies God.

v3-4 – How did the Tribulation Saints praise the Lord?

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

Lets read the Song of Moses in Exodus 15 and consider why this song would be sung by the Tribulation Saints in heaven...

Exodus 15:1-18

1 Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea!

2 The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; he is my God, and I will praise Him; my father's God, and I will exalt Him.

3 The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is His name.

4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.

5 The depths have covered them; they sank to the bottom like a stone.

6 "Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces.

7 And in the greatness of Your excellence you have overthrown those who rose against You; you sent forth Your wrath; it consumed them like stubble.

8 And with the blast of Your nostrils the waters were gathered together; the floods stood upright like a heap; the depths congealed in the heart of the sea.

9 The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.'

10 You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11 "Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

12 You stretched out Your right hand; the earth swallowed them.

13 You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed; you have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation.

14 "The people will hear and be afraid; sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia.

15 Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling will take hold of them; all the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away.

16 Fear and dread will fall on them; by the greatness of Your arm they will be as still as a stone, till Your people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over whom You have purchased.

17 You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which You have made for Your own dwelling, the sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands have established.

18 "The LORD shall reign forever and ever."

What is the song of Moses about?

- The Lord destroyed those who oppressed His people
- The Lord insures that justice is done
- The Lord keeps His promises
- The Lord is the salvation of His people
- The Lord is in control
- The Lord is a Man of action, war (v3)
- The deliverance of the Lord is not as we might expect
- Jesus is the One who delivers us ("right hand" v6)
- The oppressors of God's people rebel against Him (v7)
- You don't want to be the object of God's anger (v7)
- God works miracles for His people (v8)
- God's enemies have a reprobate mind (v9)
- God is deserving of all our praise (v10-12)
- God leads the people He redeems (v13)
- God brings His people to His abode (v13)
- The enemies of God will be fearful (v14-16)
- God paid the price to redeem His people (v16)
- God's people will live with God forever (v17-18)

So why do you think the Tribulations Saints would sing this song in heaven?

- As God's people were then on the cusp of a new dispensation this will also be the case during the Tribulation.

- Note: the first recorded song in Scripture is the Song of Moses, and the last song in Scripture is the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb.

What is the Song of the Lamb?

This song is for the victory that Christ has won for all men over sin, death, and the grave – like the song of Moses which was sung because of the destruction of the enemies of God; it too is song of deliverance!

- It acknowledges the omnipotence of God
- Thanking Him for his truthfulness
- Acknowledging that His ways are just
- Recognizes His holiness (uniqueness, righteousness)
- Repeats the prophecy that all the nations will worship Him in the Millennial Kingdom
- Recognizes that He is the Judge and has taken action as promised

v5 – What happens next?

John sees the opening of the "tabernacle of the testimony" which is likely what the ark of the covenant symbolized. Or it could be the actual ark of the covenant.

What is in the Ark of the Covenant?

Inside the Ark are three objects (Heb. 9:1-4):

- Tablets of the Law – representing mankind's inability to keep God's perfect moral law
- Aaron's Staff – representing mankind's rejection of God's anointed for spiritual leadership, Jesus
- Pot of Manna – representing mankind's rejection of God's provision for daily needs

How does the Ark of the Covenant point to Jesus?

The stone tablets with the Ten Commandments represent Jesus' perfect life.

- He fulfilled the Law, the Old Covenant

Aaron's rod that budded represents a selection/action of God

- Jesus was appointed High Priest of the New Covenant (Heb 3:1; 6:20)
- He is Father-God's choice for Jesus being the High Priest

The manna represents Jesus provisioning via the New Covenant

- As Manna gave life to the Israelites in the desert; Jesus gives believers eternal life; Jesus is the Bread of life (John 6:48)

What came out of the temple?

seven angels having the seven plagues

What is the significance of the way they looked?

- Bright linen – the uniform of heaven... they were holy, acting for God
- Golden bands – they had authority & power to execute their God-given tasks

v7 – What are the seven angels given?

The bowls that contain the final wrath of God

Why are the bowls given by the four living creatures?

These special angels are the closest to God.

v8 – What fills the temple of heaven?

Smoke from the glory of God and from His power

What is the purpose of this smoke?

It prevents anyone from entering the temple until the seven plagues are completed

How could a God of grace, mercy and love allow such unbridled terror and bloodshed as described for the Tribulation?

God's justice must be satisfied

- God is characterized by grace, mercy and love, but He is also a God of perfect justice
- God's love cannot embrace what His holiness condemns
- Therefore, He must deal with sin! His justice demands it! His love compels it!

To bring people to salvation

- His fundamental purpose is not to destroy but to save
 - Some will be saved
 - Some will be hardened and lost

What stands out in this chapter that gives us comfort in the here and now?

- We are on the cusp of a New Dispensation... and with the end of the Church Age comes our redemption.
- We will not be enduring the painful transition to the New Dispensation – the Tribulation (that is comforting)