

Lord God Almighty

Revelation 15

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up [completed] the wrath of God.

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and those 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. 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. 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.

And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 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. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials [bowls] full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. 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.” (Revelation 15:1-8)

Do you ever wonder about God’s response to the rebels in the Book of Revelation? Does it seem right to you for Him to power out His righteous indignation? What is His rationale? Why would God bring such justice to bear on the violent rebels of this earth?

Revelation chapter 15: An Interlude and Introduction

You have all been to a dramatic or musical production that was introduced by a change in the lighting. Often, an audience will fall to a hush and begin to pay close attention when the lighting changes. Or perhaps you have been at an airshow and been totally surprised by the sudden sounds of a low-flying jet passing directly overhead. Revelation 15 functions as an attention-getting sign or prelude that introduces the 7 last plagues, pictured as bowls of wrath to be hurled upon the earth (in Revelation 16). The opening of Revelation chapter 15 serves to command our attention with the words: **“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous ...”** The phrase, “and I saw” introduces a new vision. This is “another sign” because there were two earlier signs: “a woman clothed with the sun” (Revelation 12:1) and “a great red dragon” (Revelation 12:3). The word “sign” refers to a signal, like a flag, or insignia that one would find on a ring, or a shield. The word translated as “marvelous” refers to the fact that the sign is astonishing or astounding, inspiring awe.

What is this Great and Marvelous Sign?

The sign includes all the details of verses 1-8. The central emphasis is on the nature and work of the Lord God Almighty. The angels’ purpose is described in verse 1 and their appearance and work are described in verses 5-8. The Tribulation saints and their consummate praise to God is described in verses 2-4.

The Lord God Almighty

Read these verses carefully and you can see the nature and work of the Lord. The bowls are “full of the wrath of God;” God is righteously indignant. The prevailing grace of God is implied in the phrase “the victory over the beast.” That there are “harps of God” tells us about the Lord’s creativity and communication. That God had a servant named Moses helps us understand God’s sovereignty. The reference to The Lamb reminds us that God is our Savior and Deliverer. The expressed adoration, “Great and marvelous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty...” speak of God’s mighty immensity. That His work is marvelous conveys that it is astonishing or astounding, inspiring awe. He is Lord: He is the King of all. He is God alone, meaning that He is unique; there is no other like Him. Almighty: He is the God of all might and power. All His ways are just and true. He is the King of all the saints and all the nations. He is worthy of all fear and respect, for God is Holy. The Lord is worthy of all submission and worship for His justice is now clearly revealed to all. The end of Revelation 15 reveals that God is eternal; He lives forever and ever.

The Seven Angels

Introduction

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up [completed] the wrath of God.” (v.1)

The 7 angels have the 7 last plagues. Verse 1 speaks of the last 7 plagues. This word “last” along with the expression, “filled up,” or “completed” tells us that these are being described in the order in which they will happen. Some see the seals, trumpets and bowls as occurring at the same time, but these expressions convey a sequence and completion according to time. The word “plague” pictures something done with brute force, like a strike or blow.

Authority

“And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:” (v. 5). Here the word “temple” refers God’s dwelling place in the Holy of Holies. The description “the tabernacle of the testimony”¹ reminds us of what was in the Ark of the Covenant: the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments. These 10 commands summarize the two great Laws: love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself. That the angels proceed out of the temple shows that they were authorized by God Himself to do their astounding work.

Appearance

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. (v.6)

The clothing or uniform of the angels describes righteousness with holy majesty.

The Seven Bowls

And one of the four beasts [living creatures or cherubim] gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials [bowls] full of the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. 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.” (vs. 7-8)

Authorized by the Holy God and equipped by one of God’s living creatures, the angels stand ready at the ceremony. Those bowls are full of the righteous indignation of the Holy God who

lives forever. When these bowls are presented, the temple of God will be full of the smoke of God's glory and power. No one will be able to enter the temple again until the mission of these 7 angels with 7 bowls is complete.

Response: Led by the Tribulation Saints

The Sea of Glass

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire..." (v.2)

This is the same sea described in Revelation 4:6, **"and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal."** But Revelation 15:2 describes it as sparkling with fire. What are we to learn from this fiery appearance? Hebrews 10:26-27 explains, **"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."** Those who deny the Lord and ignore His Gospel can only expect the fearful and fiery judgment of God's indignation. Indeed, Hebrews 12:29 declares, **"For our God is a consuming fire."**

Victorious Saints

"... and those 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."

These are the people who will come to know the Lord during the Tribulation. Because they trust Christ for His finished work: dying for our sins and then rising again bodily from the grave, they will be with Him for eternity. By the grace of Jesus Christ, these believers will be triumphant over the wicked system of this world. The Antichrist, his false prophet, the image of the beast, and the mark of the beast with his "666" may dominate the rest of the world; but it will not overcome them. They, in fact, will overcome these ultimate evils and stand at/upon the Sea of Glass mixed with sparkling fire.ⁱⁱ

Pastor Albert Tindley wrote, *"This world is one great battlefield, with forces all arrayed; If in my heart I do not yield, I'll overcome some day. I'll overcome some day, I'll overcome some day; If in my heart I do not yield, I'll overcome some day. Both seen and unseen powers join to drive my soul astray, but with God's Word a sword of mine, I'll overcome some day. I'll overcome some day, I'll overcome some day; but with God's Word a sword of mine, I'll overcome some day."*ⁱⁱⁱ

The Song of Moses and the Lamb

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. 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.'"

In a clear and joyful exaltation of God's glory, these triumphant saints will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. The song of Moses was the first song in Scripture; the song of the Lamb will be the last. Moses led the people in their Exodus from Egypt. Jesus Christ will lead believers in their Exodus from this Earth to be with the Lord for eternity. The plagues on Egypt destroyed

God's enemies; the bowls of plagues in Revelation 15 will do the same. Just as the waters of the Red Sea delivered God's people and destroyed their enemies so will the work of God.

What should our response be? As we see the Lord's righteous character let us worship and praise Him. Let us sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. For now we know why God will bring forth justice on the earth and repay the rebels.

How Great and Marvelous Your Deeds

How great and marvelous Your deeds
O Lord, our God Almighty
How just and true your matchless ways
The King of all the ages
Who will not fear your name, O King
and glorify in praising?
For You alone are holy

Sing to the Lamb, the praise is His
And sing the song of Moses
When all God's righteous deeds they see
The nations will come meekly
To worship Him our Sovereign King
And praise His name in singing
O Lord, our God Almighty

(This poem could be sung to the tune of *Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above* "Mit Freuden Zart")

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ⁱ The expression "tabernacle of testimony" appears in Exodus 38:21, Numbers 1:50, 53; 10:11 and Acts 7:44.

ⁱⁱ Translators are evenly split on whether to translate this as "standing on the sea of glass" or "standing beside the sea of glass." But real point of the passage is that they are worshiping and singing to the Lord God Almighty.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rev. Albert Tindley, "I'll Overcome Someday." Accessed at <https://hymnary.org/text/this-world-is-one-great-battlefield> (Many believe that the civil rights hymn, "We Shall Overcome" came from this piece.)