



Citadel Of Faith Covenant Church

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ALPHA AND OMEGA

We now turn our focus to Revelation Chapter 15. It's broken up into three sections which John will describe in greater detail in chapter 16. The three snapshots are: 1) Coming Judgment (15:1); 2) glorious scene of triumphant joy (15:2-4) and 3) a dreadful scene of wrath and doom (15:5-8). John opens up this chapter by saying he sees yet another marvelous **SIGN**. Let's remember what we said about signs. These point to something or someone in particular. These are literal real time occurrences that one could look at and then make the connection to the "end times". In verse one John sees seven angels with the seven last plagues. These judgments will climax with the Battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ. This final judgment will avenge the holocaust that the Antichrist and his two beasts will inflict on the saints of God during the Tribulation. After the delivery of this final set of plagues, God's wrath will be completed. So contrasting this horrific scene of these beautiful angels bearing plagues, we have a beautiful picture. Beside the sea of glass were those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and the mark of the beast. These victorious saints held harps given to them by God Himself! There were three main areas these saints had overcome:

- Political pressure through the first beast's compelling charismatic military prowess
- Religious pressure through the second beast's deceptively miraculous image; and
- Economic pressure through the requirement of the number of the Beast in order to buy and sell.

Unlike preaching and teaching, musical ministry will endure throughout eternity! The song that these victorious saints will sing will be a compilation of two songs; "the song of Moses" and the "song of the Lamb". Most commentators believe that the song of Moses derived its lyrics from a combination of Ex. 15:1-18 and Deut. 32:1-43. These songs of deliverance refer to Egypt and their escape from the ten plagues, God's defeat of the Egyptian army, and Israel's preparation for the entrance into the Promised Land. The song of the Lamb...a new song! Phillips in "Exploring Revelation" writes: The song of Moses was sung at the Red Sea, the song of the Lamb is sung at the crystal sea; the song of Moses was a song of triumph over Egypt the song of the Lamb is a song of triumph over Babylon; the song of Moses told how God brought the people out, the song of the Lamb tells how God brings His people in; the song of Moses was the first song in scripture, the song of the Lamb is the last. The song of Moses commemorated the



execution of a foe, the expectation of the saints and the exaltation of the Lord; the song of the Lamb deals with the same three themes. I like to call this the Greater Voices of the Tribulation Choir! Talk about your community choir!

John then sees the heavenly temple. We've seen many references to this temple already. Be reminded that the earthly temple has been destroyed by the time of John's writing for about twenty-five years. Although everything in this heavenly temple modeled that of what we have seen in its earthly version, one thing is very different. The holy of holies is not locked nor concealed. Unhindered access to God is allowed. Seven angels now emerge from the temple. They are all adorned with priestly garments. These angels approach the throne of God. One of the four living creatures (mentioned in chapters 4-6) hands each of the angels a bowl, "full of the wrath of God" (Rev. 15:7) God's mercy during the Tribulation delayed the full measure of judgment to give the people an opportunity to repent (2 Pet. 3:9). The glory of God filled the temple (Rev. 15:8). This is the culmination of God's wrath on humanity. Chapter 15 gives us the "movie trailer" of the chapters following. The temple of worship and adoration to the saints will be a temple of Doom to the people remaining on earth. I love Charles' Swindoll's contrast below:

Heavenly/Spiritual

Earthly/Physical

As the temple fills with God's Glory.....the earth is filled with His wrath

In the past the wrath of God was poured out

to save sinners.....in the future the wrath of God will be poured out
on sinners to judge them.

While the righteous in heaven rejoice over the triumph of good.....the rebellious on earth will suffer w
with the destruction of evil.

Let's remember what the first word are of this book of Revelation. Rev. 1:1 spoke that this is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Not only is it a book to chronicle future prophetic events; it's just as important to remember that this is a book that shows us another angle of the nature and character of our wonderful Savior. We see Jesus shown and talked about in the gospels. We see him speaking in the book of Acts but then we see not only His speech but His behavior in this book. We see Jesus speaking to churches (warning them); we see Jesus seated on the throne with the scroll in his hand; we see Jesus on the clouds executing reluctant judgment. I think that it is so important to notice that Jesus almost seems to be "holding out" for more of mankind to repent. In the previous chapter it took the angel from the temple to let Jesus know that He could release His sickle on the earth because humanity is "overripe" and ready to be judged. Jesus is always concerned about the lost. But when the final days arrive the "pure justice" of God will be released on all unbelieving mankind. This should make the urgency to share our faith in Christ with the world all the more critical. Let's let the world know about the miraculous, saving love of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Questions to Ponder

1. Why did the angels wear the garments they did?
2. Why do you think one of the four beasts gives the bowls filled with the wrath of God?
 - a. Why bowls?
 - b. Why would the plagues be different from the wrath of God? Or are they?
3. What does Jesus' mercy do to your heart as it pertains to the lost?