

Revelation #39**May 14, 2023****Series Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon****Today's Message: The Marvelous Sign of the Seven Last Plagues; Revelation 15:1-8**

Revelation 15 and 16 brings us to the last events prior to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is described in Revelation 19. In chapter 15 describes the scene; a vision of a great and marvelous sign concerning the last seven plagues. The descriptive word “last” reminds us of former plagues, or divine judgments, which we’ve already seen in the book of Revelation such as, the first series of divine judgment events were the seven seals. Now the seven seals span the entire Tribulation period. For the seventh seal contains the next set of judgments, which are the seven trumpets; and the seventh trumpet contains the seven last judgments, which are the seven bowl judgments, which we see poured out in Revelation 16.

Let’s show this Tribulation chronology leading up to the second coming of Christ this way:

1. The seven seals (Rev. 6:1-17; 8:1).
2. The seven trumpets– Remember, included in the seventh seal are the seven trumpet judgments (8:1-9:21; 11:15-19).
3. The seven bowls– Included in the seventh trumpet are the seven bowl judgments (Rev. 15-16).
4. The second Coming of Christ– Immediately following the seventh bowl judgment we jump from Revelation 16 to Revelation 19, which describes the second coming of Christ and the wrath of the Lamb.

Note: If you remember we had several chapters in our study so far that we called “interludes”. They are sections with important details included within the tribulation chronology, but are not presented in chronological order. These interludes were discussed in Revelation 10-11:14; 13-14, and we will see another interlude like these in Revelation 17-18. Again, these are important for our understanding of Revelation, but as John Walwood writes, “these sections do not advance the narrative chronologically.”

But, chapters 15 and 16 are chronological and should bring great awe and wonder. Chapter 15 reveals the final preparation for the last judgments prior to the second coming of Christ. And chapter 16 is the actual pouring out of the bowl judgments of the wrath of God. And make no mistake, these bowl judgments are vastly more intense than any preceding them. God’s long-suffering patience has ended and His wrath is poured out. In other words, the bowl judgments come directly from God.

One final comment before we move into chapter 15. God’s wrath ends as the final drop of the last bowl is poured out and the wrath of the Lamb begins. The remaining judgment, those yet to come, these judgments belong to the wrath of the Lamb. These judgments include His victory at Armageddon (16:16;

19:11-21): His capture and judgment of the Beast and the False Prophet (19:20), His extermination of the “kings, generals and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great.” (19:18, 21); the victory over Satan at his final rebellion when Satan is forever cast into the lake of burning sulfur, where the Beast and the False Prophet had been thrown (20:7-10). And final outpouring the wrath of the Lamb, the judgment which should cause every knee to bow while there is still time to repent and turn to faith in the Lamb for salvation– the judgment that should cause all to shutter at the thought– the Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)

If you have never believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords, Son of God, Savior of the World, judge of all men– if you never have, do not delay. Call upon the Name of the Lord and you shall be saved! (Romans 10:9-10)

So, let's get into Revelation 15.

I. (15:1) The Sign: John Saw Another Great and Marvelous Sign!

A. This is the third “sign” John saw.

1. The first sign: Revelation 12:1
 - a) John saw “a great and wondrous sign...in heaven”
 - (1) The woman (Israel, which includes the prophetic redemptive history of the seed of the woman through Israel and some form of a tribulation remnant.)
2. The second sign: Revelation 12:3
 - a) John saw another sign...in heaven
 - (1) The great Red Dragon (The empires controlled by Satan including the final world empire of the Dragon and the Beast.)
3. This third sign: Revelation 15:1
 - a) “Great and marvelous” denotes the mighty works of God
 - (1) Namely, His imminent wrath poured out on the remaining unbelieving, rebellious earth dwellers.

B. Seven angels with the seven last plagues

1. These angels will bring God's **wrath** upon the earth, meaning:
 - a) Upon the Beast
 - b) Upon the False Prophet
 - c) Upon every person that followed the Beast
 - d) Upon every person that worshiped his image
 - e) Upon every person that took his mark/ number “666” (13:17)
2. God's wrath is described as:
 - a) Seven plagues

- (1) Not meaning sickness and disease, although that could be partially correct.
- (2) Plague here means, to strike with a deadly blow or wound
 - (a) Same word is used to describe the deadly wound inflicted upon the Beast in 13:3, 12.
- (3) These seven plagues are the seven bowl judgments of Rev. 16
- 3. The seven **last** plagues
 - a) They are last **“because with them God’s wrath is completed.”**
 - b) **“last”** also teaches us that God’s wrath began with the first seal judgment and will conclude with the seventh bowl judgment.
 - (1) The wrath of God will be over. The wrath of the Lamb will begin. See introduction.

C. Application

- 1. God is long-suffering. He “is patient toward you, not wishing for anyone to perish, but for everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9; cf 1 Timothy 2:4)
- 2. But for everyone who rejects His love and grace, for everyone who reviles His Christ and insults His gift of mercy and salvation found in Christ who died and rose from the dead, there will wrath and anger (see Romans 2:4-11)
 - a) For everyone who rejects God’s Gospel will face “only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”

II. (15:2-4) The Songs: John Saw the Overcomers who were victorious over the Beast!

- A. He sees the faithful saints standing upon what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire.
 - 1. First, “the sea of glass”
 - a) In Rev. 4:6 John saw before the throne of God “what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.”
 - (1) Clearly reflecting the glory of God. God’s glory shimmering.
 - (a) Similar descriptions of God’s glory is seen in:
 - (i) Exodus 24:10 and Ezekiel 1:22
 - b) Here in 15:2 what looked like a sea of glass is mixed with fire
 - (1) Denotes the beauty and glory of God’s judgment
 - (a) His judgment is pure, righteous and holy!
 - (b) It is a terrible, consuming judgment. None escape.
 - (i) Hebrews 12:29: “Our God is a consuming fire.”
 - 2. He saw the saints standing in the presence of God
 - a) These are **believers who will come to faith** during the tribulation.

- (1) ReThese are they who did not love their lives so much as to shrink back from death! (Rev. 12:11)
 - (a) They died for their devotion to the Lamb!
- (2) They are overcomers! They overcame the beast. "Victorious"!
 - (a) They did **not** follow the Beast or the False Prophet
 - (b) They did **not** worship the image of the Beast
 - (c) They did **not** take the mark or bow to "the number of his name."
- (3) They were **privileged** to hold and play harps in praise and worship
 - (a) Could be those John heard playing in 14:2!

B. (15:3-4) They sang the song of Moses and of the Lamb

- 1. The song of Moses in Exodus 15:1-8, which is a song praising God for salvation!
- 2. The song of the Lamb was first heard in Rev. 5:8-14, which praised the Lamb for the great salvation purchased for them through His blood!
- 3. This song in Rev. 15:3-4 is a new song praising God for Him giving the Victory over the Dragon, the Beast and the False prophet!
 - a) It encompasses the song of Moses and the Lamb!
 - b) And, this song glorifies God's Character: His omnipotence, sovereignty, holiness and His righteous judgments to come!
- 4. It acknowledges that ALL NATIONS will come worshipping before Him!
 - a) Philippians 2:10-11 says, "At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father."
 - (1) These saints see it and praise God for it!

III. (15:5-8) The Temple of the Tabernacle: John Saw the heavenly tabernacle was opened.

A. The Temple

- 1. John sees the Holy of Holies open up before him.

B. The tabernacle of the Testimony was in clear sight

- 1. He sees the Ark of the Testimony
 - a) First, John sees the "Mercy Seat of God"
 - (1) God is faithful to His covenant
 - (2) Hope for all who trust in Him
 - (3) He will not let His own trusting people suffer wrath
 - (4) A beautiful testimony of His mercy to all who would place their faith and trust in Him He would give everlasting life!

(a) John 3:16

b) Second, Contained within the Ark is the Law of God

(1) In context, this indicates that God's final judgment is not vengeful
be Just!

(a) These are God's judgments to vindicate His holiness!

C. (15:7) The Seven angels with seven plagues come out from the holy of holies

1. Their clothing indicates their holiness and purity

a) Again, the judgments to come are just and not hostile or vengeful.

b) Their acts of carrying out God's wrath bring glory to God.

2. They were given the seven bowls of the wrath of God

a) One of the four living creatures gave them the bowls of wrath

b) To be poured out

(1) Wrath poured out quickly, suddenly, and fully.

D. (15:8) Then, the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God

1. This is an aspect of the glory of God

a) Think of Mt. Sinai. (Ex. 19:18) The mountain was shrouded in smoke and cloud, and flashes of lightning and rolling thunder.

(1) This must be the Shikénah glory, the presence of God

2. No one could enter the temple until the bowl judgments were finished.

a) Just as when the Shikénah glory filled the tabernacle, Moses could not enter.

E. Application:

1. God is slow to anger, but judgment is coming

a) God has patiently bore with humanity; with you and me

b) He has delayed His judgments time after time

2. God has suffered much and waited a long time so that men would come to repentance.

3. Glorify God today, by receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord! Without Him God will rightly and justly judge all who refuse, mock, scoff at His mercies found in Christ!

4. When the final judgment comes no one will protest

a) People think they will take up their arguments against God

(1) But if the mountains will melt like wax before God what will happen to sinful man? (see Ps. 97:5; Amos 9:5; Micah 1:4)

(a) Ps. 97:5: "The mountains melt like wax before the Lord."

(b) Amos 9:5: "The Lord...touches the earth and it melts."

(c) Micah 1:4: "The mountains melt beneath Him..."

