

Revelation 15

- I. The End of God's Longsuffering – vs. 1
 - a. Introduction to the “Vial Judgments”.

Chapter 15 is an introductory vision to the seven last judgments of God, and forms a part with chapter 16.

- b. Announcement of the end.

This occurs at:

- The Sixth Seal – Rev 6:17
Remember, the seventh seal contains all the trumpet and vial judgments.
- The Seventh Trumpet – Rev 11:15; cf. 10:6-7; 12:10
- The First Vial – Rev 15:1
The wrath of God is ‘filled up’.

The Book of Revelation is a Book of the ‘End’ and a Book of ‘Judgment’. Yet we find God giving warnings along the way.

- c. The Third Sign in Heaven – vs. 1

There are 3 signs:

- Israel – Rev 12:1 – God’s People
- Satan – Revelation 12:3 – God’s Enemy
- Angels – Rev 15:1 – God’s Servants

- d. The Seven Last Plagues – vs. 1

- This implies the Seal and Trumpet Judgments were also plagues, or divine judgments.

Even though some of the Seal Judgments were a result of the actions of man, and some of the Trumpet Judgments come from hell and the hand of Satan, they were none-the-less by God’s permission.

- This shows the finality of events.
These judgments bring humanity to the last moments of their rebellion against God. They are the last.

- e. God’s Wrath is Filled up – vs. 1

This is truly the end of the Longsuffering of God. According to II Peter 3:9-10; Ps 7:11-13, we are living in an age of Grace and experiencing the longsuffering of God – but His wrath and judgment have been brewing.

To illustrate the ‘brewing’ wrath of God, consider the eruption of Mt. Saint Helens on May 18, 1980. Tremors were taking place months before the eruption. Six weeks before the eruption, the volcano began to bulge on its north side at a rate of over one meter a day. The pressure was building up.

Despite all these warnings, Police had great difficulty getting people to leave the area, keeping sight-seers away, and all kinds of jokes were

made. But the volcano blew out its side, 2 ½ billion cubic meters of volcanic material devastated 400 square kilometers of land, boiling fish in the rivers, blackening out the sun, and killing 25 confirmed and 47 presumed.

We are now learning of the day when the righteous anger of the Lord, restrained for 6,000 years, is going to erupt into cataclysmic judgment. See: Zeph 3:8.

Time and time again, the Word of God has issued warnings of Judgment to come.

II. The Anticipation of God's Victory – vs. 2-4

a. The Sea of Glass – vs. 2

Cf. Rev 4:6. This locates the scene of John's vision at this point as in the very throne-room of God. As noted in the study of Rev 4, this 'sea' is the laver, which pictures the Word of God.

b. The Mingling with Fire – vs. 2

In the Old Testament tabernacle and Temple, the laver was for cleansing, by which the Word of God is pictured. But the Bible is a two-edged sword, Hebrews 4:12. It not only saves and cleanses us, but judges us. John 12:48.

c. The Victorious Saints – vs. 2

Their Identity

They are the ones who have gotten the victory over the Beast, i.e. victory through martyrdom. Rev 13:7; 6:11; 7:14; 12:11; 20:4

Their Location

They stand upon the sea of glass. On earth, they stood firm on the Word of God.

Their Instruments

Harps

d. The Song of the Tribulation Martyrs – vs. 3

There are 3 songs mentioned in Revelation:

- The "New Song" – Rev 5:9

This is sung by the 4 beasts, the 24 elders, and the angelic hosts.

It is a 'song of the Lamb' – Rev 15:3 – "Worthy is the Lamb", the song of redemption.

- The "Unknown Song" – Rev 14:3

This was also sung by the hosts of heaven, but was known only to the 144,000 Jews.

- The "Song of Moses" – vs. 3

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This is recorded in Exodus 15:1-19, and was composed and sung after the plagues of Egypt and God's mighty deliverance of Israel.

(Some commentators see the Song of Moses as that recorded in Deut. 31:30-32:43. Both these songs are appropriate to the times experienced during the Great Tribulation.)

The tribulation martyrs sing 2 songs – The Song of Moses (theme: God's faithfulness to Israel), and the Song of the Lamb (theme: Redemption through the blood).

- e. The Contents of the Song of Tribulation Martyrs – vs. 3-4
 - It addresses the Sovereign God – vs. 3 – “Lord God Almighty”
 - It celebrates Divine Attributes – vs. 4 – “thou only art Holy”
 - It magnifies the righteousness of Divine Government – vs. 3
“just and true are thy ways”. This is significant in view of the judgments already poured out and those about to come. See: Romans 2:2, 11; John 5:30; 8:16.
 - It extolls Divine greatness – vs. 3 – “great and marvelous are Thy works”
 - It recognizes Divine Lordship – vs. 3. – “King of the saints”
 - It anticipates universal dominion – vs. 4
The first and last sentences of this verse look forward to the establishment of the Millennium.

III. The Opening of God's Tabernacle – vs. 5 This Vision Corresponds with Rev 11:19

- a. God's Tabernacle in Heaven
 - This was the Temple after which the Tabernacle was patterned. Hebrews 9:11, 23. Remember, the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem has been defiled by the Antichrist.
- b. The 'Tabernacle of the Testimony'
 - This refers to the Holy of Holies, where the ark of the covenant was kept. In this ark were kept the Testimony (the Commandments of God). Exodus 25:16, 21

IV. The Ministers of God's Judgments – 6-7 There were Seven Angels – vs. 6

- a. Their Attire – vs. 6
 - Pure, white linen, a symbol of righteousness (Rev 19:8), girded with gold, a symbol of deity.

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These angels have a 'priestly role' (though unlike their earthly counterparts, they could enter into the Holy of Holies). Priests in the Bible have two major functions:

- Access to God
- Sacrifices to God

The Priesthood throughout the Bible may be simply summarized as follows:

- Before the Law – Head of the household
- Period of the Law – Levitical order
- Present Age – Each believer through Christ – I Pt 2:9; Rom 5:1-2; Eph 2:18; 3:12
- Heavenly Angels – 7 Angels

These 'angels-priests' are about to offer a great sacrifice of judgment.

b. Their Vials – vs. 7

A vial is a bowl-like container. These were golden vials and were filled with the wrath of God. Rev. 14:10

Men today have the choice of drinking from the cup of salvation, Ps 116:13 or the cup of wrath, Ps 75:8.

V. The Closing of God's Temple – vs. 8

a. The Smoke of God's Glory

The presence of God was often signified by a cloud, e.g. Ex 40:35. Smoke is mentioned when God's presence in judgment and holiness is intended. For example, when smoke covered Mt Sinai, God was giving the Law which spoke judgment to the offender – Ex 19:18. Isaiah saw smoke when he was commissioned to preach a message of judgment – Is 6:4.

See: Ex 16:10; 24:16; Ps 18:8

b. The Closing of the Temple

Grace is withdrawn, and all the prayers and pleas of men on earth will go unheeded.

"Heaven will be barricaded so that none can enter until justice is satisfied."

Lam 3:43-44; Prov 29:1; Gal 6:7-8