

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

Oliver B. Greene

Copyright © 1963

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Seven Angels With the Seven Last Plagues

Revelation 15:1-8:

1. **And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.**
2. **And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them 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.**
3. **And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.**
4. **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.**
5. **And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:**
6. **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.**
7. **And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.**
8. **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.**

Chapter fifteen is a short chapter, but a very important one. In this chapter we will see the seven angels who have the seven last plagues. John sees the vision of the angels with the bowls of the wrath of Almighty God.

In Revelation 12:1 John saw a great sign in Heaven . a woman. In Revelation 12:3 he saw another sign . . . a red dragon. Now in Revelation 15:1 there is another sign . . . this one being “**great and marvellous.**” What makes this third sign so great and marvelous is that the “**full wrath of God**” is about to be poured out upon the persecutors of the woman (Israel).

There are three numbered groups of angels mentioned in the book of Revelation:

1. Revelation 7:1 mentions four angels.
2. Revelation 8:2, 15:1 and 16:1 mention seven angels.
3. Revelation 21:12 mentions twelve angels.

The seven angels who have the seven trumpets must undoubtedly be angels of a very high order: **“They stand before God.”**

This is not said of the Vial angels in our present chapter. The vials held by these seven angels are filled with the full fury of God’s wrath, and they are ready to pour out this fury upon the earth. The actual pouring out of the vials begins in 16:1.

After the vials of God’s fury are all poured out, Jesus comes in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God. This is the time when every eye shall see Him, when He comes in person to finish the judgment against the ungodliness of earth’s dwellers. Every eye shall see Him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him (Revelation 1: 7).

In verse 2, John sees a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had gained the victory over the Beast, over his image, over his mark and the number of his name are standing on the sea of glass, **“having the harps of God.”**

In Revelation 13 we studied the Beast and his power.

He went forth conquering and killing all who would not worship him and who refused to receive his mark. At that time he was victorious over the saints; he butchered them by the millions. But now all those who were martyred by him are victors on high, and the Beast is about to receive the fullness of the vengeance of Almighty God.

The Bible is fool-proof - no loopholes, no untied ends. John saw **“as it were** (it appeared as) **a sea of glass mingled with fire.”** That must have been a sight to behold!

In chapter 4 John saw **“a sea of glass like unto crystal.”** The sea was unoccupied when John saw it in chapter 4, but here we see those who have been victorious over the Beast; they are standing on the sea and they have something in their hands: **“harps of God.”** There will be music - such music as our ears have never heard!

Please note: These are standing. Their position denotes victory. They sealed their testimony with their life’s blood. They are now victors. They have **“harps of God,”** and they will share a martyr’s crown. (Read Hebrews 2:12 and Exodus 15.) Can you imagine the music that will come from this great company of heavenly musicians playing on harps of God? What a day that will be for the victorious hosts as they stand upon the calm sea of glass mingled with fire!

Verse 3 reveals the song they play and sing: **“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”**

The song of Moses celebrates God’s mighty deliverance of His people Israel - God’s elect.

The song of the Lamb celebrates the great redemption purchased by the Lamb on Calvary by the victorious shedding of His precious blood; and had the Lamb of God not laid His life down, had He not shed His precious blood, the Blood offered by the high priest in the Old Testament era would have been void.

All the shed blood of the Old Testament pointed to the Blood of the Lamb. Old Testament saints looked forward to the shedding of the Blood, while WE look back to Calvary. Without blood there is no salvation: Hebrews 9:22: “**Without shedding of blood is no remission.**” I John 1:7b: “**the Blood of Jesus Christ, (God’s) Son, cleanseth us from all sin.**”

The opening words of the song are “**Great and marvellous are thy works!**” These words also occur in verse one . . . John saw a sign which was “**great and marvellous**” . . . great and wonderful because of the great and wonderful victory which is made available through the accomplishment of that which John beheld. In verse 1, the sign of the closing judgments is “**great and marvellous,**” and in verse 3 the works of God are also “**great and marvellous.**”

The pouring out of the vials of wrath will be brief - but terrific, stupendous and wonderful in power. This work is ascribed to JEHOVAH . . . Almighty God . . . the self-existent Creator of all things, who is “**from everlasting to everlasting**” (Psalm 90:1,2). The judgments in these vials are terrible. Words cannot describe the pain, the woe, the anguish, the misery they will bring; but they are “**true and righteous.**” God deals in righteousness - whether it be with His own, His enemies, or whosoever. God cannot be untrue, He cannot be unrighteous. His judgment is righteous. In the last part of verse 3 we read, “**Thou King of saints.**” Jesus is not the King of the saints; we are members of His body - we are the New Testament Church.

But He is the King of Israel, King of kings, King of the earth, King of all nations. Nowhere is He referred to in the Bible as King of saints. We, the saints, will reign with Him here on the Millennial earth. Read I Corinthians 4:8, 6:2-3 and Revelation 1:6.

The nations here are about to be dealt with in final fury and righteous judgment; therefore, Jesus Christ is declared “**King of nations.**” He will put down all enemy rule and resistance (Jeremiah 10:7).

Verse 4: “**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 this verse we have three reasons why all should fear the Lord and glorify His name:

1. “**For thou art holy.**” The Hebrew word here denotes that God alone is worthy of worship. The nations have been at this time worshipping the Beast. The cry to the nations is “**Fear God!**”
2. “**For all nations shall come and worship before thee.**” All nations of earth have never in the past worshipped before God, and they will never all worship before God until this time; but there is a day coming when all nations will bow at His feet (Zechariah 14:16,17; Isaiah 2:2-4, 56:6,7; Psalm 100 and Psalm 148).

3. **“Thy judgments (thy righteousnesses) are made manifest.”**

Note, please, the plural of the word **“judgments,”** signifying the righteous acts of God in these terrible, horrible judgments contained in the vials of wrath. Here God is declaring Himself to be righteous in judgment - and certainly that is reason enough for all peoples to fear God. **“O, God, deal with me in mercy!”** is my humble prayer. I seek the mercy of God . . . God’s grace . . . not my just desserts.

Verses 5-7: **“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 full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.”**

After **“these things”** in verse five, note a break a change of procedure in the judgments. The vials of God’s wrath are in a group all to themselves. Two things about the vial judgments differ from the seal and the trumpet judgments:

1. The throne in Heaven is the source of the seal and trumpet judgments. But the temple is the source of the vials. The temple takes the place of the throne in the vial judgments, introducing therefore an even more violent judgment than ever before witnessed on this earth. These vials, filled with judgment, come from God in His holy and righteous character.

2. These vials contain the wrath of God against the organized systems of evil, which are in power here upon the earth at that time; and the pouring out of these vials of God’s wrath will mean the consummation of all evil power here upon earth. God’s judgments upon evil men and their systems are being completed in order that the Millennium can begin, and there will then be peace on earth and good will toward men for the space of one thousand glorious years of peace.

In verse 5 we learn that John saw the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in Heaven, opened. From Revelation 11:19 to Revelation chapter 19, it is the **“temple in Heaven”** from which action on earth proceeds, and not the throne. Here - and also in Revelation 11:19 - the temple John saw is in Heaven, and is open. The temple in Heaven is the residence of Almighty God and God’s angels.

In Revelation 11:19 the ark of the covenant is seen. This ark is the token of God’s presence with, and interest in, His people - the elect; but here in verse 5 we see the tabernacle of the witness (testimony). This was a testimony really to the **“rights of God”** - which has been openly denied by the Antichrist, who claimed to be God and who announced from the temple that he WAS God; but now he is about to be put down by Jehovah God, and all of the ungodly systems of Antichrist will fall with him. **“The covenant”** was the sign of Israel’s security (Psalms 105:8; 106:45; 111:5). **“The witness”** testifies to judgment according to the holy nature of God, judgment upon His enemies and the would-be destroyers of God’s elect - Israel.

What a sight John saw when the temple was opened!

John did not see the priest of God ministering in the holy place, nor did he see the high priest ministering in the holy of holies, but the seven mighty angels with bowls, vials, containers . . . filled to the brim with the fury and the wrath of God. He did not see priests (the ministers of grace), but angels (the ministers of judgment).

God Himself has commissioned and equipped these angels for the terrible job they are to perform. God's temple of old was a temple of grace . . . a temple of mercy . . . a temple of longsuffering. Here His temple is open for judgment such as the world has never known.

The wickedness of earth's dwellers deserves judgment in all of its bitterness and fury, because they have insulted God as far as it is possible to insult God. God's holiness demands righteous judgment, and it is therefore imperative. There is no alternative. Since God made Adam, God has desired to bless mankind, reason with men, forgive them. But since Adam, men have decided against God, have made their own plans - and like Judas, they have gone "**their way.**"

Therefore God has no alternative. He must destroy wicked men; and in the final judgments He will completely rid this earth of all wickedness. The righteous character of the mission of these seven angels with the vials is signified by their apparel: "**pure and white linen.**" (See also Revelation 19:8.) They are wearing golden girdles, which signify divine righteousness in their action (Isaiah 11:5, Revelation 1:13). When John saw the Lord in Chapter One, He wore a golden girdle. The word "**beasts**" in verse 7 does not refer to an evil or wild beast as heretofore in chapter 13. One of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels the vials filled with God's wrath.

Verse 8: "**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.**"

There are three distinct steps in this judgment of the seven angels who held the seven vials and came out of the temple of God, which was opened in Heaven:

1. The angels are commissioned and equipped in the temple - the sanctuary of Almighty God (verse 6). That does not sound like the lovely "grandfather-God" the liberals and modernists talk about today, does it?
2. One of the living creatures gives to each of the angels a golden bowl . . . a vial . . . filled with the fury of the wrath of Almighty God. That does not sound like the God of modernists of today, does it?
3. The angels cannot act until God gives them the command to move and to pour out their vials (Revelation 6:1). The eternal, ever-living God is the God of judgment. That does not sound like the tender, heavenly "Father of all men, all men are brothers, no one is bad, all men are good." That does not sound like some of the Sunday morning essays of today, does it?

God is longsuffering. He is patient. He is good. He is kind; but He is also a consuming fire. Paul warns us in Romans 11: "**Behold the goodness and the severity of God.**"

The Psalmist cries out, **“God is angry with the wicked every day”** (Psalm 7:11). Nahum warns, **“God will not acquit the wicked”** (Nahum 1:3). And Paul the Apostle thunders out, **“God is a consuming fire”** (Hebrews 12:29).

Please read these words slowly and carefully, and give heed to this statement concerning God’s power and God’s judgment:

“See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me.

**I KILL, I MAKE ALIVE;
I WOUND, I HEAL:**

Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the Blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people: for He will avenge the Blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land (Palestine - the land given to Father Abraham for an everlasting possession) and to His people” (Deuteronomy 32:39-43).

Modernists will not preach about a God of judgment - only a God of love. No, there is entirely too much blood here to fit the modern Sunday morning sermon. But whether they preach it or not, whether they believe it or not, God is the same, yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). God deals in blood and fire, and if you are not covered by the Blood, then you will be engulfed in the fire. If you fail to receive His mercy and grace, then you will suffer His wrath and fury, and you will be judged when God performs **“HIS STRANGE WORK”** (Isaiah 28:21).

It makes no difference what you have heard, what you have read, what preachers have said, nor what seminaries have taught: The Bible is God’s Word, and that Word is forever settled in Heaven. All hell cannot change it. There is a hell . . . a hell of fire and brimstone. There is a judgment day, and all will be there. My advice to you, precious friend, is that if you are not as sure you are saved as you are sure you are breathing, then bow on your knees this moment and stay there until you can say,

“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!”

Yes, you can KNOW you are saved! And if you do not know it, you are not saved. Read II Timothy 1:12, I John 3:14, Romans 8:16.

~ end of chapter 15 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
