**PRELUDE TO THE BOWLS**

**REVELATION 15**

We now arrive to the fourth parallel episode in the drama of revelation.

**15** is the shortest chapter in all of the revelation.

Though brief, it supplies a vital prelude to the wrath soon administered.

**Chapter 16** covers each bowl’s contents and their pouring.

I’ll be covering 5 subjects in this study:

* Seven Angels
* Sea of Glass
* The Victorious
* Song of Victory
* Temple of The Tabernacle

**Seven Angels**

* **REV 15:1**
* **“Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.”**

As further testimony for the number 7 to represent wholeness is that by the plagues of the 7 angels the wrath of God will be finished.

In these 7 plagues the wrath of God will be satisfied. The NKJV says His wrath will be complete.

The cause for this wrath is man’s disobedience.

His demands of justice must be pursued and attained.

God’s punishment of the wicked does not negate the nature of His mercy.

Rather, it magnifies the nature of his Justice.

We have already seen seven seals and seven trumpets.

Their order of fulfillment is not consecutive; the order is parallel.

Men have had a tendency to envision the trumpets were blown one after another and that the vials were poured out one after another but careful study shows this is very unlikely.

These stories act as one picture as it is drawn.

First the outlines, then the outline is traced and given more detail and finally the finishing touches are added until the whole stands.

The seals are opened, the trumpets sound, and the vails are emptied.

Each trace the course of divine action.

After witnessing these 7 angels John sees something wondrous:

**Sea of Glass**

* **REV 15:2**
* **“And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire,”**

The apostle is going to tell us more about those 7 angels with their plagues.

But before he does so he shows us the church triumphant after the last day.

After the bowls of wrath have been emptied, what is this company of victors going to say?

John beholds a sea.

It’s likely the sea described here symbolizes God’s transparent righteousness revealed in judgments upon the wicked.

Not only does he behold a sea but there is a multitude standing on it.

**The Victorious**

* **REV 15:2 (Remainder)**
* **“and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God”**

On the sea stands this multitude of winners.

They have harps and are singing the song of Moses and of the lamb.

This vision is based on the story of the drowning of Pharaoh’s host in the red sea.

Much like the Sea John is looking at, the Red Sea is where the Hebrews stood and sang their songs of deliverance and of victory.

**Exodus 14:15 says “I will sing to Jehovah, for he has triumphed gloriously: The horse and the rider hath been thrown into the sea.”**

Thus we understand the victory Moses and His people had even more clearly.

Their victory served as a foreshadowing of the victory of all God’s redeemed over the beast, his image, and number.

Just as Israel had ascribed the cause of their victory was God so do the redeemed.

**Song of Victory**

* **REV 15:3**

**“They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb”**

Moses is described as the servant of God. He is the type of Christ in the Old Testament. It is no wonder that the redemption song is the one song of both Moses and the Lamb.

An anthem of praise and adoration is from the beginning note to the final.

I want you to now see the song they sang.

* **REV 15:3**

**“Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!”**

* **REV 15:4**

**“Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested.”**

Notice that this song deals not with the overcoming of the saints, rather it deals with the mighty works of God.

There is not one single word in it about their own achievement.

Self is at last forgotten; selfishness is destroyed. In heaven the song of Moses and the Lamb is exclusively written for loving praise to the Almighty.

What a wondrous picture that John is given but this beautiful scene is one of the rare occasions in the revelation where his ears are given something marvelous.

The apostle now leaves the future and refocuses our attention on the last section of our study.

**Temple of The Tabernacle**

* **REV 15:5**

**“After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.”**

The tabernacle of the testimony was the Holy of Holies.

Into it none but the High Priest entered and He only to make intercession for the forgiveness of sins.

It is the type of the Holy of Holies above, the mercy seat in the heavens, where our High Priest intercedes for us and where the smoke of the incense of prayer rises to God.

Hebrew Christians must have known what the writer meant when he wrote of a greater and more perfect tabernacle:

**But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building (Hebrews 9:11)**

The tabernacle and later the temple under the Jewish economy is a type of the church and of heaven.

The writer of **Hebrews** follows emphatically and conclusively in **verse 24**:

**For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.**

* **REV 15:6**

**“And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.”**

The mission of these angels is divine and approved. They have seven vials, or bowls.

The seven last plagues brimming full of the wrath of God.

The angels attire is impressive and symbolic.

Linen pure and bright describes the attire of the Lamb’s bride **Rev 19:8**.

The heavenly horsemen are similarly described as having linen pure and white **Rev 19:14**

The golden girdle was seen earlier in our study being worn by the glorified Christ **Rev 1:13**.

The golden girdles seem not to identify their work as priestly but to signify that they are angels of high rank entrusted with a solemn obligation.

* **REV 15:7**

**“Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.”**

We already met the four living creatures in **Rev 4**One of those creatures had the awesome responsibility of giving the seven bowls of God’s wrath to the seven angels.

Specific evil events don’t fit the imagery here.

Why should the events that Bret will speak about be literal events if we surmise the bowls, trumpets, and seals to be figurative?

Mixing literal with figurative violates this passage entirely.

Pieters writes concerning this passage that Literalism is here hopeless.

* **REV 15:8**

**“The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed”**

Throughout history an ever-recurring order of events has taken place.

The word of God is preached.

Churches are established.

They are lampstands.

They stand in the midst of a world that lies in darkness.

Time and time again God’s people are persecuted by the world.

Subjected to many trials and afflictions.

The conflict between the church and the world points to a deeper warfare between Christ and Satan, in **Revelation 12** they are identified as the seed of the woman and the dragon.

The question arises whenever in history trumpets of judgment and initial plagues fail to result in conversion, what then?

Does God allow such hardness of heart to go unpunished to go unpunished until the final judgment of the last day?

Should we understand that God’s wrath as being pent up until the second coming as described in **Revelation 14?**

We receive an answer in **chapter 15.**

The answer in short is that when the wicked fail to repent there is a final resort of wrath that follows.

God chose bowls of wrath to signify storing up. Sins are not forgotten. Punishment is coming.

Have you been forgiven of your sins? Do you stand guilty in need of pardon?