

The Book Of Revelation Study 77

Revelation 15:1-8 (NKJV)

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.*

² *And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, 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.*

³ *They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!*

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."*

⁵ *After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

In our last study we looked at the grape harvest of the earth. We saw the reaper and the ripeness of the earth and also the reaping of the earth. In final judgment. This included the seven bowls of judgment to be poured out on the earth which we will get into later in chapter 16, and the battle of Armageddon, that great battle when the whole world comes to fight against Jesus and His angelic hosts.

These great moments represented by these judgments were the constant theme of the Old Testament prophets. They frequently warned of the coming Day of the Lord, whether in an imminent historical judgment, or the final eschatological Day of the Lord.

Isaiah warned:

Isaiah 13:6-9 (NKJV)

⁶ *Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.*

⁷ *Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart will melt,*

⁸ *And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces will be like flames.*

⁹ *Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it.*

Ezekiel described the Day of the lord as a time of doom for the nations:

Ezekiel 30:3 (NKJV)

³ *For the day is near, Even the day of the LORD is near; It will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles.*

Joel exclaimed:

Joel 1:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ *Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.*

Amos cried;

Amos 4:11-12 (NKJV)

¹¹ "I overthrew some of you, As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD.

¹² "Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"

The Prophet Zephaniah gave the following frightening description of the Day of the Lord;

Zephaniah 1:14-18 (NKJV)

¹⁴ The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out.

¹⁵ That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,

¹⁶ A day of trumpet and alarm Against the fortified cities And against the high towers.

¹⁷ "I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the LORD; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse."

¹⁸ Neither their silver nor their gold Shall be able to deliver them In the day of the LORD'S wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land.

Throughout the entire historical outpouring of God's wrath, from to the final explosion of His eschatological wrath, a strange paradox exists:

God is busily working to save sinners from His own wrath.

God's nature encompasses not only righteousness and holiness, but also grace and mercy. Even during the devastating judgments of the Tribulation, God will call sinners to salvation.

He will do so using the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, the two witnesses a host of redeemed Gentiles and Jews even an angel flying in the sky.

As God's wrath escalates so does His evangelistic efforts as well

The result will be that the greatest harvest of souls of all time, from all the nations will be saved, many to survive the Tribulation and enter the millennial kingdom.

God's final wrath is also called His fierce wrath,

The Prophet Zephaniah wrote of this final out pouring of God wrath by saying;

Zephaniah 3:8 (NKJV)

⁸ "Therefore wait for Me," says the LORD, "Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination is to gather the nations To My assembly of kingdoms, To pour on them My indignation, All my fierce anger; All the earth shall be devoured With the fire of My jealousy.

It is true that Peter wrote

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Yet those who refuse God's love, reject His grace, and scorn His mercy will inevitably face His wrath.

As this 15th chapter unfolds, three motives for the final out pouring of God's wrath will become evident;

The vengeance of God

The character of God,

The Plan of God.

THE VENGEANCE OF GOD

Revelation 15:2 (NKJV)

² And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, 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.

In this remarkable vision, John **saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire.**

The sea was not an actual ocean, because in 21:1 "he saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea"

What John saw was a transparent crystal platform before God's throne, shimmering and glistening like a tranquil sunlit sea.

John saw the same sea-like crystal platform in;

Revelation 4:6a (NKJV)

⁶ Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.

Now Moses also had a vision of it when he and the elders of Israel saw the God of Israel.

Exodus 24:9-10 (NKJV)

*⁹ Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,
¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.*

Mixed with fire indicates that this platform was also connected to God's judgment as fire is almost always connected to God's judgment. It is said of God that he is a consuming fire (*Heb 12:29*)

Now John saw gathered around the throne of God **those who had been victorious over the beast.**

These believers were redeemed during the Tribulation. They will be **victorious over the beast** because of their undying faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 20:4-6 describes their resurrections and reward.

Revelation 20:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and

reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

⁵ *But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

⁶ *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

In *chapter 13:7* it says of the beast (Antichrist);

Revelation 13:7 (NKJV)

⁷ *It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.*

But Antichrist's triumph will be short-lived, and in the end the Tribulation saints will be granted triumph over him, prevailing under the pressure to which the world had already succumbed.

Not only will the Tribulation saints triumph over the beast, but also over **his image and the number of his name**.

The beast's crony, the false prophet, will perform many lying wonders to deceive people.

One of them will be to set up an **image** of the beast, which he will order everyone to worship on pain of death. He will also require everyone to receive a mark representing either the beast's name, or **the number of his name**.

Those without that mark will face execution and will be unable to buy or sell.

But the Tribulation believers will, by God's power, eternally triumph over the whole enterprise of Satan, the beast, and the false prophet.

Even those martyred for their triumphant faith will receive their glorious rewards.

Revelation 20:4 (NKJV)

⁴ *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

That the Tribulation saints are seen **holding harps of God** indicates that they are rejoicing and singing praise to God.

Harps were associated with praise earlier in Revelation (*5:8, 14:2*)

This is also true of the harps in the Old Testament.

These believers rejoice because their prayers for God to take vengeance on their persecutors (*6:9-10*) are about to be answered.

The appearance of the Tribulation saints make the point that God sends His wrath as an act of vengeance on those who mistreat His people.

Jesus warned:

Matthew 18:6-10 (NKJV)

⁶ *"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*

⁷ *Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!*

⁸ *If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.*

⁹ *And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.*

¹⁰ *"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.*

Unbelievers will be condemned to eternal hell for mistreating God's people, because that mistreatment reveals their evil, impenitent hearts;

Matthew 25:41-45 (NKJV)

⁴¹ *Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:*

⁴² *for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;*

⁴³ *I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'*

⁴⁴ *Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'*

⁴⁵ *Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'*

The Apostle Paul wrote:

Romans 12:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord"*

The Old Testament likens persecuting God's people to poking a finger in His eye;

Zechariah 2:8 (NKJV)

⁸ *For thus says the LORD of hosts: "He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.*

The Psalmist also wrote of God's vengeance for His people:

Psalms 94:1-10 (NKJV)

¹ *O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongs-- O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!*

² *Rise up, O Judge of the earth; Render punishment to the proud.*

³ *LORD, how long will the wicked, How long will the wicked triumph?*

⁴ *They utter speech, and speak insolent things; All the workers of iniquity boast in themselves.*

⁵ *They break in pieces Your people, O LORD, And afflict Your heritage.*

⁶ *They slay the widow and the stranger, And murder the fatherless.*

⁷ *Yet they say, "The LORD does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob understand."*

⁸ *Understand, you senseless among the people; And you fools, when will you be wise?*

⁹ *He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall He not see?*

¹⁰ *He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct, He who teaches man knowledge?*

The believers pictured here in this passage have undergone the terrors of the Tribulation and suffered painful, violent deaths as martyrs.

Yet despite having endured the most intense persecution the world will ever know, their faith, which is a gift from God, will endure.

Eventually they will stand triumphantly before the throne of God, watching as God takes vengeance on their persecutors.

Next study we will talk about the Character of God and His Plan.