

The Book Of Revelation Study 78

Revelation 15:1-4 (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."*

In our last study we looked at the vision of John and the subject was the vengeance of God for His Saints under the throne.

Romans 12:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

God will answer the prayers of the saints martyred for His name sake. And that we have seen.

Now we want to turn our eyes to the next thing revealed in this passage and it is the character of God.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

Revelation 15:3-4 (NKJV)

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."*

The song sung by the glorified saints before the throne is an anthem of praise to God.

The ultimate motive of God's wrath is His holy, righteous character, which demands that He judge sinners.

It is God's holy nature, soon to be revealed in judgment against their persecutors, that elicits this song from the redeemed.

The **song of Moses** is the first of several songs recorded in the Old Testament.

The Israelites sang a song of praise when the Lord gave them water in the wilderness (*Num 21:17-18*)

Moses taught the children of Israel a song of remembrance shortly before his death (*Duet. 31:19-22; 32:1-44*)

That song of Moses is not in view here, because it deals with Israel's unfaithfulness and God's punishment of the nation before her restoration.

The context of *Revelation 15* is not one of unfaithfulness, but of faithfulness that triumphs.

The historical setting for the **song of Moses** comes from the time of the Exodus.

As **the bond-servant of God**, Moses was called to lead the people of Israel out of captivity in Egypt.

God delivered them from Pharaoh's pursuing army by parting the Red Sea, stacking the water on either side of a path, thus allowing the Israelites to cross safely on dry land.

After they were safely across, the collapsing waters drowned the Egyptian army.
On the far side of the Red Sea, the Israelites sang a song of praise to God for their deliverance.

Exodus 15:1-18 (NKJV)

- ¹ *Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: "I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!*
- ² *The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will exalt Him.*
- ³ *The LORD is a man of war; The LORD is His name.*
- ⁴ *Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.*
- ⁵ *The depths have covered them; They sank to the bottom like a stone.*
- ⁶ *"Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces.*
- ⁷ *And in the greatness of Your excellence You have overthrown those who rose against You; You sent forth Your wrath; It consumed them like stubble.*
- ⁸ *And with the blast of Your nostrils The waters were gathered together; The floods stood upright like a heap; The depths congealed in the heart of the sea.*
- ⁹ *The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, My hand shall destroy them.'*
- ¹⁰ *You blew with Your wind, The sea covered them; They sank like lead in the mighty waters.*
- ¹¹ *"Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?*
- ¹² *You stretched out Your right hand; The earth swallowed them.*
- ¹³ *You in Your mercy have led forth The people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength To Your holy habitation.*
- ¹⁴ *"The people will hear and be afraid; Sorrow will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia.*
- ¹⁵ *Then the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed; The mighty men of Moab, Trembling will take hold of them; All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt away.*
- ¹⁶ *Fear and dread will fall on them; By the greatness of Your arm They will be as still as a stone, Till Your people pass over, O LORD, Till the people pass over Whom You have purchased.*
- ¹⁷ *You will bring them in and plant them In the mountain of Your inheritance, In the place, O LORD, which You have made For Your own dwelling, The sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands have established.*
- ¹⁸ *"The LORD shall reign forever and ever."*

This **song of Moses** was a song of victory and deliverance for the righteous, and at the same time of judgment and wrath on God's enemies.

The tribulation saints gathered in triumph in a place of safety and secularity, will echo the same song of deliverance sung long ago by the people of Israel.

In addition to singing again with new meaning the **song of Moses**, who led Israel in the redemption from Egypt, the redeemed saints before God's throne also will sing the **song of the Lamb**, who is their eternal Redeemer.

The song was first heard in **5:8-14**.

Revelation 5:8-14 (NKJV)

- ⁸ *Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*
- ⁹ *And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,*

¹⁰ *And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."*

¹¹ *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,*

¹² *saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"*

¹³ *And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"*

¹⁴ *Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.*

Like the **song of Moses**, the **song of the Lamb** expresses the themes of God's faithfulness, deliverance of His people, and judgment of His enemies.

Commentator John Phillips compares and contrasts the two songs:

The song of Moses was sung at the Red Sea, the song of the Lamb is sung at the Crystal Sea:

The song of Moses was a song of triumph over Egypt, the song of the Lamb is a song of triumph over Babylon;

The song of Moses told how God brought His people out, the song of the lamb tells how God brings His people in;

The song of Moses was the first song in Scripture, the song of the Lamb is the last;

The song of Moses commemorated the execution of the foe, the expectation of the saints, and the exaltation of the Lord;

The song of the Lamb deals with the same three themes.

(Exploring Revelation, rev.ed. [Chicago: Moody, 1987; reprint, Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1991], 187)

The words of the song recorded here do not match exactly either the **song of Moses** in *Exodus 15*, or the **song of the Lamb** in *Revelation 5*.

But the themes and many of the key terms are similar.

The phrases here echo many Old Testament passages

The theme of these songs and the song from the saints here in Heaven, extol God's character as the Omnipotent, Immutable, Sovereign, Perfect, and Righteous Creator and Judge.

Because He is all that, God must and will judge sinners; if He ignored their sin, He would not be holy, righteous, and true to His nature.

Habakkuk 1:13 (NKJV)

¹³ *You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?*

Job 8:3 (NKJV)

³ *Does God subvert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice?*

The Psalmist answers;

Psalm 19:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*

The song closes with joyful anticipation of the millennial reign of Christ, when **all the nations will come and worship before God.**

In the word of the Psalmist;

Psalm 66:4 (NKJV)

⁴ All the earth shall worship You And sing praises to You; They shall sing praises to Your name.” Selah

Zechariah 14:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

After God’s **righteous acts** of judgment **have been revealed** during the Tribulation, the time anticipated by Isaiah will come;

Isaiah 66:23 (NKJV)

²³ And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD.

That time will mark the first phase of the fulfillment of Philippians

Philippians 2:10-11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

THE PLAN OF GOD

Revelation 15:5-8 (NKJV)

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.

Each of the angelic players in this unfolding drama will fulfill his assigned duty according to God’s plan. It has always been God’s purpose to judge sinners and destroy sin.

The, **“Eternal fire, has already been prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41)**

And awaits those whom God will one day sentence to eternal punishment there.

God’s holy angels await the time when they will play their role in God’s judgment of sinners (*Matt. 13:41-42, 49-50*)

Here in this new vision they are given the instruments of execution.

The phrase **after these things I looked** introduces a startling dramatic new vision.

Something is about to draw John’s attention away from the redeemed saints singing their praises before God’s glorious throne.

This new vision revealed to him the bowl judgments, but first John sees the angels who will carry out those judgments.

As he watched, **the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened.**

The apostle had seen a similar sight in an earlier vision, which anticipated this opening, when “*the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm*” (11:19)

Temple (naos) refers to the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary where God’s presence dwells, emphasizing that God is the source of the plagues.

The **tabernacle** was sometimes referred to as the **tabernacle of testimony (Ex 38:21)** because the most important item in it was the ark of the covenant, sometimes called the ark of the testimony (*Ex 25:22*) and it was so named because it contained the testimony, the two stone tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments (*Ex 25:16, 21; 40:20; Psalms 78:5*)

As John watched, **the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple.**

The time has come in God’s sovereign plan for the seven plagues, which represent the final, deadly judgments, to be poured out on the world

Hebrews 10:31 (NKJV)

³¹ *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

These seven angels will execute God’s plan.

They were **clothed in linen, clean and bright**, the fabric representing their holiness and purity.

As befits such glorious, holy majestic beings, the angels were **girded around their chest with golden sashes**, running across the torso from the shoulder to the waist.

After solemnly proceeding from the inner sanctuary of God’s heavenly temple, the seven angels received the means by which they will dump God’s judgment.

One of the four living creatures (cherubim) gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever.

Bowls (Phialas) refers to shallow saucers.

The imagery is not that of a stream being poured gradually out of a pitcher, but of the whole content of the shallow saucers being hurled down in an instant flood of judgment.

Bowls were a part of the temple furnishings and were associated with the sacrifices (*Ex 27:3; 38:3*)

Those who refuse to drink the cup of salvation will be drowned in judgments poured from the bowls of wrath.

Because God **lives forever and ever**, He has the power to put an end to sin, so that it cannot exist again forever in His holy presence.

Out of the heavenly temple came not only the angels, but also **smoke** symbolizing **the glory of God and His power.**

Smoke, and emblem of majesty, also symbolized God’s glorious presence in the Old Testament tabernacle or temple (*Ex 40:34-35*).

This **smoke** also symbolizes God's wrath; thus **no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.**

The glory cloud will remain in the heavenly temple until the earth is completely purged, cleansed, and prepared for the King and his kingdom.

The scene described in this chapter establishes the background for the final, definitive judgments, poured out in *chapter 16*.

Once, the wrath of God was poured out on Jesus Christ because of what He did for sinners; In the future, wrath will be poured out on sinners because of what they did to Jesus Christ.

Now it is true that;

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.

And that even in His wrath, He will remember mercy;

Habakkuk 3:2 (NKJV)

² O LORD, I have heard your speech and was afraid; O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.

Yet mercy refused brings judgment. By the time God pours out the seven bowls of His final wrath on earth, sinner will have been warned repeatedly to repent.

They will have experienced numerous terrifying judgments, which they will acknowledge came from God;

Revelation 6:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

¹⁷ For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

They will have heard the saving message of the gospel preached by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, the two witnesses, other redeemed Gentiles and Jews, even from an angel flying in mid heaven.

Yet tragically, they will harden their hearts and fall into calamity

Proverbs 28:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Happy is the man who is always reverent, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

They will pay a fearful price for failing to heed the Scripture's warning:

Hebrews 3:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

Hebrews 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷ again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

