

## Revelation 15 – The Wrath of God: The Last 7 Plagues

By Holly Effiom

Revelation 15 is a perspective of events from heaven – just like that transition between Revelation 11 and 12. Revelation 14 opens at a point that the beasts out of the sea and the earth are joined together with the red dragon to wreak havoc on the saints of the Most High until the saints are removed from the environment altogether. So now, Jesus is again physically present in the earth while the church is absent – Jesus’s work of judgment commences. Revelation 14:14-20 and 16:1 is a representation of events from the perspective of heaven.

Rev 14:14

How is the one sitting upon the cloud different from the angels?

What do we know about crowns?

According to Dan 7:14, would you say that the kingdom given to the Son of man might be a crown?

Since Rev 6, how many crowns have been given to a man?

What is significant about the “sharp sickle” in the hands of one like the Son of man?

LESSON: When we opened this chapter, we had a word picture of the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion with 144,000 of the children of Israel with Him. And, we proposed then that the message was that Jesus had arrived to take His inheritance and make war on those who oppose Him.

Here we are given another word picture, and it hearkens back to Daniel 7:13-14, in which the “Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.” When we studied this section of scripture, we knew that the Ancient of Days gave the Son of man dominion in the earth. This event is repeated by Jesus in Matt 26:64, and again in Rev 6:2, as well as in this section of scripture, but this picture is even fuller now – the Son of man, uplifted by the clouds, has the golden crown, and has a sharp sickle in His hand.

VV 15-20

Why are the angels telling the one sitting on the clouds to thrust in his sickle? Why are they not doing it themselves?

What is it to reap?

What “harvest” is the angel speaking of?

Is this the harvest of the saints of God?

How do you know?

What is a winepress?

LESSON: I always associate the image of the sickle with the harvesting of wheat and grains. It is swung, not exactly indiscriminately but, to capture a bunch of stalks that have the grain within. Later, the stalks will be gathered and beaten to release that grain. The tool used to harvest grapes is sickle-shaped but has a shorter handle, and this is because you don’t want to be indiscriminate when harvesting grapes.

So, the angels seem to be directing the one sitting on the clouds in what needs to be done, but this is incorrect in understanding. Historically, the first fruits belong to the master of the harvest. So, when the angels are crying to the one sitting on the clouds to “Thrust in thy sickle, and reap...” it is acknowledgement that the Lord of the harvest kicks off the harvest season by taking his portion first. This is consistent with the image of the Lamb and His 144,000 Jews (first fruit) standing on Mount Zion, which gives us the understanding of the King arriving on the earth to take His inheritance through conquest.

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From the perspective of heaven, the same phenomenon is being viewed as the Lord of the harvest arriving to judge with a rod of iron – a long-handled sickle being used to reap grapes – an indiscriminate reaping of grapes. Which tells us that it will be violent and bloody.

Here in Rev 14:14-20 is another word picture of what is about to happen; and it is an image unlike anything we have seen before. The Son of man – not A Son of man, but THE Son of man (Dan 7:13-14) is thrusting a sickle into the earth, without mercy. And, not just any sickle, a *sharp* sickle. Can you imagine Jesus doing anything to actually *harm* the earth *and* the people in it?

I can tell you now, I can picture the King Jesus doing this work; and it's marvelous to my eyes, and I say "Hallelujah"!

Rev 15:1

From what perspective is this vision given?

What was the message of that previous vision?

How are the plagues mentioned here, different from those contained in the 7-seal judgments or the 7-trumpet judgments?

What is this specific judgment?

So, if the prior plagues (7 seals and 7 trumpets) were not the wrath of God, what were they?

LESSON: The perspective of this and the prior vision was from heaven. The last time we looked at things from the perspective of heaven was at the end of Rev 11 and 12. Rev 13 and the first two-thirds of Rev 14 were discussing what is happening on the earth – that basically being satan and his cohorts wreaking havoc on the earth.

The prior vision was that of the Son of man, riding on the clouds, thrusting His sickle into the earth, going to war in the earth, because the earth is His domain. It is important to understand that the Son of man is not making war on the earth, but rather, on those who are destroying the earth, *His* domain. Rev 11:18.

V2

What is significant about John's vision of the "sea of glass"?

How is this vision similar to that in Rev 4:6? How is it different?

Where is this "sea of glass" located according to Rev 4:6?

Who is standing on the "sea of glass" in this vision?

How is this vision similar to Rev 7:9-15? Is this the same event?

What does this tell us?

LESSON: The last time we saw a sea of glass was in Rev 4:6, and we know that that location is before the throne of God which was surrounded by the 4 beasts, full of eyes. In Rev 15, that sea of glass is filled with people, celebrating because that had gained the victory of the beast and his mark. I believe that Rev 7:9-15 was a vision of this event.

VV3-4

What is the song that those standing on the sea of glass are singing?

What is the song of Moses? Who sang this and when? Ex 15:1-21

What is the song of the Lamb? Who sang this song and when? Ps 22:22-31

What is the essence of both of these songs?

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LESSON: The essence of this vision is to convey the message that the saints of the Most High consists of both Jews and Christians, and those that gained the victory over the beast and his mark will be celebrating in heaven.

Those who sing the song of Moses are those who have the testimony of overcoming by keeping the commandments of God. Those who sing the song of the Lamb are those who have the testimony of overcoming through the blood of the Lamb.

From this perspective, a song would be one's testimony. What a beautiful way of looking at a song. I think I asked in an earlier chapter, "What's up with all the music?" Well, when you view a song as a testimony, you would have to think that everyone in heaven has a testimony of how they got there, and all of the songs together, make beautiful music, forever. What song was satan and his angels singing when in heaven? I believe, they were singing from the "Me, me, and more me" songbook!

VV5-6

What is being opened up in heaven?

When was the temple closed? Rev 11:1-2

In Rev 11:19, the temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of the covenant was seen. What did we say that that meant?

Is it possible that Rev 11:19 was a vision giving a prophecy of this current section of scripture?

Is there any mention of a mercy seat? Ex 37:6-9. Why or why not?

Why is it significant that these angels are wearing pure, white linen?

What is significant about the golden breast plate or girdle? Jesus is also wearing one in Rev 1:13.

Why were breast plates or girdles worn in the past, because they were pretty?

What exactly is "the judgment"?

LESSON: We are once again being given a view of the ark of the covenant in a heavenly vision. In Rev 11:19, at the point at which the vision was given, we proposed that it meant that judgment was about to begin (aside: I suspect that that was a prophecy of this section of scripture, Rev 15:5-6). Notice that in neither vision is the mercy seat mentioned – there will be no mercy shown in this war.

When Moses and Aaron used to meet with God in the Holy of holies, God would reside above or sit up on the mercy seat – He would rule Israel based upon the Law, their covenant with Him, and with a heart set on mercy. God rules in the lives of His believers based upon the Law, His full filled covenant with Jesus Christ, and a heart filled with mercy.

The angels carrying the wrath of God are wearing pure, white linen, which signifies that they have proven themselves pure and have been deemed righteous before God (Rev 14:4-5). Perhaps they have songs we will get to hear, too.

And, the scripture notes that these angels are wearing golden breast plates – Jesus was wearing a similar uniform in Rev 1:13. While I think that that probably looks pretty snazzy, breast plates aren't generally worn for that reason; they are worn to protect the chest area of the body, and are generally associated with battle. I would think that these angels are heading out to war.

So, based on this scripture, what we are being told is that "the judgment" *is* the wrath of God. They are one and the same thing. Based upon this understanding, what would you say that the Bible is about?

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VV7-Rev 16:1

Who is dispensing the vials of the wrath of God to the angels?

Who are the 4 beasts? Rev 4:6-11; Isa 6:1-8.

Where are the other 3 beasts?

Why do you think the scripture is pointing out what 1 beast is doing and not mentioning the others?

Why is it significant to know that the temple filled with smoke? What does it tell you about God? Ex 40:34-35; 2 Chr 7:1-3.

Why couldn't any man enter the temple?

Where does the "great voice" come from? Who is it that is speaking?

What do we know about the great voice based on when he speaks to this point? Rev 1:10; 4:1; 9:13; 10:4, 8; 11:12; 16:1.

LESSON: There are so many noteworthy sections in this vision!

1. The sea of glass. Comparing this vision of in Rev 4:6 to the throne visions of Isa 6, Eze 1, and Dan 7, there are similarities, as well as unique aspects that inform you that God's interaction with each prophet stands on its own.

John's throne vision in Rev 4:6-11 included a sea of glass, a throne, four beasts – full of eyes and crying holy, holy, holy... day and night – and 24 elders. In Rev 15, we see the sea of glass, mingled with fire now, and a celebration going! What does this tell us?

- We can say for sure that the church – those who get the victory over the beast and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name – are definitely *not* in the earth.
  - We can say for sure that the church was not meant to suffer the judgment – the vials of the wrath of God. We know that there will be some that come to faith in Christ even after suffering through the wrath of God (Rev 14:13); however, God had not *intended* them to suffer in that manner. His *intent* is for His *enemies* to suffer His wrath.
2. The non-mention of attendees at the sea of glass. Rev 14:13 makes clear that the church's work in the earth is completed and that heaven's "work" begins – battle in the earth, hence the angels carrying the vials of the wrath of God wearing battle garb. Could this be the reason that the throne, 3 beasts, 24 elders, and the angels are not mentioned in Rev 15 – they had gone to "work" in the earth?
  3. The "great voice". An important thing we must acknowledge is that there is One who is higher and is observing everything taking place. He speaks audibly once in a while, and only when He believes it's necessary; and understand subliminally, if not expressly, He is directing all activity, including the pouring out of His wrath.