

## Revelation 15:1-8 | Prelude To The End

### Introduction

Revelation 15 is a unique look at the final bowl judgments. After the 7 seal judgments and the 7 trumpet judgments, a lengthy interlude (chs. 10-14) brings us to the final period of tribulation – the 7 bowl judgments. This represents the most intense period of judgment and suffering of the tribulation.

### Verse-By-Verse Notes

#### Verse 1

- This is the last time John will speak of a “sign in heaven.” The other two are in Revelation 12 when he sees the sign of the woman (probably ethnic Israel through whom the Messiah came) and the sign of the red dragon (Satan). This third (and final) sign is the 7 angels who will execute the bowl judgments.
- John says the 7 plagues are “the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished,” meaning that they will complete the wrath of God on the unrepentant world. The bowl judgments are the climax of the tribulation. “All that remains is the final judgment itself.” (Robert Mounce)

#### Verse 2

- John sees the redeemed who conquered the Antichrist and his religious/political system through persevering faith.
- Robert Mounce: “Carrying harps of God, they join their voices in an anthem of praise celebrating the holiness of God and the righteousness of his works.”

#### Verses 3-4

- The redeemed sing the “song of Moses” (see Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32) which emphasizes the *glory, omnipotence, justice, sovereignty, severity, holiness, lordship, and righteousness* of God. We should note that all of these attributes are expressed by the outpouring of the bowls.
- The “song of Moses” represents the central salvation event of the Old Covenant – the Exodus from Egypt and it foreshadows the central salvation event of all redemptive history, the life, death, resurrection, ascension, return, and reign of Christ.

#### Verses 5-6

- In the heavenly tabernacle imagery, the 7 angels with the 7 bowls of judgment come *from* the presence of God. These are divinely appointed, authorized, and executed judgments. Psalm 104:4b says “He makes his ministers a flaming fire.”
- Robert Mounce: That they come out of the temple points to the divine origin of their commission.”

- The 7 angels are described in a similar way John described Jesus in 1:13 – with golden sashes. Jim Hamilton: “These angels . . . look like him because they represent him. Their task is holy. Their errand is righteous. They seem to come rushing out of the temple with the zeal of furious devotion to their task—the glad visitation of God’s long-awaited justice.”

### **Verse 7**

- The 7 angels receive their bowls from one of the four living creatures, the guardians of God’s throne (see 4:6). These bowls are *full* of the wrath of God. The Greek word for “full” here occurs 11 times in the NT, and 7 of them are found in Revelation. It contains the idea of “fullness.” These bowls represent the fullness of God’s wrath against the unrepentant wicked.
- Robert Mounce: “It is the wrath of a God whose existence has neither beginning nor end. He is a living God, fully able to execute punishment upon all his adversaries.”

### **Verse 8**

- When the angels received their bowls, the presence of God descended on the Temple as smoke, and no one could enter until the wrath of the bowls were finished (see also Exodus 40:35 & 1 Kings 8:11).
- Robert Mounce: “The smoke that fills the heavenly temple in Revelation indicates the presence of God in all his glory and power actively to carry out his judgment upon wickedness.”

Concluding summary from Mounce:

*Thus the stage is set. Because these are the “final” plagues, John has prepared his readers by stressing the awesome nature of the occasion. They have been reminded that the redemptive deeds of the Almighty God are great and marvelous. As King, his ways are just and true. Judgment comes from the temple in heaven that is his eternal abode. When the bowls of wrath are delivered to his angels of judgment, the temple is filled with the smoke of his glory. By such a breathtaking scenario John prepares his listeners for the actual outpouring of divine wrath.*

**BIG IDEA: DIVINE WRATH IS THOROUGH, FINAL, AND CANNOT BE STAYED. FLEE TO CHRIST NOW!**