

Revelation 15 - Overcomes on the Sea of Glass

© 2003-2004 Tony Garland - contact@SpiritAndTruth.org

COURSE COMMENTARY



15:1 - seven angels with the seven last plagues

- **another sign in heaven**

This phrase recalls the previous great sign of the woman clothed with the sun and standing upon the moon ([Rev. 12:1](#)) and the sign of the red dragon ([Rev. 12:3](#)). This sign is "marvelous" (*thaumasto'n*) meaning, *beyond human comprehension, wonderful, remarkable*.

- **seven angels having the seven last plagues**

These seven angels are given the final seven judgments: the seven bowls of God's wrath. They will pour their bowls in the next chapter. That these are the *last* plagues indicates the seals, trumpets, and bowls are *sequential* rather than parallel.

- **in them the wrath of God is complete**

These are the judgments of the last trumpet (in Revelation), the final of the three woes ([Rev. 8:13](#)). When the last bowl is poured out, a voice from the temple declares, "It is done!" ([Rev. 16:17](#)). God's wrath began earlier, when the first seal was opened ([Rev. 6:1](#)) and was recognized by the earth dwellers as early as the sixth seal judgment ([Rev. 6:16-17](#)). The church does not experience God's wrath and so is taken in the Rapture before the Tribulation. This period will come to an end after the final 3.5 years when "the power of the holy people is completely shattered" ([Dan. 12:7](#)).

15:2 - a sea of glass

- **a sea of glass**

Ezekiel saw this sea of glass above the cherubim and under the throne ([Eze. 1:22](#)). It is clear as crystal ([Rev. 4:6](#); [22:1](#)). It speaks of purity and perhaps cleansing. In the same way that Noah was saved through water ([1Pe. 3:20](#)) and Israel escaped Pharaoh by water ([Ex. 15](#)), so too these had undergone a baptism and now were victors.

- **mingled with fire**

This may speak of the impending judgment. Or it may denote "fiery red," as *purro's* did in [Rev. 6:4](#). If red, it may denote Christ's atoning blood, or more ominously, the blood of the martyrs themselves! There may also be an allusion to the Red Sea of the Exodus of Israel.

- **those who have victory**

The Greek phrase is *tous niko'ntas* "the overcomers!" These overcame the Beast. They followed Jesus' instructions to the church at Smyrna and obtained the crown of life ([Rev. 2:10](#)). They "did not love their lives to the death" ([Rev. 12:11](#)). These are almost certainly martyrs having undergone the death penalty for refusing to worship the Beast or his image and to take his mark ([Rev. 13:15-17](#)).

15:3 - song of Moses, song of the Lamb

- **the song of Moses**
Probably the song of victory upon deliverance through the Red Sea ([Ex. 15:1-18](#)). There are also some similarities to the song Moses wrote prior to his death warning Israel of her impending apostasy ([Deu. 32:1-43](#)).
- **the song of the Lamb**
Probably the new song recorded in Revelation [5:8-14](#). Like the Old Testament Jews, these still honor Moses, but they recognize the preeminence of Messiah Jesus. The song of Moses is *to* God. The song of the Lamb is *to* the Lamb. "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." ([John 1:17](#)).

15:4 - You alone are holy

- **You alone are holy**
His holiness speaks both of His purity and His uniqueness. "Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is, God" ([Luke 18:19](#)). God cannot lie ([Num. 23:19](#); [Rom. 3:4](#); [Heb. 6:18](#); [Tit. 1:2](#)).
- **all nations shall come and worship before You**
The promises of the Psalms ([Ps. 46:10](#); [86:9](#)) will finally come true in the Millennial Kingdom. At that time, the kingdom of this world will be *His!* ([Rev. 11:15](#)). All nations will come to Jerusalem to worship amidst a restored Israel ([Zec. 8:20-23](#)).

15:5 - the tabernacle of the testimony

- **the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven**
The tabernacle was God's dwelling place among Israel in the wilderness. It was called the "tabernacle of the testimony" because the Ten Commandments, written on stone, were kept in the ark of the covenant ([Ex. 25:16](#)). Thus, the heavenly testimony (last seen in [Rev. 11:19](#)) stands as a *witness* against the godless rebellion of those on the earth below. They will be judged according to God's moral law.

15:6 - seven plagues

- **out of the temple**
They come forth from the *nao's*, the innermost part of the temple, from before the presence of God. Like the reaping angels of the previous chapter ([Rev. 14:15-18](#)), their mission has full divine authority!
- **clothed in pure white linen**
"Pure white" is *katharo'n kai lampro'n*, clean and shining. Like the garments of other angels ([Luke 24:4](#); [Acts 10:30](#)) and the garments of the wife of the Lamb ([Rev. 19:7-8](#)). Their sinlessness contrasts with the vile Beast and his minions below.

15:7 - seven golden bowls

- **seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God**
The bowls are similar to those used to offer incense, which is the prayer of the saints ([Rev. 5:8](#)). The wrath contained in these bowls represents God's response to the mountains of prayers offered up over the ages by the saints. It includes prayers to avenge the martyrs of the end ([Rev. 6:10](#)) and for His kingdom to come "on earth" ([Mat. 6:10](#)). The seven plagues are reminiscent of

God's promise to Israel if she refused to heed His prior judgments, as these have at the time of the end ([Lev. 26:27-28](#)).

15:8 - temple filled with smoke

- **the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God**
His *shekinah* glory now manifests itself. He had manifested His presence in a similar way when He came to the tabernacle in the wilderness ([Ex. 40:34-35](#)), at the dedication of Solomon's Temple ([1K. 8:10-11](#)), and in Isaiah's vision of the heavenly Temple ([Isa. 6:1-4](#)).
- **no one was able to enter the temple**
Indicating a period of great privacy and intensity in the mind of God attending the final outpouring of His wrath. This even may signal the impossibility of intercession to stay His hand ([Jer. 15:1-2](#)), or indicate the time of His sorrow knowing no more will turn to Him and so judgment must now fall ([2Pe. 3:9](#)). It would seem that the anguish on the part of the Father is similar to that of the Son on the cross ([Mat. 27:46](#)).

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).