

# Revelation 15

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

## A Scene of Heaven

15:1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, *which are the last*, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

### I. Context

- A. With the seventh trumpet blowing, Jesus returns and harvests the earth. The church (the grain) are taken into their new home with God - Heaven. Those that did not choose to follow Jesus (grapes) are destroyed with fire - symbolically squeezed so that all of their wickedness is pulled from them.
- B. The wickedness of the "grapes" will be the cause of the end of the world. This wickedness will fill the bowls of wrath - which will be the cause of the end of the world - in other words, we destroy ourselves.
- C. Now that God's people have been removed, God will allow the world to end - and the following is how it will happen.

### II. Notes

- A. Leviticus 26:21 - *If you walk in hostility toward Me and refuse to obey Me, I will multiply your plagues seven times, according to your sins.*
- B. The statement that these are the **last** plagues seems to show that the set of visions now commencing carry us down to the end of the age; there are no other plagues after these: they are the last plagues; the vials, like the seals and the trumpets, run up to the final consummation. They are plagues; the word carries us back to Egypt: on Egypt fell the ten plagues which showed forth God's righteous power, and exposed the hollow pretensions of the magicians and their gods; the wild beast-power and the false prophet-power of that day was crippled and exposed. In like manner upon the wild beast-power of later ages the plagues of God fall. - *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*
- C. Hitherto God had borne with his enemies with much longsuffering, but now his wrath will go forth to the uttermost. - *Benson Commentary*

15:2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God.

### I. Context

- A. Without the influence of the church, the world self destructs.
- B. As the world is destroyed, the people of God will be safe in the throne room of God - on the "glass" bubble that overlooks the burning world. They will be worshipping God in His presence forevermore.

### II. Notes

- A. Revelation 4:6 - *And before the throne was something like a sea of glass, as clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, covered with eyes in front and back.*
- B. Revelation 5:8 - *When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*
- C. Revelation 12:11 - *They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. And they did not love their lives so as to shy away from death*
- D. Revelation 13:17 - *so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark--the name of the beast or the number of its name.*

15:3 And they \*sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!"

I. Context

- A. The world is self-destructing, but those that have chosen Christ have been taken into the safety of God's throne room, where they are worshipping Him.
- B. They worship God and Jesus in the same way that Moses worshipped God after being saved from Egypt and a new Christian worships Jesus after being freed from sin. They proclaim Jesus as the true king of their hearts.

II. Notes

- A. Exodus 15:1 - Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted. The horse and rider He has thrown into the sea.
- B. Job 36:24 - Remember to magnify His work, which men have praised in song.
- C. 1 Timothy 1:17 - Now to the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.
- D. Revelation 5:9 - And they sang a new song: "Worthy are You to take the scroll and open its seals, because You were slain, and by Your blood You purchased for God those from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.
- E. The song of Moses was a pæan of victory over Pharaoh and his hosts ([Exodus 14:26-31](#); [Exodus 15:1-21](#)). Israel stood on the margin of the Red Sea and saw the tokens of the overthrow of the great world-power of that day; so these saints stand by the border of the fire-blent sea of glass, and sing the song of triumph over the doom of the great world-powers of every age. The cases are parallel, the songs are alike; - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- F. They also sing the song of the Lamb. The Apocalypse is full of Christ; the Lamb is the axis on which the world of its scenery moves; He is the key of earth's history; the victory of the saints is in Him ([Revelation 12:11](#)); their song of triumph is of Him who put a new song in their mouth and in whom all things are reconciled ([Ephesians 1:10](#); [Philippians 2:10-11](#)). - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- G. But the former is to be preferred; it is appropriate in a song which celebrates a victory over those who vaunted themselves as the princes of this world, and which proclaims the submission of the nations to God; and it seems to have been transplanted here from Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 10:7](#)): "Who would not fear thee, thou King of the nations?" The song celebrates the noble acts of the Lord; it declares them to be great; but it is not their greatness, it is their righteousness and faithfulness which calls forth the grateful praise. The long days of oppression, and the seeming silence of the Almighty, when the prayer and cry "How long?" has risen from perplexed and suffering saints, have brought the temptation of the psalmist: "I have cleansed my heart in vain" ([Psalm 73:3-13](#)). But now the righteous acts of the Lord are manifested; now it is acknowledged that "verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth" ([Psalm 58:11](#)). Though clouds and darkness have sometimes been round about Him, it is now beyond doubt that "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne" ([Psalm 97:2](#)). - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

15:4 "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For all the nations will come and worship before You, For Your righteous acts have been revealed."

I. Context

- A. The world is self destructing, but those that have chosen Jesus are safe and worshipping God because they have escaped the destruction as Moses did when He and the Israelites escaped Egypt.
- B. The people of God no longer have anything to fear - especially from God, who protects them. But the people of the world will now fear God and will come to worship Him by compulsion - because they finally (and too late) realize that God is truly in charge.

## II. Notes

- A. Psalm 86:9 - All the nations You have made will come and bow before You, O Lord, and they will glorify Your name
- B. Isaiah 66:23 - From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come to worship before Me," says the LORD.
- C. Jeremiah 5:22 - Do you not fear Me? declares the LORD. Do you not tremble before Me, the One who set the sand as the boundary of the sea, an enduring barrier it cannot cross? The waves surge, but they cannot prevail. They roar but cannot cross it.
- D. Jeremiah 10:7 - Who would not fear You, O King of nations? This is Your due. For among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You.
- E. Revelation 14:7 - He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship the One who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and the springs of waters."
- F. Reverence and adore thee; for the word "fear," in the Scriptures, is commonly used in this sense when applied to God. The sense here is, that the judgments about to be inflicted on the beast and his image should and would teach people to reverence and adore God. There is, perhaps, included here also the idea of awe, inasmuch as this would be the effect of punishment. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

15:5 After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened,

### I. Context

- A. The world is self destructing, but those that have chosen Jesus are safe in Heaven with God.
- B. Then God responds to the praise and worship of His people.

### II. Notes

- A. Hebrews 8:5 - They serve a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle, "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."
- B. Revelation 11:19 - Then the temple of God in heaven was opened, and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple. And there were flashes of lightning, and rumblings, and peals of thunder, and an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.
- C. The tabernacle was well called the tabernacle of witness, for it contained the ark of the testimony with the Law of God, and was a perpetual witness of God's presence among His people. The temple of the tabernacle then is the shrine, or inner sanctuary, of the heavenly true tabernacle, after the pattern of which the tabernacle of Moses was fashioned, which is now opened. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- D. It is called the "tabernacle of testimony," because it was a testimony or witness of the presence of God among the people - that is, it served to keep up the remembrance of him. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

15:6 and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes.

### I. Context

- A. The world is self destructing, but the people of God are safe in Heaven. They worship God, and He responds to their praise.
- B. God's response was to send seven angels (dressed as High Priests returning from the Holy of Holies with an answer from God for the people). They each hold a bowl filled with the wickedness that was pressed out of the "grapes" (the people that refused God). These are the plagues that will destroy the world.

### II. Notes

- A. Daniel 10:5 - I lifted up my eyes, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist.

- B. Revelation 1:13 - **and among the lampstands was One like the Son of Man, dressed in a long robe, with a golden sash around His chest.**
- C. It is well to remember this, for these plagues are not, like the judgments of the trumpet, calls to repentance; they are plagues on those who have refused to return, who have rejected the sanctuary, the tabernacle of witness, which the Lord pitched among men, and who have refused, like obstinate builders, the stone which has become the head of the corner. Out of the rejected temple the angels of wrath come; it is ever true that out of rejected mercies the heaviest of plagues are forged. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- D. The angels are clad in a garb resembling that of Christ ([Revelation 1:13](#)); they are come forth to do His bidding; they are clothed in raiment which indicates their righteous errand. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- E. Instead of **linen**, some MSS. have "a stone:" the angels, according to this, were "clad in a stone, pure, brilliant." There is a parallel thought in Ezekiel, who describes the splendour of the King of Tyre: "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond," &c. ([Ezekiel 28:13](#)). - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- F. these angels came in the habit of high priests, when they went in to inquire of God, or came out with an answer from God. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

**15:7 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.**

I. Context

- A. The world is self destructing, but the people that followed Jesus are safe with God in Heaven.
- B. Seven angels will carry out the destruction, but the means to that destruction (the bowls of wrath) are handed to them by one of the living creatures that symbolized nature. This would suggest that mankind destroyed itself.

II. Notes

- A. Revelation 4:6 - **And before the throne was something like a sea of glass, as clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, covered with eyes in front and back.**
- B. These vials are given by one of the living creatures who represent creation; it is thus through creation that the wrath of God can visit the rebellious; that wrath of God is simply the operation of God's righteous law against sin. His statutes are eternally righteous. He has given to all things a law which cannot be broken; that law is adverse to evil, and will in the end root it out, for it does the bidding of God, who lives unto the ages of the ages. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- C. The vials are the shallow bowls which were used for incense. They are filled with the wrath of God, and that wrath is now to be poured out "upon the kingdoms that have not called upon God's name" ([Psalm 79:6](#)). - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

**15:8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.**

I. Context

- A. The world is self destructing, but the followers of Jesus are safe with God in Heaven. The angels are pouring on the world the seven plagues created by the wickedness of man. The world will end.
- B. The heavenly temple (God's presence) is now covered with smoke in the same way smoke (or a cloud) entered the temple when it was dedicated. At that time, no one could enter the temple because the smoke blocked them. This would symbolize that as judgement fell on the earth, the way to God is blocked. There is no more time to choose to follow Him - that door has closed.

## II. Notes

- A. Exodus 19:18 - Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke, because the LORD had descended on it in fire. And smoke rose like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.
- B. Exodus 40:34 - Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
- C. Leviticus 16:2 - And the LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to enter freely into the Most Holy Place behind the veil in front of the mercy seat on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.
- D. 1 Kings 8:10 - And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD
- E. 2 Chronicles 5:13 - The trumpeters and singers joined together to praise and thank the LORD with one voice. They raised their voices, accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and musical instruments, in praise to the LORD: "For He is good; His loving devotion endures forever." Then the temple, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud
- F. Isaiah 6:4 - The doorposts and thresholds shook at the sound of their voices, and the temple was filled with smoke.
- G. As in the wilderness (Exodus 40:34-35), and as at the dedication of Solomon's temple (1Kings 8:10-11), the tokens of God's presence filled the temple, so it is now, but with a difference: it is smoke, not cloud, which is the symbol of God's presence. But the vision which perhaps, under all circumstances, most nearly corresponds with the present is that of Isaiah (Isaiah 6); there the prophet beheld the vision of God. His train filled the temple, and the house was filled with smoke, and a message of judgment was given to the prophet; that message declared that the sin of the people had reached a climax: they had trifled with convictions, and henceforward the words of God's servants would harden rather than awaken them. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes," &c. (Isaiah 6:9-10), till the desolating judgments had fallen. The general drift of the present vision is similar; the days of warning are over: the plagues which now fall will fall on those who have trifled with convictions: the sanctuary which was opened as a refuge is now closed: none can enter till the plagues have descended. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)