

1. Redeemed of Earth are in close communion with God and the Savior, chp. 14:1-5
2. The Gospel is Universal, chp. 14:6-7
3. Evil cannot prevail, 15:8
4. The Wicked will be punished, 14:9-12
5. The Reward of the redeemed is sure, 14:13
6. Christ is the sole Lord of the harvest, 14:14-16
7. The Wrath of God will come upon all who refuse Christ's saving work, 14:17-20

## SECTION 46

## Text 15:1

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God.

## Initial Questions 15:1

1. What is unique about the seven plagues in vs. 1?
2. Does this imply that God's wrath is objective or subjective?

Preparation for the Last Seven Plagues  
Chapter 15:1-8

*Verse 1*

Chapter 15 and 16 form a unit structured around the seven plagues. This chapter begins the last of the sevenfold pictures of judgment under the symbol of seven bowls of anger. John has gone through two other cycles of judgment chapters 5-8:1 (7 inserted between 6th seal and 7th seal which is opened at 8:1); the next series is presented through the imagery of seven trumpets and this is contained in chps. 8:2 thru 11. In this particular chapter John begins the outpouring of the seven plagues.

Another vision was now vouched-safe to John. He says, "I saw. . .seven angels having seven last plagues; because in them was finished (*etelesthē* - 1st aor. passive voice - the act of completion was singular, complete and final. The finality was a function of the purpose of God) the anger (the word is *thumos* not *orge* or wrath) of God."

## SECTION 47

## Text 15:2-4

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. 4 Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.

## Initial Questions 15:2-4

1. Discuss the content of the song of the Lamb, vss. 3-4.
2. Who are those who are victorious over the beast - vs. 2?

## Verse 2

Now the scene turns to the theme of triumph, vindication of the righteous, and the new song of victory. John "saw the ones overcoming (*ek* - of) the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name" (see chp. 13:11-18). Immediately after mentioning the seven plagues, there is a song of triumph in heaven. The chorus is composed of victorious Christians, who have encountered and ultimately defeated their persecutors. They sing the song of Moses as well as the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses was a victory song as the results of crossing the Red Sea (see Exodus 14:31; 15:1-19; also Deuteronomy 32-33). The source of the imagery of the sea of glass now becomes apparent. Moses led Israel victoriously through the Red Sea, the redeemed has crossed the Red Sea of persecution into the city of God. God's victory enables Christians to sing even in impossible situations.

## Verse 3

What is the content of this song? (See chp. 14:3 - "A New Song.") God is praised for "His great and wonderful works, Lord God almighty; righteous and true are (are - not in text) your ways, the king of the nations." The word Lord (*kurie* - see *Special Study on Titles of Christ in The Revelation*) reveals their

attitude toward the sovereign of the universe by submitting to His will even when things seemed hopeless in the great persecutions. The term God (*theos*) strikes the cord of biblical monotheism. This is most amazing in view of Caesar's claim to this title. Singing God's names revealed their absolute repudiation of anyone else's claim to this name, but the Christian God. The title, - the Almighty (*ho pantokrator*) means absolutely powerful. They sang this name even when it looked as though God was not powerful without limit, because His saints were being persecuted and the dragon had "overcome" the Church. If He is actually king (*ho basileus*) of the nations (*ethnōn* - generally applies to the Gentile peoples. If one was not an Israelite, he was a citizen of the nations), then Rome and her emperor is no king of the nations, as Caesar claimed.

#### Verse 4

The universal reign of the Christian God is again asserted by one of the great biblical questions - "who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?" The Bible does not mean by fear of the Lord what primitive religions mean by it. God's people were not afraid of Him! They did not placate Him with sacrifices seeking to turn His favor toward them. Fear means reverence or awe (the original sense of awful was reverence, now it has a negative connotation) in the scriptures when it applies to God. The book of Proverbs 1:7 contains a commentary on this word. The inspired author says that - "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The Hebrew word which is translated beginning has the root meaning of head, chief, or first thing. I personally would translate this verse as follows - "The fear of the Lord is the chief source of wisdom." This brings out that knowledge of God should be the first (or head from root of Hebrew word) in the hierarchy of man's knowledge, rather than secondary, or last.

The song continues by declaring that God is Holy (see Isaiah 6:1ff), and that "all the nations will come and will worship before you; because your ordinances (or righteous acts - judicial decision for or against - see Romans 5:16) were made manifest." God's judgments will be public, and they will be just decisions, but whether they are for or against an individual, will depend on his relationship to the Lamb of God.

## SECTION 48

Text 15:5-8

5 And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 and there came out from the temple the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed with precious stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles. 7 And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.

Initial Questions 15:5-8

1. The imagery of verse 5 comes from the Temple. When was the Temple destroyed, and by whom?
2. Get a Bible Dictionary and look up the terms - glory, power, and discuss in vs. 8.

Verse 5

John utilizes once more imagery from Exodus. The heavenly temple is described here as "the tent of witness," as in Exodus 40:34, the tabernacle in the desert is so described. This "tent of witness" "was opened."

Verse 6

"The seven angels came forth" (out of the tent of witness) "out of the tabernacle (*vaou* - shrine) having the seven plagues." The angels were clothed as priests. They wore garments symbolizing their purity. (Note that the imagery of the "girded breast" is found also in 1:13. It is priestly dress.)

Verse 7

"One of the living creatures gave to the seven angels seven bowls full of the anger (see vs. 1) of the living God". . . . This took place around the throne of God. God was looking on!

Verse 8

John's imagery comes from Isaiah 6:1f. (There are other places where this imagery is used too.) "The Temple was filled with smoke" from the glory and power of God," and no man could (*edunato* - was able) enter into the temple, until

should be finished (or completed) the seven plagues of the seven angels."

Discussion Questions  
Chapter 15

1. Discuss the two other cycles of judgment (chps. 5 thru 8:1; 8:2 thru 11).
2. What was unique about the seven bowls of anger as a series of God's judgments?
3. Read and discuss Exodus 14:31; 15:1-19 - the song of Moses mentioned in vs. 3.
4. Discuss the names used for God in vss. 3 and 4 in view of the situation of the Christians - due to persecution.
5. What does the Bible mean by the term fear when it is applied to God - vs. 4?
6. In what sense was the Old Testament Tabernacle "a tent of witness" (Exodus 40:34) - vs. 5?
7. According to vs. 7 when could men enter again into the temple of God?

SECTION 49

Text 16:1

And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.

Initial Questions 16:1

1. What was the source of the great voice - vs. 1?
2. What were the angels commanded to do - vs. 1?

Pouring Out of the Seven Bowls  
Chapter 16:1-21

*Verse 1*

A careful restudy of the two previous series of judgment will show that they are less connected than the series of the seven bowls of anger. They follow each other in rapid succession, except for the pause of anticipation while waiting for the last bowl (vs. 17).