

None other than an outraged Christ himself. In a definite prophesy of the Christ, Isaiah said:

"I have *trodden* the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will *tread* them in my anger, and *trample* them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my *redeemed* is come." (Isaiah 63:3, 4).

And what a horrible flow of blood follows! From the trodden vintage there flows a stream of such magnitude that it rose to the horses bridles to the distance of 1600 stadia, or furlongs. What an appalling result!

Since this is a symbol in a book which is, of all the books of the Bible, preeminently symbolic, this doubtless symbolizes the terrible final destruction of the hosts of wickedness. A symbol of a river of human blood, one hundred and sixty miles in length, to the depths of the horses mouths, tells the tragic story.

The very mention of horses bridles here causes our minds to leap forward to the nineteenth chapter where Christ is pictured mounted upon a white horse, followed by the armies of heaven, also mounted on horses. (Rev. 19:11-16)

The whole seems to be symbolic of the awful carnage in the punishment of the wicked in that day. The figures 40 times 40 equals 1600, or 4 times 4 multiplied by 10 times 10 is a symbol of the completeness of the final judgment.

Four seems to be the apocalyptic symbol of the earth as there are said to be four corners, four winds, or four directions and four quarters of the earth. The earth 4 times 4 times 100 implies the completeness of the Divine Judgment.

## CHAPTER XV

*Text (15:1-8)*

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.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingle 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.

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.

This chapter takes up a detailed account of the final judgments poured out upon the beast, the image of the beast and those who have his mark.

The preceding chapter simply gives a preview or a summary of events that lie in the future; the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth chapters cover the same territory but give a more detailed account.

Throughout these above mentioned chapters the theme is the destruction of spiritual Babylon. Looking back, the seven seals recount the history and overthrow of Roman paganism. The seven trumpets carry us through the overthrow of the Roman Empire of the west by the Goths, Vandals, Huns and Heruli and the ruin of the Eastern portion of the empire by the Saracens and Turks. The seventh trumpet terminates with the trump of the archangel. The seven vials, or bowls, give the history of an epoch and like each series of sevens before it, carry us to the end of that epoch. Particularly do the events of the seventh seal refer to the ecclesiastical or spiritual Rome, called the papacy. The seven seals have as their object, the overthrow of Roman paganism. The seven trumpets have as their design the overthrow of the Roman Empire. The seven vials have as their goal the overthrow of the blasphemous power, the papacy which is spiritually called Babylon.

This is not the ancient capital on the Euphrates, nor the Roman imperial city situated on the Tiber, but Rome as a spiritual symbol.

The last chapter closed with the two harvests, one of the wheat and the other of the grapes; now we would naturally expect the presentation of the new heaven and the new earth. But again there is a new series of judgments. John reviews, recapitulates and enlarges upon the scenes sketched in the fourteenth chapter. He does this under the symbolism of the emptying of seven vials; or seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God.

Here in the fifteenth chapter we encounter the third and last of the three great *signs in heaven* given by John. In Revelation, the 12th chapter, the word "wonder" in the first and third verses, we have found to be *signs*.

The first *sign in heaven* was the *woman* clothed with the sun, or the Church of Christ. The second *sign in heaven* was the great red dragon, or the devil, or Satan. It is the sign of "the mystery of iniquity" spoken of by the apostle Paul. The third *sign in heaven* which is now before us, is the vision of the seven last plagues. This sign is described by John as "great and marvelous." Hear him:

*vs. 1* "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

The seven angels and their vials do not begin their work until we reach the sixteenth chapter. But the emphasis in the fifteenth chapter is that these are the seven *last* plagues and that by them the purpose of God will be fully and finally accomplished, because God's wrath will be "filled up."

The word "plagues," not used in reference to the trumpet judgments, is evidently intended to refer us back in the Scriptures to a parallel case of God's deliverance of His persecuted people in Egypt. The plagues of Egypt were ten in number to symbolize fullness of Divine visitations; here they are seven in number to symbolize completeness and finality.

*vs. 2* "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

John here sees the victory gained by the saints over the beast. There is a sea as of glass mingled with fire." It was the sea that overwhelmed the Egyptians in the ten plagues visited upon them. But the people of God passed safely through it. Here is a greater victory. They *stand* upon the sea. The fire with which this symbolic sea is intermingled represented the judgments of God fully and finally accomplished. The saints are *standing on this sea*. They are represented as above, or beyond the reach of the sea of judgment.

They have the harps of God to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. It is very worthy of note that in these visions of the triumphant saints, they are ever pictured as singing to the tune of instrumental music.

*vs. 3* "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and

the song of the Lamb, saying, "great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou king of saints."

They sing in a higher key and in a more glorious diapason the old "song of Moses" which the ancient Israel of God sang on the shore of the Red Sea on the morning of their deliverance. (Exodus 15th Chapter) Now into the old redemption song mingles a new and loftier strain the song of completed redemption. Shall we listen to this song of the Lamb as it reaches its grand crescendo:

*vs. 4* "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee for thy judgments are made manifest."

Whereas the worshipers of the beast glorified "the number of the name of the beast," these true worshipers glorify "the name of the Lord." They sing in ecstasy of spirit because the judgments of God are made manifest.

The truth and righteousness of God's judgments are revealed in that Christ manifests himself as the King of the true saints of all nations.

As the strains of praise sink into sacred silence the apostle's attention is turned again to the agents of divine judgments. He sees the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven.

The fifth verse of the fifteenth chapter resumes the thread of thought dropped in Revelation 11:19 which reads, "and the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." So after the great interruption in which were given the three celestial signs in heaven—the woman, the dragon and the sign of the seven angels with the seven last plagues, John now returns to his starting point of the opened temple.

*vs. 5, 6* "And after these things" (the celestial signs and other visions Rev. 12:1 to Rev. 15:1-4) "I saw and the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and there came out from the temple the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles."

The garb is royal and priestly. Their ministry is priestly although involving duties marked by severity of punishment. Now they are empowered to perform and execute their tasks.

*vs. 7* "And one of the four beasts (or four living creature) gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever."

This living creature,—one of the four,—we found in the study of the fourth chapter to be one of the cherubim. In Ezekial 10:20 Ezekial said, "I knew they were cherubim."

So, one of the cherubim who appears again and again in Revelation, gave the seven bowls full of God's wrath, to the seven angels.

*vs. 8* "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and his power; and no man was able to enter the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

So it was of old. Smoke covered Mount Sinai when God spoke the "ten words." (Exodus 19:18) The cloud filled the house, when the erection of the tabernacle was finished. "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place that cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priest could not stand to minister because of the cloud for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." (I Kings 8:10, 11)

We also find that "the house was filled with smoke" when Isaiah was granted his vision as described in (Isaiah 6:4).

"And the posts of the door moved as the voice of him cried, and the house was filled with smoke."

All this imagery symbolized divine majesty. Here, in Revelation, the smoke proceeds "from the glory of God, and from His power."

And no one was able to enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

This does not mean that no one can enter the church until after the seventh plague has been poured out. The door of the church was opened at Pentecost and no man can shut that door until the final judgment. But here the meaning seems to be that the true saint of God cannot enter the final place of eternal reward until after these plagues.

Christ, in his life, said, "I go to *prepare a place for you*" (John 14:2) To do this, Paul said, "He ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things." (Ephesians 4:10) And in Revelation 21:2 we read:

"I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, *prepared* as a bride adorned for her husband."

Until the place Christ went to prepare is finished, which certainly will be after the time of the seven plagues, no one could enter therein.