

Rev. 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

John's attention is once again turned to heaven to behold seven angels with the seven last plagues of God's wrath against evil on earth. Again, the Greek for the word *wrath* indicates a passionate anger.

Marvelous or wonderful, from the human perspective, seem to be strange terms with which to describe this sign. But when you think of it in the perspective of bringing an end to this terrible time of judgment and ushering in Messiah's Kingdom, it makes more sense.

Rev. 15:2 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.

Rev. 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.

Rev. 15:4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou only art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

John next sees something that looks like a sea of glass; it is transparent; but it is mingled or mixed with fire. Then he notes that people are standing on the sea. That makes me think that he is seeing like a beautiful transparent flooring that glows with the brilliance of a flame of fire. Those standing on the sea are identified as those that had gotten victory over the beast. This victory was gotten in spite of experiencing the effects of God's wrath/judgment; their experience proved to be a refining fire in their lives.

Those who refuse to worship the beast and submit to his leadership will be victors. They may not feel like they are on the winning side for however long they have to endure through the tribulation, but once they get to heaven they will realize the reward for their faith. This group is distinct from those in Revelation 7:9 and are specifically identified as tribulation believers. The implication to me is that those believers who die during the tribulation are immediately translated into incorruptible bodies to the presence of the Lord.

They will evidently be given a special gift to be able to utilize the harps given them to use in their victory celebration and in worship of God. Their specialties will include two songs—that of Moses and the song of the Lamb. They will relate specifically to these songs because they represent deliverance and victory. After reading the three main songs/prayers of Moses in Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 32 and Psalm 90—It would seem that Psalm 90 would fit the best. For all we know, it's a whole new song composed by Moses in heaven. I'm sure the song of the Lamb was composed in heaven; the next two sentences appear to be at least a part of this song. It gives glory to the Lamb as Lord (master,

supreme in authority) God (the Divine being) Almighty (all-ruling, absolute and universal sovereign). His ways are just/fair/righteous and true.

At one time or another in life, we usually question why God in His omniscience chose to work with man the way He has. Why did He create man when He knew we were going to make such a mess of things? Verse 3 is a statement that recognizes that He can't be questioned as to the rightness and righteousness of all that He has done—the path He foreordained to be able to enjoy the fellowship of man. All of His ways are true and just!

The Lamb, Jesus, is the King of saints—the one holding the highest position in the multitude of those who claim spiritual purity, their claim to sainthood, through His provision for them.

Next a rhetorical question is posed. Who shouldn't fear/reverence the Lamb, Jesus, the Lord/Master, and glorify/honor/magnify/esteem His name? The obvious answer is no one. Why? He alone is holy in His divine character, free of defilement and pure by His nature. It is noted that all nations/races/ethnicities will worship/reverence/adore Him in His presence. His judgments/decisions/deeds will be publicly declared; He doesn't judge or act in secret.

Rev. 15:5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

“After that” - After witnessing the scene described above. This is interesting. After looking up all the words in the Greek, this is my paraphrase—John sees the temple in heaven open—the place that houses the Decalogue. This seems to have a direct connection with **Rev. 11:19**, another affirmation that the ark of the covenant is in heaven.

Revelation 11:19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Rev. 15:6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

Rev. 15:7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

The presentation John is giving seems to be similar to the narrative of creation in Genesis. Further explanation is given after the first statement of facts, i.e., verse 1. First John tells us that he sees the 7 angels with the last plagues; then he goes into more detail associated with the vision.

The wording in these two verses is a bit confusing. Seven angels come out of the temple; they are clothed in pure and white linen wearing golden girdles about their breasts—and they have the last seven plagues. In verse 6 the angels have

the plagues. In verse 7 the beasts give the angels the vials full of the wrath of God. They are not one and the same. The vials of God's wrath represent His power and authority for the judgment that is about to be poured out upon earth and those dwelling there. These judgments are going to express the full measure of God's wrath.

I think it is significant that those delivering judgment as directed by God are presented as pure and righteous. They are not ashamed of what they are doing; they are not unwilling servants. They are totally loyal and committed to obeying God. They know His character; they know His actions are holy, just and righteous.

The point is made that these vials are FULL (swelled out) of the wrath of God. This seems to indicate that these last judgments are going to bring about the worst torment ever experienced by man on planet earth. This conclusion is reinforced by the words of Jesus that in context reference the period of time following "the abomination of desolation" when Satan in the person of Antichrist declares himself to be "god" in the temple.

***Matthew 24:21-22** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

Again, we are reminded that this judgment is coming from God—who lives forever and ever. I can read it a thousand times—and I still really can't grasp it. It makes no sense how one can have no beginning or end. I just believe it by faith.

Rev. 15:8 **And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.**

The temple in heaven fills up with smoke from the glory of God and from His power. This automatically makes me think of the description of God descending on Mount Sinai to deliver the law to Moses.

***Exodus 19:18** And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace...*

From the time the temple fills with God's glory to the completion of the judgments from the seven vials, no man is able to enter into the temple. This implies that men were able to go in and out prior to this event. It's intriguing to think about how we will be involved in worship at the heavenly temple. It seems to continue to be a focal point of worship and fellowship with God until the making of the new heavens and earth.

Revelation 21:22 *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea....And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*