

Revelation 15 – Close of Probation

Revelation 15:1-2 *“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. 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.”*

I saw another sign in heaven - Another wonder. The Greek word for “sign” here is *semeion* and is the same word Revelation 12:1, 3; 13:13 renders “wonder” and “wonders.” In Revelation 13:14; 16:14; 19:20, it is rendered “miracles.” Here it is used to denote something wonderful or marvelous.

Seven last plagues - Literally, “seven plagues, the last.” These plagues are outlined in chapter 16. They are the last with respect to their kind and there will be no more plagues as such, although the ultimate destruction of Satan and sinners is still future. (Revelation 20:11-15)

Filled up - Greek *teleo* - Meaning “to finish,” “to execute,” “to perform,” “to accomplish.” The special punishment reserved for the worshipers of the beast and his image (Revelation 16:2) is summed up in the seven last plagues. See notes on Revelation 14:10.

Mingled with fire - In Revelation chapter 4 the sea of glass is likened “unto crystal.” (verse 6) Here it has a hue like fire no doubt through a reflection of the glory of God.

Had gotten the victory - These are the people who responded and accepted the message of warning mentioned in chapter 14. They have been saved from the world of trouble and are now secure in the kingdom of God. The victory was obtained by the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 12:11) They stood loyal to God even when the death penalty was pronounced. (Revelation 13:15) Now they stand safe on the sea of glass. The victory is complete and their struggle is over. They overcame and now in the heavenly kingdom they sing the anthem of victory.

The harps of God - See notes on Revelation 5:8; 14:2. Verses 2-4 are parenthetical. Preceding a description of the fearful seven last plagues, the prophet is given a view of the triumph of the Church over all her enemies. The saints will not be swallowed up but will be delivered.

Revelation 15:3-4 *“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are your ways, you King of saints. 4 Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name? for you only are holy: for all nations shall come and worship before you; for your judgments are made manifest.”*

They sing the Song of Moses - This is no doubt a reference to the song of deliverance after Israel crossed the Red Sea. (Exodus 15:1-21) That song celebrated the deliverance from Egyptian oppression. And the new song, deliverance from the tyranny of “Babylon the great.” (Revelation 17:5)

Servant of God - Compare Joshua 14:7 where Moses is designated “the servant of the Lord,” and Exodus 14:31 where he is called “His [the Lord's] servant.”

Of the Lamb - The deliverance of the saints was wrought by Christ the Lamb of God and it natural that He should be adored and exalted in the song of deliverance.

Great and marvellous are your works - There are many allusions to Old Testament phraseology in this song. The marvelous works of God are extolled in Psalms 139:14; Psalms 111:2, 4. There may be a specific reference here to the “works” of God in the seven last plagues. The “sign” delineating these plagues is described as “great and marvellous.” (Revelation 15:1)

Just and true are your ways - Or, “righteous and genuine.” Compare Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalms 145:17; Revelation 16:7; 19:2.

King of saints - Textual evidence is divided between the reading “King of nations” and “King of ages.” The reading “King of saints” has little support. In Jeremiah 10:7 the Lord is called “King of nations.” This reading fits the thought of Revelation 15:4 where the prediction is made that all nations shall come and worship before God.

4. Who shall not fear thee - Compare Jeremiah 10:7. The message of the first angel in chapter 14 was, “Fear God, and give glory to him.” The saints had heeded this appeal, and now that their pilgrimage is over they join in this wonderful ascription of praise to the glory of God. Compare the cry of the worshipers of the beast, “Who is like unto the beast?” (Revelation 13:4)

Glorify thy name - Compare Psalms 86:9.

Holy - Greek *hosios*. (see Acts 2:27; cf. Revelation 13:34) The adjective appears with reference to God in the LXX of Deuteronomy 32:4. This is the first of three reasons given why men should glorify their Maker. The other two are, “for all nations shall come and worship before thee,” and “for thy judgments are made manifest.”

Your judgments - Particularly the judgments of God against the beast, his image and his worshipers.

Revelation 15:5-8 “*And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 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. 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. 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.

Temple - Greek *naos*.

Tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened - Or “tent of the witness.” This name applies to the most holy place in Numbers 17:7. In Acts 7:44 it seems to refer to the entire structure. (Numbers 9:15) Here the latter meaning probably applies. The wilderness tabernacle was a type of “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man.” (Hebrews 8:2)

Clothed in pure and white Linen - Textual evidence may be cited for the reading “stone,” which, however, creates an unusual and unlikely figure. White garments are the typical attire of celestial beings. (Matthew 28:3; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10; Acts 10:30)

Golden vials - Greek *phialai* - Meaning “bowls” such as used for boiling liquids, for drinking or for pouring out libations.

8. The Temple was filled with smoke - Compare Exodus 40:34-35; Isaiah 6:4, 55:6, 59:16; Amos 8:11; Leviticus 16:17.

No man was able to enter the temple - Literally “no one.” This no doubt means that the time for intercession is past and no one can enter and have access to the mercy seat. The time of preparation is over and now is the time for the pouring out of the unmingled wrath of God.