

Detailed Study of Revelation Chapter 15

Revelation Chapter 15 serves as a **prelude** to the final outpouring of **God's judgment** on the earth, which culminates in the **seven bowls of God's wrath** in the following chapter (Revelation 16). In this chapter, John is given a vision of **angels preparing** for the final judgments, and the **glory of God's holiness** is emphasized in contrast to the **corruption** and **rebellion** of the world. The **theme** of judgment is clearly underscored, but it is also a reminder of **God's holiness, justice, and the ultimate triumph of His kingdom** over evil.

From a **hermeneutical** perspective, Revelation 15 serves as a **bridge** between the judgments introduced in the previous chapters and the climactic **seven bowl judgments** in the next chapter. The **dispensational view** of this chapter sees the events as **future**, likely occurring during the **Great Tribulation** just before the **second coming of Christ**. The focus is on the **final purification of the world** and the establishment of God's **eternal reign**.

Exegetical Breakdown of Revelation 15:1-8

1. The Vision of the Seven Angels with the Seven Last Plagues (Revelation 15:1)

Revelation 15:1 (ESV): *"Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished."*

- **Greek Word Study:**
 - **"Sign" (Greek: *sēmeion*)** – A **sign** often refers to a **divine revelation** or **symbolic vision**. The term **semeion** suggests something that points to a **larger reality** or **divine purpose**. Here, the **sign** refers to the **final stage of God's judgment**, which will be revealed through the **seven angels** with the **seven plagues**.
 - **"Plagues" (Greek: *plegē*)** – The word *plegē* refers to **blows, strikes, or punishments** often associated with divine judgment. It emphasizes the **severity** and **finality** of the judgments being unleashed on the earth.
 - **"Wrath" (Greek: *orge*)** – As in previous chapters, *orge* refers to **God's righteous anger** against sin, rebellion, and wickedness, specifically **His holy and just judgment** on the earth's evil systems.
- **Theological Insight:** The **seven plagues** represent the **final outpouring of God's wrath**. This is the last phase of divine judgment before the **new heaven and new**

earth are established. The **plagues** are not arbitrary but are carefully **administered by God** as part of His sovereign plan to eradicate evil.

2. The Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb (Revelation 15:2-4)

Revelation 15:2-4 (ESV): *"And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire, and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty. Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.'"*

- **Greek Word Study:**
 - **"Sea of glass"** (Greek: *thalassa hēglassē*) – The **sea of glass** symbolizes the **purity and majesty of God's presence**. In Revelation 4:6, the **sea of glass** is described as **clear as crystal**, representing **God's holiness** and the **divine realm**. The fire mixed with it could symbolize **God's judgment**, as fire often represents **purification** and **wrath** (cf. Hebrews 12:29).
 - **"Conquered"** (Greek: *nikaō*) – The verb *nikaō* means to **overcome, conquer, or be victorious**. This is a word that is used repeatedly in Revelation to describe the **victory of the saints** over the **beast, the Antichrist**, and the forces of evil.
 - **"Song of Moses"** (Greek: *ē ōdē Mōusē*) – This refers to the **song of deliverance** sung by the Israelites after their escape from Egypt (Exodus 15). It is a song that celebrates God's **deliverance** and **judgment against oppressors**. In Revelation, it symbolizes the **victory of God's people** over the **forces of evil**.
 - **"Song of the Lamb"** (Greek: *ē ōdē tou arnion*) – This song celebrates the **redemptive work of Christ** (the Lamb). The **Lamb** (Jesus) is the central figure of **God's salvation** and **triumph over evil**.
- **Theological Insight:** The **song of Moses** and the **song of the Lamb** both emphasize the **holiness, justice, and sovereignty of God**. The saints' victory over the beast represents their **spiritual triumph** through **Christ's power**. The song expresses both **praise for God's justice** and **thanksgiving for His redemptive work**. This victory is shared by all believers who **overcome** in Christ.
- **Historical and Cultural Context:** The **Song of Moses** (Exodus 15) was a victory song celebrating Israel's **deliverance from Egypt** and the **destruction of Pharaoh's army**.

The **Song of the Lamb** is the **Christianized** version of this song, applied to **Christ's** **victory** over sin, death, and the forces of evil. In the context of **first-century Christians**, this song would have been particularly meaningful as it symbolizes the **ultimate** **victory** over the **Roman Empire** and **persecution**.

3. The Temple and the Seven Bowls (Revelation 15:5-8)

Revelation 15:5-8 (ESV): *"After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. And 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, and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished."*

- **Greek Word Study:**

- **"Sanctuary" (Greek: *naos*)** – The **sanctuary** refers to the **inner sanctuary** of the heavenly temple, the place where God's **glory** and **presence** dwell. The **heavenly temple** symbolizes God's **sovereign rule** and the **holiness** of His judgments.
- **"Golden bowls" (Greek: *phialē chrusē*)** – The **golden bowls** represent **containers** of **wrath** that will be poured out on the earth. The use of gold emphasizes the **value** and **holiness** of the **wrath** being poured out, suggesting that it is **just and righteous**.

- **Theological Insight:** The **seven angels with seven plagues** represent the **final judgments of God** to be poured out in the coming chapters. The **wrath of God** is a **righteous judgment** against **sin and evil**, and the **filling of the temple with smoke** indicates the **absolute holiness** of God and the **inaccessibility** of His judgment until it is fully executed.
 - **Historical and Cultural Context:** The imagery of the **sanctuary** and **smoke** recalls the **Old Testament tabernacle** and the **presence of God** filling the temple (cf. Exodus 40:34-38, 1 Kings 8:10-11). In Jewish thought, smoke was a symbol of **God's glory** and **divine presence**. In this context, it represents the **final phase of God's sovereign plan** to deal with sin and evil.
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Application Questions for Today's Christian Audience

1. **How can we maintain our faithfulness in the face of severe persecution?** The saints who **conquer** the beast in Revelation 15 are described as victorious despite tremendous adversity. How can we cultivate a faith that overcomes worldly pressures and remains **loyal to Christ**?
 2. **What does it mean to sing the “song of the Lamb” in our lives today?** The **song of the Lamb** celebrates **Christ's victory** and **salvation**. How can we live in a way that reflects our participation in His victory over sin and death?
 3. **How do we respond to the holiness and justice of God in the midst of suffering and judgment?** In Revelation 15, God's **justice** and **holiness** are magnified as He prepares to judge the world. How can we **revere** God's holiness in our own lives, especially when faced with personal trials or injustice?
 4. **What is the role of praise and worship in the believer's endurance?** The **praise** of the saints in Revelation 15 is a **response to God's greatness**. How does praise help us **endure** and **focus on God's sovereignty**, especially when facing the challenges of our world today?
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Conclusion

Revelation Chapter 15 is a pivotal chapter that **sets the stage** for the **final judgments** to be unleashed on the world. It highlights the **victory of the saints**, the **holiness** and **justice** of God, and the **ultimate triumph of Christ** over evil. This chapter offers **comfort and hope** for Christians facing persecution, reminding them that **God's justice will prevail** and that the **final victory is assured**. It calls believers to **faithfulness**, **praise**, and **endurance**, all while keeping their eyes on the **holiness and sovereignty of God**.