

Revelation Chapter 15& 16 – God’s final Judgement

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. ² And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

“Great and marvelous *are* Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true *are* Your ways,
O King of the saints!

⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For *You* alone *are* holy.
For all nations shall come and worship before You,
For Your judgments have been manifested.”

⁵ After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ⁶ And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. ⁷ Then 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. ⁸ The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.” ² So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. ³ Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead *man*; and every living creature in the sea died. ⁴ Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying:

“You are righteous, O Lord,
The One who is and who was and who is to be,
Because You have judged these things.

⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
And You have given them blood to drink.
For it is their just due.”

⁷ And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* Your judgments.” ⁸ Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. ⁹ And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. ¹⁰ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. ¹¹ They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. ¹² Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. ¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ¹⁵ “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” ¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. ¹⁷ Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” ¹⁸ And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and

there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. ¹⁹ Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. ²⁰ Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹ And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

Introduction

We are now coming to the worst part of Revelation.

We are told in chapter 15: v.1 that 7 last plagues are about to happen on this earth.

These 7 last plagues are the completeness of God's wrath.

It appears that God has given every opportunity to mankind to repent of their sin and they have hardened their hearts.

Now is the time for God's judgement.

Before the pouring out of God's judgement we are given an insight into what happened in heaven before this awful judgement.

So Revelation Chapter 15 is an insight into Heaven and an introduction to the final judgements.

1. The Victors and their song – 15: v. 1-4.

In verses 1-4 we are told that in heaven there were a group of Christians singing a wonderful song. These Christian believers had been killed here on this earth because they refused to obey the Anti-Christ and have his mark on their hands or forehead.

These believers lost their lives here on this earth, but now they were rejoicing in Heaven.

The vision that John sees is a group of victorious believers, standing by the heavenly sea.

Our thoughts immediately go to Exodus Chapter 15 where we read about Moses and the children of Israel, standing by the Red Sea, singing a victory song.

God's children had been delivered from the bondage of slavery in Egypt, through miracle plagues sent by God.

Now we see that God will repeat the plagues of Egypt, but this time it will be world-wide and not just for the people of Egypt.

As we go through these chapters we will notice a similarity between the plagues of Egypt and God's final wrath upon mankind.

This also helps us to see clearly that the Bible is one book.

All the different books in the Bible inter-connect to make one picture.

I hope that by reading the Bible from Genesis to Revelation that you will see the complete picture.

We are going to focus upon the song that the martyred servants of God were singing in Heaven prior to the last judgement on the earth.

It is interesting to note that the origin of this song points us back to 6 Psalms.

Let us look at them for a moment.

a) Psalm 90: v. 1-2

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.

² Before the mountains were brought forth,

Or ever You had formed the earth and the world,

Even from everlasting to everlasting, You *are* God.

b) Psalm 92: v.5

⁵ O LORD, how great are Your works!

Your thoughts are very deep.

c) Psalm 145: v.17

¹⁷ The LORD *is* righteous in all His ways,

Gracious in all His works.

- d) Psalm 86: v.9
⁹All nations whom You have made
 Shall come and worship before You, O Lord,
 And shall glorify Your name.
- e) Psalm 98: v.2
²The LORD has made known His salvation;
 His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.
- f) Psalm 111: v. 9
⁹He has sent redemption to His people;
 He has commanded His covenant forever:
 Holy and awesome *is* His name.

1. The song that these saints were singing in heaven is deeply rooted in scripture.

You may remember last week that I told you about a lady who became a Christian during the last "Revival" in Scotland on the Island of Lewis.

She testified to the fact that God was closer to the people during the singing of the Psalms than at any other time during the Revival.

Now you know why.

It is because God honours His word when it is being sung.

Our "Music Team" work very hard to find songs that fit in with the words that I am preaching each Sunday.

Sometimes it can be very difficult, but most of the time they get it right.

This is why our worship time of singing can be so enriching and pleasing to God. We are singing back His words to Him and He delights in us.

May we always try to focus our singing on God's word.

2. Secondly the song the saints were singing in Heaven did not mention their own achievements.

The song focused totally upon God Himself.

Their song was an outburst of the greatness of God.

Someone once said that Heaven is a place where men and women **forget themselves and remember only God.**

We don't have time to look at the song in detail, but we need to mention the attributes of God.

We are told that God's works are "great and marvellous"

We are told that God's ways are "Justice and Truth"

God is the King of the Saints, we are His Saints and He is our King.

God is "Holy" which is the most important aspect of God's character.

We are told that one day, all the nations will come and worship this Holy God.

Finally, we are told that God's judgements have been made known.

It is no use preaching and teaching about Salvation, unless you tell people what they can be saved from.

You can be saved from the "wrath" of God and today we will get a taste of what this wrath will look like at this time in history.

Salvation is always a Salvation **from Sin and being delivered from God's wrath to come.**

It is the greatest rescue plan of all time for mankind.

We now move on to 15: v. 5-8.

2. The Judgements and their significance. – v. 5-8.

The temple of heaven is opened and 7 Angels come out.

Seven is the number of completion, and these 7 Angels are about to complete God's judgement on the earth.

The wicked world has defied and disobeyed God's Law, but now judgement is coming.

The Robes of these Angels signify Holiness and Royalty.

The "White Linen" reminds us of the dress of the Old Testament priests. The "Golden Girdle" speaks of the King.

This is another reminder that the saints of God are "Kings" and "Priests".

(Rev. 1: v. 6)

This description also takes us back to Revelation Chapter 1: v. 13.

¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

Finally, we are told in v. 8 that the heavenly temple was filled with smoke from the Glory of God.

Twice in the Old Testament, God's Temple/ Tabernacle was filled with God's glory.

First in Exodus 40: v.34-35 and then in 2 Chronicles 7: v. 1-4.

Exodus 40:34-35

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

2 Chronicles 7:1-4

When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. ² And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house. ³ When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, *saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever."* ⁴ Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD.

There is however a difference in this verse.

The difference was that **nobody was allowed to enter the temple until the 7 plagues were completed.**

This is significant.

No Angel or believer could enter the temple to pray for the nations of the world.

The nations were beyond prayer and beyond God's mercy.

God's long suffering had come to an end and His judgement was about to fall.

This is one of the worst verses in the Bible.

NOW there was NO HOPE.

Let us now move on to the 7 plagues of Chapter 16.

The judgements in chapter 16 are similar to the ones in chapter 8, but now the judgements are more severe.

These judgements here occur in quick succession and are aimed at the Anti-Christ and his satanic kingdom.

You will notice how similar they are to the plagues of Egypt, but as I said before they cover the whole world.

Plague No. 1 – The first judgement is described as a foul and loathsome sore which was afflicted upon everybody who had the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image.

This is similar to the 6th plague of Egypt. (Exodus 9:v.9)

Plague No. 2 - The second judgement was God turning the sea to blood and it resulted in every living creature in the sea dying.

Plague No.3 - The third judgement was upon all the rivers and springs of water on the earth. This was similar to the first plague of Egypt in Exodus 7: v.14-25.

The Angel who executed this judgement said these words

⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying:
“You are righteous, O Lord,
The One who is and who was and who is to be,
Because You have judged these things.
⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
And You have given them blood to drink.
For it is their just due.”

The people of the earth had shed blood, so now they must drink blood.

We see this “Law” operated throughout the Bible.

Pharaoh drowned the Hebrew boys in the Nile river when they were born. However, God’s judgement was to drown the Egyptian army in the Red Sea.

In the book of Esther Haman tried to destroy the Jewish nation. He built a “hanging platform” (Gallows) to hang Mordecai the Jewish leader. However, God turned the situation around and instead Haman and his sons were hanged instead.

Notice the words in 8:v. 7.

⁷ Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, “Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he *tried to* lay his hand on the Jews.

I would like us to turn back to revelation chapter 6: v.9-10

⁹ When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. ¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

At last God has answered the cry of the many Christians who had been killed on this earth, just for being faithful to God and His word.

Plague No.4 - In this plague people were scorched with fire.

It seems that God made the sun so hot that it scorched people if they went outside.

This is a fulfilment of the prophecy from Malachi chapter 4: v.1.

“For behold, the day is coming,
Burning like an oven,
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,”
Says the LORD of hosts,
“That will leave them neither root nor branch.

As a result of this judgement people became angry against God, they did not repent, nor give any glory to God. Their hearts were fully hardened.

Plague No. 5 - This plague was total darkness. This was similar to the 9th plague of Egypt in Exodus 10: v.21-29.

This is a fulfilment of prophecy from the prophet Joel Chapter 2: v. 1-2.

Blow the trumpet in Zion,
And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;
For the day of the LORD is coming,
For it is at hand:

² A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,

Like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains.
A people *come*, great and strong,
The like of whom has never been;
Nor will there ever be any *such* after them,
Even for many successive generations.

Again we are told that the people did not repent.

I am reminded by what a Bible teacher said, “Men and women who will not be won to Jesus by GRACE, will never be won at all.”

What he means is that human persuasion or any other means will never persuade people to follow Jesus. It is a work of the GRACE of God, working in people’s lives.

Q. Is God working in your life today?

Plague No. 6 - This was the drying up of the river Euphrates.
We are told that there was a purpose behind this judgement.
The purpose was so that the Kings from the “East” might be prepared.

In v. 16 we are told that the drying up of the Euphrates was also preparation for the battle of “Armageddon”.

The word literally means Mount Megiddo.

I have been to this place in Israel.

It is a deserted place but there is plenty of room for a big battle in the future.

I will deal with this final battle in Revelation chapter 19 on Sunday 18th June, so comments on this are best left to that Sunday.

Plague No. 7 - The final plague is a shake- up of the whole earth.
verses 18,20,21 here.

¹⁸ And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

²⁰ Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹ And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

I don’t think we need to dramatize these plagues, or even discuss them here, it is bad enough just to know about them.

However, they are real plagues that will come upon this earth, as judgement by God for the rebellion and disobedience of mankind.

Q. What can we learn today that will make a difference in our lives?

It is unlikely that any of us here will see this period, but it is not impossible.

However, we can learn something about God that will help us to live our lives better and if we are not a Christian, we need to take God’s judgement upon our own lives seriously.

1. Application to Believers today.

If you are a Christian today, living and working in Japan, then you will not be popular.

There is a promise in 2 Timothy Chapter 3: v.12.

¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

This is not a nice promise but it is real.

The more “Godly” we seek to be in Christ Jesus, the more we will suffer persecution.

If you are having a hard time at work today for no apparent reason, then it is likely that Satan is trying to discourage you through your supervisor or manager.

Few people have the privilege of working for a Christian company anywhere in the world.

Therefore, all of us at some time in our lives are going to face difficulties at work.

If I was living in America, I would try and get a job with this company.

Q. Why?

Well they are closed on a Sunday.

However, although God has blessed this fast food franchise, it is constantly attacked by the press for their stand to close on a Sunday.

Whenever people treat us badly for just living a godly life, we need first of all to pray for these people, that God's grace may be given to them, while they have a chance.

You may be the **only Bible that they will ever read**, by your life-style.

You may be the **only hope that they will ever have for eternal life with Jesus in Heaven.**

There is another side to this.

As you pray for people who persecute you, remember God will judge them one day.

His judgement will come and that is 100% sure. Nobody is outside of God's judgement, He sees everything.

If you are a Christian today, rejoice that you are one of God's chosen people.

However, with that choice comes a responsibility and this is to be a godly witness for Jesus and to act gracefully when you receive persecution.

Whether it is mild persecution or strong persecution, it will still hurt.

Nevertheless the Holy Spirit of God will help you.

2. Application to Non- Believers.

Remember Chapter 15: v. 8

⁸The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Before the last plagues, nobody was allowed to enter the Temple in Heaven until the plagues were complete.

In other words, the opportunity to receive God's grace had ended.

The worst thought that I could have today is that somebody here is going to end up in hell, when they die.

I want you to be quite sure what God is saying to you today.

John Chapter 3:v.14-21 in the N.K.J.

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world

that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have

everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the

world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not

believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of

God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness

rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does

not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the

light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

I would like to close with a story about 3 demons.

The first demon said I have a plan to stop people becoming a Christian.

The second demon said, what is your plan?

He said I am going to tell people that there is no heaven.

The second demon said, that will not work, there is too much evidence in creation for a creator God, and He must live somewhere.

The second demon said, I have a better plan, tell people that there is no Hell, so they can do what they like and they will not be judged.

The two other demons argued against that. They gave lots of good reasons why that wouldn't work.

Finally, the third demon stepped forward and said, I have the best plan of all.

Tell people that they have "Plenty of time".

They all agreed that if you give people plenty of time, they will be less likely to become Christians.

The Bible says "Now is the day of Salvation"

If God speaks to your heart today, you must come to Jesus, or you may never get another opportunity.