

Revelation 15: The Prelude to the Final Judgments

Revelation 15 is both solemn and majestic. It stands at the doorway of the final outpouring of God's judgments. Before the bowls are poured out upon the earth in chapter 16, heaven pauses. There is worship. There is testimony. There is glory. And there is a clear declaration that everything God does is just and true.

Though it contains only eight verses, the number seven appears repeatedly throughout the chapter. In Scripture, seven often signifies completion. Here it underscores that God's redemptive plan for creation is moving toward its appointed conclusion. The long arc of prophecy is nearing its fulfillment. What began in promise is now reaching its climax.

As we read this chapter, we must understand that it is a brief pause—almost a sacred interlude—before the rapid succession of the bowl judgments in the next chapter. This is the calm before the final storm.

But let us be clear: this is not chaos. This is not uncontrolled fury. This is not divine temper. It is not revenge or God getting even. These judgments represent the holy, measured, and righteous response of God to persistent, unrepentant evil.

Throughout Revelation, we see something sobering. God progressively withdraws His restraining presence. He allows humanity to experience the consequences of rejecting Him. Again and again, opportunities to repent are extended. Testimonies are given. Warnings are sounded. Mercy is offered. Yet many refuse.

In this sense, judgment is not God delighting in destruction. It is God allowing those who persistently reject Him to experience life apart from Him. Even in judgment, His heart is that none would perish but that all would turn and live.

It is important to remember that as severe as the judgments of Revelation are, they do not compare to the absolute and final separation from God described elsewhere in Scripture. Hell was not created for humanity's original design and purpose. It was prepared for the devil and his angels who chose rebellion over relationship. They did not want God's rule, God's presence, or God's authority. So, God created a place where His fellowship is not experienced.

The judgments in Revelation progressively reveal what life becomes when God's sustaining presence is rejected. They serve as warnings—merciful warnings—before final separation becomes permanent.

Revelation 15 reminds us that God is holy. He is patient. He is just. And He is merciful. The cross proves His love. The resurrection proves His authority. The coming judgments prove that history is moving toward a righteous conclusion.

The question for every heart is simple: will we respond to His mercy now, or will we resist until only justice remains?

Let us read through this passage carefully.

I. A Great and Marvelous Sign (Revelation 15:1)

John writes:

“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.”

This is the final series of judgments. The word “complete” means brought to its full measure. God’s patience has been extended. His warnings have been given. His mercy has been offered again and again. But now justice reaches its appointed conclusion.

Scripture consistently reveals that God is slow to anger and abundant in mercy. Yet the same Bible that speaks of His grace also speaks of His holiness. Judgment is not inconsistent with love. It is the necessary expression of holiness in a world that refuses repentance.

God does not judge impulsively. He judges righteously.

II. The Sea of Glass and the Victorious Saints (Revelation 15:2)

John continues:

“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.”

Some Bible scholars suggest that the “sea of glass” represents creation itself—the vast expanse of the universe, the fabric of space and time spread out before the throne of God. In this view, what John sees is not merely a symbolic floor in heaven, but a picture of the entire created order lying transparent and subject before its Creator.

The imagery reminds us that all of creation—every galaxy, every dimension, every moment in history—rests before Him in perfect clarity. Nothing is hidden. Nothing is outside His authority. The One seated on the throne rules over space, time, and eternity.

Earlier in Revelation, the sea of glass appears before the throne of God—clear, calm, and majestic. Now it is mingled with fire. Fire speaks of purification and judgment.

Standing upon this sea are those who overcame. They did not compromise. They did not bow. They endured under pressure. They remained faithful to Jesus.

Notice something important: they are not defeated victims. They are victorious worshipers.

Victory in the kingdom of God does not always look like earthly survival. Sometimes victory looks like faithfulness unto death. But heaven calls it triumph.

Application:

Are we preparing our hearts to stand firm? We may not face what they face, but we do face pressure—cultural pressure, moral pressure, spiritual pressure. Faithfulness today prepares us for faithfulness tomorrow.

III. The Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb (Revelation 15:3–4)

“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!
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.’”

This is powerful. The song of Moses recalls deliverance from Egypt. The song of the Lamb celebrates deliverance through the cross. Redemption in the Old Testament and redemption in the New Testament find their fulfillment in Christ.

Notice what they proclaim:
“Just and true are Your ways.”

In eternity, there will be no accusations against God. No one will stand before His throne and say He was unfair. His judgments will be seen as righteous.

Today, people question God. They ask how a loving God could judge. But heaven sees the full picture. God has extended mercy. He has given time. He has offered salvation at infinite cost.

Remember how God established the innocence of Jesus. Pilate said, “I find no fault in Him at all.” Judas declared, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” Even the thief on the cross confessed, “This Man has done nothing wrong.”

The Just One died for the unjust.

When judgment falls, it is not because God delights in punishment. It is because the innocent Lamb was rejected.

Application:

Do we trust the justice of God even when we do not understand His timing? Faith means resting in His character when circumstances seem unclear.

IV. The Temple Opened in Heaven (Revelation 15:5–6)

“After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.”

The earthly tabernacle was patterned after a heavenly reality. Now John sees that heavenly temple opened.

Seven angels emerge, clothed in pure white linen, girded with golden bands. Their attire reflects holiness and authority. These judgments proceed from the very presence of God.

Judgment does not originate from chaos. It proceeds from the throne.

V. The Bowls of Wrath and the Filled Temple (Revelation 15:7–8)

“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.

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.”

The smoke recalls moments in Scripture when God’s glory filled a place so powerfully that no one could stand. When the tabernacle was completed in the wilderness, the glory cloud descended. When Solomon dedicated the temple, the priests could not continue ministering because of the overwhelming presence of God.

Here, heaven is filled with glory and power. Access is restricted. This moment is solemn. It is decisive.

God is not distant. He is not indifferent. Scripture reveals that He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Through the prophet Ezekiel, He says, “I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies... therefore turn and live.”

Jesus wept over Jerusalem. He said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often I wanted to gather your children together... but you were not willing.”

If we have seen Jesus, we have seen the Father. The heart of God is not cold. It is grieved by rebellion. Yet holiness demands that evil be removed.

Application:

This chapter calls us to reverence. It calls us to humility. It calls us to gratitude. If we are saved, it is because Jesus bore the wrath we deserved. He shed His blood on the cross to redeem us. And His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

A Challenge for Believers

1. Walk in holiness.
2. Stand firm in a culture that pressures compromise.
3. Live in light of eternity.
4. Trust the character of God even when the world mocks Him.

Jesus said:

“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

We are not called to speculation. We are called to faithfulness.

Lift up your head. Redemption draws near. Walk closely with Jesus. There has never been a better time to run hard after Him.

An Invitation to Those Who Do Not Yet Believe

If judgment is real, then so is mercy.

God has provided salvation through His Son. The innocent died for the guilty. The Lamb of God bore sin so that you could be forgiven. He rose from the dead, proving that death was conquered and that He is Lord.

You do not have to face judgment. You can receive grace.

Turn to Him. Confess your sin. Trust in what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Believe that He rose again. Surrender your life to Him.

He will forgive you. He will cleanse you. He will make you His own.

And instead of fearing the future, you will look up with hope—because your redemption is drawing near.

May we be a people who worship before the storm, who trust in the character of God, and who walk faithfully with Jesus until the day we stand on that sea of glass, singing the song of the Lamb.