

Revelation - Chapter 14 & 15

Tribulation Announcements & Victory of the Lamb

Before the seventh trumpet sounds John witnesses a series of signs or symbols of events that will occur in Heaven and on earth during the Great Tribulation. First there is war in heaven and Satan is permanently expelled from Heaven. Enraged by his ejection from Heaven, Satan attempts to wipe Israel and all believers in Jesus Christ from the earth. Although he is unsuccessful this will be the largest and deadliest of persecutions God's people has ever seen.



Satan then sets up his earthly kingdom, giving power to his Antichrist and False Prophet who together will cause the world to worship Antichrist. Antichrist will commit the ultimate in blasphemy when he sits in the temple of God to proclaim that he is god. The False Prophet will cause all the unsaved to receive the mark of the beast. Antichrist will begin to wage a massive world

war that will continue until Jesus returns.

Then there is a celebration of the tribulations saints that the salvation, power, kingdom of God and the authority of His Christ has come. The Tribulations saints have overcome Satan because of the blood of the Lamb and word of their testimony.

Jesus standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000

Then John sees Jesus, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000. This is a prophetic vision of the ultimate triumph of Jesus following His second coming to earth, when he joins the 144,000 on Mount Zion, the highest point in ancient Jerusalem, at the beginning of His Millennial reign. This event is foretold in Psalm 2:6-9.



Standing on Mount Zion with Jesus in triumph are the 144,000 who will survive both Satan's wrath and God's judgments on the sinful world. They are first mentioned at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Nothing will be able to harm them, because God will seal them (Rev 7:3-4). We learn the following about this group of Jewish men from the twelve tribes of Israel:

- In sharp contrast to the mark of the beast on the foreheads of the unsaved the 144,000 have the name of Jesus and God written on their foreheads.
- They are singing a new song before the throne of God, the four living creatures and the elders and no one else could learn the song. With all the trouble they have faced, they are joyously praising the Lord for their protection and triumph.
- In the midst of rampant sexual sin throughout the world they will keep themselves chaste. They will stand apart from the sin of their culture.
- They will be completely loyal to and follow the Lamb, no matter the cost.
- They are first fruits to God and to the Lamb, purchased by God and Jesus for a special divine service. In the Old Testament the first fruits were offered to God to be used in His service (Deut 18:3-5). Their purpose is to serve the Lord by proclaiming the gospel to the lost and may refer to the beginning of a great harvest to the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.
- They will only speak God's truth. They will not propagate Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet's lies, agenda and false religion.
- They will be above reproach, leading godly lives before all who see them.
- They will enter the Millennial Kingdom as living men.

Tribulation Announcements

Next John sees three angels flying in mid-heaven. The first angel preaches the everlasting gospel, the second pronounces judgment, and the third promises doom. These three angels deliver God's last call to repentance before the final judgments fall and Jesus returns.



Everlasting Gospel

The first angel proclaims the everlasting gospel, announces that the hour of God's judgment has come, and commands the people of the earth to worship God. Here the everlasting gospel seems to be neither the gospel of grace nor the gospel of the Kingdom, but rather the good news that God at last is about to deal with the world in righteousness and establish His sovereignty over it. ¹



By this time unbelievers will have experienced the devastating seal and trumpet judgments and the earth will have been devastated by worldwide wars, famine and earthquakes. Still in His grace and mercy, God calls sinners to repent and worship Him

through the preaching of this angel.

Judgment

The second angel announces the fall of Babylon, which will come later. Sadly, this implies that the first angel's message was largely rejected. The nations who participate in the spiritual corruption induced by Babylon, Antichrist's worldwide political, economic and religious empire, ultimately share her divine condemnation and judgment. The promise of judgment upon the evil Babylonian system is designed to bring comfort to those in trial during the Great Tribulation.



Doom

The third angel proclaims the sad doom of those who worship the beast. As unbelievers drink of the wine of spiritual immorality, they will also drink the cup of God's wrath. God's wrath here is described as full strength, untempered by the Lord's mercy and grace. They will be tormented day and night forever. They will have no rest day or night. Jesus referred to hell more times than any other person in the New Testament. He also talked

more about hell than about heaven.

The angel makes it clear that those who trust in Christ will receive the love and grace of God while those who reject Christ will go to hell and receive eternal punishment. Once again, God graciously calls on sinners to repent in the final hour.

Blessing of the Saints

A blessing or encouragement is given to those who put their trust in Christ in the time of the Great Tribulation. God, Himself, then gives a blessing to those who die in the Lord during this period as martyrs of the faith. A voice from heaven, a direct communication from God rather than an angel, occurs six times in the book of Revelation: Rev 10:4, 8:11:12; 14:2; 18:4; 21:3.

Then the Holy Spirit, repeats the blessing and adds two further reasons for the tribulation martyrs' blessedness. First, they are blessed because they can "rest from their labors." Labors here describes difficult, exhausting work. They will live hard, difficult, dangerous lives struggling for survival. They will be filled with deep sorrow as

they watch those they love suffer torment and death. They will be excluded from society, unable to buy or sell. They will live as fugitives on the run.

They will also be blessed because “their deeds follow with them.” Their deeds here refers to their service to the Lord. Their record of diligent labor will follow with them to heaven where they will be rewarded for their earthly service to God (Heb 6:10).

The Judgment of the Son of Man - Grain Harvest - 7 Bowl Judgments

Next John sees Christ participating in God’s judgments on an evil world. Christ is referred to as Son of Man (Rev 14:14). This is the title under which Christ deals with



the earth and earth dwellers (Mt 25:31; Jn 5:27) and claims universal dominion (Dan 7:13, 14: Rev 1:13-14).²

It is the last time Scripture refers to Jesus as Son of Man. He is about to take possession of the entire earth. Joel, Isaiah, and Christ all spoke of a coming harvest of divine wrath when the Messiah will execute final judgment (Joel 3:12-13, 21; Isaiah 63:1-6; Matt 13:30, 39-42).

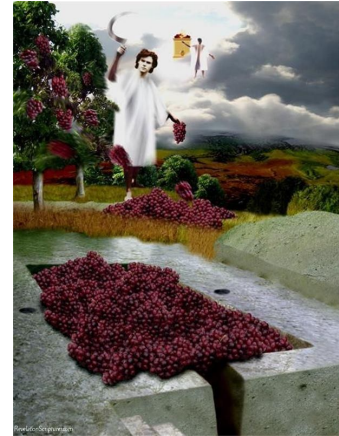
John sees Jesus sitting on a brilliant, white cloud symbolizing His glory and majesty coming to establish His kingdom in fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy (Dan 7:13). He is sitting as He waits for the proper time to stand and begin the reaping. That reaping, which is the seven bowl judgments, will be followed by Christ’s return to establish His kingdom. He wears a golden crown the type worn by victors in war or athletic events. It pictures the Son of Man as the triumphant conqueror over all His enemies (Matt 24:30).

An angel comes from the temple alluding that the judgement proceeds from God, and cries out that the time for judgment has come, judgement is overdue, and that the condition of the world is one of a rotten moral condition. The overripe condition of wicked humanity tells us that the Lord, in His mercy, has delayed judgment for as long as possible (2 Pet 3:9).

Christ’s sharp sickle indicates that it is the time of harvest, He reaps with His sickle referring to the judgments at His second coming. The brevity of the statement dramatizes the suddenness of the judgment (2 Pet 3:10). The picture of the Lord Jesus Christ mowing down His enemies is like a harvester cutting an overripe wheat field that demands immediate attention by the harvester. This is the first phase of the final reaping of the earth.

Angel With Sharp Sickle - Grape Harvest - Judgment of Armageddon

Then another angel comes out from the altar in heaven associated with the prayers of the saints. His appearance means that the time had come for those prayers to be answered. While the wheat harvest represents the sudden, swift intrusion of God's judgement into human history, the grape harvest signifies the severity of that judgment.³



The angel has a sharp sickle and is commanded to gather the clusters from the vine of the earth for its grapes are ripe. It pictures the earth's wicked people as bursting with the juice of wickedness and ready for the harvest of righteousness. The time has come for the final harvest. Their destinies had been sealed. They had rebelled against their Creator and Redeemer, taking the mark of the Beast, the ultimate sign of rebellion, and adopting a wicked lifestyle to match.⁴

The angel swings his sickle to the earth and throws the harvested clusters into the great winepress of the wrath of God. All the enemies of God who survive the seven bowl judgments will be gathered like grape clusters from the vine of the earth and flung into the great wine press of the the wrath of God. This action is fulfilled in Rev 19:15.

This is a prophetic picture of the ultimate judgement of unbelievers at the second coming of Christ. The spurting of the grape juice from under the bare feet of those treading the grapes in the winepress is compared to the spurting of blood that will occur in the awful human carnage outside of Jerusalem where the judgements in Rev 19:17-19,21 take place.

Whether the blood will flow as high as the horses' bridles or not, there will be a heavy shedding of blood as part of a tremendous outpouring of God's final judgment on evil mankind. The area described as 1,600 stadia is approximately two hundred miles and refers to the area within a two-hundred mile radius outside of Jerusalem where the world armies will gather to battle Christ at His second coming. There will be millions of people engaged in the battle of Armageddon. Nothing in earth's history has come close to the massive size and destruction that will occur. This will be the center of the final carnage (Isa 63:1-3, 6; Joel 3:13-16).

Armageddon, will actually be a slaughter rather than a battle. All Christ's enemies, including Satan, Antichrist, False Prophet, and all who refuse to follow Him even after repeated warnings, will be immediately destroyed. This terrible bloodletting will mark the end of the Gentile Age.

Though Armageddon will spell certain doom for the enemies of God, it will also mean salvation for His people. Christ and the armies of heaven will return to destroy the Antichrist and his armies of the earth. Then the King of kings will establish His everlasting Kingdom (Rev 19:11-16).

Seven Proclamations In The Prelude To God's Wrath ⁵

Eternal Gospel Proclaimed	Glorify God!	Rev 14: 6-7
Babylon's Sentence Declared	Babylon Is Fallen	Rev 14: 8
Warning Sounded	Do Not Worship the Beast!	Rev 14: 9-12
Blessing Announced	The Dead in Christ Are Blessed!	Rev 14:13
Rewards Promised	Good Works Will Be Rewarded!	Rev: 14:13
Judgment Pronounced	Reap the Earth!	Rev 14:14-16
Wrath Prescribed	Gather the Wicked!	Rev 14:17-20

The Two Advents of Christ Contrasted ⁶

At His First Coming	At His Second Coming
He came in meekness as a servant (Matt 20:28)	He will come in power as Judge (Matt 24:30-31; 25:31-46; John 5:26-29)
He came in humility & gentleness (Matt 11:29; John 5:41)	He will come in majesty & splendor (1The 4:16; Rev 1:7)
He came to seek & save the lost (Matt 18:11; Luke 19:10; John 3:17)	He will come to judge & reign (Acts 10:40-42; 2 For 5:10; Rev 11:15)
He came as a servant to super wrath for sinners (Matt 16:21; 17:12; Mark 9:12)	He will come as a conqueror to rescue the righteous from wrath (1 For 15:51-52; 1 The 4:15-17)
He came to sow the seed of the gospel (Matt 13:3-9; Luke 8:11)	He will come to reap the harvest (Matt 13:37-42)

Son of Moses & Song of The Lamb

Then John records seeing another great and marvelous sign in heaven, the third heavenly sign that he sees. This time there are seven angels with seven plagues. These seven plagues, the seven bowl judgments, are the last and worst plagues because they contain the last of God's wrath.

Standing on a transparent crystal platform shimmering and glistening like a tranquil sunlit sea before God's throne, are those who had been victorious over the beast. These are the believers redeemed during the Tribulation (Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-17; 12:11; 17:14:1-5; 12-13). They will be victorious over the beast because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and because they did not take the mark of the beast.

The sea of glass was mixed with the fire of God's judgment, which was about to be poured out on the earth. Fire is frequently associated in Scripture with God's judgment (Heb 12:29; Num 11:1; 16:35; Deut 9:3; Psa 50:3; 97:3; Isa 66:15; 2 Thes 1:7-9; 2 Pet 3:7).



The redeemed Tribulation saints are playing harps, rejoicing and singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses is the first of several songs recorded in the Old Testament. The last recorded song in the Bible is the song of the Lamb. Both songs speak of redemption.

As God delivered the people of Israel out of captivity in Egypt, parting the Red Sea, stacking the water of either side of a path to allow the Israelites to cross safely on dry land, the Israelites sang of song of praise to God for their deliverance. This song is recorded in Exodus 15.

There is also another song written by Moses at the close of his career and recorded in Deuteronomy 32. It is a comprehensive picture of God's faithfulness to Israel and His ultimate purpose to defeat their enemies. This song more nearly corresponds to the situation in Revelation 15. Both songs however, ascribe praise to God and are similar in many ways to the hymn recorded by John. ⁷

Like the song of Moses, the song of the Lamb expresses the themes of God's faithfulness, deliverance of His people and judgment of His enemies. Although the words of the song recorded here in Revelation 15 does not exactly match the song of Moses in Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 32, or the song of the Lamb in Revelation 5, the themes and many of the key items are similar.

The song of the redeemed saints extols God's character as the omnipotent, immutable, sovereign, perfect and righteous Creator and Judge. This song closes with joyful anticipation of the Millennial reign of Christ, when all the nations will come and worship before God. ⁸

Seven Angels With Seven Bowl Judgments

Then John introduces a startling and dramatic new vision. The Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary where God's presence dwells, opens and out of the temple comes seven angels dressed in pure linen, clean and bright with golden sashes across their torso from the shoulder to the waist.

The seven angels approach the throne of God and a high-ranking cherubim gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God. Bowls were part of the temple furnishings and were associated with the sacrifices (1 Kings 7:50; Zech 14:20;



Ex 27:3; 38:3). Those who refuse to drink the cup of salvation will be drowned in the judgments poured from the bowls of wrath (Psa 116:13). God has the power to put an end to sin so that it cannot exist ever again in His holy presence. ⁹

These seven angels give four judgments:

1. Righteous judgment because they are wearing white robes
2. Sovereign judgment because they are wearing golden sashes, which represent the priests and king
3. Solemn judgment because they have bowls of wrath
4. Sure judgment because no man can enter into the temple until God is finished.

Smoke also came out of the temple in heaven. Smoke symbolizes the glory of God and His power. Smoke also symbolized God's glorious presence in the Old Testament tabernacle or temple (Ex 40: 34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Isa 6:1-4). This smoke also represents God's wrath.

No one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues were finished. The glory cloud will remain in the temple in heaven until the earth is completely purged and prepared for Jesus, the King and His Kingdom.

Summary

In Chapters 14 and 15 John shares a series of pronouncements and visions assuring us of Christ's ultimate triumph and judgment of evil. The last of God's wrath is seen in the seven bowls given to the seven angels. It will soon be poured out on the earth and Christ will take His rightful place as King of kings. Even during the devastating judgments of the Tribulation, God will continue to call sinners to salvation.

Today, the invitation is still open to those who will receive the grace of God by trusting in Christ and being saved from entering this awful period that may be impending for this present generation.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NASB95)

“while it is said, “Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.” (Hebrews 3:15, NASB95)

“that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” (Romans 10:9–10, NASB95)