Revelation 15

Seven Last Plagues:
The Song of Moses and the Lamb

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Before the last bowls are poured out, heaven sings. The men and women the beast killed are standing, harps in hand, praising God for His ways — righteous and true. His wrath is not a temper tantrum; it is holy, and when it is finished, all the nations will worship Him.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

Scripture in the text and key-verse cards: King James Version (public domain). Quotations in the notes: New American Standard Bible® (NASB 1995), © The Lockman Foundation; used by permission. Commentary sources: David Guzik, Enduring Word.

00 The Text

REVELATION 15 (KJV), MARKED

Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
Rose Sin / warning
Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] 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.

[3] And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

[4] Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

[5] 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.

Marked in the text

- **v1** another sign in heaven, great and marvellous
- **v1** seven angels *(every occurrence)*
- **v1** the seven last plagues
- **v1** filled up the wrath of God
- **v2** a sea of glass mingled with fire
- **v2** gotten the victory over the beast
- **v2** having the harps of God
- **v3** the song of Moses the servant of God
- **v3** the song of the Lamb
- **v3** Great and marvellous are thy works
- **v3** Lord God Almighty
- **v3** just and true are thy ways
- **v4** Who shall not fear thee, O Lord
- **v4** glorify thy name
- **v4** thou only art holy
- **v4** all nations shall come and worship before thee
- **v4** thy judgments are made manifest
- **v5** the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony
- **v6** pure and white linen
- **v7** seven golden vials full of the wrath of God
- **v7** who liveth for ever and ever
- **v8** filled with smoke from the glory of God
- **v8** no man was able to enter into the temple
- **v8** fulfilled

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 15:3 (KJV)

3 And they sing ⇄ the song of Moses the servant of God, and ⇄ the song of the Lamb, saying, ▲ Great and marvellous are thy works, ▲ Lord God Almighty; ▲ just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Setting

Chapter 14 ended with the wine press of God's wrath. Before the last judgments fall (ch. 16), John is taken back into heaven. It is the shortest chapter in Revelation — a pause for worship before the storm. "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous" (v1) — the third "sign" in heaven, after the woman (12:1) and the dragon (12:3).

Structure

- v1 — **the seven last plagues:** "seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished."
- vv2–4 — **the victors' song:** "something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast," "standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God" (v2). "They sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" (v3): "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!" (v3). "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; for all the nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed" (v4).
- vv5–6 — **the temple opened:** "the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened" (v5). The seven angels come out, "clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes" (v6).
- vv7–8 — **the bowls given, the temple closed:** "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" (v7). "The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished" (v8).

Repeated words

seven angels (vv1, 6, 7, 8); plagues (vv1, 6, 8); the wrath of God (vv1, 7); finished (vv1, 8); great and marvelous (vv1, 3); sea of glass (v2, twice); song (v3, twice); temple (vv5, 6, 8); nations (vv3, 4); glory / glorify (vv4, 8).

Contrasts

the beast's apparent victory over the saints (13:7) ⟷ the saints "victorious over the beast" (v2). The song of Moses by the Red Sea (Exod 15) ⟷ the song of Moses and the Lamb by a sea of glass (v3). Plagues on Egypt ⟷ the seven last plagues on the world (v1). The temple opened (v5) ⟷ no one able to enter it (v8). God's wrath in golden bowls (v7) ⟷ the same golden bowls holding the prayers of the saints (5:8). The martyrs sing nothing about themselves ⟷ everything about God (vv3–4).

Chapter theme (my words)

Before the last bowls are poured out, heaven sings. The men and women the beast killed are standing, harps in hand, praising God for His ways — righteous and true. His wrath is not a temper tantrum; it is holy, and when it is finished, all the nations will worship Him.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 15:4 (KJV)

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Recapitulation (v1)

Guzik says chapter 15 is not a new step after chapter 14 but a closer look at the same end-time events. Erdman, in Guzik: "As is the plan of the prophet, he reviews, he recapitulates, he enlarges upon the scene he has already sketched." Guzik: "This reminds us that Revelation is not strictly chronological in its arrangement." Some readers see the seals, trumpets and bowls as one long sequence; others see them as overlapping views of the same end. Either way, these are the *last* — in them "the wrath of God is finished." The word means brought to its goal (*teleō*); the same word comes back in v8. Guzik: "God isn't just blowing off steam."

The sea of glass mixed with fire (v2)

We saw the sea of glass, like crystal, before the throne in 4:6; now it is mixed with fire. Guzik reads the fire as judgment — "This is a place where God's anger flashes hot." Walvoord, in Guzik: "The sea is designed to reflect the glory of God." Guzik also suggests it may picture God's Word, connected to the bronze laver of the tabernacle (Exod 30:18; Eph 5:26), and it surely recalls Israel standing safe on the far shore of the Red Sea.

Who are the victors? (v2)

Guzik identifies them with the tribulation martyrs of 7:9–14 and 13:15: "They are not those who survive the tribulation." They overcame the beast by refusing him, even to death (12:11). The beast thought he won (13:7); heaven says they did. Guzik notes that the word translated "on" (*epi*) can also mean "over" or "beside" the sea.

The song of Moses and the Lamb (vv3–4)

The first song of Moses was sung on the shore after the Red Sea (Exod 15) — the Lord is a warrior, Pharaoh is drowned, and no god is like Him. Moses also wrote a song of warning near the end of his life (Deut 32). Here one song carries both names: Moses and the Lamb, law and grace, the old exodus and the final one. The song praises God's *works* (great and marvelous), His *ways* (righteous and true), His *worthiness* (who will not fear?), and the coming *worship* of all nations (Ps 86:9; Jer 10:7). Guzik: "These martyrs are only focused on God." They don't sing about their suffering or their courage — and they are "not like the modern anti-hero or vigilante, who sink down to the level of the criminals they fight." The textual variant "King of the nations" versus "King of saints" (KJV) is worth noting; both are true, but the song's point is that all nations will bow.

The temple of the tabernacle of testimony (vv5–6)

Moses built the tabernacle after a heavenly pattern (Exod 25:9, 40; Heb 8:5). The "testimony" was the law kept in the ark (Exod 25:16). Judgment comes out of the place where God's law is kept — the world is judged by the standard it rejected. The angels wear clean, bright linen and golden sashes, priestly clothing (compare Jesus in 1:13): God's judgment is holy and undefiled.

Bowls and smoke (vv7–8)

One of the living creatures hands out the bowls. Guzik says these were broad, shallow bowls; Seiss calls them "shallow, pan-like, golden bowls, or censers." Poured from a shallow bowl, the contents come out all at once. The smoke of glory recalls the tabernacle (Exod 40:34–35) and Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 8:10–11) and Isaiah's vision (Isa 6:4). No one can enter until the plagues are finished — Guzik: "This declares that judgment was now irreversible." The time for intercession is over.

Word study (Greek)

- **sign — *sēmeion* (G4592):** a mark or wonder that points beyond itself.
- **marvelous — *thaumastos* (G2298):** wonderful, causing amazement.
- **plagues — *plēgē* (G4127):** blows, strokes, wounds.
- **wrath — *thymos* (G2372):** passionate, boiling anger.
- **finished — *teleō* (G5055):** to complete, bring to the goal; Jesus' word on the cross (John 19:30).
- **glass — *hyalinos* (G5193):** glassy, transparent.
- **victorious — *nikaō* (G3528):** to overcome, conquer.
- **bond-servant — *doulos* (G1401):** a slave, one owned by his master.
- **Almighty — *pantokratōr* (G3841):** ruler of all.
- **true — *alēthinos* (G228):** genuine, real, as opposed to counterfeit.
- **holy — *hosios* (G3741):** pure, devout, set apart.
- **righteous acts — *dikaiōma* (G1345):** just decrees, righteous deeds.
- **temple — *naos* (G3485):** the inner sanctuary, the dwelling place of God.
- **testimony — *martyrion* (G3142):** witness, evidence.
- **bowls — *phialē* (G5357):** broad, shallow bowls; the KJV "vials" misleads.
- **smoke — *kapnos* (G2586):** smoke; with glory, the sign of God's presence.

Cross-references

Exod 7–12; Exod 15:1–18; Exod 25:9, 40; Exod 40:34–35; Lev 26:21; Deut 32:4; 1 Kgs 8:10–11; Ps 86:8–10; Ps 111:2; Ps 145:17; Isa 6:1–4; Jer 10:6–7; Rom 11:33; Heb 8:5; Rev 4:6; Rev 5:8; Rev 7:9–14; Rev 12:11; Rev 13:15; Rev 16:1.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 15:2 (KJV)

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.

Command to obey — "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name?"

The martyrs ask it as a question no one can answer. I'm to fear Him and glorify His name now, in my work, my words and my home. That fear is not terror — it is taking God seriously.

Sin to confess — making my story about me

The victors in heaven sing about God's works and ways, not about their suffering (vv3–4). I tell my testimony and too often I'm the hero of it. The men I disciple carry stories of what was done to them and what they did; healing begins when the song turns to what God has done.

Warning to heed — the door closes

"No one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues … were finished" (v8). There comes a time when the way in is shut. Today the door is open. For the man in a cell thinking he has time to get right with God later, later is not promised.

Promise to trust — His ways are "righteous and true."

I don't understand everything God allows. The martyrs died and still sang that His ways are just. For a man who has lost everything — family, freedom, hope — this is the anchor: God has not done wrong, and He will make every wrong right.

Example to follow — overcoming without becoming the beast

The saints were "victorious over the beast" by refusing to bow, not by fighting his way. Guzik's word fits: they are no vigilantes. When men have been wronged, the pull is to answer like the dragon. The victory is faithfulness.

Worship

"Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty." I join the song of Moses and the Lamb — the God who brought Israel through the sea brings me through the cross. All the nations will come and worship before Him, and I start now.

Prayer

Lord God Almighty, King of the nations, Your ways are righteous and true even when I can't see it. Teach me to fear You and glorify Your name. Take my story and make it a song about You. Open the door for the men I serve while it is still open. Let me overcome by faithfulness and not by force. Amen.