

## The Revelation – Introduction of the Seven Last Plagues

In this week's lesson we'll continue our study on The Revelation of Jesus Christ by looking at the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of this blessed book. This Scripture says:

- (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.

Once again we find seven angels introduced who will introduce plagues upon the earth. These plagues are said to be filled up with the wrath of God. This brings up a point that I think is often overlooked by churches today. People like to talk about the love of God. After all, 1 John 4 tells us that God is love, and John 3, among many other Scriptures, tells us about the extents of God's love. What we find here, though, is that in order for God's love to be complete there must also be God's wrath.

Let's go back for a few moments to the Garden of Eden. When God made Adam and Eve in the beginning he made them in his own image. He put them in a beautiful paradise where they could live forever in communion with him. He also gave them a free will to choose to serve him. You see, God desired for people to serve him because they want to, not because they had no other choice.

This, though, is where humanity stumbled. You see, man chose darkness rather than light. Sin looked tempting, and Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. Because of this transgression death came upon all men. Since that time humanity has continued in rebellion against God. We are all sinners. There is none righteous.

Now I want you to understand that the love of God is real. God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). There is coming a time,

though, when God's patience will come to an end. The 'fullness of time' will come, a time when God can no longer stand the corruption upon the Earth. This has already happened one time in history. At that time God sent a global flood to destroy the entire earth. Today the earth is scarred with signs of that catastrophe. There are great canyons carved out by the swiftly flowing flood currents. There are mass burials of living things all over the earth which have been preserved as fossils due to the quick burial to which they were subjected.

At that time, though, there was one man who found grace in the eye's of the Lord. This one man was Noah. Noah was a righteous man, and Noah followed God's command. Noah escaped the wrath of God because he was obedient to the voice of the Lord. We, too, can escape God's wrath through simple obedience. The gospel is for all who will come to the Father through Jesus Christ. If you've never received Jesus Christ as your Savior I want you to pay special attention to the fact that God hates sin, but God loves you even though you are a sinner.

After the introduction of the seven angels we are once again introduced to a group of saints. These are the ones who have gained the victory over the beast, who is Satan. Their victory cannot be of their own because they were sinners. Their victory came in the blood of Jesus Christ. This is the only way to defeat the Devil today. It is the only real way to overcome our addiction to sin. You see, once the blood of Jesus has been applied we begin to understand that we have power over the Devil. As we mature as Christians we wield that power more and more as we become more Christ-like. Does this mean that the Christian does not sin? Of course not! 1 John 1:8 says that we're not being true to ourselves if we say that we have no sin.

This is exactly what the saints are pointing out in their song. They talk about God's works. They see God's majesty in all of his creation and realize that death, suffering, disease, and heartache came about because of sin and not because of God. They recognize that they are not holy, but God is true, just, and holy. They recognize that God is a God to be feared.

Both David and Solomon tell us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10). You see, because God hates sin we, as sinners, should fear the wrath of God, but because God is love we, as believers, should relish in his mercy. The only way that you can relish in that mercy is by putting your faith and trust completely in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. You see, somebody has to pay for sin, and Romans 6:23 tells us that the price is death. As we'll talk about later on in this series this death is not just the death of the physical body. It is the soul in the flames of an eternal Hell.

No it is interesting here that the angels already had the seven last plagues, but there is something added to the plagues. You see, the plagues alone were not enough. They had to be tempered with God's wrath. God is a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24, Deuteronomy 9:3, Hebrews 12:29) and his wrath is being displayed here. The fire is so great that the temple cannot be entered until God's wrath has been carried out.

Next week we'll begin to talk about these seven last plagues. In the meantime I would like to give you some questions to ponder. Will the seven last plagues apply to you? Will you be

in that number that receives the wrath of God? Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will escape. If you can't say of a surety that God's wrath will not apply to you then I want to ask you to do something. I want you to get down on your knees and call upon God. I want you to ask him to forgive you of your sins and cleanse you of your unrighteousness. I want you to ask him to save you from this day of wrath as you put your trust in his son Jesus Christ. Then I want you to tell others about what the Lord has done for you.

In that light I would love to hear about your salvation experience, whether it happened today or whether it happened fifty years ago. Our testimony is greatest when it is shared with others.

Yours in Christ,

Bro. John Rich