

GOD ALONE IS HOLY (15:1-8)

Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

¹Then I saw another great and astounding sign in heaven:
seven angels who have seven final plagues (they are final
because in them God's anger is completed).

²Then I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and
those who had conquered the beast and his image and the number
of his name. They were standing by the sea of glass, holding harps
given to them by God. ³They sang the song of Moses the servant of
God and the song of the Lamb:

*"Great and astounding are your deeds,
Lord God, the All-Powerful!
Just and true are your ways,
King over the nations!*

⁴*Who will not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name,
because you alone are holy?
All nations will come and worship before you
for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

⁵After these things I looked, and the temple (the tent of the
testimony) was opened in heaven, ⁶and the seven angels who had
the seven plagues came out of the temple, dressed in clean bright
linen, wearing wide golden belts around their chests.

⁷Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels
⁹seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God who lives forever
and ever, ⁸and the temple was filled with smoke from God's glory
and from his power. Thus no one could enter the temple until the
seven plagues from the seven angels were completed.

Father,

You alone are holy, yet you call us to be holy because You are. Show us this week something of your holiness and in doing so alarm us with our own sinfulness and the corrupting influence of this world upon us.

Amen

MONDAY

This chapter is preparing us for the seven last plagues whose content is to be revealed in chapter 16. As you read and study this week you may want to read 15 and 16 as a unit.

Why do you think this particular sign is called “great and astounding” (15:1; see 12:1,3)?

What is this sign?

What are the seven last plagues (16:1-20)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

What does it mean when it says that “in them God’s anger is completed?”

Of what does the description “something like a sea of glass mixed with fire” remind you (15:2; 4:6)?

What does their “standing” and “holding harps” suggest is the eternal function of these conquerors?

TUESDAY

What happened to the nation Israel to cause them to sing the “song of Moses” (15:3; see Exodus 14:1-31)?

In what way is that event parallel to this one?

What does the *Song of Moses* teach you about the Lord?

WEDNESDAY

Is the song recorded here (15:3-4) the same as the song of Moses in *Exodus 15:1-21*? Why or why not?

Why is this described as also the “song of the Lamb?”

What does it declare to be true about God?

Which of these is particularly meaningful to you? Why?

THURSDAY

Today let's consider some more about the attributes of God which were declared in the song of the Lamb. In the Song, these attributes are placed in parallel and in relationship to one another.

"Great and astounding are your deeds,

Lord God, the All-Powerful!

Just and true are your ways,

King over the nations!

*⁴Who will not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name,
because you alone are holy?*

All nations will come and worship before you

for your righteous acts have been revealed."

First, the Lord God is said to be *the All-powerful One*. This supreme power ties in with His position as *King over the nations*. Men in their lust for power seek to rule over one another and compel

Second, His *deeds* are *great and astounding*. They are seen to be *just* and *true*. Psalm 145:17 says that, "*The LORD is just in all his actions, and exhibits love in all he does.*" It is His loyal love that lets us know that we can rely upon Him. No matter how things may look, God is still true to us. He remains faithful.

Third, because of what He does and how He does it, God is the proper object of our *fear, glory, and worship*. All mankind will one day come to worship.

Finally, He is *holy*. It is an ancient Hebrew concept of a being set apart from ordinary, sinful humanity. This will be seen by all as God's *righteous acts* are fully revealed.

God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible, and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine. [A.W. Tozer in *Knowledge of the Holy*]

FRIDAY

What is “the tent of testimony” (15:5; Exodus 16:34; 25:16; 31:18; 32:15)?

What had happened to the temple on the earth (*Daniel 9:26*)?

Why do you think it would have been important for the seven churches to know that *this* temple was in heaven?

What is indicated by the temple being “opened” at this specific time (11:19; 14:15,17; 15:5-8)?

Why is no one able to enter the temple until the plagues are finished?

SEVEN LAST PLAGUES (16:1-21)

"You are just They got what they deserved!"

¹Then I heard a loud voice from the temple declaring to the seven angels: *"Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls containing God's wrath."*

²So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth. Then ugly and painful sores appeared on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

³Next, the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea and it turned into blood, like that of a corpse, and every living creature that was in the sea died.

⁴Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water, and they turned into blood.

⁵Now I heard the angel of the waters saying: *"You are just – the one who is and who was, the Holy One – because you have passed these judgments,⁶ because they poured out the blood of your saints and prophets, so you have given them blood to drink. They got what they deserved!"*

⁷Then I heard the altar reply, *"Yes, Lord God, the All-Powerful, your judgments are true and just!"*

⁸Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was permitted to scorch people with fire. ⁹Thus people were scorched by the terrible heat, yet they blasphemed the name of God, who has ruling authority over these plagues, and they would not repent and give him glory.

¹⁰Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast so that darkness covered his kingdom, and people began to bite their tongues because of their pain. ¹¹They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their sufferings and because of their sores, but nevertheless they still refused to repent of their deeds.

¹²Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates and dried up its water to prepare the way for the kings

from the east.¹³Then I saw three unclean spirits that looked 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.¹⁴For they are the spirits of the demons performing signs who go out to the kings of the earth to bring them together for the battle that will take place on the great day of God, the All-Powerful.¹⁵(Look! I will come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays alert and does not lose his clothes so that he will not have to walk around naked and his shameful condition be seen.)¹⁶Now the spirits gathered the kings and their armies to the place that is called Armageddon in Hebrew.

¹⁷Finally the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying: "It is done!"¹⁸Then there were flashes of lightning, roaring, and crashes of thunder, and there was a tremendous earthquake – an earthquake unequalled since humanity has been on the earth, so tremendous was that earthquake.¹⁹The great city was split into three parts and the cities of the nations collapsed. So Babylon the great was remembered before God, and was given the cup filled with the wine made of God's furious wrath.²⁰Every island fled away and no mountains could be found.

Father,

Help us this week to see your glory and to reflect upon your goodness even as we read of this terrible judgment. Keep us faithful to give You honor and to repent of our own evil. Deliver us from the Evil One and his deceptions.

Amen

MONDAY

Who told the seven angels to pour out on the earth the seven bowls of wrath (16:1)?

Compare these bowls of wrath with the plagues of Egypt (16:2-12; Exodus):

The Plagues of Egypt
(*Exodus*)

(7:14-25)
(8:1-15)
(8:16-19)
(8:20-32)
(9:1-7)
(9:8-12)
(9:13-35)
(10:1-20)
(10:21-29)
(11:1-12:36)

The Final Plagues (*Revelation*
16)

(2)
(3)
(4)
(8-9)
(10-11)
(12-14,16)
(17-21)

Why do you think the *ugly and painful sores* an appropriate judgment upon people who had the mark?

TUESDAY

How are the second and third judgments connected?

What would be the result of the sea and fresh water turning to blood?

What is the third angel's opinion about what God has done and who confirms that assessment (16:5-7; 6:9-11)?

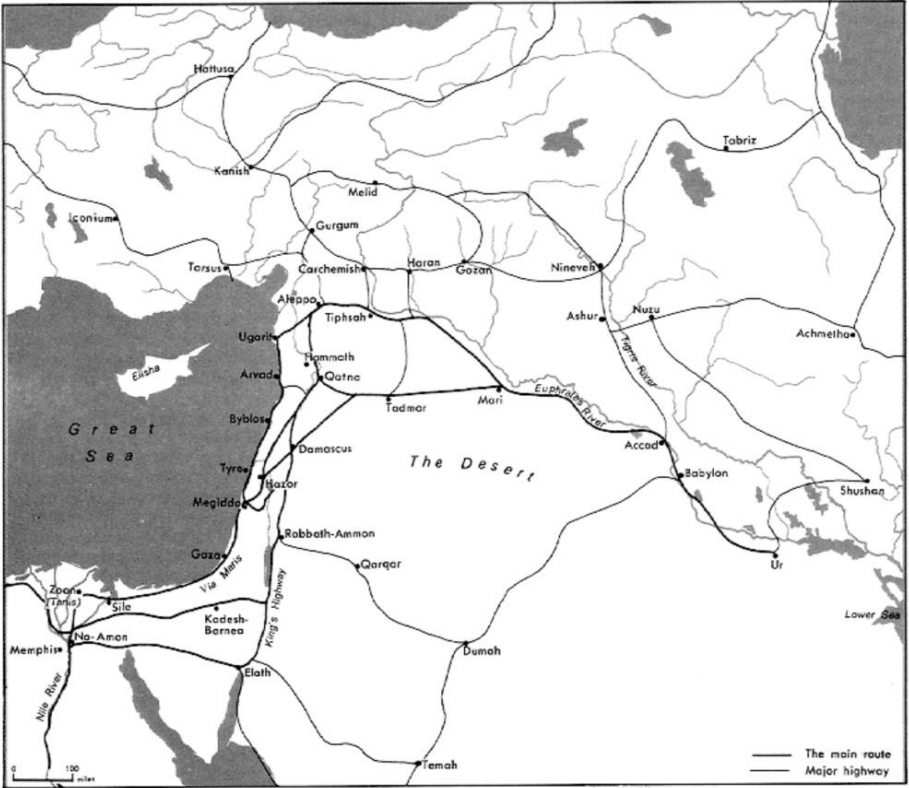
How does this angel's assessment make you feel about God?

WEDNESDAY

Why does God expect "*glory*" from mankind?

The people living on the earth will speak ill of God's name (16:8-11). What is their blasphemy? One writer suggests they are denying God's ability to bring on these judgments. Another suggest that they are cursing God as the source of their trouble, but denying that He is just in bringing all this trouble upon them. What do you think they are doing and why do they refuse to repent and give God glory (16:9, 11)?

THURSDAY



Where is the “Euphrates” river in relation to Israel and to Armageddon (16:12)?

Who then are the “kings from the east?”

The three frog like things coming out of the mouths of Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet are identified as unclean spirits who deceive (compare Exodus 8:3 for a similar idea). Why do you think God allows the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet to perform signs (16:13)? _

What is the “war of the great day of God, the Almighty” (16:14; cf. 16:16)? _

The translators of the NET Bible put 16:15 in parenthesis. Why?

What does it mean to “keep one’s clothes?” (Compare 3:4-5,18)

How do you think this was intended to help the people to whom this book was written?

How about the people who live during the Tribulation?

What should we do about this word?

FRIDAY

“*Armageddon*” (16:16) is a Hebrew word meaning *Mount Megiddo*. The plain in front of this mountain is a historical sight of battle:

There the Lord routed Sisera before the armies of Deborah and Barak (Jgs 4–5); Gideon was victorious over the Midianites and Amalekites (Jgs 6–7); King Saul and his army were defeated by the Philistines (1

Sm 31); and King Josiah was slain in battle by the Egyptian army of Pharaoh Neco (2 Kgs 23:29).¹

In 1917, General Allenby fought a modern mechanized battle on this very spot. Napoleon was said to have remarked that all the armies of the world could maneuver in such a place.

What is the significance of this coming battle to you?

Where are each of the seven bowls poured out?

(2)

(3)

(4)

(8-9)

(10-11)

(12-14,16)

(17-21)

What significance do you see in this?

What city is identified as the “great city” (16:19)? _

What does the fact that this city is split into three parts, the cities of the nations falling, and by every island fleeing and mountains are not found indicate about this earthquake?

When God finishes His judgment, the fulfillment of the seventh trumpet of 11:15 will be accomplished,

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”

¹Tyndale Bible Dictionary, Tyndale reference library (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 111.