

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"The Fury of God"

Revelation 15:1-4

1. Revelation is a book which focuses on judgment. This may seem pessimistic, but the outcome is very bright (chap. 21, 11). Hence, no apology is offered for bringing messages on judgment which in fact are warnings of what to avoid and shun.

2. Interestingly, preceding each section of seven judgments (seals, trumpets, vials) there is an introductory vision. Consider that before the seals, there are introductory chapters 4 and 5. Similarly chapter 8:1-6 is introductory to the trumpet judgments (8:7ff). Now before the vial judgments (16:1-21) is chapter 15 which introduces the final seven plagues.

3. Clearly there are two subdivisions in this chapter: a. A picture of the fury of God (vv. 1-4). b. A plan for the fury of God (vv. 5-8). To study these, consider three events which are recorded:

1. A SIGN v. 1

a. Noted The word "sign" (σημείον semeion) occurs at least 77 times in the New Testament. It is a favorite with John (20:30, 31). It means a pointer to some event or person. Here it is "great and marvelous" which means it arouses wonder.

b. Identified There is no doubt as to the "sign" being known. It relates to seven specific angels who bring the seven final plagues of the Tribulation.

c. Described The phrase "wrath of God" occurs six times in this book (14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1; 19:15). It is related to God, as opposed to the final expression of wrath being related to the Lamb's presence on earth (cf. 6:16, 17; 14:14-20). The Lamb comes for at least two purposes: 1) to prevent any attempt to cut off Israel as a nation and 2) to demonstrate that He stands with beleaguered Israel in their final hour of need. Here the "wrath of God" is stated to be "filled" (ἐτελέσθη etelesthe) which means "completed." His accumulated wrath is poured out at last!

2. A SEA v. 2

a. Stated It is marked as a "sea of glass" and "mingled with fire." In one sense, the sea is linked with an earlier reference (4:6), but in another, it relates to judgment and fiery trials. Apparently, those involved in the sea have experienced extremely difficult times. They have come through the fire! But,

glory to God, they "stand" (ἑστῶτας hestotas) on the sea of glass! This is their victory position.

b. Detailed The unique use of the preposition "over" (ἐκ ek) indicates that these who stand on the sea have gotten victory "out of" the beast, his image, mark, and number of his name. What had seemed an impossible situation has resulted in a glorious final victory! The victors stand with harps, indicative of worship (cf. 5:8). That is the ultimate for those who cast their lot with the Lord.

3. A SONG vv. 3, 4

a. Related Two persons are singled out in connection with the song: Moses and the Lamb. The former is drawn in because the whole affair relates to redemption (Ex. 15:1-22). For Moses it was the overthrow of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. That was a demonstration of God's power. But the song is also related to the Lamb (5:8-10). Here the emphasis is on the grace of God. The noun for "Lamb" is "little Lamb" (cf. other word for lamb in John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:19).

b. Included Major aspects of God's person are included in the song. In the first instance, both His "works" (ἔργα erga) and His "ways" (ὁδοί hodoi) are mentioned (Psa. 103:7). Of the attributes of God mentioned, the following are given: God's greatness (μεγάλα megala), justice (δίκαιαι dikaiiai), truth (ἀληθινὰ alethinai), and holiness (ὅσιος osios). What a magnificent testimony to the character of God!

c. Addressed The song is addressed to God Who is 1. Lord God Almighty noting Him as Jehovah (Κύριε Kurie), Elohim (Θεὸς theos), and Shaddai (Παντοκράτωρ Pantokrator). 2. King of saints. The word "saints" may be "nations" or "ages" (Majority Text). He is indeed Lord of all!

d. Intended The purpose of the song moves in several directions: 1) fear (φοβηθῆ fobethe), 2) glory (δοξάση doxase), 3) worship (προσκυνήσουσιν proskunesousin), 4) judgment (δικαιώματά dikaiomata). Truly, this is a song to be anticipated. So be it!

Conclusion With the truth of these events assured, it behooves all to be reconciled with God through Christ now. God has done this already (2 Cor. 5:18). It is up to us to believe the fact of this affirmation. Salvation is available now. Receive it! If not, there is nothing but an eternal punishment awaiting the unbelieving. May God move your heart today to believe the Truth! Amen.