

God's dealings with the sinful world have progressed from the opening of the six seals (Rev. 6) to the opening of the seventh seal out of which preceded the seven trumpets (chs. 8 and 9). During the 'reign' of the Antichrist and the False Prophet (ch. 13) the world continued in its violent opposition towards God and His people. The time is now approaching when God declares, Enough! The seven vials/bowls of His most devastating wrath are about to be poured upon the rebellious nations of the world who had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image (16:2). These vials will be further described in chapter sixteen.

Prior to the final opportunity for wicked mankind to repent John sees another sign in Heaven, ^{15:1} great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. ... God will present humanity with every opportunity to repent before He will unleash the most terrible judgment ever inflicted upon the world. This is *the* final call, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Lk. 13:5). ... This is God busily working to save sinners from His wrath, ^{Rom. 1:19} Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. ²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. ... Bow before the sovereignty of God or condemn yourselves to suffer the consequences of your wilful sinful rebellion!

Looking on are those who (proleptically) will conquer the beast. These are the saints who will persevere and be preserved in steadfast obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ (14:12). They conquered the beast and refused to worship him, for even in death they had not denied their Saviour and Lord. They were invincible, 'more than conquerors'. The beast could not crush their faith in Christ, for neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38,39).

They are pictured standing on a sea of glass mingled with fire ... them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name (v.2), ... They are standing in the immediate presence of God which John saw previously when he was first lifted up into Glory (4:6). There is the tranquil beauty and serenity of the 'sea of glass' but it is mingled, - bubbling underneath, - with the fire of God's judgment.

The martyr-saints are on the 'sea of glass' before the throne of God. The beast cannot deny them such pleasure and privilege for they had passed from death on earth to victory in Heaven. These are they who have the Father's name written in their foreheads (Rev. 14:1). ... Satan has lost them, he has failed! The prayer of Jesus has been answered, ^{Jn. 17:12} those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost

... ²⁴ Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me. All the wickedness and deceit emanating from the beast and the Antichrist is powerless to quench and quell the song and witness of God's victorious people! ... And in their hands, they held the 'harps of God', rapturously and continually singing their anthem of praise. ...

The Jewish believers knew well ³ the song of Moses the servant of God (cf. Ex. 15), and the Gentile believers were equally familiar with the song of the Lamb (cf. Rev. 5:8-14) ... and together they were saying, ³ Great and marvellous are thy works *IPs. 92:5; 111:2; 139:14*, 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 *[Millennial praise]*; for thy judgments are made manifest. ... And how Satan hates to hear it! While the people of the earth under his wicked spell gave their praise to the Antichrist and the beast (13:3,4,14-16), the devil could never extinguish the worship of the saints. ... He was powerless to deceive and seduce God's true people.

As John continued to watch, his gaze was averted from Heaven to what was about to be unleashed upon the earth, ⁵ behold *11:7, 18; 2:10, 22; 3:8, 9, 11, 20; 4:1, 2; 5:5; 6:2, 8; 9:12; 11:14; 12:3, 14, 17 ...*, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ... The seven vials are on the cusp of being outpoured. The point of no return for the unbelieving masses worldwide has arrived. They have been given opportunity after opportunity to repent but they have wasted every hope. They will not believe!

And out of the temple, - the dwelling place of God, - proceeded the seven angels having the seven plagues. The word for plague (*πληγή*) means not so much a disease or an epidemic, but a devastating 'blow', or 'wound' ... deadly judgments which will strike the world with unimaginable impact.

These seven plagues are being held in the hands of the seven angels, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles *lv.6, i.e. holiness and purity*. ... There was nothing comparable about them to any of the world's population. They were distinct in every way possible. What an ominous and frightening scene about to descend! ... One of the four creatures standing around the throne of God (cf. 4:6) handed to each of the seven angels the seven bowls which would have originally come from God, filled to the brim with His wrath, 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. ... While the plans of sinful man seem indomitable, the purposes of eternal God cannot now or ever be frustrated for He is the One who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will (Eph. 1:11). ... Satan is a defeated foe, and his eternal destruction is inevitable!

And God's powerful authority is further accentuated using Old Testament description, ⁸ And the temple was filled with smoke [*His holiness*] from the glory of God [*His majesty*], and from his power [*His authority*], and no man was able to enter into the temple [*His unapproachability*]. ... There is no match among men or demons for God's glory for He is in a 'class' of His own, *Is. 46:9* I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. ... The declarations in the Book of Revelation are as sure as if they have already come to pass!

In the Old Testament, when God demonstrated Himself to men and women, He often appeared in glory too powerful for them, for example, *Ex. 40:34* Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle ... *I Kings 8:10* And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD ... *Is. 6:1* In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ... ³ And one cried unto another [*the seraphim*], and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. ⁴ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke ... *Ezek. 44:4* Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

Such is God's majesty and His glory in comparison to all that is sinful and fallen! The glory cloud will remain in the Heavenly temple until the earth is completely purged and prepared for the King and His Messianic Millennium Kingdom, *II Peter 3:10* the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. ... ¹³ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. ¹⁴ Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.