REVELATION: PART 44 · STUDY GUIDE

Revelation 15: Preparing for the Last Plagues

Revelation 15:1 | Sunday, May 21 | Revelation Series

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OVERVIEW

Hal opens Revelation 15 by admitting he expected a short chapter and found otherwise once he got into the Greek text. Chapter 15 and chapter 16, he says, are inseparably linked: chapter 15 gives the divine viewpoint on the last seven judgments — the whole scene is in heaven, and it shows why God is going to do this — while chapter 16 unravels the golden bowls themselves. He sets them inside the telescopic scheme running through the book: the seventh seal opens the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet opens the golden bowls. A word first about the two harvests at the end of chapter 14, which are vignettes rather than chronology. Then the heart of the message. This is the last interlude of grace, and when what chapter 15 describes is unleashed there is no more opportunity to believe. The word behind “the wrath of God is finished” is teleo — tetelestai, paid in full, the shout Jesus gave from the cross. Hal renders the clause: the wrath of God against the Christ-rejecting world is paid in full.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 15:1 — Another sign in heaven, great and marvellous — seven angels with the seven last plagues

Revelation 15 — The divine viewpoint on the last judgments; the whole scene is in heaven

Revelation 16 — The unravelling of all seven of the golden bowl judgments

Revelation 14 — The two harvests taught the week before — vignettes, not chronology

Revelation 12:1 — The first of the great signs in heaven

John 19:30 — “It is finished” — tetelestai, paid in full

KEY TERMS

Allos — the Greek word for “another of the same kind” — this third sign carries the same great importance the first two had

Teleo — the verb behind “finished”; in that time it meant paid in full

Tetelestai — the perfect-tense form Jesus cried from the cross — the word found on parchment receipts for a debt paid in full

Interlude of grace — the breathing space God gives after a series of judgments, a chance to reflect and respond; chapter 15 marks the last of them

Telescopic judgments — the three series opening into one another — the seventh seal opens the seven trumpets, the seventh trumpet opens the golden bowls

Vignette — Hal’s word for a passage that does not carry the chronology forward but sketches the persons and movements of the seven-year period

The golden bowls — the seven last plagues — the final and most catastrophic of the three series

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer from the message itself. Every answer is in the teaching.

1. Why does Hal say chapter 15 and chapter 16 have to be taken together?

2. How do the three series of judgments relate to one another?

3. What were the two harvests at the end of chapter 14?

4. Why does Hal insist those harvests are not part of the chronology?

5. What conclusion does Hal say cannot be drawn from those harvests?

6. What is an interlude of grace, and where have they already appeared?

7. What makes this interlude different from the ones before it?

8. What is the Greek word allos, and what does it tell us about this sign?

9. How does John describe the sign and what the seven angels carry?

10. What word stands behind “finished,” and what did it mean at the time?

11. What did Jesus mean when he cried tetelestai from the cross?

12. How does Hal translate the last clause of Revelation 15:1?

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Hal says he sat down expecting a short chapter and the Greek text made things leap out at him. What happens to your own reading when you slow down on a passage you thought you already knew?

2. God gives a breathing space after each round of judgment. Where in your life has a pause turned out to be mercy rather than delay?

3. This interlude is the last one — after it, no more opportunity to believe. What does it do to you to hear that God's patience has an end?

4. "Paid in full" is a receipt, not a sigh of relief. How does hearing the cross that way change how you think about your own debt?

5. Hal warns against reading the harvests of chapter 14 as proof of something they do not prove. How do you tell the difference between what a text says and what you would like it to say?

6. The whole scene of chapter 15 is in heaven, and it shows why God does this. Why does it matter that the reason is given before the judgment falls?

MEMORY VERSE

> *"Because in this, the wrath of God against the Christ-rejecting world is paid in full."*
>
> — Revelation 15:1, as Hal reads it in this message