

## Revelation 15

### The Seven Angels with Seven Plagues

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.

2 And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. 3 And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

“Great and amazing are your deeds,  
O Lord God the Almighty!  
Just and true are your ways,  
O King of the nations!<sup>[a]</sup>  
4 Who will not fear, O Lord,  
and glorify your name?  
For you alone are holy.  
All nations will come  
and worship you,  
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

5 After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent<sup>[b]</sup> of witness in heaven was opened, 6 and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. 7 And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, 8 and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

## Justice Introduced

Justice rightly consumes a lot of the public discussion of our current events.

Everybody claims to long for justice, to be on the side of justice, and to be working to bring justice to every corner of the earth. But, despite all of this attention and clamoring, injustice abounds.

We don't have to look very far to see things in our own community that make our blood boil.

- Children go hungry while their parents buy drugs.
- Rich people get away with crimes while poor people get convicted.
- Hard-working people get taxed while lazy people get a free ride.
- Underprivileged kids get a subpar education while kids with the right last name get away with cheating.
- Racial discrimination is allowed to continue.
- Honest people get punished while liars go free.
- Millions of innocent babies are aborted.
- Good people meet tragedy while evil people prosper.

I don't bring this up to suggest that America is somehow a cesspool of injustice. In fact, I believe this is probably the one place in the history of the world that has come closest to achieving justice for all types of people.

The fact that we still see so much injustice in the most just place on earth should tell us something about the extent to which justice has been perverted by man's sinful condition.

The feelings we have about injustice are no different than others throughout the history of the world. The justice of God is a central concern in Scripture because there is no other place that people have been able to find it.

Take, for example, the way that Christians have historically justified war. In two thousand years of Christian theology, there are some generally accepted principles that must be followed for a Christian to believe that a war is just:

1. It's a last resort
2. It's waged by a legitimate civil authority
3. It's for a just cause
4. There is a probability of success
5. The war is waged to establish peace
6. Only the amount of violence necessary to succeed should be used
7. Civilians must be distinguished from military forces.

War is horrible and has never accomplished lasting peace because it has been imperfectly

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executed by sinful individuals, even as they have sometimes pursued right aims. In two thousand years, there has never been a war in which these principles were perfectly followed. When God makes war, he will completely and totally accomplish justice on the earth.

What are we speaking about when we try to conceptualize a God who pours out violent wrath in perfect justice? It is certainly not something that can be replicated. While Satan has been enraged to War against Christ's church, his violence cannot compare with God's wrath because God's wrath is perfect, just, and holy. God's wrath cannot be withstood as we continue to unfold the rest of the book of Revelation. There is much more to say about the just wrath of God, and the Bible certainly says much more than we are comfortable with in our modern American mindset.

Steven Lawson of Ligonier Ministries recently released a sermon summarizing the Biblical concept of the wrath of God. I highly commend it to you in preparation for this discussion.

<http://renewingyourmind.org/2017/09/01/the-wrath-of-god>

Revelation 15 is giving John an introduction to the total unrelenting wrath that will be poured out on unredeemed humanity from God's indignation against all injustice. The song of deliverance in Revelation 15 is only made possible because God is a perfectly just judge. God's people have conquered the beast because God does not allow his kids to be chased forever. As God delivered his children from the injustice of Pharaoh through plagues and the hand of Moses, so the church will be ultimately delivered through the hand of Jesus and the plagues about to be poured out on the earth.

God's wrath highlights his perfect justice, which makes our deliverance sparkle with an even greater luster for worship.

- Have you noticed non-Christians longing for God's justice?
- How does the idea of God's justice make you feel?
- How does the idea of God's wrath make you feel?
- What are some ways that Christians work for justice in the world today?
- Why is it good for Christians to serve as civil authorities (police, military, judges, elected officials)?
- When is it permissible for a Christian to participate in war?
- Why does war never bring about perfect justice?
- What will be different about God accomplishing justice through wrath?
- How does God's justice highlight the cross?