

THE PROLOGUE TO THE VIALS REVELATION 15:1-4

Well let's turn in our Bibles please to the book of Revelation, chapter 15. The focus of our study today is going to be on verses 1 to 4, however, I want to read the entire chapter in order for us to understand the context of the section that we will be dealing with. Notice, then, Revelation chapter 15:

“¹ And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. ² And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. ³ And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, 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; for thy judgments are made manifest.

“⁵ And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: ⁶ and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 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. ⁸ And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.”

Well we come now today to the fifth parallel section in the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation, as we have seen, is not written in a linear fashion. The book of Revelation is not a consecutive, chronological sequence in which things later in the book occur after things written about earlier in the book.

Instead, the book of Revelation is written in a cyclical fashion. It is made up of seven sections which are all parallel to each other, and each of which takes us on a journey from the first coming of Christ to the second coming of Christ. These parallel sections are not identical with each other. They differ from one another in the themes that they emphasize. Each of these parallel sections features a different theme as they take us on our journey from the first to the second coming of Christ.

In chapters 1 to 3, we saw the spiritual warfare that would take place within the churches that exist between the first and the second coming of Christ. This was the section that described the seven churches.

Then in chapters 4 to 7, we saw the works that the wicked would do in the world, and against the church, between the first and the second coming of Christ. This was the section that described the seven seals.

In chapters 8 through 11, we saw the temporal judgments of God that would fall on the wicked between the first and the second coming of Christ. This was the section that described the seven trumpets.

Then in chapters 12 to 14, we saw the work of Satan and his helpers, who would all work together to persecute the church between the first and the second coming of Christ. There we saw the dragon, who represents Satan, assisted by antiChristian government, which was represented by the beast out of the sea. He is also assisted by antiChristian religion, which was represented by the beast out of the earth. He is also assisted by antiChristian society, which was represented by the great city Babylon. He is also assisted by an antiChristian populace, which was represented by those who took the mark of the beast.

Now in this fifth parallel section that we are beginning today, which covers chapter 15 and chapter 16, we see the theme of God's anger against the willfully defiant. This is the section that describes the seven vials of the wrath of God being poured out.

Now you recall the previous section in which the seven trumpets of God's judgment sounded in chapters 8 through 11. The purpose of the trumpet judgments was to bring temporal, physical, and spiritual judgments on the wicked, as a partial retribution for the evil they have done to the saints, and as a powerful incentive for them to repent before the final wrath of God falls upon them.

So the purpose of the trumpet judgments was partly punitive—there was a partial retribution for the evil they have done. But it was also rehabilitative—it was a powerful incentive for them to repent. The trumpets, then, were a sample of God's wrath to come and they were a warning to flee from the far greater wrath that will follow if they do not repent.

But what was the outcome of the seven trumpets, in terms of the response that was given to them? Well, we read in chapter 9, verses 20 to 21, that after these trumpets had sounded, the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented *not* of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which neither can see nor hear nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their theft.

So what we see is that, even though these trumpet judgments were lesser judgments, and even though they contained a gracious element within them in terms of calling men to repent so that they might not experience the greater wrath yet to come, those who were the objects of these judgments did not listen. Not only did they not repent, they hardened themselves further against God's trumpet judgments.

And what happens when God brings lesser judgments as an incentive for men to repent, and instead they only harden their hearts further? Well, God doesn't just walk away. God brings greater judgments that are far worse, and which ultimately result in the destruction of the unrepentant. So the trumpets of warning sounded, and when the sound is ignored and defied, then the vials of God's wrath are poured out.

Now we have an illustration of this increasing pressure that God brings upon the defiant in the life history of Pharaoh in Egypt. You'll remember that when Moses first showed up and started talking to Pharaoh, and said to him, You need to let God's people go and stop oppressing them and persecuting them, Moses brought some lesser judgments. His initial judgments and signs that he brought were quite small in terms of their negative impact. But then when Pharaoh hardened his heart, there were greater judgments brought—more intense, more destructive. And when Pharaoh hardened his heart against even *those*, then the final destruction of Pharaoh was accomplished in the Red Sea.

It's not like some parents. You know, their children act up and they say, You stop that! And the child rebels even further, and the parent backs off—walks away, doesn't want to engage in the battle. God isn't like that. When the sinner acts up, God brings pressure to bear. When the sinner throws himself down on the floor and kicks and screams in rebellion, God brings even more pressure to bear. Ultimately, God never loses. If humanity will not submit to God, humanity will be destroyed by God.

We have the same pattern here in the book of Revelation. We saw the lesser judgments brought in the seven trumpets. We will now see the greater judgments brought in the seven vials. Ultimately, we will see the final destruction accomplished in Revelation chapter 20, when Satan and all of his helpers, who didn't listen to the seven trumpets, who didn't listen to the seven vials, are ultimately destroyed forever in the lake of fire, just like Pharaoh and his helpers were destroyed forever in the Red Sea. I think it's interesting that Pharaoh was ultimately destroyed in water in the sea, and that the wicked are going to be ultimately destroyed in, if you will, the water of the sea, that is, the lake of fire.

The way of the transgressor is hard. But as he continues to transgress, it gets harder and harder and harder. A man may start out life, or society may be formed, in rebellion against God. And so initially, God brings His lesser judgments to bear on them to show them the errors of their ways and to move them to repentance.

But if an individual or a society persists in wickedness, refuses to repent, and hardens itself against God, then God does not just walk away. God begins to pour out terrible judgments upon them and to bring severe expressions of His anger to bear against them. A world that will not repent will be broken. This anger of God against defiant rebels will be severe, and this anger of God against defiant rebels will destroy them. That's the message of the seven vials in this fifth parallel section.

And so as we see the wicked of the world refuse to repent under the warning of the seven trumpets, we now will see the world severely punished under the wrath of the seven vials poured out in judgment upon them. Every generation between the first and the second coming of Christ has heard God's warnings, and refusing to repent and plunging deeper into sin has then experienced terrible expressions of God's anger and God's wrath upon them. Every unrepentant sinner eventually exhausts God's patience and brings God's final judgment upon his life.

So we want to consider together, then, the sobering warning of the seven vials of God's wrath being poured out in this fifth parallel section before us in chapters 15 and 16. Today we're going to begin an investigation of chapter 15, and this chapter can be broken into two parts. The first part, in verses 1 to 4, is the prologue to the seven vials. And we see that many of these parallel sections have prologues. We saw chapter 8, verses 1 to 5, was a prologue to the seven trumpets.

Now we see here, chapter 15, verses 1 to 4, is the prologue to the seven vials that are poured out. Then the second half of chapter 15 involves a presentation of the seven vials, in verses 5 to 8. So we have the prologue to the seven vials in verses 1 to 4, we have the presentation of the seven vials in verses 5 to 8, and then we have the pouring out of the seven vials in chapter 16.

Now today we want to look at this prologue in verses 1 to 4, and that will be the focus of our study together. But I wanted you to see the lay of the land that we're going to be traversing as we proceed through this fifth parallel section.

So in the first place then this morning, let's consider together the vision of the angels. The vision of the angels is contained in verse 1. Notice it says, "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

Now in verse 1, John sees another visual, symbolic image in heaven, and this visual, symbolic image he sees in heaven is one that is very powerful and one that is very amazing to him. It's great and it's marvelous. He sees seven angels having the seven last plagues. Now a plague is a public calamity, something that affects entire populations, something that affects a whole society of people. There is nothing singular or private or individual about these plagues. They affect large masses of humanity. Verse 1 goes on to say about them that "in them is filled up the wrath of God." That is, they are the full expression of the wrath of God that will be seen on this earth prior to the second coming.

Now when it says, "in them is filled *up* the wrath of God," it is not saying that this is all of the wrath of God that we will ever see. After these seven vials of wrath are poured out, there is far more of the wrath of God that will be seen in the eternal state, as men are cast into the lake of fire, there to suffer forever and ever, in the worst of all possible agonies that men will ever experience. Hell is a far worse expression of the wrath of God than any of these seven vials are, or all of them put together.

So what verse 1 is saying when it says in these seven last plagues “is filled *up* the wrath of God,” is that in these seven plagues is filled up all the wrath of God against men *that will be seen on this earth*. Remember God promised, I’m not going to send another flood. I’m going to limit the expressions of my wrath.

What is being said here is that this is the full expression of the wrath of God that will ever be seen on this earth, before the second coming. This is the last expression of God’s wrath in this age, and this is the worst that God will do while this world exists. *But*, after this world ends, He will do far worse in the final judgment.

Now as those assembled in heaven, which we see in verses 2 to 4, behold the wrath of God that is about to be poured out on the men on the earth for their willful defiance against God, as they view these angels holding these seven vials and knowing what is in them, are those in heaven horrified by what they see is about to happen? Are those in heaven dismayed that God is going to deal so harshly with the impenitent on the earth as is described in these horrific vials of wrath that are poured out? Does this expression of God’s anger and the suffering it’s going to cause to humanity offend the sensibilities of those in heaven, regarding how a loving, merciful God ought to act? It doesn’t offend them in the slightest; and in fact, it is the cause and the grounds of their praise and worship of God.

You know, a lot of people run around on earth and they say, O, you know, God is terrible, because look at all the suffering He allows on the earth! Well, you haven’t seen anything yet of the suffering that God is going to bring on the earth. And the glorified saints in heaven find no fault with God for the suffering He brings on humanity in His providences, and we on earth should find no fault with God either.

When we see the suffering of humanity, we should simply say to ourselves, This is less than what humanity deserves for her sins, and there is even greater suffering for her sins in the future in hell. And the only remedy and relief from this suffering is repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

And so we see those in heaven justifying God, and praising God, and exalting God for His holiness, and for His justice, and for His righteousness in bringing this degree of wrath to bear upon this kind of people for this type of sin and rebellion.

That brings us then to our second major point. Having seen the vision of the angels in verse 1, notice in the second place then this morning the description of the saints in verse 2. In verse 2 it says, “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.”

Now we were introduced to this sea of glass in Revelation chapter 4 and verse 6. There we saw that the sea of glass, or this glassy sea, represented the peacefulness and the purity that surrounds the throne of God. This perfectly calm sea symbolizes that all around the throne of God is pure and peaceful and tranquil. Around the throne of God there is no ripple of anxiety. There is no heaving of turmoil. There are no waves of conflict. There are no storms of rebellion.

The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, and casts up mire and dirt. There is no peace to the wicked. And so a troubled, violent sea is always a symbol of sin, and corruption, and evil, and turmoil, and anxiety. And a perfectly calm sea is the exact opposite of all of that. So then a calm ocean with a glassy surface is symbol of peace and purity and serenity.

However, it says in verse 2 that this sea of glass is mingled with fire. Fire, in the book of Revelation, is always a symbol of God's judgment, and it indicates that from the serenity of God's throne is going to proceed the fire of God's judgment upon those who have the mark of the beast. This fire of God's judgment is not sent forth because the throne of God has been threatened, or because there is anxiety over whether Satan and his helpers might overthrow it. The throne is not threatened in the slightest. Everything is calm, everything is peaceful, everything is serene.

But God's justice has been violated, God's holiness has been offended, and God's wrath and judgment have been provoked. So this fire that shoots through this glassy sea symbolizes the sending forth of God's wrath against the impenitent. Purity, peace, and justice are the things that characterize the environment of the throne of God, and we see them all in this sea of glass mingled with fire.

Now standing on this sea of glass are the glorified believers in heaven. They are identified as those who have gotten the victory over the beast, over his image, and over his mark, which is of course the number of his name. That is, those in heaven were those who never took the mark of the beast. They never bought into or practiced the blasphemy of the antiChristian world.

Remember the mark that was on the beast in Revelation chapter 13, in verse 1? The mark that was on the head of the beast was "blasphemy." And those who take the mark of the beast on their head and hands are those who think blasphemous thoughts with their heads, and those who engage in blasphemous deeds their hands. And this mark has existed ever since the first coming of Christ, and will continue to exist until the second coming of Christ. It is the characteristic of all of the unsaved.

But those in heaven were not of them. Those in heaven are those who never bought into or practiced the blasphemy of the antiChristian world, which was comprised of antiChristian government, antiChristian religion, antiChristian society, and an antiChristian populace. These in heaven, around the throne, are the believers in Christ who lived as strangers and pilgrims and sojourners in this world, but they were never of it, and they never thought the blasphemy of the

world, and they never practiced the blasphemy of the world; and thus they got victory over the mark of the beast.

They were in the world, but they were never of this world. They worshiped God, rather than men. They were theists, not humanists. They were servants of God, not blasphemers of God. They were separated from idolatry, not immersed in idolatry. They embraced biblical truth, and they rejected satanic lies. They followed Christ, and they defied Satan. They practiced holiness, and rejected temptation. They were loyal to Christ, and they turned their backs on the world.

All of this is what it means to obtain the victory over the beast, and over his name, and over his image, and over his mark. They would not think like evil men, and they would not act like evil men. And this is how they refused to take his mark—the mark of humanism in their forehead or in their hand.

Now these in heaven who obtained the victory over the beast, and over his mark and his name and his image—these that are in heaven are not just standing there. It says in verse 2 that they have harps that have been given to them by God, and they are singing a song of praise to God. This isn't the first time we've seen this in the book of Revelation. We have saints singing with harps in chapter 5, verses 8 to 10. We saw them singing with harps in chapter 14, verses 2 and 3. And now we see them singing with harps the third time, here in chapter 15, in verses 2 to 4.

So having then seen the vision of the angels in verse 1; having seen the description of the saints in verse 2; notice then thirdly, the worship of the Lord in verses 3 and 4. In verses 3 and 4 it says, “³ And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, 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; for thy judgments are made manifest.”

Now it says in verse 3 that “they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, *and* the song of the Lamb,” implying that these two songs are really one song, which is expressed in the following words that are recorded for us in verses 3 and 4. So what we have here is a single song with an extended title that tells us that this song reflects the victory of both Old Testament saints and New Testament saints over their enemies. This victory of Old Testament saints and New Testament saints over their enemies is a victory that has been wrought for them by God Himself.

Now under Moses the servant of God, Israel was delivered from Pharaoh and his people, and Israel obtained the victory over Pharaoh and his people at the Red Sea. And you remember that the realization of that victory caused them to burst into a hymn of worship and praise, in Exodus chapter 15 and verses 1 to 18. So under the Old Testament, under the leadership of Moses at the Red Sea, the people of God obtained victory over their grand enemy, Pharaoh. And as a result, they sang a hymn of praise.

But not only do we see that under Moses the servant of God, Israel was delivered from Pharaoh and his people, we also see that under Christ the Lamb of God, the church was delivered from the beast and his people, and the church obtained the victory over the beast and his people at the cross. And the realization of that victory causes them to burst into a hymn of worship and praise here in Revelation chapter 15.

So the pattern in the Old Testament is repeated in the New Testament: God brings a great victory for the people of God over their enemies, and they burst out in a hymn of praise. That was true with Pharaoh and his people, and it is equally true with the beast and his people. Both Old Testament saints and New Testament saints defeated the dragon and his helpers and obtained victory over them through the mighty works of the Lord, and upon the realization of that victory, praise bursts forth with joy and enthusiasm from both of them.

And so, the victory over Pharaoh and the Egyptians was a foreshadowing of the victory over the beast and his people; and therefore, this triumphant song that the glorified church in heaven sings is called the song of Moses and the Lamb. It is a single song of the victory of the people of God over their enemies, wrought for them by God, to whom goes all glory and praise.

Notice then, if you will, the lyrics of this hymn of praise and worship, and how the focus of those lyrics is on God Himself. It says, beginning in the middle of verse 3, “Great and marvelous are *thy* works, 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*; for *thy* judgments are made manifest.”

Do you see how the focus of the lyrics of this hymn of praise and worship is on God? True hymns of worship are not about us. They are not mancentered, and they don’t have a lot of “me, myself, I” in them. It’s all about He and Him and God. True hymns of worship are Godcentered and Godfocused and Godglorifying. That’s why we use the hymnal we do, because I know of no other hymnal that is so Godfocused, Godcentered, and Godglorifying in the lyrics that the hymns contain than the Trinity Hymnal that we use.

Notice, then, what this hymn of praise by the people of God tells us about their understanding of God. First of all, there is a declaration about *the works* and *the ways* of the Lord.

Notice first, there’s a declaration of the works of the Lord. It says in verse 3, “Great and marvelous are *thy* works, Lord God Almighty.” Now when it says that God’s works are great, what is being said here is that the extent of God’s works is comprehensive and all encompassing. In other words, God’s works are large in their extent and they are deep in their effect.

God does nothing on a small scale. His works encompass all of time, they encompass all of the universe, they encompass all of the circumstances of life, and they encompass all of the people who ever have lived or will live. Let me ask you, Is that great in its dimension? Great are the works of the Lord!

But not only are these works great, it says they're marvelous. In other words, not only are God's works great, they are also amazing; that is, when you look at something, you marvel at what is done, and you stand amazed and overwhelmed by what has been accomplished. God's works are marvelous in that they are wise beyond comprehension; they are complex beyond understanding; and they are wonderful beyond the power of description.

We look at what God does, and we can only marvel with wonder at the profoundness of what He achieves, and we stand speechless before it. It says in Second Corinthians, Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. There are no words of human speech that are adequate to express the marvelous nature of God's work. And why are His works so great and so marvelous? Well, because He is the Lord God Almighty. Notice verse 3: "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty." There are no throwaway terms there. Every one of those three terms is significant. He is the Lord. That speaks of His absolute sovereignty. He is God. That speaks of His ultimate authority. And He is Almighty. That speaks of His infinite power. His great and marvelous works point to His sovereignty, authority, and power.

When you look at how great the works are and how marvelous the works are, you say, Someone with tremendous sovereignty and authority and power must have done that. And because of His absolute sovereignty and ultimate authority and infinite power, He is *able* to do these great and marvelous works. And of course, the greatest and the most marvelous work that the Lord God Almighty has ever done is that of saving His people from their sins and giving them victory over Satan and his helpers.

So these, in verse 2, who have received that salvation and who have seen the victory of God achieved over all of their enemies are standing, as it were, by their own sea. And they are giving God praise and worship, just like the Israelites did as they stood by their sea, and they saw that God has thrown the horse and the rider into the sea. And isn't it interesting that the four horsemen of the apocalypse are symbolized as horsemen, just like Pharaoh's horses? And they're all thrown into the sea of God's wrath and destroyed.

But not only do we see a declaration about the works of the Lord—"Great and marvelous are thy works"—secondly, we also see a declaration about the ways of the Lord. Notice it says in the last phrase of verse 3, "just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." This next phrase speaks not of what God does, but rather of how He does it. It speaks of God's character and of God's conduct as He carries out and achieves His great and marvelous works.

Now when it says of God that He is just in the way in which He does His great and marvelous works, what's being said here is that God's ways are always righteous. He never does His works in a sinful or a morally corrupt fashion. There is rectitude, there is virtue, and there is righteousness in all that He does. He never is unjust in His works. He is holy in all He does, and He is pure in all He accomplishes, and no one can point to anything that God has done and say of it, That was not done in the right way; that was not the right thing to do.

Many people have done great and marvelous things, humanly speaking, but they did them in a very corrupt and wicked way. Did Hitler do great things? Did he do things that made the world marvel? Yeah, but they sure weren't just, and they sure weren't true. But everything God does—His greatest works, His most marvelous works—are also, all of them, done righteously.

But it also says regarding the way in which He does things that not only are they just, but it also says they're true. Notice verse 3: "just and true are thy ways." Now the word "true" here means genuine. God is genuine and sincere in all that He does. In other words, He does not pretend to be one thing while He's really another. God deceives no one; God lies to no one; God never breaks any promise that He has made. To put it in the common vernacular, with God, what you see is what you get. God is exactly what He represents Himself to be in His word, unlike many politicians.

This week, you heard Fidel Castro died, right? I spent quite a bit of time reading about him and his history, and you know, when he started his little revolution down there, even though he was a socialist/communist/Marxist, he hid that from his followers, and he presented himself as a moderate. And he got all the people behind him, and they overthrew the ruler, and he installed himself. And after he was in power, then he says, Oh, here's what I really believe. And he started imposing socialism and communism on the nation. So he was insincere, he was deceitful, he lied, and he broke all of his promises.

God is not like that. God is true, and so when God says, I am doing this in order to achieve that—you can take it to the bank. It's the truth. He will never tell you later on, Oh, I was just fooling.

And so this is what the King of saints is like. He who rules us is righteous, genuine, transparent, sincere, and honest in all of His dealings, and in all of His works. In *all* of them He demonstrates absolute integrity.

Now as this hymn proceeds, secondly, it asks a rhetorical question in verse 4. Notice: "4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" And so the rhetorical question is asked, Who would be so foolish as to not fear and not glorify the Lord, especially in light of who the Lord is? And now they begin to speak about who God is.

Notice first of all, "for thou only art holy." God is the only one who is holy, the only one without sin, and therefore, the only one who deserves to be held in reverence and to be given worship. No sinful being is ever worthy of fear and of worship, but a pure and holy God is infinitely deserving of worship and reverence. You see, His holiness causes fear, because I am not holy and I need to be reconciled to this God. And as I see His holiness, I recognize He is worthy of worship; I am not.

And so reverence is given to Him because of His purity, and I stand beneath Him, and I stand humbled before Him, in poverty of spirit and in mourning and in hungering and thirsting after the righteousness that He has, and which I don't. And when I recognize all of that, it causes me to flee to Christ for forgiveness and for cleansing. And the Bible promises us, there is a fountain to which we can come and find cleansing without money and without price.

Holiness causes worship, because God is the only perfectly pure being in the universe. He is unique. There is no one like Him, there was no one above Him, there was no one who has the purity He possesses. And so the question is asked, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" Because you are holy, everyone should fear you, and everyone should glorify your name.

And then, a second reason is provided. It says, "for all nations shall come and worship before thee." Here is another reason why people would be completely foolish to not fear and glorify the Lord now, because eventually, everyone's going to do it anyway. Eventually, all nations will bow the knee and worship the Lord in the future. And so it is the case that they *should* begin to do so now.

In Psalm 86, verses 8 and 9, it says: "8 Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works." Who you are, what you have done—there is no comparison with anyone else in the universe. And then the psalmist goes on to say in verse 9, "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name." And so if all nations are going to come and worship the Lord, then we need to come and worship the Lord *now*.

The third reason that is offered as to why we should fear the Lord and glorify His name is not only because He's holy, not only because everyone's going to universally worship Him ultimately anyway, but thirdly, it says "for thy judgments are made manifest."

In other words, even now, at the time this hymn was being sung, the judgments of God were being made manifest in the assembly of these seven angels with these seven vials that are about to be poured out. And when you see the coming judgment of God and the pouring out of His wrath and His anger, who would be so foolish as to not fear the Lord and glorify Him, and thus avoid the outpouring of those plagues?

And if the judgments are going to be so great on the earth now, and the suffering is going to be so intense here in our present experience, then how much worse will they be in the future for those who refuse to fear and glorify the Lord? Now is the time to fear the Lord. Now is the time to glorify the Lord, because by doing so, we may escape the judgments of God's wrath that are ready to be poured out, as manifested by these seven angels standing with these seven vials of the wrath of God.

Now as we come to the conclusion of this hymn of worship, notice that even though it is sung by those who had gotten the victory over the beast, there is not a word in this hymn about themselves or the way *they* overcame. The pronoun “I” is not in the hymn.

Those who triumph through Christ do not want any glory for themselves. They don’t even want to talk about themselves. Those who triumph through Christ want to give all the glory to Him, and draw the attention of the whole world to Him. Heaven is heaven because in it, all self-centeredness and self-importance and self-glorification is completely lost and forgotten and forsaken in the praise of the greatness of the glory of God.

Psalm 115 and verse 1 says, “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake.” And while I am not saying that it’s never appropriate to talk about myself or what God has done in me, all of that should always lead to the focus being placed, not on me, but on God and all He has achieved, and the victory He has accomplished in overthrowing the rider and his horse, delivering His people, and then His people offering Him hymns of praise for the salvation that He has wrought on their behalf. Well, let us pray together.

Our Father, we are so grateful for this wonderful, blessed representation of the saints in heaven, pouring out their worship, even as they view the impending wrath of God that is about to fall. Clearly, those in heaven have no problem praising God for His wrath, as much as for His mercy and His grace and His love, for God does all things well—not just when He loves, but also when He judges.

And so, Lord, we thank you that there is coming a day of judgment when all wrongs will be made right, and those who were good will be vindicated, and those who were evil will be punished. And in all of that, the Lamb will be glorified and God will be feared and honored, and the praise will resound from the harps and from the mouths of the people of God to the person of God, for all eternity. And in that we will find the final and perfect fulfillment and satisfaction of who we were made to be and all that we desire to do.

And now, Lord, be pleased to fill our mouths with hymns of praise this week, as we sing in our hearts, making melody to the Lord for His works and His ways. In Jesus’ name we ask it. Amen.