

**Lesson 19**  
**Revelation 15**

**Prelude to the Seven Bowls**

**Memory verse:** "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1: 13-14 NIV)

Revelation 14 seemed to describe the consummation of all things, ending with the fury of the Battle of Armageddon. But now John will go back and describe God's judgment in more detail. This idea of stating and re-stating in more detail is common with prophecy, and with Hebrew literature in general (see Genesis 1:1-2:7 and Genesis 2:8-25). Remember, we already saw what seemed to be the end in Revelation 6:12-17. Then John took us over the same material in greater detail again. This reminds us that Revelation is not strictly chronological in its arrangement.

The reality is the future for the world is tragically bleak. And it is not about the social problems, the moral problems, and about the environmental problems. The situation may be bad, and there may be some severe fallout from those categories of human life. But what is really fearful and frightening and what is really serious and foreboding and what is really dreaded about the future is really nothing that man will do, but it is what God will do. The New Testament says, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." That's the real terror in this world. Not what man will do, but what God will do. The anger and the fury of God is a devastating reality that lurks on the edge of human history. God like some massive and devastating and deadly lion crouches ready to pounce and kill at the appointed moment.

And there have been plenty of warnings, plenty of previews of coming attractions. In fact, God has clearly delineated the nature of His holiness and righteousness and justice. He has given us many evidences that He will act against sin. All the way back in the book of Genesis, the very beginning in Eden, all was bliss until God's law was violated and wrath fell on the sinners and destroyed the human race by plunging all of us into iniquity. In Noah's day all was going along well until sin reached its maximum in the sight of God and His wrath destroyed the whole world...with the exception of eight people.

And throughout the rest of the Old Testament there is expression after expression of the wrath of God on sinners. And not only is that wrath expressed, but it is illustrated. Often in the Old Testament, as we read the history of God's people Israel, we read about the anger of the Lord, sometimes kindled against them and many times against the nations around them. In fact the Bible says He is angry with the wicked every day. Second Samuel 16 says there is wrath gone out from the Lord.

In the ministry of the Old Testament prophets there was the constant theme of wrath from God. The prophets constantly warned about the day of the Lord, whether it was some temporal day of the Lord or that final eschatological day of the Lord yet to come, it was always a terrible time of judgment when sinners were to be destroyed and damned. All of those historical days of the Lord, those times in history when God intervened and great judgment were nothing but previews of the final wrath, the last and greatest day of the Lord.

Throughout all of that period the strangest paradox is working. And that very strange paradox is this, that all the way through the expression of God's wrath up until His ultimate final and eternal wrath, God is busily working to save sinners from His own wrath. Therein lies the marvellous reality of the nature of God that encompasses both righteousness and holiness alongside mercy and grace that makes justice and judgment the twin of love and kindness. And as we've learned in the book of Revelation, even up to the very last scene, judgments falling all over the place in the world, all of the sealed judgments and the trumpet judgments, all through that period of time right down to the shattering of the universe, the devastation of the earth and the final bowl judgments we shall see in chapter 16, all through all of this final expression of judgment that is coming in a time called the Tribulation, God is calling sinners to salvation.

Things to learn: 1) the voice of the victors. 2) Seven bowls of judgments. 3) God's final act.

**Discussion questions:**

1) Who are these people in verses 1 to 4 and why are singing?

Q2. What are the implications of the seven angels that came out of the temple in heaven with the seven plagues in verses 5 to 6?

Q3 How would the understanding of verses 7 and 8 change your perspective of life on earth while you have it?