

Revelation 15: Preparation for the final judgment of the seven bowls. KV 1

After the interlude in chapter 12-14, providing vital information on the participants of the tribulation, the chronological sequence is resumed with the initiation of the seven bowls.

1. The celebration of the victors over the beast. 1-4

John starts in **v1** with “another sign” indicating that there is no linkage to the vision in chapter 14. The sign of the angels with the seven plagues is described as “great and marvelous” because with this, God’s wrath will be “finished”. In Greek, it is “teleo” which is literally “complete”. This means that the punishment for the tribulation will be over, making it a cause for celebration. The sign on the seven plagues is actually a continuation from the blowing of the seventh trumpet in 11:15. In v2-5, the round of worship that is described ends with the opening of the temple or tabernacle in heaven as in 11:19. This is the chronological link from 11:19 to 15:5, with an interlude in chapter 12 to 14. Thus the celebration in **v2-4** probably coincides with the round of worship in 11:15-18. The celebration is definitely before the throne in heaven for in v7 the living creatures are present and it is happening on the sea of glass mentioned in 4:6. The only difference is the mixture of the sea with fire, perhaps a special effect to heighten the celebration. The participants are all those victorious over the beast and it must include both Jews and Gentiles. This must be so, for both the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb are sung (3). In Greek there is a definite article for each song indicating that they are separate and distinct songs. The song of Moses was sung in Exodus 19:1-19 for the victory over Egypt. It is a song to be sung by Jews and for this occasion it must be the 144,000 who overcome the antichrist. Their presence further supports the proposal of Rapture II in 14:1-5, when these Jews would be transported to heaven. The song of the Lamb must be words of praise for Christ the Lamb and should be sung by the gentile martyrs who are already in heaven in 7:9-17. Together they end with praises for God in v3-4 anticipating His rule, which will begin immediately after the seven bowls. In their words, three characteristics of God’s work are lauded. Indeed, He has done great and marvelous works but His ways are also righteous and true. Thus we can attempt great things for God but it must always be imbued with truth and result in righteousness.

2. Getting ready the seven bowls. 5-8

This section shows that there is indeed a temple in heaven, which the tabernacle on earth is a copy. It must be the place where God is worshipped in heaven. The temple opens as in 11:19 but now the seven angels emerge for they are responsible for delivering the seven plagues (**5-6**). Their appearances especially the golden sash is similar to Christ’s in 1:13. There, Christ is presented as the holy judge and it matches with the angels’ sacred task of executing the final judgment of the world. Seven bowls are given to the angels by a living creature who must have obtained it from God (**7**). The temple in **v8** was filled with smoke, signifying that God is there in all His holiness and glory (Exodus 19:18). Of great importance is the statement that no one was able to enter until the seven plagues were over. God’s wrath will be unleashed and none stand in His presence. Against the unrepentant, the most ferocious of torments will now take place with the seven bowls

Lesson to Ponder: Never belittle the awesomeness of God’s wrath for no one can enter the temple. As saints, be deeply thankful for the precious blood of Christ that covers us.

Revelation 16: The seven bowls, ultimate judgments to complete God's wrath. KV 17
The seals are the ultimate woes caused by men, while the trumpets are those due to nature and demonic forces. Finally the bowls are the ultimate woes caused by the wrath of God.

1. The first five bowls, making life unlivable. 1-11

The duration of the bowls could not be too long because the heavenly host seems to view it as already over (11:15). Furthermore, drinking water will be eliminated in v4 and it will be difficult to sustain life even for a week. God is directly venting His wrath for unlike the seals and trumpets, the pouring of the bowls are from His direct command **(1-2)**. The first bowl results in agonizing sores to all who worship the beast. This accounts for the majority as the saints have mostly departed. These sores seem to come on immediately and it's probably not an infectious disease as this will require time to spread. Thus it is unlike anything we have seen before. In the second bowl, the sea becomes like the blood of a dead man **(3)**. This is clotted blood and naturally sea creatures will not survive, not to mention the unbearable odor. The third bowl turns all fresh water into blood **(4-7)**. A third of drinking water is already affected in 8:11 and with this, it will all be ruined. Life must be unlivable but this is God's judgment and thus the praises for it in v5-7. The personified altar speaking in v7 is probably to show God's vengeance for the killing of His saints in 6:9. More agony is ahead, for in the fourth bowl there is scorching heat with the pain of sunburn over naked sores **(8-9)**. The fifth bowl results in complete darkness for the kingdom of the beast **(10-11)**. Humans in agony can still support one another but this is not possible in darkness and all they can do is to bite their tongues in pain. Note that the darkness is not global, to enable the kings' movement in v12. The people suffer but they simply will not repent (9, 11). In the previous woes, some will still glorify God (11:13; 14:7) but now only blasphemy is heard. They fully deserve God's judgment.

2. The sixth bowl to prepare for Armageddon. 12-16

With the sixth bowl, the Euphrates dried up **(12)**. A possible harmony is that the kings of the east are leading the large army of the sixth trumpet (9:16). They are now at the Euphrates and thus will need to cross it. In 9:14, the four demons that gathered the army are from the Euphrates and thus this is probably their destination. However in **v13-16**, unclean spirits emerge from the "unholy trinity". Together, they deceive the kings of the world, which must include the easterners to gather at Armageddon in Israel and it will be at Christ's second coming (15). In 19:19, it states that the armies gathered to war against Christ. This is the ultimate deception. After what has transpired, they must know that Christ is coming but still they gather to war against Him thinking that they can win.

3. The seventh bowl with the final annihilation. 17-21

In the last bowl, Christ will return **(17-19)**. As in 11:8, the great city is Jerusalem for the splitting is also predicted in Zech. 14:4. Cities are destroyed and Babylon is discussed in chapter 18. There are great physical upheavals although the "every" in **v20** is probably a hyperbole. The 100 pounds hailstones on the blasphemers in **v21** must predominantly be at Armageddon where millions gather. This explains the flow of blood in 14:20.

Lesson to Ponder: In v15 we are to stay awake, keep our clothes and avoid nakedness. This is to remain pure and to deal with sins as a committed Christian should in 1John 1:9.

第十五章：預備七碗最終的審判

鑰節：1 節

經過 12-14 章的中場歇息，看過那些有份參與大災難者的重要資料後，此刻是重歸時間順序，輪到七碗啟動。

1. 得勝者為勝過那獸而慶祝—1-4 節

約翰在第 1 節說到他看見“另一個徵兆”，表示這和 14 章的景象並不相關。天使掌管七災的異象被形容為“又偉大又奇妙”，因為至此神的烈怒將會“發盡”。希臘文“teleo”直譯是“完成”，這意味著大災難的懲罰已告結束，而也是為甚麼要慶祝的原因。七災的異象其實是接續 11:15 第七枝號筒的吹響。在 2-5 節這一輪在天上的敬拜，是以天上的聖殿或會幕被打開來結束，就如 11:19 提到的那樣。11:19 順序應和 15:5 連接，而 12-14 章則是中場休息，因此 2-4 節的慶祝可能是和 11:15-18 的敬拜同時進行的。慶祝肯定是在天上的寶座前，因為第 7 節指出四活物也在現場，舉行地點是在 4:6 提過的玻璃海之上。與 4:6 惟一不同的地方是玻璃海如今摻雜著火，也許那是為提高慶典氣氛的特別效果。那些參加者全是勝過獸的人，相信猶太人和外邦人也在其中。事實必定如此，因為他們唱著摩西和羔羊的歌（3 節）。在希臘原文這每首歌之前都有定冠詞，表示它們是截然不同的歌。摩西的歌在出埃及記 19:1-9 是猶太人因著戰勝埃及而唱，此刻那十四萬四千猶太人也可能是因著得勝敵基督而唱。他們的出現支持了 14:1-5 是第二次被提這觀點，這些猶太人都被提到天上去。羔羊的歌是對基督的稱頌，祂是羔羊。唱歌的應該是殉道的外邦人，他們在 7:9-17 已經抵達天上。他們以同聲讚美神來結束慶典，在 3-4 節他們唱出對神統治的期盼，在七碗完結時這會即時發生。在他們的讚美中神工作的兩大特質受到頌揚，祂的作為奇妙偉大，而祂的道路又公義真實。所以我們是可以嘗試為神作大事的，但工作必須充滿真理，讓義成為結果。

2. 為七碗作好準備—5-8 節

這段表明在天上確有一所聖殿，而地上的會幕只是影兒。聖殿一定是那在天上敬拜神的地方。“見證”或“法櫃”是指被存放在約櫃裏十誡（出埃及記 25:21；31:18）。聖殿就如 11:19 所形容的那樣打開了，如今有七位天使從當中出來，他們是負責送出七災的（5-6 節）。他們的穿著，特別是那金帶子就和基督在 1:13 的裝束相似。在那裏基督是聖潔的審判者，這和天使負責執行對世界終極審判的神聖任務是相配合的。一個活物把七碗交給天使，那七碗應該是來自神（7 節）。在第 8 節聖殿充滿了煙，那是聖潔和榮耀的神在殿中的表示（出埃及記 19:18）。在七災完結之前沒有人能進入聖殿這聲明是非常重要的，神的烈怒將盡地釋放，沒有人可以站立在祂的面前。對於那些不肯悔改的人來說，如今七碗會給他們帶來最慘酷的折磨。

思想心得：千萬不要輕忽神那令人震懾的烈怒，要曉得沒有人可以進入聖殿。既已為聖徒，我們當為能蒙基督的寶血遮蓋而深感謝恩。

第十六章：七碗，最終的審判結束神的烈怒

鑰節：17 節

七個印章是人引起的終極災禍，而七枝號筒的災禍則是來自大自然和惡魔的力量。最後是神的烈怒帶來七碗的終極災禍。

1. 頭五碗讓人無法生活—1-11 節

那些碗的日子不會太長，因為天上萬眾是以過去式那樣看整件事的（11:15）。另外，到第 4 節飲用水已經沒有了，在這情況下生命將會難以維持，連一星期也艱難。神現在直接把祂的烈怒傾盡，不同於七印和七號，把碗傾倒是神親自發號施令的（1-2 節）。第一個碗令那些拜獸像的人生滿令人痛苦不堪的惡瘡，這會發生在大部份人身上因為信徒已幾乎全離開了。這些惡瘡來得突然，所以不可能是需要時間來傳播的傳染病之類，因此這應該是前所未有的現象。第二個碗讓海水變成像死人的血（3 節）。那是凝固的血塊，水中生物自然不能生存，更何況還有令人難以忍受的惡臭。第三個碗把江河變成血（4-7 節）。在 8:11 三分之一的飲用水已經受到影響，而到此所有水源更是受到破壞。人在這情況下根本無法生活，然而因為這是神的審判，所以 5-7 節是對這懲罰的讚頌。第 7 節那會說話的祭壇可能是表示神為在 6:9 祂被殺的聖徒報復。更痛苦的事還在後頭。第四個碗是烤人的酷熱，陽光燒灼那些裸露的毒瘡（8-9 節）。在第五個碗獸的王國在一片漆黑中（10-11 節）。通常人在痛苦中仍可以彼此支持，但在漆黑中就甚麼也不能作，人只能在痛苦中嚼自己的舌頭。留意這黑暗並沒有把全世界覆蓋，為要讓東來的王可以前行（12 節）。人雖然在痛苦中可是卻仍不肯悔改（9, 11 節）。在之前的災中還有人把榮耀歸給神（11:13; 14:7），但如今只聽見一片褻瀆聲。他們受神審判全是罪有應得的。

2. 第六個碗是要備戰哈米吉多頓—12-16 節

到第六個碗幼發拉底河已經乾涸了（12 節）。而另一處和這所提協調一致的，是在第六枝號筒帶著大軍的東方眾王（9:16）。他們如今已抵達幼發拉底河並有需要渡河。在 9:14 那四個把軍隊招集來的惡魔是從幼發拉底河出來的，所以這地方可能就是他們的目的地。還有在 13-16 節有三個污靈從那“不潔的假三位一體”出來，牠們一同欺騙全世界的王，要他們聚集在以色列的哈米吉多頓，當中必定也包括那來自東方的軍隊，而這事將會發生在基督再來的一刻（15 節）。19:19 說那些軍隊集合起來是要與基督作戰。這是終極的騙局。經過之前所發生的一切他們應該曉得基督快要來了，但他們仍然聚集起來要和基督開戰，還自忖能得勝。

3. 七碗帶來最後的殲滅—17-21 節

在最後的碗基督會回來（17-19 節）。正如 11:8 的大城是指耶路撒冷，這裏的大城也是耶路撒冷，至於城的斷裂亦在撒迦利亞書 14:4 早有預言。各國的城都倒塌了，而巴比倫的結局則會在第 18 章詳述。地球的地貌將會發生天翻地覆的變化，雖然在 20 節的“各”可能只是誇張的說法。21 節有 100 磅（四十公斤）的隕石落在褻瀆神的人身上，這應是哈米吉多頓大戰的場景，因為到時會有千百萬人聚集在一起。這也解釋了 14:20 節血流成河的景象。

思想心得：15 節提醒我們要警醒，看守著自己的衣服免得赤身露體。這是指我們要持守潔淨，要如約翰一書 1:9 的教導那樣，以委身基督徒的態度去對付罪。