

Revelation 15:1-8

"T - 7"

If we've mentioned it once we've mentioned it at least ½ a dozen times. The book of Revelation is the single most OT, NT book there is. Not only in its allusions *to* & speaking of things found in the OT, but it's also very Hebraic in its form & fashion of writing. What I mean by that is that it's common for John to be informing us of something, bring us to what would seem to be a conclusion, & then he'll stop, hit the rewind button & share w/us again but adding greater detail, & filling things out more fully along the way.

A quick and easy illustration of this in your OT would be found in the very beginning. We're told in *Gen 1:1*, "In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth." It's a single solitary statement of fact, then the author begins to add detail along the way of the creation account.

Then again in Vs 26 he says, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;' *Gen 1:26* (Btw have you ever wondered who God was talking to when He said, "Let Us make man in *Our* image, according to *Our* likeness)? We're witnessing the Divine counsel of the Triune God, 1 God, 3 Persons, Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Be that as it may in Vs 27 we read, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male & female He created them." *Gen 1:27* That's it, the case is open & shut, God created man, He created woman, He created the heavens & the earth & everything contained therein.

But when you get to Ch 2 the author backs up; opens up his "zoom lens" & enlarges upon the details, prior to any plant growing or herb of the field, there was just the dust of the ground & the mist that went up from the earth to water the earth for there was no rain. Then he tells us that God formed man out of the dust of the ground, that He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; & man became a living being. Later on in Ch 2 gives us the details regarding the woman, she wasn't formed from the ground, but God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, & He took from his side, then closed up his flesh & from Adam God created the woman & He brought her to him. Vs 23 of Ch 2 tells us, "And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.'¹ These are all details that are documented later.

¹ The New King James Version. 1982 (*Ge 2:23*). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We're told that God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male & female He created *them*. Then we rewind & in greater detail the author (Moses in this case) fills in the account more fully.

Even so John seems to follow this same particular pattern throughout the book of Revelation. He brings us right up to the brink of the end of the world & the return of J.C. then he stops, backs up & gives us even greater insight into the final period of human history as we know it on planet earth.

We noted it 1st back in Ch 6, the scroll was taken; J.C. Himself was opening the seals & judgment was falling upon the earth. When we reached the 6th seal we were seeing these cosmic/cataclysmic upheavals, earthquakes, the sun becoming black, the moon turning blood red, stars falling from heaven. *The sky receded like a scroll as though it were being rolled up, the mountains & islands were moved from their places & men both small & great (rich & poor, kings & paupers, those mighty, every slave & every free man) were hiding themselves in rocks of the mountains in caves of the earth crying out, "Fall on us & hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, & who is able to stand?"* Rev 6:16-17 Now I don't know about you, but if you ask me that sounds like the end of the world & the return of J.C.!

But then John hit pause, shared additional details, out of the 7th seal came 7 trumpets, we learn of more chaos that will ensue, that not only will judgment come in practical ways, but spiritually there will be demonic hordes unleashed upon the planet. We learn more about the A.C. & his agenda, the cost of worshiping the beast, taking his mark, the murderous intent behind his rule to wipe out the people of God from the planet & force the worship of himself from the people of the earth.

When we get to the end of Ch 14 we see the reaping of the harvest again of God's judgment. The angel announces in the presence of our Lord, *"Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."* Revelation 14:15 Vs 16 tells us then that Jesus thrust in His sickle on the earth, & the earth was reaped. In Vs 19 we read of an angel who thrusts in another sharp sickle, gathering the vine of the earth, throwing it into the winepress of the wrath of God... Again, I don't know about you, but to me that seems like "game over", judgment has fallen, the earth as been reaped & the rebellious were thrown into the winepress of the wrath of God.

Now Ch 15... John backs up one final time to give us one final bit of detail...

Of course this reminds us that the book of Revelation isn't strictly chronological in its record throughout. But be that as it may Jesus will return in T-minus 7 final plagues & counting. There will be no more backing up, only forward progression from here on out; the end of all things is at hand.

Ch 15 is the shortest Ch in the book of Rev. Yet it's packed *full of familiar images from the Exodus account (or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the Exodus account is packed full of images found in this Ch)*. We see plagues, a sea, the song of Moses, the temple, angels in the temple, golden bowls (like unto those used in priestly service in the tabernacle) & the unapproachable smoke & Shekinah glory of God that fills the temple.
Vs 1-8

Back in Vs 1 John tells us that he saw still *another* sign. Back in Ch 12 he saw 2 signs that spoke of the nation of Israel & the Satanic persecution that she & her offspring have been subjected to throughout the ages.

Here he sees another sign in heaven, great & marvelous in that they are God's final dealings w/unrepentant man. He says, "7 angels having the 7 last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete."

When God was dealing w/the nation of Israel about walking contrary to Him, not honoring nor obeying Him, He said, "*Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins.*"² Here in similar fashion these angels have the final 7 plagues that God will bring on a contrary & disobedient world.

"For *in them* the wrath of God *is complete*." God's holy anger will flash hot once and for all against a rebellious, Christ-rejecting world. God has said in His word, "*My Spirit shall not strive with man forever,*"³ There will come a point where the mercies of God upon a sinful world will come to an end. We serve a God who is slow to anger & rich in mercy, but there will come a time when this world will be called to account & the longsuffering of God will cease.

Up to this point, even in wrath God has remembered mercy but no more; there will be no more mercy & after this there will be no more wrath. The world (at this point) has filled up the wine cup of the wrath of God & He will pour it out full strength & the people on this planet will be forced to drink it down to the dregs.

² *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Le 26:21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ge 6:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Now, lest you think that God is being unfair & has somehow just lost His temper lets remember & refresh ourselves in the fact that not only is God gracious & full of compassion, He is also holy & righteous & as such *must* deal w/sin or else He can no longer *be* holy or righteous.

God gives ample time for man to repent; how much time do we want? It's like saying that God was unfair when He wiped out the Amorites in giving Israel the land of Canaan. It would seem that way if you didn't know that God allowed Israel to remain enslaved to Egypt while He gave the Amorites 400 yrs to repent (twice as long as we've even existed as a nation)... But there comes a point whereby enough is enough... Since the cross of Christ God has given to mankind some 2,000 yrs to turn to Christ; & though God certainly has His righteous remnant we can certainly agree that the overall demeanor of this planet is one of rebellion against God & rejection of J.C. We'd rather have sin than a Savior, transgression rather than a Teacher of righteousness & corruption over the Christ.

Yet all this time (in the words of the psalmist), *"He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities."* ⁴*Why is that? Why hasn't God dealt w/this world according to its sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities? Because He is merciful... "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed..." Lam 3:22*

Sadly, sinful man too often interprets God's mercy for God's acceptance, God's patience for God's approval. They're not instantly struck down or plagued so rather than thank God for His mercy & turn from their sin they set their heart to delve deeper & deeper into sin... What does the bible say? *"Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."* ⁵

But the time is coming whereby God will wrap it up & wind it down, pouring out His full fury & wrath against sin once, for all, & it will be finished.

Vs 2

Or as we prefer to understand it "The *guitars* of God!" ☺ (this is the word from which we get our word "guitar"). John says he saw something like a sea of glass, or like a glassy sea (which we've seen before back in Ch 4 there before God's throne) but now it seems to have the appearance of being mingled w/fire.

Some believe this speaks of the judgment of God that He's preparing to pour out.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ps 103:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ec 8:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Others believe it speaks of the fires of purification associated w/the martyrs that have come up out of the great tribulation who are there standing upon the sea. Even as Peter said, *"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls."* 1 Pe 1:6–9

The bible makes it abundantly clear that our faith is purified in the same manner by which gold is purified (meaning through fire, [difficult circumstances & trying times]).

So whether you choose to see these fires as the fires of judgment, or the fires of purification through which these saints endured the tribulation & persecution of the A.C. I don't think either view harms the text.

Now one thing I would point out is the fact that where it says, "those who have the victory over the beast", we shouldn't see these folks as making it through the great tribulation unscathed, these are people who died for their faith. More literally it speaks of coming "triumphant out of" rather than "victory over". The point being that in losing their lives for Christ's sake they found life. *They didn't love their lives to the death, they overcame by fearing not the one who could destroy their body but then had no power over their soul. They feared God, stayed true to God and are therefore recognized eternally not as losers who were killed, but victors who were triumphant out of & through their circumstances.*

Something else we might want to point out is again this sea of glass. When Moses received the blue print for the tabernacle we know that he was given an earthly representation of the heavenly reality.

& There before the tabernacle of meeting Moses was to fashion a bronze laver filled w/water for the cleansing of the priest (of course when Solomon built the temple, his was more like a swimming pool, a giant tub for the cleansing of the priests). But the idea behind both was that they were to be purified before entering the presence of God.

Here we have this sea before the throne in heaven, again speaking of the need for purity in the presence of God. Now, in the NT vernacular Paul the apostle told us (who've been cleansed by the blood of Christ) that it's the *word of God* that washes us. (Eph 5:26)

We don't cleanse ourselves *ritually* by means of a laver & water, we're washed in the water of the word, spending time w/God relationally.

So w/regard to the water of the word, we could realistically consider these victors in Vs 2 to be standing "upon the pure word of God" having received victory thereby.

Vs 3-4

One song 2 titles (if you will) in which the perfect union between law & love, the old & new covenant is displayed; perhaps we're seeing here Jewish believers in Jesus that have come from the great tribulation; the song of Moses telling us it's Israel, the song of the Lamb showing their love for Jesus.

But this is a song the praises God for His *works*, for His *ways*, for His *worthiness* which leads (obviously) to His *worship*.

Notice, "Great & Marvelous are Your *works* Lord God Almighty." Listen to me; everything that God does is great & marvelous. "Marvelous are Your works, (the psalmist cried) & that my soul knows very well." This is that Rom 8:28 eternal perspective that recognizes, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." ⁶

Think about this, these are people who were mistreated, who were persecuted, some starved to death, others were imprisoned & executed, & yet when they stand before God they don't say, "I have a couple questions for You!" "What was up w/letting us starve, or be placed in prison, or undergo tremendous strain & person anguish?" They say, "Great & marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty, Just & true are Your ways, O King of the saints!"

Question: How do you respond when life treats you "unfair"? Do you have a problem w/God & want answers? Or do you "grab a guitar" (proverbially speaking) & give Him praise? God's not hanging you out to dry, the bible declares, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." ¹ **Jn 1:5** Translation: God is good, there's nothing dark nor deceptive about God; He is for you & not against you, you are His child. When you get to heaven you'll realize that the main thing was never climbing the corporate ladder or beating that disease... You'll rejoice before God being more than a conqueror through Him who loved us (Rom 8:35).

⁶ The New King James Version. 1982 (Ro 8:28). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Now that doesn't mean we never fight injustice, or try to find comfort or healing in our affliction. But there will be problems we face on this earth that we simply can't fix... So what do you do? You trust Him... & give praise *to* Him because great & marvelous are His works, just & true are His ways...

There was Jesus before Pilate, on trial, being examined, questioned, interrogated. Yet in the end what did Pilate say? "I find no fault in this Man." (Luke 23 [just & true]). Judas, having betrayed the Lord went back to the chief priests & through down the money they'd given him & said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." (Matt 27, [just & true]). Then hanging on the cross one thief rebukes the other who was mocking Jesus saying, "...we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." (Luke 23) Our Lord is just, & true are His ways, no fault in Him, no darkness nor wrong doing.

His works are great, His ways are just & true. "Who shall not fear You, O Lord, & glorify Your name? For You alone are holy." God alone is *worthy*, He *alone* is holy. & All nations shall come and *worship* before Him...

Now we could certainly take a moment here & underscore the fact that universal worship is in store for our Lord. That the nations will be His inheritance & all flesh will worship before Him. There are many, many Vs that communicate that.

But what I want to point out is the fact that God is into the *corporate gathering*... In Zechariah 14 we learn that from yr to yr people will be called to worship before the Lord throughout the millennial kingdom. But not everyone will go, you're invited to, but you don't *have* to. However to those who don't God says, "No rain". Dry times, limited harvest, a scarcity of fruit. Today God calls us to come & dine w/Him & worship before Him, so many say, "I'm busy". That's fine, but expect dry times & limited fruit; God simply blesses in a unique way the corporate gathering of the saints.

The final thing I'll point out about this song is it's appropriate focus. 2 Vs, no less than 10 references to God. Notice again (read/emphasize "You, Your, King" etc).

This (you guys) is the heart of worship, focus is on the Lord, it's not about us, it's all about Him.

Vs 5-6

Again we're reminded of the Exodus account, Moses constructed earthly copies of these heavenly realities.

But what I want to draw our attention to here is the fact that #1 These angels come forth from the temple of God Himself. What that means is that they're not acting on their own authority, but they're fulfilling God's direction on God's behalf. This judgment is coming from God.

The other thing I would point out is that we note that they're emerging from the holy place & their garments are reminiscent of priestly kind of garb. Here's the point; the work they're doing & the judgment they're bringing is holy. Too often today in movies we see the "hero" dole out justice by sinking to the level of the criminal they're fighting.

God's wrath is in no way, shape, or form nowhere close, not even mentioning on par w/the afflictions of the enemy. There's nothing unholy or unclean about God's judgment. What is happening here is holy & Divine, God's wrath is both sacred & severe & will lead ultimately to the downfall of Babylon & the return of J.C. to the earth.

Vs 7-8

This seems to be God's way of saying, "Do not disturb". No one was able to enter the temple, therefore nothing will hinder God's judgment. No more prayer petitions, no more mercy, God's wrath will be poured out & brought to an end. It's T-7, time has run out.

There's coming a time when it will be too late to petition God for mercy. Here's the good news, we're not there yet. You can still pray, still repent, still turn from your sin & cry out for mercy.

The bible says, "*Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.*" *Is 55:6* That time (my friends) is right now; today if you will hear His voice, don't harden your heart, open your heart. Give to God *His* way in *your* life...

Prayer Points:

Father that's our prayer. That You would have Your way, unhindered & uninhibited in *our* lives. We're so thankful God that You are slow to anger & rich in mercy. May we be the same, full of mercy, slow to anger. & Help us Lord to learn how to praise You even in the midst of trying (& what would seem to be unfair) times. We praise You O God for Your works, for Your ways, for Your worthiness & we worship You, for You are holy, You are just & You are true...

The time is coming when it will be too late, but that time is not right here or right now. Right now you can call upon the Lord, be forgiven of all your sin & given new life. Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near... (Share the gospel), if you're ready & will to respond in turning from your sin & trusting in Jesus, than now is the time.