

## Chapter 15:

John sees another image in heaven. 7 angels with the 7 last plagues. The number 7 represents perfection and completeness. The text states that God's wrath will be complete through these last events. John then sees a "sea of glass" glowing with fire. We originally see the "sea of glass" in chapter 4. The meaning of this sea of glass is purely speculation by everyone as there isn't any scripture that supports what it means. It likely has a physical and spiritual meaning. It could represent the transparent floor of heaven that allows those above to peer in on those below. It could also represent calmness and peace around the throne and in heaven. In this text where we see the "glowing with fire" could represent the final wrath of God that is about to come. In chapter 20 we will see fire from God in heaven that consumes Satan and his army. In the Old Testament we often see fire associated with God's power, presence, and divine judgment.

In verse 2 it mentions a group of people who have been victorious over the Antichrist and hadn't received the mark. The fire in the sea of glass could represent that these individuals have been removed out of the Tribulation and are now at peace. It states that these believers held harps given to them by God and they sang the songs of Moses and of Jesus. There are a lot of interesting statements in this text. First, I would note these believers were victorious over the Antichrist. That means they were in the Tribulation. My opinion is these people are raptured, not resurrected. I don't believe this is "the rapture" or the first rapture, but "a rapture". I'll get into this more on the notes I write specifically on the resurrection and rapture. The reason I don't believe it is resurrection is because in chapter 20, yet to come, we see the martyrs from the Tribulation that are waiting under the alter, come to life and reign with Christ for 1,000 years.

It is also interesting that the "songs of Moses" is referenced here. It could mean that there are Jewish people in this group that have also accepted Christ and been removed with Gentile believers. There is a popular belief that God's servant Moses is going to be 1 of the 2 witnesses that will minister during the first part of the Tribulation. If it is Moses, then it would make sense that these believers may have interacted with him or been familiar with him.

Lastly, I would note these believers have harps. They are not seen on thrones, judging, or reigning with Christ. They are still blessed to be in heaven. They are found righteous in the sight of God and victorious over the Antichrist, but they are not receiving the greatest of rewards. Keep in mind, from our study on the 7 churches, there are rewards far greater than playing harps for those who are victorious. Being in heaven is a great reward by itself, but ruling and reigning with Christ is reserved for those who have made themselves ready. There are people that will disagree and say that every believer will receive the same rewards. I would ask you to read the Bible, pray and meditate on that. Let the Spirit speak to you.

In verse 5, John sees the Holy Temple in heaven being opened. Within the temple is the "Tabernacle of the Covenant Law", or the Ark of the Covenant, (Ark of the Testimony). The Ark contained the physical manifestation of the presence of God while on earth. It also housed the 10 commandments. I think it is important to note that while we are no longer living under the law, but by grace provided through the sacrifice of Jesus, "righteous behavior" can still be measured by how

we live. The 10 Commandments represent God's expectation towards righteous living. Although He has provided grace to us through his Son, we will be accountable for our deeds at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is appropriate here that the Ark is opened prior to God's wrath pouring out across man and creation. It shows how God provided the way to earn an eternal and abundant life, but those who turn away from Him, have instead earned his wrath.

In verse 6 we see the 7 angels coming from within the temple with the 7 plagues. They are dressed in clean-shining linen and golden sashes. This refers to righteousness. 1 of the 4 living creatures gave to the 7 angels, 7 golden bowls filled with the wrath of God. In verse 8 we see that no one may enter the temple during this period. We see the temple filled with smoke. I believe this signifies the presence and glory of God filling the temple during this time.