***The Last of God's Wrath  
  
RV193-01***

**Why People go to Church**

People come to church for a variety of reasons. Here at Berean Church, we have established our church services on the principle and the example which we find in Acts 2:42, where the early group of Christians, who were now expanding quite rapidly from the day of Pentecost, were told that they continually devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. The word "teaching" there in the Greek language is the Greek word for "doctrine."

**What is the Church all about?**

So, first of all, what is the church all about? The church's business is to teach people doctrine. Secondly, the church is about fellowship – to interrelate with one another on the common ground of being in Christ: to aid one another; to encourage one another; to admonish one another; to caution one another; to exalt one another; and, to alert one another to red flags that come up in our minds toward what we are doing in our lives. Thirdly, it is for the breaking of bread, which was not only social fellowship, but, of course, the Lord's Supper. So, the churches gathered periodically, and often daily, for the Lord's Supper meeting. And the final purpose of the church is prayer. They made it a point to interrupt their lives periodically, and to gather for prayer. And they did this continually. They learned doctrine; they fellowship with one another in temporal fellowship in the inner circle; they remember the Lord's Supper, and what it connotes; and, they spent time together in prayer.

**Revelation 15**

In keeping with that historical precedent, we are gathered here today to study the Word of God, and to enhance our personal lives in spiritual strength and understanding and capacity to do God's work. We now come to a new of the book of the Revelation: chapter 15. Our subject is "Prelude to Doomsday," and this is segment number one.

As we look at this short chapter, Revelation 15:1-8 will bring to a conclusion what we have been in for quite some time, which we have referred to as the large set of parentheses. If you look back in your Bibles to Revelation 11:15, you have come there to the blowing of the seventh trumpet. At that point, the narrative which has been going chronologically from seals to trumpets, and then eventually to the bowls, the narrative has been going chronologically through the tribulation, month-by-month and year-by-year. Then there is an interruption.

We have previously had what we called the set of small parentheses. These parentheses are interjected to give us a little more background information on what is happening in the tribulation under the antichrist at the time. Back in Revelation 11:15, we began what was the large parentheses, and now in chapter 15, we come to the end of that parentheses. At the end of chapter 15, we now move back into the chronological progression once more, in the seven bowls of God's wrath, which will be poured out upon mankind.

This final expression of the wrath of God will come very near the end. It will probably be within weeks, if not the last month of the tribulation. It will come like monstrous hammer blows of a blacksmith on an anvil. Mankind will be scattered, shattered, and so disoriented. It will be in terror, and it will be in fear. The human race will come apart at the seams. Suddenly, they're going to realize that all their cockiness and all their assumptions of self-deity was ill placed. They're going to recognize that there is a God in heaven who is in charge, who they have been ignoring.

So, with chapter 15 now, we're closing down this large set of parenthesis, and we will then resume the chronological progression, which ends with the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath. That then ends with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, which is described in detail in Revelation 19. So, that's from whence we have come, and where we're going.

**Literal Interpretation**

The chronological portion of the book of the Revelation is presented in the series of seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls of wrath. The book of the Revelation is a logical book. It is an understandable book, but you do have to know the rest of the Bible. If you read the book of the Revelation by itself, you don't know what the symbols mean. The symbols have all been used someplace else in the Scripture. Once somebody points those out to you, it all becomes very clear. Above all, we do take it literally.

We reject all the great denominations of our day who say that: "The book of the Revelation is not to be taken literally. These things will not happen on this earth." I'm telling you that the only way the Word of God speaks is in literal language, so we can understand that what it describes is going to take place on this earth in history, in time and space.

The seven trumpets came out of the seventh seal; and, the seven bowls will come out of the blowing of the seventh trumpet. As the sequence proceeds, through the tribulation, there is a gradual crescendo of divine wrath to the very end. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ then takes place immediately after the seventh bowl judgment has been completed. Actually, Revelation 16:21, which is the end of the bowl judgments, should be followed (and can be followed) by Revelation 19:11, which describes the return of Jesus Christ.

There again is an interjection of two very dramatic chapters – Revelation 17-18. What are they going to talk about? They're going to tell us how the world religion, that the antichrist has put together with the false prophet, is going to collapse. All of the New Age religion ... is going to be exposed for the fraud that it is.

The other thing is that the world government and world socialism will collapse. The whole economic system of the world is now teetering on the brink of disaster. We are in a presidential campaign now where the most noted economic analysts (the people whose judgment we can trust) have analyzed the economic plan of both presidential candidates, and they're both bad. Neither one of them can solve the enormous financial crises facing the United States. One of the only silver-lining rays of hope is that these knowledgeable economists say that one of the candidates' plans will not add to the national debt, and the other one will make it worse. That's the only hope for it, but neither one can solve it. Why not? Because it has gone beyond control.

What we are seeing in our day is the groundwork being prepared for an overnight explosion of the whole economic system worldwide. Yes, our parents told us how terrible it was the day they woke up after the great collapse of the stock market in 1929. People who were enormously wealthy one day had nothing the next day. Men who are executives of corporations were now on the street corner selling apples in the desperation to try to earn something with which to feed their families. That was nothing. People who lived through that look back on it, and they have some reservations and intimidations and concerns about that ever happening again. But it's going to happen in a major way on a worldwide scale.

So, that is sandwiched in here between pouring out of the last bowl of judgment and the coming of Jesus Christ. We have this information given to us as to how the new world order of world government is brought to its knees, and the economic system collapses.

So, Revelation 15-16 (these 2 chapters) are actually the woe which the angel said was coming back in Revelation 11:14. The second woe is past. We've had the first woe and the second woe, and we won't go through those again. But he said, "Behold, the third woe is coming quickly." And we've had to wait until Revelation 15-16 to see what that third great woe is that's going to hit mankind.

Revelation 15 then introduces the beginning of the end for the kingdom of man on the earth. This will be the final expression of divine wrath against the Bible-haters of our day and the Christ-rejecters. It is the great finale of God's plan for the defeat of Satan's ambition to be like God, and to rule the world which God has created. Satan is doomed. The world's rejection of Jesus Christ will then have reached the point of no return, and God's wrath descends like a hurricane. It's an appropriate analogy, in view of what has happened in Florida. If you've been watching the pictures on TV, it is inconceivable to believe that a community can find itself with 80% of everything in the community destroyed, in city after city. And people, in desperation, are trying to survive.

Well, the hurricane that God is going to bring, when these seven bowl judgments are poured out one after another, is going to be something that the human race has never seen. And I stress that to you so that you'll be reminded that God is a God of judgment. Forget this malarkey that God is a God of love, and therefore He cannot treat people with such horrendous judgment. That's exactly what He's going to do. He's telling us that that's what He's going to do. He's warning the human race that this is what is coming. But men prefer following Satan's human viewpoint rather than God's divine viewpoint in these matters. So, the hurricane of God is coming.

This will, of course, also have a silver lining, because it will usher in the kingdom of God finally on this earth under the authority and leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will then rule from the city of Jerusalem as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, in command of all the governments on the face of the earth. God has a timetable for human history, and he is moving world events accordingly. Don't forget that. He has a timetable, and He is moving steadily and inexorably toward the fulfillment of His plan, but as per His own timetable.

**Another Sign**

So, I direct you now, first of all, to Revelation 15:1 to observe the magnificent seven: "And I saw another sign in heaven." The apostle John uses this Greek word "harao" for "saw." This word tells us that John is looking at an overall panorama. It is the big, broad view, as if you stood on a mountain, and looked down in the valley, and you saw this whole scene. This is much more impressive than when you're focusing on the little thing. We have another Greek word that tells you that it's a focus of attention. John is looking at a broad, panoramic scene in his vision. And what he sees is "another sign." This word "another" is that Greek word that I've shown you before: "allos," which is the word for "another of the same kind" of something else. So, what John is telling us is that there have been signs before this, and this is like that previous sign. Here's another sign just like this one.

This word "sign" means "a token" which is used to confirm something. Very often, it is a miraculous token, but it is a stamp of divine approval or guidance. John says that he sees another sign just like other signs that he has already seen, and he sees this one "in the heavens." This refers to the expanse above planet earth – somewhere in outer space, which is visible to John in his vision. What John is telling us is that this is the third major sign which he has seen of an impending work of God.

**The Woman**

The first sign was one that we have already looked at in Revelation 12:1-2, where he saw a woman who was clothed with the sun, standing on the moon, and with a crown of 12 stars on her head. That referred to the nation of Israel. That was the first sign that John saw.

**The Red Dragon**

The second sign that he's referring to, which was, again, like the first one, in that it was a symbolic presentation of what God was about to do, was the sign where he saw a red dragon who had seven heads and ten horns wearing seven crowns. This is in Revelation 12:3. This was Satan and his restored Roman Empire, ruled over by the antichrist.

Now John says, "I see another sign, just like those previous two, that is telling me something that God is about to do." Again, I must remind you that we're talking about the future. John is been given a preview of history. It hasn't even happened yet to this day. But it is going to literally come to pass. Just because it's in a symbolic form does not mean that it has no meaning, or that it will not take place. That is a very grave mistake.

So, John sees a third sign similar in symbolism to the previous two. But this one, he says, "I have to call *great*." So he says, "This sign is a great one." The reason he says that is to tell us of the magnitude of this site – this Panorama that he's looking at, of what is going to take place at the hand of God. This word "great" symbolizes the most extensive destruction by God which humanity has yet experienced. And it will take place during the seven-year tribulation period, near the very end. This is a destruction which will take place all over the world.

When the hurricane hits Florida or Louisiana, the rest of the United States was there to reach out and give a helping hand. Let me ask you: What would happen if all 50 states were hit by 160-mile-an-hour, devastating hurricane all at the same time? Who's around to give you a hand then? Some other country. What if it hits every country with the same intensity, so that there's nothing but devastation and death and dying and privation in every country on the face of the earth? Who's going to be there to help you? Nobody. You'll be dying like they do like flies in Somalia.

All of these pagan lands have either been brought down to economic destruction because the communists came in and took over these countries, and set up a socialist system. You should remember that these countries that were trying to be saved from dying of starvation were once breadbaskets themselves, who shipped food out of their countries until the communists came in with their socialist system, and destroyed the enterprise of the people, and the prosperity that those people once enjoyed.

Furthermore, these people worship the pagan gods. When you worship a pagan God, you have open yourself up to destruction. These people are suffering the consequences of the gods that they worship; the gods of their tribes; the gods that their fathers taught them; and, the gods who indeed not gods. When that happens, eventually a nation tears itself apart. That's what is so pathetic about the United States today – that we who began this country with a with a knowledge of God should now be embarrassed to bring Him into the political scene; to bring Him into our social life; and, to recognize that the laws of man must be compatible with the laws of God.

It is a terrible thing for a person to say, "I must silence, and I must muffle what I believe as a biblical Christian, or I can't make it in my political party. I can't make it in the political scene in the United States. I have to keep under cover that I am a biblical Christian. Otherwise, people I'm associated with will turn their back upon me." Should that not be a clue to abandon that kind of a group? A people who do not honor God are on a course of self-destruction, because it is God who sets the laws of right and wrong – not man.

So, here you have a judgment of God which is going to be so great and devastating because it's going to hit every country on the face of the earth. There will be no one around to help. It will be an event unparalleled in all of human history in its total impact on humanity.

Furthermore, the apostle John says, "This thing is not only great," but he says, "This sign that I see," he calls, "marvelous." The Greek word is "thaumastos." "Thaumastos" creates a great sense of all and wonderment – astonishment.

Let me show you a couple of places in the Bible where this is used, to give you a feeling. For example, John 9:30 uses this same word. This is the record of the man who had been born blind: "Jesus came by and touch his eyes, and healed him." Now the Pharisees (the religious leaders) don't like this, and they're interrogating this man as to how this thing came about. He tells them that Jesus has done this, and that he is praising Jesus as a man of God. They say, "Are you one of His disciples too?" As they interrogated him up in verse 27, the man sort of sarcastically said, "What? Do you want to become one of His disciples?" I mean, he's telling this to the ruling religious body of Israel, the people who run the country. And they, with contempt, revile him in John 9:28: "You are His disciple, but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses. But as for this man, we do not know where He is from."

Put yourself in this man's place – this simple man. His eyes are open, and he tells these religious leaders that this man has done a miracle. And this simple man says, "He couldn't do this unless He were from God. He really did get my eyes sight. He didn't just give me a con like Bob Tilton, and Oral Roberts, and all the other carnival con men. You really brought sight to my blind eyes. You're from God. I know where you're from."

Does that take too much intelligence? Not at all. These pontifical religious leaders were shelling and raking in the dough. They say, "We don't know where He's from." So, this poor man can't restrain himself: "He answered and said to them, "Well, here is a 'thaumastos.' Here is a thing of great astonishment. It is a great wonder that you do not know where He is from. And yet, He opened my eyes." And they caught the insult. And then they rebuked him and threw him out.

What he is saying is, "If He can open my eyes, that is an omnipotent power. That is an act of God. The devil will not give you your sight. He can't do that. Only God could perform a miracle like that. I'll tell you where this man is from. I'm surprised. I'm astonished. I'm 'thaumastos' that you don't know. He's from God." And you don't talk to religious leaders that way.

Here's another example in 1 Peter 2:9 where this word is used. Peter is telling the believers what they are now in Christ, over against what they once were. He says, "You are a chosen race." You didn't get into heaven because you decided to raise your hand in a church meeting, or walk an aisle, or even quietly to take Christ. It's because God chose you. He opened your eyes and brought you in. He pulled you in. You're a royal priesthood. There's no longer anybody who stands between you and God. You are your own priest. You face God yourself. There is no Aaronic priesthood between you and God. There is no Roman Catholic hierarchy, as the Catholic Church teaches, that causes you to go from yourself and your sin to God. And of course, to this day, you understand that the Roman Catholic Church says, "Unless the Catholic Church gives you salvation, you do not get salvation. You cannot go to heaven unless the church sends you there. And you do not get instantaneously saved by an act of faith." They call that (by the Council of Trent) an anathema. You are placed under an anathema, which means you can't go to heaven. If any Catholic dare says, "I'm going to heaven," the church has automatically placed him under anathema, and they send him to hell. That is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church to this day.

There are some people who don't attend Berean Church who once used to be here. Do you know why? Because they happen to have relatives who are Catholics. And when they heard me say that anybody who believes the Catholic plan of salvation, of getting to God through some kind of a special priesthood that dispenses the merits of Christ and of Mary to you bit-by-bit, so that gradually you get more and more saved – that that kind of a person is in a works salvation, and God says, "I'll give you salvation as a gift, but if you try paying Me for it, you're out." And I cannot believe it, but these people rise up in holy indignation and horror that their grandparents are going to be in hell.

So, what do they do? They don't come back here so that they cannot hear it. Just because you don't hear the truth does not change it from being the truth. Either the Bible is true (in Ephesians 2:8-9 – grace salvation; and, Romans 11:6 – that grace and works cannot be mixed), or else it's not true.

We also have people in our congregation who have found an explosion just like that within their family. One young couple said they heard our sermon that had dealt with this subject, and they knew about it, and they knew the problem, and somebody in the course of dinner that day, on Sunday afternoon, was discussing the matter of salvation, and that we had learned about sending missionaries to the Catholics, and this family had Catholic grandparents, and the mother exploded: "What do you mean, they're sending missionaries to Catholics?" And this person responded, "Well, they're not going to heaven." Well, that was it. That spoiled their afternoon; their dinner; and, everything else.

Well, you're going to decide who your authority is: the hierarchy of some religious system like the Catholic Church; or, the Word of God. That's what the Reformation was all about. You make your choice. But the Bible says, "You're the royal priesthood because you're the royal family of God, and you're a holy nation." You're a people of God's own possession, such that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His "thaumastos" light – into His marvelous light. You as a Christian are capable of understanding the deep things of the Spirit of God. That's what the Bible calls them. The Bible says that these are the deep things of the Spirit of God.

You know that, before you became a Christian, and before you had any access to instruction, you were treated like a nincompoop. Nobody ever taught you the deep things of the Spirit of God. They taught you salvation; they taught you stories; they shoveled out their nonsense; people ate it up; and, you were the poorer for it. And in eternity, they will want to rise up and curse those preachers who denied them access to the deep things of the Spirit of God. You Christians, because you have the indwelling Holy Spirit; you have the local church; you have a pastor-teacher elder who has the gift of conveying spiritual things to you; and, you have the principle of the confession of known sins, so that you're in the temporal, inner circle of fellowship where God will teach you, you are capable of learning everything that there is in the Bible. And it has nothing to do with your IQ. It has only to do with your willingness to be in church; listen; and, be positive to the Word of God that you're here.

Like the Bereans of old in Acts 17:11: "To receive the Word of God willingly, and to search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so." Yes, you should not be quoting me as proof of something in spiritual matters. You should be quoting the Scripture, which is the basis of that truth. We should indeed be brought into the marvelous light of God. The Jews of the Old Testament never had a chance for something like this, because they did not have the Spirit of God indwelling.

I'll also tell you that when you get away from the instruction of the Word of God, you'll fall into reversionism. Everything gets backwards in your mind, and you're in a tailspin, and you think that you're right. It's like that verse that we have on the back of our evangelism brochure. That verse in Proverbs says, "There's a way which seems right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death."

So, here is this word that John uses when he sees something that just takes his breath away, as indeed a Christian who realizes the things that he learns, and they take his breath away. How many times have I had you people, who are sitting here at this very moment, come to me because you found yourself in some situation, in a conversation with somebody talking about the spiritual things, and suddenly, this person is hitting you with all kinds of falsehood, and you're answering that from the Word of God, and you are amazed at how you are capable of responding with the truth? You got a hold of it, and you can't believe that you're that effective in spiritual combat. That's exactly what you are. You are indeed "thaumastos" at yourself. You're amazed, and you should be. But you're capable of that.

This is the difference between learning doctrine and going to some hokey-pokey weekend retreat where somebody speaks upon a subject that is maybe a problem for you, playing all the strings of the emotions within your life. And when you get out of it, after fritters away, you've spent your money, and you have nothing to show for it. Well, when you learn doctrine, you have the basis of being something significant for the rest of your life.

So, this is the kind of sign that John is seeing.

Let me give you one more: In Matthew 21:42, this word "marvelous" is used in the Greek: "Jesus said to them, 'Did you never read in the Scriptures (the Old Testament Scriptures, here again to these religious leaders), 'The stone which the builders rejected?''" And here the analogy is that those who were building the nation of Israel turned their back upon Jesus Christ. They wouldn't receive Him as Messiah: "The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone. This came about from the Lord, and is marvelous in our eyes." Jesus says, "Isn't it amazing that the whole Jewish nation, under the guidance of their leaders, should reject the one person who can take them to heaven – Jesus Christ?"

To this day, the Jews uniformly reject the one person that they need to take them into heaven, and they turn their back on Him. Now, that's awesome to me. That is fittingly described as a "thaumastos" event. It's inconceivable. Yet God says, "This man that you reject is the cornerstone of everything I'm building in the body of Christ, the church."

So, John says that he sees this third sign, and it catches his breath away. He has seen some breathtaking events in his visions, but this sign tops them all. And what this sign refers to, I again tell you, is a literal event. It will take place on earth. John is not just hallucinating here, and writing things because he's on an LSD trip. This is actually a revelation from God, and it's going to take place in time and space history. And John is given this preview of human history, which he records for us.

The people of the tribulation, in maximum terror, and experiencing unprecedented destruction, as their chickens of sin finally come home to roost. That's what's going to happen. And this is what God has told them that He's going to do. This was included in Psalm 2:4-5, where God says, in describing this tribulation era: "He who sits in the heavens laughs." Isn't that a sign? God watches humanity, and God has such a great sense of humor that He has to laugh at all these idiots who are running around; improving the world; protecting the environment; and, ordering mankind in an orderly fashion so that there'll be peace and prosperity on the earth – and God laughs.

Furthermore, it says, "The Lord scoffs at them." The Bible is very realistic. God has nothing but contempt for a human viewpoint wisdom.

Then verse 5 says, "Then He will speak to them in His anger, and terrify them in His fury." That's the word. It's going to be a time of great terror.

So, John sees another sign similar to these previous two, except this one he describes as the greatest of all, and the most breathtaking of all. Then he observes seven angels. Please notice that some kind of a perfection is now being reached. The number seven in the Bible signifies completion. God has seven days of creation. The number seven keeps cropping up, and it deals with something that is completed. Here you have seven angels, indicating a company that is going to bring something to a conclusion. These angels are those who remain loyal to God on the occasion of Satan's original rebellion against God in heaven. On that occasion, one-third of the angels that had God created joined; and, the other two-thirds stayed with God.

**Seven Plagues**

In the Greek Bible, it does not say "the" seven angels. Therefore, we know that this is a new group of angels. It is not referring to the seven who brought the seals, or the seven who blew the trumpets. This is a totally new group of angels that have come up on the scene. They are the agents of God's wrath against the tribulation world. And we're told that they have something that they're carrying. They have seven (again, the number of completion) plagues. This is the Greek word "plege." This word indicate some kind of a calamity. It connotes actually a severe blow which creates a wound. So, God has something that is going to be a severe blow against mankind that's going to hurt them badly. Each of these angels carries this plague in a bowl. These plagues are judicially inflicted punishments. They're the decision of God the judge. They're not just something that comes about in the normal course of events, like getting sick. These are special judgments that are going to be placed upon humanity.

Then he says something significant to us, and that is: "This is the last. These plagues, which are the last." This means the end of the line of God's plagues and judgments. In the Greek Bible, when you want to emphasize some word, you either put it at the 1st of the sentence, or you can put it at the last sentence. This one comes at the last of the Greek sentence, because God wants to emphasize that this is it. God has been punishing mankind. God has been judging. God has been bringing terrible things into the lives of people individually to get their attention. He's been bringing it upon societies to get their attention. Now He has brought it upon the whole tribulation world of the antichrist, and they have not paid attention.

So, God has seven more plagues. And when that seventh one is poured out, that's it. There'll be no more efforts on the part of God to wake people up. These are the very last of the divine judgments on tribulation humanity. And we have no time span, as with the other plagues under the seals and trumpets. For them, it says that something happens for three months; something happens for six months; or, something happens for a period of three-and-a-half years. There is no time factor here, which indicates to us that we're down near the end. These plagues come one after another within a matter of weeks. They're the final judgment and tribulation humanity.

**The Final Wrath of God**

Then, when number seven is completed, Jesus Christ returns to this earth. How do we know that they are the final seven? Because he says, "In them, the wrath of God is finished." I've told you that there are two different words for wrath in the New Testament. So, I have to explain to you which kind of wrath this is. This is the Greek word "thumos." You may remember that I told you that this is an anger in the form of an outburst of wrath from a state of inward indignation. It is something that's been stewing and stewing on the outside. And finally, you've had enough, and you explode. This is a human description of exactly how God feels. God has been taking it. He has been insulted. He has been blasphemed. He has been held in contempt. The whole tribulation world is thumbing their nose at God. God's grace and His wisdom, and His kindness, and His mercy (that's the word) has held back, and held back. This is not because He's vindictive. None of these plagues are because He's trying to get even or hurt people, but to get their attention. And when He has given the final plague, then that which is pent up within Him explodes outwardly in wrath. And God brings down, with these final seven judgments, all that He has pent up within Himself for such a long time. This is going to finish the wrath of God.

The word "finished" is the Greek word "teleo." This word means "to bring to an end." This word is of interest to us because this is what Jesus used on the cross in John 19:30. Jesus Christ had now bled profusely with all the beatings that have been upon Him. He was on the cross from 9:00 in the morning to high noon. During that period, He was crying out with a loud voice in His agony: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He was addressing My God the Father, and My God the Holy Spirit: "Why have you turned Your back upon Me?" Well, They had, because He was bearing, at that point, the sins of the world. Come 12:00 noon, that part of the atonement was completed.

Only one thing was now necessary to do to complete the payment of death, and that was for Him to die physically. So, finally, the agony continues from noon to 3 p.m. Then at 3 p.m., we're told that He raises His head, and He says, "Father." He is no longer using the word "God." God is what you talk about when you're out of fellowship with Him, and when you're under His judgment. Now He is back in fellowship. He has borne the pain and suffering, and shed the blood for the sins of the world. Now He can address God as one who is back in fellowship, and He says, "Father, into your hands I commit My Spirit." And here, in John 19:30, then, we read, "He said, 'It is finished.' And He bowed His head, and gave up His Spirit." This is the word he used: "teleo." He was telling, with that act, that: "It is finished," and He was indicating the imminent completion of His atonement for the sin of mankind with His physical death.

He had already died spiritually. When He was separated from God the Father and the Spirit, He experienced spiritual death for us. Now He must experience physical death for us. And He said, in a strong voice, gathering of all the energy He had left, "It is finished." Then He gave up His life by choice. This was the last effect of all the beatings, and probably the trauma of shock. He now releases, and He dies physically. And that meant termination.

So, what this word refers to is the completion of God's righteous judgment on tribulation humanity for its evil, and its rejection of Jesus Christ, as it indicated, for the Lord Jesus Christ, the completion of His payment for the sins of the world upon the cross.

**The Campaign of Armageddon**

So, these seven bowl judgments, these seven plagues which these angels now come out holding in their hands, are really the last artillery barrage in preparation for the final battle of Armageddon. Armageddon is a series of battles. It should be called the Campaign of Armageddon. And now we're down to the last final battle, which is out there on the plain of Megiddo, as the nations of the world, with their armies, face Jesus Christ, coming from heaven, with all of us and the host of the heavenly believers who join that battle on the field of Megiddo, near the mountain Har-Magedon, the mountain of Megiddo.

In military tactics, if you are going to seek to overrun a position, you try to soften up that position, and to destroy the enemy who is dug in – to destroy his weapons by an artillery barrage. The field artillery men have their weapons zeroed in so that they progressively move forward with each barrage. They move forward with each volley of the guns, so that they cover the ground systematically. And unless somebody has dug into some impregnable position, as very often the Japanese were clever and capable of doing in the South Pacific, you would think that nobody could be alive, but always there is somebody. But now they are shattered; they are dazed; and, they have been put off-balance. Then, as the final artillery barrage is lifted, the troops move in to capitalize on that moment of confusion.

Well, this is what God is doing with these seven plagues. All of humanity is hit everywhere on the face of the earth at the same time, and they are literally reeling backwards. Everything of the infrastructure of the government comes apart. Things are totally out of control for the antichrist. Nobody knows what's going on. People are in agony. They're in horrible screaming pain. Then the antichrist has to try to pull things together with the nations of the world to meet Christ in that final battle on the field of Megiddo.

So, with the conclusions of the divine bowl judgments demanded by the holy character of God, Jesus Christ now will be able to return to earth from heaven to reign. He cannot come back to reign until the kingdom of man has been destroyed. He cannot establish the Kingdom of God on this earth, with the Millennial Kingdom, until the kingdom of man has been destroyed. That's what we're being told here in the opening verse of Revelation 15. This is the destruction of the kingdom of man. Now Christ can return. The seven angels who deliver the final divine punishment will, no doubt, I suspect, rejoice in this vindication of Bible doctrine and prophecy. Finally, tribulation humanity will find out who is right, and who is wrong on spiritual matters. I remind you that that is very sober.

A man once told me that I was very arrogant to say this: when I told him that he was seriously out-of-step with the Word of God, and he was seriously in error. And I said, "Well, at this point, we'll leave this difference between us, and I can tell you one thing that is interesting about what you believe in the Christian life is that someday you will find out who's right and who's wrong." He thought that was very arrogant for me to say. Why? Because he didn't think there was such a thing as a right and a wrong. But the Word of God is what's right, and the rest is wrong.

So, whatever your problem is, and whatever your difference may be in spiritual matters with others, just be sure that you know your ground; that it's based on Scripture; and, that it is not based on some emotional domination of your soul. And then leave it with the Lord, because you're going to find out someday who was right and who was wrong. Those who are right will be rewarded; and, those who are wrong are going to be the losers. And here is the issue. Finally, humanity finds out that those Bible believing fundamentalist Christians – they were the ones who were right. They were the ones who had the story straight. They were the ones who had a perspective on all the institutions of society, and on all the elements of life that go together to make a civilized society. They find that Christians who knew doctrine were the ones who knew where history was going, and what God was planning to do.

So, finally, tribulation humanity gets the word. God's righteous indignation, then, against the antichrist, and against his New Age religion worshipers, is going to be, as John says, the greatest thing that this world has ever seen of human devastation, and is going to be a wondrous, awesome sight to behold.

Our job, as believers, is to alert people to what is coming. And as John says, "To snatch them from the burning," if they will respond. Thank God that we are the snatchers, and not the burning.

Next time, we will look at the fact that God, throughout His dealing with mankind, has been in the habit of confirming what he says with signs. The Word of God is not something that somebody just wrote in the Bible – some prophet wrote down. That's the challenge we have. Next time, I think it's pertinent that I take you through some of the great historical occasions when God has had a trilogy of signs, just as He has given here to John, to confirm His message to speaker; to prophet; to leader; and, to king, one after another. And when you suddenly realize that God has done this all the time (a trilogy of signs), you will see that it is great and wondrous indeed.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1992

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