

Oh, Lord, Just and True Are Your Ways

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[0 : 00] If the Bibles would be pleased and turn to Revelation chapter 15. Revelation 15 will introduce to us the next series of judgments.

In fact, the last series of judgments, the bold judgments or the plagues. So 15 is just an introduction. Chapter 16, which we'll look at next week, is the actual pouring out of the bowls. And then, so we will look at 15 today, chapter 16 next week, Lord willing. And then in two weeks, we'll take a break and review.

We'll look back, we'll take a step back and look at 12, chapter 12 through 16. Kind of see if we can put the pieces together. And we'll make charts, we'll color, we'll do all kinds of stuff to kind of put it together and make connections in our head.

But more importantly, in our hearts. So today we look at a new vision. Revelation chapter 15, as God introduces these seven last plagues.

[1 : 17] So, if you're able, please stand as I read from Revelation chapter 15, verses 1 through 8. Eight simple verses. Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing.

Seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last. For with them, the wrath of God is finished. And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire.

And also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord, the God, the Almighty.

Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy.

[2 : 30] All nations will come and worship you. For your righteous acts have been revealed. After this I looked in the sanctuary of the tent of witness.

In heaven was open. And out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues. Clothed in pure, bright linen.

With golden sashes around their chests. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God.

Who lives forever and ever. And the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power.

And no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven angels, excuse me, until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

[3 : 30] So it reads. Let us pray. Father, we pray that you grant us eyes to see and ears to hear, hearts to receive. May we, Father, may these pictures, these images, this revelation impact not only our mind but our heart and our soul.

May we recognize that the real point of all this is that it's all about you, not about us. It's all about your character, who you are.

Not about what we think. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. So I want to start with a question.

What do you know about the exodus? The exodus of Israel? The exodus from Egypt? What do you know about it? What was it about? What does it show us?

What did God do in the exodus? He delivered. He delivered Israel. Right? From what? Slavery.

[4 : 51] Bondage. Right? So it's a picture. It is a historical event, but it's also a picture of God's deliverance, salvation.

Right? But let me ask you, in that event, how did God deliver? What did he use to overcome the Egyptians?

The plagues. The plagues. He delivered through judgment. Delivered through judgment. So we saw that God sends plagues of judgment.

And each one of those in the chapters of Exodus, verses 7 to 12, each of those plagues bore witness to the powerlessness of the gods of Egypt.

Each one struck a blow. In fact, the word plague means blow. A wound. A striking. Against the gods of Egypt.

[5 : 57] The god of the Nile. The god of life. The god of the sky. The god of the sky. Everything was struck. And Israel's salvation comes not only through the plagues, but then, remember, as they come, what was the final deliverance?

What was the final battle? The sea. The Red Sea. They stood between the sea and the mountains, and here's Israel.

Or, excuse me, here's Pharaoh's army, right? What's holding back Pharaoh's army from charging on Israel? A pillar of fire. Cloud.

God standing between Israel. And then God opens the sea. They march through the sea on dry land. Get to the other side, which, if you read the text, it's on the third day.

They're on the other side. And then, as he releases the army, and as the army of Pharaoh comes into the sea, that's when God closes the window.

[7 : 02] Closes the sea. And so they're standing on the other side, looking, and the sea becomes calm. What was raging now becomes calm.

And through a final act of judgment, Israel is delivered from the enemy. In Revelation 15, we hear echo after echo after echo of the Exodus deliverance.

We see plagues. We see plagues. These are seven plagues. We see a sea that is mixed with fire. Remember that the fire, pillar of fire, went through the sea to pave the way for Israel. We see the song of Moses after the deliverance.

We see a holy God. We see, in Exodus, a tent of witness. And finally, as they stand at Mount Sinai, we will see smoke and fire on Mount Sinai.

[8 : 22] And in Revelation 15, we see each one of those things. We see plagues. We see a sea. We see fire. We see the song of Moses by those who are saved.

We see a holy God. We see a tent of witness. And we see smoke because of the glory of God. Coincidence? I think not.

We are meant to pull up those images because Exodus is a type. Exodus is a foreshadowing. It's a type of deliverance that God does over and over and over again.

God delivered Noah and his family through the judgment of the flood. God delivers Israel, the nation, through the judgment of the Exodus. God delivers through judgment over and over again. And once again, we see now in chapter 15 of Revelation, God delivers his people through judgment. What was the cross?

[9 : 27] It was a judgment through which we are delivered. In the Red Sea, Egypt paid the price.

They were the substitute. In the flood, the world was the substitute for the eight souls.

On the cross, Jesus is the substitute for all who receive his grace. So, this is what we see in Revelation 15.

And we're introduction to God's judgments. Final judgments. The seven last plagues. The fullness of God's wrath. As I said, chapter 15 is just introducing it. Just kind of preparing us for it.

Chapter 16 is when the actual pouring out of the seven bowls happens. So, Lord willing, we'll look at that next week. Seven angels, seven plagues, seven bowls.

[10 : 24] Cycles of seven. What does seven mean? Is seven important in the book of Revelation? We have seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven angels. Seven, seven, seven, seven, seven, seven, seven.

Seven is what? Completion. Fullness. Seven churches. That wasn't all the churches in the first century. He picked out seven that represented all of them.

And as we look at those seven churches in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, we see seven different, very different churches with different issues. Each with different issues that represent all churches of all time with different issues that we face.

Each church is told to be the overcomer. Right? Each church is told to repent of a different issue. Each church is told to the one who conquers.

To the one who overcomes. I will give. So it's a conquering. Conquering. Conquering fear. Conquering deception. Conquering compromise.

[11:30] Conquering apathy. Conquering self-sufficiency. We looked at seven different issues in the seven churches. Then in chapter 6 to 8 of Revelation, we saw the seven seals.

Seven seals were the beginning. The same things that Jesus talked about in Matthew 24. The beginning of birth pangs. They're not the end. They're simply the beginning. They're simply becoming warnings of the wrath of the Lamb.

And then in Revelation 8 through 11, we are introduced to seven trumpets. Seven different judgments. But now the judgments are intensified. They're raised to another level.

And we see a demonic element in the seven trumpets. As the plagues of demons on earth dwellers. Yet even during these seals and even during these trumpets, there's a chance to repent.

There's delay. There's interlude in between these judgments. There's an opportunity still to repent. Then in chapters 12 to 15, we saw seven visions.

[12:39] Starting with the vision of the woman, right? And then the dragon. And then the beasts of the dragon.

And et cetera. See different visions. That showed the spiritual war going on behind the scenes of history. So seven, seven, seven churches.

Seven seals. Seven trumpets. Seven visions. Now we come to the seven last plagues. Chapter 15. And I believe chapter 15 is an explanation for the judgments.

Sorry, keep hearing voices. Can you guys talk in the hallway or something, please? Sorry. Here we see seven last plagues.

And they're explained. They're explained. Why are we doing it? What is happening? So, here we come to the finish of God's severe wrath, which leads to judgment.

[13:45] How should we understand the fierceness of God's righteous wrath? How should we understand? What is this here for? What are we meant to understand? Well, I think we have two explanations.

There's a break in this chapter. Verses two through four are set off by itself. Notice verse one introduces the seven angels with the seven plagues. And then it kind of leaves that.

Again, verses two to four goes to this other vision. You see something else. And then in verse five, we come back to the seven angels with seven plagues. So, I think what we have is kind of this in between the seven angels, seven plagues, this explanation in verses two to four of why this is happening in the song of the redeemed.

So, what are the explanations? So, first of all, I think we see in verses two to four, how do we understand the fierceness of God's wrath? Number one, in verses two to four, God's wrath is just and true.

His wrath is just and true. And then secondly, we will see in verses five to eight, as we now begin to prepare for the bowls, it's described in verse eight as full of the glory of God and the power of God.

[15:04] The smoke that prevents anyone from going into the temple where the wrath comes from is described as the smoke comes from the glory of God and the power of God.

Someone doesn't want this message out today. So, let's look at those in order. Verses two to four, God's wrath is just and true. He says that, the song says that in verse three, just and true are your ways.

Just and true are your ways. For you will, who will not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name for you alone are holy. Here's the recognition of who God is.

See, this is about God, not about us. What we see over and over in these verses is a declaration of who God is.

He is great and awesome. He is just and true. He alone is holy. His righteous acts have been revealed.

[16:15] The smoke reveals his glory and his power. See, it's all about him, not about us. From our perspective, we look at wrath as, what, cruel?

Inhumane. That word came up in our class this morning as we were talking about this. Wouldn't it be more humane of God to just put us out of our misery? Humane comes from the word.

Human. Human idea. I got some. Thank you. Appreciate it, brother. So that's how we look at it.

We look at it as, is this too much? This fierceness, this fury, this heat of God. Is it right? Yeah.

It is, but it offends us. My gosh, we put a dog down more humanely.

[17 : 23] Don't we? So it raises those issues. This is the issue.

Who is God? Who is God? And in contrast, who are we?

Who are we? God's wrath is just and true. He alone is holy and righteous.

So we see, first of all, the singers in verse 2. Tells us, I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name standing beside or on the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

So here's the singers. It's those who have conquered the beast. He talks about, we looked at all of that back in chapter 13, the beast and its image and the number of its name. The warning against taking, identifying with the beast, which in the first century, the beast was Caesar.

[18 : 35] The Roman authorities, identifying with them, worshiping them, aligning yourself with them. We have no king but Caesar, say the people about Jesus. See, making a choice between God as king and man as king.

That doesn't mean you have to be wholehearted in it. Those Jews on that day, when they said, crucify him, they said, we have no king but Caesar. Did they really mean that? No, that was just expedient to get rid of this Jesus.

We'll give verbal allegiance. So identifying with the beast and anything that has to do with him, his name, his image. So it's not conquering the beast physically or earthly.

It's conquering the beast in a way, you know, not in an earthly way at all, but by the blood of the lamb. Right? Chapter 12, 11 tells us they conquered by the blood of the lamb.

Conquered by his victory, by his payment of our debt, and by the testimony of Jesus. We conquer by our own lives that identify ourselves with him and not with another ruler.

[19 : 53] Power and weakness. This conquering. How do we conquer? In Revelation, conquering is by suffering. How did Jesus conquer? He conquered by suffering and dying.

We conquer by suffering and dying. So we are defeated physically, right? The dragon will kill us, ultimately, right?

But that's not. How long did the two witnesses killed by the dragon stay dead? Three days. Three days, just like Jesus.

Three days. And then they raised up. Victory over death. That's the conquering. See, that's our sight. Now, they're standing on the sea of glass.

What's the sea of glass about? It's a glassy sea. You know, you want to ski. Anybody water ski? You want to ski on a sea of glass. You're a lake of glass. Especially if you're in a barefoot ski.

[20 : 50] That's the only way to do that. Sea of glass. What is it? Well, it's a sea. Sea in the Bible is representative or symbolic of the world rebellion. A rebel world that now is calm.

Remember, Jesus walked on the sea. Israel went through the sea. The sea over and over again, especially in the Old Testament, is portrayed as this rebellious thing.

The waves are rebellious. And God created a boundary to keep the waves from transgressing. The sea is a picture of earthly rebellion.

So now we see this earthly rebellion is calmed. And notice that it's not just to see a glass, but it's mixed with what? Fire. It's been judged.

It's been overcome. And if the image is that these conquerors are standing upon the sea, like Jesus. Image of conquering. If it's a picture. If it means. And by the way, the Greek technically means they're standing upon the sea.

[21 : 53] But it could mean. Could. No, the voice is changing. Mean they're standing beside the sea, which would sound just like. Just like Exodus 14.

Where the Israelites stood beside the sea as it is now calmed. Victory. Mixed with fire. I think that's the image going on here.

So we see the singers. These are. Who are they? Who are those that overcome the beast? Who are those that conquer by the blood of the lamb? Believers.

Right? The believers. The redeemed. So what do they sing? Verse 3. They sing. It looks like two songs. They sing the song of Moses.

You know, in case you don't know who he is. He's the servant of God. And then the song of the lamb, who's more than a servant of God. He's the son of God.

[22 : 53] So they sing the song of Moses and the song of the lamb. So what's the song of Moses? Moses actually had two songs. After the sea.

After they come through the sea. Exodus 14. Exodus 15 records the song of Moses. And Moses sings. The Lord is my salvation.

The Lord is my song. He who triumphs valiantly. The rider is tossed into the sea. Right? The Lord is my strength.

My salvation. My song. My song. He has shattered the enemy. Who is like him? Is Moses' song. But Moses sang another song at the end of his life.

So in Exodus 15, we have a song of Moses of victory. In Exodus 32. The chapter before he dies. Moses writes another song.

[23 : 54] Not as uplifting. Not as uplifting. Interesting. He has seen Israel fall. He has seen Israel say they'll keep the covenant, but not keep the covenant.

He will see them test the Lord. He will see them grumble. He will see them time and again fail. Fail. And so in Exodus 32, he sings another song. Still has these themes in it.

He says, I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Ascribe greatness to our God. The rock. His work is perfect. For all his ways are justice.

A God of faithfulness and without iniquity. Just and upright is he. Same words here. Just and right. Just and true. Great and awesome.

But in Deuteronomy 32, he also warns about falling away from the Lord. God is a just God. God is a true God. God is a powerful God. God is a great God.

[24 : 58] God is a holy God. God is a righteous God. He deserves all we have. So then it's the song of the Lamb as well.

So it's not just about an Old Testament redemption. It's now. Now John is connecting the song of Moses with the song of the Lamb. And so we see this.

Oh, it is a type. Exodus was a type of salvation that now Christ is fulfilling. It's not a seed, but it's a cross. But it's still a deliverance through salvation.

By the blood of the Lamb. Right? His works are great and awesome. His ways are just and true. He alone is holy.

So in the context of this, this is talking about God's wrath. Right? Talking about we have these seven angels with seven plagues. Which are the end of God's wrath.

[26 : 00] And then in verses five through seven, we have again. Here come the angels with the seven plagues. Now they're given seven bowls that are full of the wrath of God. So verse one, verses five through eight, it's all about the wrath of God.

Verses two through four, sing what? What does all that mean? What is the wrath of God? Great and awesome. Just and true.

He alone is holy. His righteous acts have been revealed. His wrath is great. His wrath is awesome. His wrath is just, fair, right.

His wrath is true. His wrath is because he is holy. And in all of this, his righteousness is revealed through these judgments.

See, it's about him. So what's the significance we see in verse four? The song says, you know, great and amazing are your deeds.

[27 : 10] Oh, Lord God almighty. Just and true are your ways. O king of the nations. Here's the conclusion. Here's the point. Here's the issue. Who will not fear?

Who will not fear? It's not a threat. It's a logical question. Since he is great and awesome. Since he is just and true. Since he alone is holy.

Who will not fear? Who? Who of their right mind. Who that is sober. Who that is not a fool.

Will not fear. Who? That's the question. See, it's about him. It's about him.

How do you respond to a God who is just and true and holy and righteous?

[28 : 16] So can I meddle? Do you fear him? Do you fear him? What does that mean? Well, remember Peter.

Let's look at Peter. Peter's out fishing with Jesus one day. And Peter loves Jesus. He's seen Jesus do miracles. He's heard Jesus' gospel.

He's all about Jesus, right? And they're on the boat. The storm comes, right? And Jesus is asleep. Remember this story? The waves are tossing him.

The waves are beating him. Right? And Jesus is asleep. And they think they're going to die. These are experienced fishermen. Think they're going to die in the sea. The sea, again. Huh? Right? Where's Jesus?

He's sleeping. In a storm? Yeah, he's sleeping. Get him out. Hush, be still. Right? Jesus says, hush, be still. And the sea becomes what?

[29 : 15] Like glass. A glassy sea. And what does Peter do? Peter falls on his face.

He is terrified. Not terrified like this Jesus is going to just mow me down. But this Jesus is so much bigger than I thought.

He's not just a servant of God. He is God. Who speaks to the wind? Who? Who is this?

He said. That's fear. That's what we're talking about. Fear God. Taking him seriously. Taking him for who he is. And glorify.

And glorify. Who will not fear and glorify your name? That just means honor. Thinking of him.

[30 : 17] Thanking him. Well, what's the other option? If I don't fear and glorify God, what will I do? If I ignore God, if I say, oh, God, you know, I don't see evidence of God.

I don't believe. That's a fairy tale. Yeah, science, you know, science shows, you know, we've all evolved from monkeys. Right?

All science is there, isn't it? That's what I've been told. That's what our society says. It's got to be there. They said science. That's the magic word nowadays.

So what's my option if I don't fear God? I fear man. I make my own God.

I make my own God. Because I want a God I can control. I want a God I can define. I want a God that's, oh, loving and merciful and forgiving and good.

[31 : 19] I don't want wrath. Except for the bad people. You know, that's not me. Of course. I want a God that, you know, grades on a curve. I don't want a holy God.

I want a good God. Hmm. Kind of gets foggy after a while. So we create idols.

Why do men create idols? By the way, what's an idol? The Bible's always called it idolatry. Idols.

Right? So part of the great, the commandments, right? You shall not.

Have no other gods before me. You shall not make an image of God. A shape, a form. Right? Like the beast.

The image of the beast. What's an idol? Is it just some little thing that we put on our, you know, and we go, oh. It takes it away from God.

[32 : 13] It's anything that replaces God. It's anything that we substitute for God. It doesn't have to be physical at all. It could be an idea. It could be good things.

It could be my family. If my family's more important than God, that's my idol. If my work, my job, my career is more important than God, that's my idol.

If my image is more important than God, that's my idol. So it could be anything. Anything that gives us value, security, hope, anything that we trust in.

Right? To make me better. Make me safer. Make me feel better. That's my idol.

So, what does God say about idols? Well, here's a good example of Jeremiah 10. He says, Thus says the Lord, Learn not the way of the nations, nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens, because the nations are dismayed at them.

[33 : 24] For the customs of the people are vanity, emptiness. He's going to talk about how they make an idol. A tree from the forest is cut down, worked with an axe by the hands of a craftsman.

They decorate it with silver and gold. They fasten it with hammer and nails so that it cannot move.

Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field.

They cannot speak. They have to be carried, for they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.

There is none like you, O Lord, you are great. Your name is great in might. Who would not fear you, O king of the nations? Exactly the same words. Who will not fear you, O king of the nations?

For this is your due. For among all the wise ones of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like you. They are both stupid and foolish.

[34 : 28] The instruction of idols is but wood. It's kind of ridiculous when you think about it, isn't it? Idle? Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish, the gold, no matter how much you dress it up.

They are the work of craftsmen and the hands of the goldsmith. Their clothing is violet and purple.

Oh, we can make them look real royal. They are all the work of skilled men.

Oh, they're creations of men. But the Lord is the true God. He is the living God.

And the everlasting God. At his wrath, the earth quakes and the nations cannot endure his indignation.

Can an idol do that? See, idols are man-made. We all make them. Okay?

[35 : 31] We all make them. We infuse them with meaning. We infuse them with significance. We give to them.

We think that's our security. That's our identity. That's our hope. If I just could have this position. If our family could just be here.

If I could just get that, then I'll be okay. If I just have this, then I can rest secure.

I don't know what it is for you. I know what it is for me. Things that we infuse with meaning and yet they're powerless.

They're just a thing. It's just money. It's just an idea. It has no power. Except over me. We feel.

[36 : 41] Why do we make idols? Because we feel like we can replace God with other things that we can control and manipulate and appease and get what we want.

idols are man-centered, man-made, but they are absolutely dishonoring to God.

They are a slap in His face. How can we try to replace the irreplaceable God? How can we make something that's somehow like the incomparable God?

That's why God calls it stupid, foolish, unthinking, illogical.

What other words can you come up with? How shall we understand the fury of God's wrath? Well, look at it from His perspective. It is just. It is true.

[37 : 48] For He alone is holy. His righteous acts have been revealed. That's one explanation.

Verses 5 to 8 give us another explanation.

Not only is God's wrath just and true, but His just wrath is full of His glory and power. So we see in verse 8 the smoke of His wrath, the smoke outcome of this bowl of judgment comes from His glory and power.

So God's just wrath is full of His glory and power. We see that in three ways. We see it in verse 1.

We've seen in His agents, the people who bring about this wrath.

They are seven angels. We're seeing verse 1. Seven angels with seven plagues. Plague meaning to blow or to afflict. These are the last ones which means they're the final plagues.

They complete His wrath. They fulfill and accomplish all of His judgment. So in other words, so last meaning, so in the context of Revelation we've had, right, seven seals, which are just kind of the beginning, just kind of the birth pangs, just kind of the warnings.

[39 : 01] Then we have the trumpets which are a little bit more intense, but still, still there's interludes, still there's delays, still there's chances to repent.

Now come the bowls. They're the last. They're at the end. They must be kind of concurrent with the seventh trumpet, with the sixth seal.

There must be maybe another view of the very final judgment before the end of history and we appear before the throne of God.

These are it. These are not, unlike the seals and the trumpets which kind of span from the beginning of Christ all the way through the church age, I think these bowls are just at the very door, just at the very end because they go fast.

There's no delay. It's just one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, done. And they're much more intensified. So we see in the agents, these seven plagues, they're the last.

[40 : 21] Notice in verse six, as he comes back to talking about these seven angels again, they come out of the sanctuary. That's a word for temple.

It's actually the word for temple. They come out of the temple, the temple that is in heaven. Out of the sanctuary, out of the temple, come the seven angels with the seven plagues.

They come from the temple, which means they come from the throne of God. And then we're told what they're wearing. We're told how they're clothed, which is like, why do we need to know that?

I think we just need to know that this is a holy thing because they're clothed in linen that is what? Pure and bright. Kind of, they're reflecting God.

They're representatives of God. They're messengers of God. They're the ones bearing the plagues and they will each in turn pour out the plague. But it's from the temple, from the throne.

[41 : 22] So we see his glory and power coming through these angels. And then we see it in the source.

Again, verse five says it's from this temple. Verse five, after this, I looked in the sanctuary, the temple of the tent of witness of witness in heaven was opened. The temple.

From the temple, from God's throne, comes these plagues. But it's curious.

So what is it called? It's not just the temple. It's called, verse five, the temple of the tent of the testimony. What's that?

What's the tent of testimony? The temple. Yeah, we've seen the temple in Revelation. We've seen, that's where God's throne is, right? That's where the people gather. That's where the altar is, right? [42 : 21] The angels are there. The 24 elders are there. The four creatures are there. It's God's throne room. It's where God's people are.

Because we are the temple, right, openly. What's the tent of witness? Tent. Tent. Well, think back to a tent.

Remember a tent in the Old Testament? Kind of a big one. It wasn't a one. Not just a tabernacle. We call it the tabernacle. Jesus tabernacled with us. Yeah, Jesus tabernacled with us.

He tented. Temporary. Right? He set up pegs in the ground, I guess. Yeah, the tent. It's referring back to the original tent, the tabernacle, in the wilderness.

Remember, they had to have it so they could move it because they were moving all, wherever the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire went, they'd pick up and move and go. Had to be a movable tent.

[43 : 22] Tents, by the way, wear out, don't they? They're meant not to be permanent. So it's a tent. But what's the witness part? Why is it a tent of witness?

Well, back in Exodus 25, again, Exodus, it's called a tent of witness. Because inside that tabernacle tent was what?

There's a bunch of stuff in there, but yeah, it's inside the Holy of Holies. And what's inside the Holy of Holies? The Ark of the Covenant, also called the Ark of the Testimony.

And what was in the Ark? The testimony. The covenant. The tablets. Take two tablets.

Call me in the morning. I was an old, right? Moses went up and came down and take two tablets and call me. No. I already messed up.

[44 : 20] Never mind. But thanks for laughing. I appreciate it. With you. With you. At you. Two tablets. Two tablets. Written on stone by the finger of God.

They were called the covenant. They're the words of the covenant. They're the testimony. The witness. And the tent was the tent of that witness.

Yes. And so why? Earlier we heard about, remember, heaven was open and we saw the Ark? Remember we saw that earlier in Revelation? The Ark was there. So it's still playing a part. Not for believers. Because our Ark, right?

Is covered. But the Ark, so those ten words on those two tablets, what else do we call those? Ten Commandments.

[45 : 23] Yeah. Ten Commandments. Those are what we're judged by. Those will be the witness. That is the basis of God's judgment.

It's what God says. It's what is true and just. How you doing, by the way? How have you done with those ten?

Are you good? Never? Always had God as your only God? Perfect, right? Never had another replacement God.

Never kind of let his name slip without, you know, always meaning holy God. And, of course, Saturday. You always keep Saturday, right?

Sabbath. Sabbath is not Sunday. Sabbath is seventh day. It's Saturday. Begins Friday night. Friday night, you shut down, don't you? You shut down Friday night all the way to Saturday night. That's the shutdown and worship and rest, right?

[46 : 24] You don't do any projects or anything like that, right? Hmm. Parents, right? We love our parents. We've always loved our parents, right?

What are the other commandments? Oh, things like murder. Okay, haven't done that. Except, by the way, Jesus defines murder. Yeah. Then there's, what? Adultery.

I haven't done that. Except, by the way, Jesus defines it. Right? Stealing. Lying. Coveting. Oh, come on. How we doing?

No one. No one. Has kept it. No one. And that was its purpose. That was its purpose, according to Paul in Romans 3.

The purpose of the law is to show us our sin. To show us our failure. All have sinned and fall short.

[47 : 27] I've tried to honor him. I've tried to honor my parents, but there were some moments. Right? I hated myself later.

I try not to covet, but man, that new truck. Oh. Whatever. No, no, don't ask me if that's why I bought the truck I bought.

Because there were better ones. Yeah. I coveted other ones before that. Had to go there. Yeah, I know. Why did I have three 240Zs back in the day? I know. Oh, I had no trouble with that.

That's the basis of judgment. So it's seen in his agents. It's seen in his authority. This testimony of the tent. And then it's finally seen in the symbols in verse 7 and 8.

We see two symbols. We see bowls, and then we see smoke. In verse 7, we see that now these angels who have the plagues are now given bowls.

[48 : 30] Bowls. Interesting. They already have the plagues, but now they're given bowls. A symbol. A symbol. A vessel. A vessel for sacrifice. A bowl or a cup, it could be.

Bowl or a cup is the same thing that we saw back in chapter 5, verse 8, where the... Remember, the prayers of the saints were in a bowl. The prayers of the saints were in a bowl that came before God. Sacrifice. The prayers of sacrifice. Our prayers are sacrifices. Our prayers are... Go worship before the Lord like incense. They raise up to Him and they please Him. A bowl was really what the angel in chapter 8 of Revelation did when he...

When the angel of the altar took the incense from the fire and he takes fire and he takes the prayers of the saints. Remember, and he mixes them all together. And then he puts them on a censer, which is a bowl kind of thing.

And he takes it and he throws it upon the earth. So there it's an object that is poured out on the earth. That's what these bowls are going to be again. And now there's going to be seven of them instead of just one.

[49 : 39] There are bowls here now of judgment. What was a sacrifice to the Lord also becomes a judgment. What was a sacrifice of Jesus on the cross also was a judgment.

What saves us is also an immense cost. Right? Right? There's this fine line between worship and judgment.

Hmm. So we have bowls and then we have this smoke. We're told in verse 8, the sanctuary, the temple was filled with smoke.

And it's smoke, not from what we would think is fire, but smoke from what? The glory of God and from his power.

Smoke from his glory and power. And the effect of that is that no one could enter the sanctuary. No one could come into the temple.

[50 : 51] Now, think with me as believers. Are we not told that we can come before God? Because Jesus has taken the veil away.

Are we not told we can come right in to the Holy of Holies? We can come right before God. Here's a moment when no one can come. A moment, a time. Until this moment, he's approachable through Jesus.

Until this final judgment, come. Come. Once we reach this moment, no one can come.

It is now done. It is now finished. Awesome and terrifying, isn't it? His power is unmatched.

His power and glory are seen. By the way, I just reread Exodus 14 this morning, which is the, you know, going through the Red Sea. And both those words are pronounced. God says, I will show Pharaoh my glory.

[52 : 00] And then at the end, it says, Israel saw his power. Glory and power in judgment. Amen. So.

Seven bulls. Seven plagues. Full of God's wrath. God. God. Amen. So I came across a text that is extremely relevant to this back in the Old Testament.

It's Leviticus 26. It's a fascinating chapter because in Leviticus 26, God spells out the effect of the covenant, right? So we make a covenant with God at Sinai.

God says, I will be your God. I will make you a nation. I will keep you safe. I will give you a promised land. All of this. What I ask of you is you obey me.

Right? You fear me. You keep just 10, 10 laws. And so Leviticus 26 starts with, if you keep my commands.

[53 : 10] No, I will bless you. I will give you fruit, fruit, fruit harvest. I will give you protection from your enemies.

I will keep you healthy and wealthy. That's where health and wealth comes from. You got to keep the old covenant though for that. I will keep you healthy and wealthy and no one's going to touch

you.

You keep my word. You're good. Promised land, milk and honey. And then it comes to the second part of Leviticus 26.

And let me read it for you. Leviticus 26, verse 14. But if you will not listen to me. And will not do all these commandments.

If you spurn my statutes. If your soul abhors my rules. I mean, hate. Hate God's commandments? I used to.

[54 : 10] So that you will not do all my commandments. But break my covenant. Then I will do this to you. I will visit you with panic. With wasting disease and fever.

That consume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain. For your enemies shall leave it.

I will set my face against you. And you shall be struck down before your enemies. Those who hate you shall rule over you. And you shall flee when none pursues you. You shall flee when none pursues you.

And if, in spite of this, you will not listen to me. Then I will discipline you. Again. Seven fold for your sins.

And I will break the pride of your power. I will make your heavens like iron. And your earth like bronze. Try to farm men. And your strength shall be spent in vain.

[55 : 15] For your land will not yield its increase. And the trees of the land will not yield their fruit. Then. If you walk contrary to me.

In other words, you now are rebelling. Not just ignoring me, but rebelling. If you walk contrary to me. And will not listen to me. I will continue striking you. Seven fold for your sins.

I will let loose the wild beasts. Against you. Which shall be review of your children. And destroy your livestock. And make you few in number. So that the road shall be deserted.

And if by this discipline. You are not turned to me. See, because what I want is for you to turn to me. But you continue to walk contrary to me.

Then I also will walk contrary to you. And I myself will strike you seven fold for your sins.

[56 : 13] And I will bring a sword upon you. That you shall. That shall execute vengeance for the covenant that you broke. And if you gather within your cities. I will send pestilence among you.

And you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. When I break the supply of bread. Ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven. And shall dole out your bread again by weight.

And you shall eat and not be satisfied. But if. In spite of this. You still will not listen.

You still will ignore me. And walk contrary to me. Then. I will walk contrary to you.

In fury. In wrath. In heat. And I myself.

[57 : 12] Will discipline you. Seven fold. For your sins. And on and on. It goes. What I want you to notice about this text.

I know we hear. Oh he's going to get us. Get us. Get us. I want you to hear something else. He is absolutely patient. He had every right to take us out the first time.

But he warms. He's trying to get our attention. Hey. Hey. Hello. Come on now. How's things going? Not so well? Okay. Turn.

Turn. Turn. He is extremely patient. It is a process. He disciplines. He keeps engaging. He keeps pursuing.

He keeps seeking the sinner and the rebel. Why not just point out of their misery? Wouldn't that be the humane thing? No.

[58 : 11] He just keeps. Why? Because he wants us to turn. Turn. Turn. Turn. But I thought if I broke the covenant. I'm a dead man.

You are. But I can change that. I can raise you back up. If you'll turn. Because I'm a God who's merciful. And compassionate.

And loving. And forgiving. And absolutely I'm holy. There is an end where no more turning. Here's the sinner's problem.

Talking about me. We ignore God's word. God's word. And then you know we despise it.

We despise it. Wasn't there a time believers in your life when you hated God? Did you ever admit that? Because he called you to do something that you couldn't do.

[59 : 10] He demanded that you do something that you could not do. That's not fair. Right? Hate him. It's okay.

He knew that. You hate me. You despise. You hate. You abhor. Your soul abhors. My rules. You refuse. So we ignore. We despise. We hate. We refuse. And then we become outright rebels. And we become hardened. And we say in spite of all that's going against us. Because he keeps. Right? The wrath. Right? The wrath is. He keeps pulling back. He keeps pulling back. And he leaves us to ourselves. It's okay. Because all it matters is I didn't fall. But there's a point. Right? God is incredibly patient and merciful to us. [60:10] We ignore him. He keeps coming. He doesn't have to. He doesn't owe us anything. He loves us. He wants to give us every chance.

Every opportunity. And he will be absolutely just. And true. In his judgment. It is what we owe him. It's just the truth. So. Do you listen to God? It says if you will not listen to me. Do you listen to him? I'm not going to look and see if you're not or not. Have you felt his pursuit in your rebellion? I'm not talking just to unbelievers here. I'm talking to believers too. Because we. Believers can still rebel. Right? Yeah. Talk to David. Talk to Naomi. [61:13] Will you turn? Will you turn? This is another opportunity. Today's the day.

If you've been running from him. If you've been ignoring him. If you've been mad at him. And that's okay. But turn to him in that anger. Turn to him in that grief. In that pain. Turn to him. He alone can. He can take it by the way. Give it to him. If you're already thinking it and feeling it. He already knows. You're not going to offend him. Ooh. Can't say that to God. Can I? Yeah. Read the Psalms. Why should we turn to him? Because he forgives. He delivers us from guilt and shame. He gives us a true identity and hope. He gives us freedom, peace, joy. Why? Hmm. [62:16] My option is I can continue to defy him. And refuse his grace. Why? Because I can. Does it make sense?

Absolutely not. It's stupid. But I can. Have you been there? I've been there. I don't care. Christian, do you know the song of Moses and the Lamb? Can you say, the Lord is my salvation. The Lord is my strength. The Lord is my song. The Lord is my song. He makes me sing. He has done great things. His works in me are great and awesome. His ways toward me are just and true. Wait a minute. [63:17] No, they're not just. They're merciful. So. Okay. As we prepare for the Lord's table, we're going to sing a great song.

And draw me nearer. It's very appropriate for this point. Let that be our prayer. As we prepare for communion.