

Revelation 15:1-4—The Martyred Jewish Believers in Heaven

Revision: The two harvests

Last week we learned about two harvests at the end of Revelation 14. One is a harvest, by Jesus, of the enemies of God at the battle of Armageddon. The other is the harvest of believers. We need to remember that these harvests are not a part of the chronology of the book of Revelation—in other words, they are not in order. The context shows exactly where in the 7 year tribulation they actually fit or occur. For example, the 144,000 standing on Mt Zion can't happen until the end, because Jesus doesn't come back until the end of the 7 year tribulation. Revelation chapters 12-15 are all vignettes, meaning they explain some of the events that happen, but not necessarily when those events will happen.

Therefore, we can know from the context of the rest of the book that the first harvest of believers happens shortly after Jesus comes back (right after the Second Coming), because He is already on the earth. The second harvest, the harvesting of the "grapes of wrath" or the unbelievers happens when Jesus physically returns, at the Second Coming, and is called the battle of Armageddon. We also looked at other Scriptures to confirm this.

Also, just like Revelation chapters 12, 13 and 14 which we have covered, chapter 15 is also one of the many vignettes; stories with meaning, that show the most important personalities, organisations and events that will shake the world during that 7 year period of the Tribulation.

So, just to be clear, the harvests described at the end of chapter 14 are not chronological. Just like the 144,000 standing with Jesus on Mt Zion in Chapter 14, both of these events happen at the very end of the 7 year tribulation. In other words, it simply describes what will happen, but not when it will happen. It's the chapters that describe the various judgements move the story forward and provide the chronology of the book (chapters 6, 8-9, 16, and 19—22). Chapter 16 is the next chronological chapter as it describes the order of the bowl judgements.

Revelation 15—The Martyred Jewish Believers in Heaven

Revelation 15:1-4 NKJV

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

² And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

**"Great and marvellous are Your works,
Lord God Almighty!**

**Just and true are Your ways,
O King of the saints!**

**⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For You alone are holy.
For all nations shall come and worship before You,
For Your judgments have been manifested."**

Revelation chapter 15 and chapter 16 are inseparably linked together. Revelation 16 details the last seven judgements that will be poured out on this planet—the seven bowl judgements. They will be the most horrific, the most catastrophic, most destructive, most lethal, and most painful seven judgements that will ever hit this planet. Revelation chapter 15 shows us the divine viewpoint towards all this, and it shows *why* God is going to do this.

Again, in chapter 16 we see the pouring out of the last seven judgements, the bowl judgements, the last in a series of three sets of 7 judgements that are telescopic.

Q Who remembers the three sets of judgements? *The seven Seal Judgements, the seven Trumpet Judgements, and then the 7 Bowl Judgements.*

The seventh seal judgement opens up the seven trumpet judgements, and the seventh trumpet opens up the seven bowl judgements. At the end of the seventh bowl judgement, Jesus comes back to earth—the Second Coming!

So Revelation chapter 15 is the last interlude of grace, where God gives people a chance to reflect and respond to the message of Jesus Christ and His salvation—that is, a chance to repent.

2 Peter 3:9 AMP

The Lord does not delay and is not tardy or slow about what He promises, according to some people's conception of slowness, but He is long-suffering (extraordinarily patient) toward you, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance.

The judgements get greater and more intense as they go on. God in His mercy includes an interlude of grace or pause after each series of judgements. However, there will be no more interludes of grace once the bowl judgements start. It shows that God's patience has run out. This shows the end of God's patience for mankind. Let's start with verse 1.

The Third Great Sign—The wrath of God is Complete

Revelation 15:1 NKJV

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

v 1 **I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous:** Revelation 14 seemed to describe the consummation of all things, ending with the fury of the Battle of Armageddon. But now John will go back and describe God's judgment in more detail. This idea of stating and restating in more detail is common with prophecy, and with Hebrew literature in general (see Genesis 1:1–2:7 and Genesis 2:8–25).

v 1 **Another sign:** Greek: *Allos*, meaning another of the *same* kind of sign in Heaven. This is the third sign in Heaven. It's another of the same kind of sign as the other 2 signs that appeared in heaven—it also has great meaning. Here it is described as **great and marvellous**.

We'll go through the first two signs in a little while.

v 1 **Seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete:** This is what the third sign is. These seven last plagues are the last, because in them, the wrath of God is finished or complete. The seven last plagues refer to the seven bowl judgements that we will read about in Revelation chapter 16.

v 1 **For in them the wrath of God is complete:** The ancient Greek word for **wrath** is *thymos*. As was the case in Revelation 14:10, there are two words for wrath or anger in Biblical Greek: *thymos* (a volatile, passionate anger) and *orge* (anger from a settled disposition). This is a place where God's anger flashes hot.

v 1 **Complete:** This is a very interesting word. It comes from the Greek word *Teleste*. It's the same word used by Jesus when He cried out from the cross in John 19:30, "It is finished." The word means "paid in full". This Greek word was found on receipts, on parchments that show debts being paid in full, with no monies outstanding. It means the debt was completely paid. So when Jesus cried out *Tetelestai*, He was declaring that the sins or sin debt of man had been paid in full. The penalty of every sin that would ever be committed had been paid in full.

Something that I would like you to notice is that once Jesus said this, His prayer to the Father was completely different. Instead of saying as He did previously, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me, Jesus said, "Father, into Your hands I commit my Spirit. God the Son was back in fellowship with the God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus repeated "My God"? Why He said it twice, "My God, My God"...? Because Jesus was referring to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. God the Son was hanging on the cross. Jesus was addressing the other two members of the trinity. My God the Father, and My God the Holy Spirit. And yet here at the end, right after Jesus cries out, "Paid in full," He simply bowed His head, and went back to His intimate relationship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus was then able to pray, "Father, into Your hands I commit my Spirit." His relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit was restored. This shows that Jesus was no longer carrying the sins of the world. He was separated when He said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me." But now, after declaring "It is finished," Jesus is back in that beautiful and eternal relationship that He always had with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. I say this mainly because there are some who say that when Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth, hades, He continued to suffer. But no, Jesus was already victorious. He descended to Hades or hell victorious, He went there to set the captives free, the OT saints, and led them victoriously to heaven.

So how does the word **complete** or **finished** fit into the context of the last seven plagues? Well, it says that in these last seven plagues the wrath of God is complete. Hal Lindsay suggests that it could be translated this way:

"Because in this, the wrath of God against a Christ rejecting world, is paid in full." In other words, the cup of God's wrath which was reserved for judgement of the earth is now empty. So it's going to be something horrific.

The First Two Signs (revision)

The first great sign:

Revelation 12:1 NKJV

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

We studied this and learned that it refers to Israel. Joseph had a dream and his father Jacob interpreted the dream for us. Jacob was the sun, Joseph's mother the moon, and the 12 stars the twelve tribes of Israel. This was the first great sign, and it signifies that all through history, God had created the nation of Israel to be a great or miraculous sign of God's existence through them to make known the way of salvation to the gentiles. God said, "I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you, because in you I will bless all the nations."

God knew that because He had created Israel, and had stated that He was going to use them to reach out to the rest of the world and to bless the world through them, that they would become a target of Satan, and therefore they would need divine protection. Thus the promise, "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you." That covenant of physical protection by God of God's covenant people is still being kept by God to this day. Right now they are in unbelief, in the most part, but God still keeps His covenant with them.

The second great sign:

Revelation 12:3 NKJV

And another [of the same kind] sign [has meaning] appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

This represents the final form of the gentile world power, the revived Roman empire with its ten kings. It will be brought about by Satan (the dragon), and will be one of the greatest curses that mankind will ever experience. Unbelieving mankind will surrender their freedoms and willingly come under the control of the world's greatest psychopath—the world's most evil, cruel, deceptive, smooth talking, flattering, and manipulating leader ever—the antichrist.

The Sea of Glass

Revelation 15:2 NKJV

And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.

Q Where did we see a sea of glass before in Revelation? *Chapter 4.*

Revelation 4:6 NKJV

Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.

The difference between the “seas of glass” in Revelation 4 and 15 is that the one in chapter 4 is not mixed with fire. In chapter 15, the sea of glass is mixed with fire. Also, the martyrs who come out of this tribulation are standing on this sea of glass mixed with fire.

Q Why mixed with fire? *“The sea is designed to reflect the glory of God. In chapter 4 its description ‘like unto crystal’ speaks of the holiness of God. Here the sea mingled with fire speaks of divine judgment proceeding from God’s holiness.”* (Walvoord)

Fire in the bible often represents judgement.

Q What does the “sea of glass” represent? *It’s in contrast to the raging sea of people down here on earth.*

The bible says the nations are like the sea, it never rests, its waves are always rolling, bringing up dirt and mire etc. So this sea in heaven is a sea that’s so peaceful and smooth that it’s like glass. It represents the conditions that we will experience when we go to heaven—perfect peace.

v 2 Therefore, even though the Antichrist kills them, they **have victory over the beast**—they are *not* losers. The early church consistently described the day of martyrdom as “a day of victory.” This is always the way. When we suffer for Christ’s sake, we appear to lose, but we are actually winning. God’s kingdom is an upside down kingdom. Everything in God’s kingdom is opposite to the world.

v 2 **Having harps of God:** The only people seen with **harps** before were the twenty-four elders (Revelation 5:8). These tribulation martyrs are given the blessing of worshipping God with music in heaven.

The Jewish Tribulation Martyrs

We move on to verses three and four where we find out exactly who these tribulation martyrs are:

Revelation 15:3-4 NKJV

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

**“Great and marvellous are Your works,
Lord God Almighty!**

Just and true are Your ways,

O King of the saints!

4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For You alone are holy.

For all nations shall come and worship before You,

For Your judgments have been manifested.”

v 3 **They sing the song of Moses:** Only one song is sung, but this song goes by two titles (**the song of Moses** and **the song of the Lamb**). The two titles refer to a single song. Here is a perfect union between law and love, between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

This song is deeply rooted in the Old Testament and gives praise to:

- God's works (**Great and marvellous are Your works**)
- God's ways (**Just and true are Your ways**)
- God's worthiness (**Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy**)
- God's worship (**all nations shall come and worship before You**)

These people went through untold horrors during the Tribulation, but now they are celebrating with a joy that we can't even imagine. They have no regrets, no PTSD, no residual fears or discouragement or even disturbing memories. Everything they want is right in front of them—Jesus! They are true winners. Everything they did, gave up, and suffered is being repaid a billion times over. And as they enter eternity in the presence of God, they are singing with all of their might this new song that God is teaching them.

Application:

Remember that God doesn't make us or force us to give up things for Him. Instead He gives us the opportunity to give up things, even good things, for His sake, so that we can be greatly rewarded. We will be blessed both in this life and the next.

Mark 10:29-30 NLT paraphrase

"Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, ³⁰ will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life.

Remember what Jim Elliot said, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."

It isn't that God wants us to become miserable as we give things up, but rather that we would become so occupied with Him, that our concerns shift from trying to fit into all the demands of this world system to doing the things that bring honour and glory to God, and eternal reward to us. This is how we enter into the joy of the Lord, the joy of abiding with God, of walking in agreement with Him.

John 15:9-11 NLT paraphrase

"I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. 10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. 11 I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

Revelation 15:3-4—Have a look at all the personal pronouns: **Your ... Your ... You ... Your ... You ... You ... Your**—there's not one "me" or "my" or "I" in there: These martyrs are focused on God alone. They did not even focus on their own costly and glorious victory. Why? Because they did it only because God enabled and strengthened them. They have and demonstrate the heart of true worship, understanding that it's all about *God*, not about us. Many today make the focus of worship themselves; they want to have a nice emotional experience and come out feeling good. But the bible describes our praise as "the sacrifice of praise." It's

something we do to give to God, to bless God, not something we do so we feel blessed. Now there's nothing wrong with feeling good as we praise and worship God, but don't always be expecting those feelings. God wants us to worship Him no matter how we feel. We worship Him because He is worthy to be worshipped, and for no other reason. *Even a depressed person can still offer the sacrifice of praise to God. We don't walk by sight or feelings, we walk by faith in what is true. God is worthy of our worship even if we don't feel like He is.*

Q So who are these martyrs? *Well the title of the song gives us a big hint. They are singing the Song of Moses, and the Song of the Lamb. So it seems that these martyrs are Jewish.*

Q What is the Song of Moses? *"The song of Moses, recorded in Exodus 15, is the first song in the Bible. With their backs to the Red Sea, three million Jews looked up to see Pharaoh's army barreling down on them. "Moses, you've led us into a trap!" they cried because not one of them knew that God was about to do something totally unexpected, unpredictable, unprecedented. So it was not until after God intervened, after the Red Sea parted, after the children of Israel crossed safely to the other side that they sang, "The Lord has triumphed gloriously, the horse and rider thrown into the sea." Jon Courson*

The Song of Moses was sung by the Israelites after God's miraculous deliverance of the nation through the Red Sea, which included the destruction of Pharaoh's army.

Another evidence that these Tribulation martyrs are Jewish is that we have already seen the gentile martyrs in Revelation chapter 7.

Why is this segregation of Jews and gentiles so important? *Because it absolutely shows that the church can not be on the earth, that the rapture happens before the tribulation starts.*

Let me explain. If the church were still on earth during this period, you could not segregate believing Jews from believing gentiles. Why? Because of what it says all through the epistles of Paul—we are one body in Christ, and there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. Again, today, in the church age, there is no difference between Jew and gentile. Here is just one of those scriptures:

Galatians 3:27-29 NLT paraphrase

And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

In the church age, there are only two groups of people, saved and unsaved. Any saved person, Jew or gentile, will go up in the rapture. Any unsaved person, Jew or gentile, will enter the tribulation. But in the tribulation, temple worship will be restored, and God will use Israel again. There will again be a distinction between God's covenant people Israel and the gentiles. Now this doesn't mean that during the church age God has forgotten about His covenant promises with Israel, just that God is currently using the church. Consider that God is still working with Israel, bringing them back into the land of Israel. The Tribulation is the last seven years or week of years allotted to Israel, the

seventieth week of Daniels 70 weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:27). This will be a special time for the nation of Israel, as they do what they had usually failed miserably to do—to take the gospel to the gentiles. In that last 7 years they will have spectacular success, a multitude that no one can count will come to Christ through their witness (Revelation 7).

The Tabernacle of the Testimony in Heaven

Revelation 15:5 NKJV

After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.

v 5 Notice that it is called “**the temple of *the tabernacle of the testimony.***”

v 5 Also, it was **opened.**

But the most important thing is that it reveals what the purpose of the tabernacle is. The tabernacle that God directed Moses to build in the wilderness was an exact replica of the tabernacle in heaven. It was always designed to be a testimony, but a testimony of what?

Hebrews 8:5 NKJV

...who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “*See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.*”

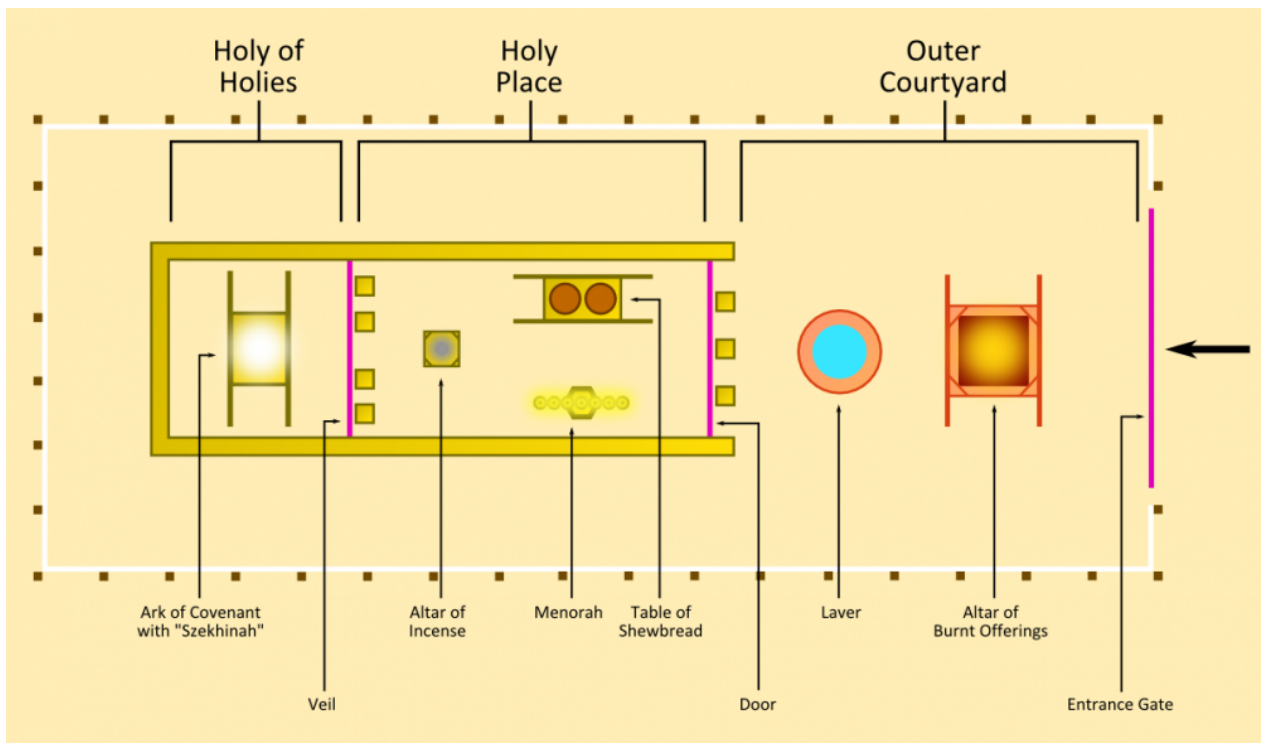
Numbers 1:50

...but you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle **of the Testimony**, over all its furnishings, and over all things that belong to it...

Here again, God says that the tabernacle is built to testify, it is built to give testimony. But again, of what?

Now, here in Revelation 15, the tabernacle is revealed to the believers, especially the Israelites. But how is it a testimony? Firstly, it would seem that God preferred the tabernacle over the temple, because the tabernacle emphasised this world is a temporary place, a place that we are just passing through. They could pack it up and carry it with them wherever they went.

Picture of the Tabernacle.



So how was the tabernacle a testimony?

1. If you look at the tabernacle, it was surrounded by a cloth fence all around. Each wooden pole made out of acacia wood was mounted on a silver socket. This is a type or picture that the only way into the tabernacle was through the redemptive work of the cross, the payment for our freedom, represented by the silver. Silver is always associated with the price paid for our salvation, the sacrifice required to buy our freedom.
2. There was only one way into the tabernacle, which shows that there is only one way to God—Through Jesus.
3. Directly in front of the front gate was a bronze altar and a bronze laver or sea that contained water. Brass is always associated with the judgement of sin. So you would look at that and see that the only way to get into the tabernacle to experience fellowship with God Himself, was through the sacrifice of an innocent substitute for my sins. What an awesome testimony. Hebrews brings this out more.
4. When you looked at the tabernacle from the outside, it was ugly, made of badger skins, but on the inside was a beautiful woven material. This was a picture that the Messiah, the Saviour who would come to be the one true sacrifice, who would not just cover sin like the animal sacrifices, but rather would take away the sins of the world, that when they saw Him, He would have no external beauty that people would be attracted to.

Isaiah 53:2b NLT paraphrase

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.

It was only once they got to know Jesus that they recognised His true beauty.

5. When they went into the first part, there was only one source of light, the Menorah with its seven branches. This is a picture of Jesus being the light of the world.

6. There was the altar of incense just before the curtain that led into the Holy of Holies. This shows that we come into God's presence with praise and prayer.

7. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would place his hands on the head of the animal and confess the sins of the nation. He would then kill the animal and take some of the blood into the Holy of Holies, the second section of the tabernacle. Again, only the high priest could go in, and only once a year.

But once he went into the holy of holies, there was no natural source of light, but between the cherubim, above the mercy seat, was the Shekinah glory of God. This represented the glory and presence of God. The mercy seat rested on a box called the ark of the covenant, which contained the 10 commandments. The mercy seat separated the presence of God from the law, the 10 commandments. The high priest would then sprinkle some of the blood from the sacrifice onto the mercy seat, making atonement for all the sins of the nation for a period of only one year.

This was all a picture of what Jesus would do later on. Hebrews makes it clear that the priests should have realised that those sacrifices could never make anyone perfect, and that a better sacrifice was needed. Well, Jesus is the better and perfect sacrifice. Jesus took His own blood, went into the real tabernacle in Heaven and sprinkled some of His own blood on the real mercy seat (not the copy on earth), and in doing so atoned for the sins of all mankind forever (not just a year and not just for the nation of Israel). Jesus is the once and for all sacrifice who atones or pays for the sins of all mankind forever.

So I went into all of that to show you why the tabernacle is called the tabernacle of testimony, and what a great testimony it has—it points us to Jesus in so many ways.

Q Now the question is, why is it focused on at this time? *Because it is to remind them that the reason these horrific and terrible judgements are about to be poured out onto the world is because they didn't receive His testimony—instead they rejected it. They didn't receive what Jesus died for and gave freely so that they could receive a pardon for their sins.*

1 John 2:2 NLT Paraphrase

He himself is the sacrifice (propitiation, payment or mercy seat) that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

Romans 3:23-25 NLT paraphrase

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵ **For God (the Father) presented Jesus (God the Son) as the sacrifice (propitiation, payment, or mercy seat) for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.**

The mercy seat represents Jesus as our payment for sins. It's where His blood would be applied or sprinkled and our sin debt paid, averting or turning away God's wrath from us. However, the world rejected that gift and so must suffer. The Hebrew word translated as mercy seat in the Old Testament is the same word translated as propitiation in the New Testament. So the testimony of the tabernacle, as explained in Hebrews 2:17 and 1 John 2:2 and Romans 3:25 is that God Himself, Jesus, would be the propitiation or payment for the sins of all mankind, that the wrath of God that resulted from us breaking His law would be satisfied and we could be free to enter into His presence.

Revelation 15:6-8 NKJV

And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. ⁷ Then 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. ⁸ The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

The seven last plagues are represented by seven bowls full of God's wrath, which will be poured out onto the earth, one at a time. Each of the seven angels is responsible for one plague. We will study them next week. The last plague represents the end of the 7 year tribulation when Jesus comes back. After this there is no more chance for people to repent.

Conclusion/Application—The Testimony of the Tabernacle

I would like to finish by going over the Testimony of the Tabernacle—what did it testify?

1. Silver represents our redemption:

If you look at the tabernacle, it was surrounded by a cloth fence all around. Each wooden pole made out of acacia wood was mounted on a silver socket.

Q What does the silver represent? *Silver is a type or picture that the only way into the tabernacle was through the redemptive work of the cross, the payment for our freedom. Silver is always associated with the price paid for our salvation, the sacrifice required to ransom us or buy our freedom.*

The story gets even more interesting. In Exodus 38 it tells us that the census tax of 1/2 a shekel of silver paid by every person over 20 years old was used to make the silver bases for the wooden poles that held up the curtain. The half shekel of silver was redemption money. The census was when people were numbered. If they didn't pay the tax then they would be killed by plague. The silver redeemed them from the plague. From this silver given by the people, the silver sockets were made.

See also Numbers 3:49, where silver was called "redemption money."

Exodus 38:25-27 NKJV

And the silver from those who were numbered of the congregation was one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: ²⁶ a beka for each man (that is, half a shekel, according to the

shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone included in the numbering from twenty years old and above, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty men. ²⁷ **And from the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: one hundred sockets from the hundred talents, one talent for each socket.**

Numbers tells us that the firstborn of all people had to be redeemed by silver, but the firstborn of all clean animals used as sacrifices on the altar could not be redeemed—they must be killed on the altar—a picture of man being redeemed and a substitute dying in their place.

Numbers 18:15-17 NLT paraphrase

... But you must always redeem your firstborn sons ... ¹⁶ Redeem them when they are one month old. The redemption price is five pieces of silver...

¹⁷ “However, you may not redeem the firstborn of cattle, sheep, or goats. They are holy and have been set apart for the Lord. Sprinkle their blood on the altar, and burn their fat as a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

Notice that the people were redeemed with silver, but the clean animals used as sacrifices could not be redeemed—they became a sacrifice to God—a picture of Jesus dying but humanity being redeemed.

2. There is only one way into the Tabernacle:

Q Why was there only one way into the tabernacle? There was only one way into the tabernacle to show that there is only one way to God — Through Jesus.

1 Timothy 2:5-6

For there is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. ⁶ He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone.

John 10:9

I am **the** door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

3. The Bronze altar and bronze laver:

Directly in front of the front gate was a bronze altar and a bronze laver or sea that contained water.

Q What did the brass altar signify? *Brass is always associated with the judgement of sin. So you would look at that and see that the only way to get into the tabernacle to experience fellowship with God Himself, was through the sacrifice of an innocent substitute for my sins.*

4. The tabernacle was ugly on the outside, but beautiful on the inside:

When you looked at the tabernacle from the outside, it was ugly, made of badger skins, but on the inside was a beautiful woven material.

Q Why was the tabernacle of testimony designed like this? *This was a picture that the Messiah, the Saviour who would come to be the one true sacrifice, that when they saw Him, He would have no external beauty that people would be attracted to.*

Isaiah 53:2b NLT paraphrase

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.

It was only once they got to know Jesus that they recognised His true beauty.

5. When they went into the first part, there was only one source of light, the Menorah with its seven branches:

Q What was this a picture of? *This is a picture of Jesus being the light of the world.*

6. There was the altar of incense just before the curtain that led into the Holy of Holies:

This shows that we come into God's presence with praise and prayer and also that the ministry of the High Priest was to pray for the people, as Jesus prays for us.

7. The Day of Atonement:

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would place his hands on the head of the animal and confess the sins of the nation. He would then kill the animal and take some of the blood into the Holy of Holies, the second section of tabernacle. Again, only the high priest could go in, and only once a year.

Q What is this a picture of? *Jesus is the better and perfect sacrifice. Jesus took His own blood, went into the real tabernacle in Heaven and sprinkled some of His own blood on the real mercy seat (not the copy on earth), and in doing so atoned for the sins of all mankind forever (not just a year and not just for the nation of Israel). Jesus is the once and for all sacrifice who atones or pays for the sins of all mankind forever.*

Q What happens to the person who rejects this sacrifice on their behalf? *Judgement. There is no mercy to those who reject Jesus. All sins can be forgiven except the sin of rejecting Jesus as the payment for your sins.*

John 16:8-9 NKJV

And when He [the Holy Spirit] has come, He will convict the world of [only one] sin,...⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me;

So we see the those "who dwell on the earth", representing or signifying those who are at home on the earth, who find their comfort in the things of the world; they reject Jesus because they are unwilling to give up the things of the world. They loved sin more than their eternal soul and so must pay the price forever. This is the same choice that we all have today.

John 3:18-19 NKJV

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

May we be children of the light who hate the darkness.