

## Revelation 15 – The New Exodus of God’s People

### I. The Introduction of The Final Plagues (1)

A. These Plagues Will Be Poured Out In The Bowl Judgments of Ch. 16

B. This Introduces the Culmination of God’s Covenant Judgment

1. This verse is an introductory vision which is further explained in vv. 5-8

a. We will see in chapter 16 that the bowl judgments parallel the trumpet judgments we have already seen

b. These judgments (here called plagues) are a recapitulation of what we have already seen in Revelation.

i. The word plague was also used of the trumpet judgments in Revelation 9:20

2. Verse one is a superscript of the rest of the book

a. God’s wrath will be finished with these seven plagues

b. The word used is *teleo* (τελεω) which means something has reached its goal.

C. The Seven Plagues Paint a Vivid Picture

1. The Old Testament saturated mind would immediately be drawn to Leviticus 26:21 – “If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins.” (ESV omits the word plagues in Lev. 26:21)

a. This was a warning of covenant judgment against Israel

b. Leviticus 26:21 (in the Septuagint) is the only other place this phrase is used.

c. The plagues of Egypt are also promised to national Israel if they fail to keep the covenant (Deut. 28:60-61)

2. The Old Testament saturated mind would also recognize the references throughout this chapter to the Exodus of Israel from Egypt.

a. The plagues effect the oppressors of God’s people

b. God’s people are seen beside the sea

c. God’s people are singing “the song of Moses”

### II. The Victorious Exodus of God’s People (2-4)

A. The Picture of The New Exodus (2-3a)

1. The Sea of Glass Mingled with Fire (2a)

a. We have seen this sea of glass before –

i. It corresponds to the brass laver in the Tabernacle and the Temple (Ex. 30:17; 1 Ki. 7:23-26)

ii. Remember we are seeing the heavenly reality which the earthly tabernacle was patterned after

iii. The pattern for the Tabernacle was given by God to mirror the heavenly Tabernacle

- b. There is also a parallel with the Exodus account
    - i. God's people are seen on the sea of glass coming out from their oppressors
    - ii. They will sing the song of Moses just like the people of Israel did when they crossed the Red Sea
    - iii. Interestingly enough, some of the Jewish Midrash literature (Jewish sermons and homilies on OT texts) speaks of the Red Sea as a crystallized kind of glass after the Egyptians were drowned and the sea returned to normal.
- 2. The Conquerors of The Beast (2b-3a)
  - a. They conquered the beast and his image
    - i. Like the Exodus, this is not a military victory
    - ii. They are conquerors by holding fast to their faith in the midst of their oppression and persecutions
    - iii. They have not worshiped the beast or his image
      - The beast (Rome) and the harlot (Jewish Leadership) have colluded to persecuted the Christians
      - We will see in chapter 17 that the beast ultimately turns on the harlot and devours her.
  - b. They stand on (in; beside) the sea of glass
  - c. They are holding harps of God
    - i. God's true people passing through the sea in a new exodus prepare themselves to worship
    - ii. They worship the true God
  - d. They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb (3a)
    - i. The song they sing is characterized as the song of Moses in that they are coming out from their oppressors and crossing through the sea
      - The song of Moses is sung in Exodus 15:1-18
      - It is a song of deliverance and praise for God's work
      - Deuteronomy 32 is also called a song of Moses and its focus is wrath against apostate Israel for its idolatry.
      - The song in Revelation 3b-4 is not parallel to the song of Moses in Exodus 15, but references to texts throughout the OT extolling God's greatness and character
    - ii. The son they sing is also characterized as the song of the Lamb

- There are not two songs referenced. The song they sing is the song of Moses and the Lamb
- They sing praises to God for the Lamb's victory over the beast
- The people of the Lamb are coming out from their oppressors in a new exodus, but the roles are reversed and the remnant is being delivered from adulterous Jerusalem.

#### B. The Song of The New Exodus (3b-4)

1. God's Sovereign Ways are Great and Righteous (3b)
2. God's Holy Name Will Be Feared and Worshiped (4a)
3. God's Righteous Acts are Now Revealed (4b)
  - a. The song includes allusions to several OT texts
  - b. These include Deut. 32; Ps. 110; Ps. 85; Ps. 86; Isa. 66 and many more

### III. Divine Judgment is Prepared for God's Enemies (5-8)

#### A. The Heavenly Tabernacle is Open (5)

1. The true tabernacle in heaven is referenced as being open again (almost the exact phrasing as in Rev. 11:9)
2. John is still using OT Covenant Language
  - a. Here he calls it the sanctuary of the tabernacle of the testimony
  - b. The basic covenant document of Israel is the Decalogue
    - i. The ten commandments are often called "the testimony" (See. Ex. 16:34; 25:16, 21-22; 31:18; 32:15)
    - ii. This testimony (i.e. the Decalogue) was kept in the tabernacle
    - iii. The tabernacle where the Decalogue was kept is often called the "tabernacle of the testimony" (see. Ex. 38:21; Num. 1:50, 53; 9:15; 10:11; Acts 7:44)
  - c. The Church is the true Temple and Tabernacle in Heaven

#### B. The Bowls of Wrath Are Prepared (6-7)

1. Seven Angels Come from the Tabernacle
  - a. They are dressed similar to the Son of Man
    - i. Their garments are almost exactly the same as the Son of Man seen in Revelation 1:13
    - ii. Their garments are similar to the Son of Man in Daniel 10:5
    - iii. They are pictured as priests of the covenant representing the Son of Man who is exalted in heaven and has received the everlasting

kingdom. They are prepared to release the promised judgments of the covenant.

- b. They are given seven bowls of God's wrath
  - i. These *phiale* (bowls or vials) refer to libation bowls that were used for the drink offerings in the OT.
  - ii. These drink offerings were poured out at the daily sacrifice after the trumpets sound
  - iii. They also allude to Isa. 51:17 which talks about the wrath formerly on Israel that will be poured out on Babylon (Jerusalem is now characterized by Babylon, the great city in Revelation)

C. The Glory of God Fills the Tabernacle (8)

- 1. The Tabernacle fills with the smoke of God's glory when His presence is there
  - a. Exodus 40:34-35 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.
  - b. 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 When the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the Lord saying, "He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting," then the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.
  - c. Ezekiel 10:3-4 Now the cherubim were standing on the right side of the temple when the man entered, and the cloud filled the inner court. Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the Lord.
- 2. In the Ezekiel text, the man in linen stands by the four living creatures in the heavenly temple and introduces an announcement of judgment.
- 3. There will be no interruption in God's judgment and no priest can intercede for them – they have rejected the true priest.