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REVELATION

The Beginning of the End

Revelation 15

Erika Kirk posted on:

September 9th - *Psalm 34:8 - Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!*

September 10th - *Psalm 46:1 - God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Our Wednesday evening study:

Psalm 91:1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

Psalm 90:12 So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

PRAYER

INTRODUCE STEVE HOGG

Rev 15:1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

I. Introduction

- a. We are approaching the finality of God's judgment
 - i. Language used at the beginning of Chapter 15 and at the end Chapter 16 – Bowl Judgements
 - ii. 15:1—"Because in them the wrath of God is finished." - 16:17 - "And a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, 'It is done.'"
 - iii. These last seven judgments that come in the form of plagues are the culmination of God's wrath
 1. They are the only sign in heaven that John describes as great and marvelous – because these are the last plagues mankind will ever know
 2. For in them the wrath of God is complete – God's wrath has reached its telos – it's purpose, goal, or final end
 3. Even the imagery of a bowl being poured out or emptied carries the idea of completion
 4. God's anger is not out of control, unbridled – His wrath isn't an emotional eruption without aim or end – it is deliberate and measured
 - iv. In Leon Morris' *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, he points out that the wrath of God is God's "**strong and settled opposition to all that is evil.**"
 1. A strong and settled opposition "arising out of God's very nature." His wrath "is a burning zeal for right coupled with a perfect hatred for everything that is evil."

- b. As with the seals and the trumpets – The Lord starts with a vision that prepares the apostle John for the events that are about to unfold.

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 marvelous 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." 5 After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6 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.

II. The Victory of the Saints

- a. Verse 2 we are introduced again to God's people – like the 144,000 in chapter 14 – they belong to God and we have a lot to learn about what it means to belong to Him
 - i. What does it truly mean to be the people of God? The nation of Israel missed it – is the church missing it today?
 - ii. Marked by Loyalty to Christ
 - 1. No questions about devotion - They have the name of the Lamb and His Father written on their foreheads.
 - 2. It is impossible to miss – it isn't hidden – it is the core of their identity – they belong to Jesus and the world knows it
 - iii. Lives Marked by Worship and Joy
 - 1. Every time the scene shifts to heaven there is an overflow of worship
 - 2. Gratitude and testimony – the people of God, in the presence of God, singing the praises of God
 - iv. Lives that are Set Apart
 - 1. Clear allegiance - uncompromised by idolatry, immorality, or the corrupt systems of Babylon.
 - 2. Friendship with the world is enmity with God – do not be conformed to this world but be transformed
 - a. There is a clear distinction between the people of God and the systems of this world
 - b. Quality of love, depth of mercy, response to pain, and trial, and loss
 - v. Faithful Followers of the Lamb
 - 1. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes
 - a. Look around at your life and ask the question "How did I get here?"
 - b. How did I end up in this job, this house, this lifestyle, with these hobbies
 - c. Can you say "I am here because I followed the Lamb here?"
 - d. One day we will say "I am in heaven because I followed the Lamb here." Why wait until then?

2. Disciples of Jesus follow Him wherever He goes – Obedience is not a bad word – it’s the essence of abiding, remaining, trusting, and taking refuge in Him
- vi. The People of God are Victorious
 1. How can you say that? Many Christians have died and many more will? Many Christian go through terrible things, suffer terrible loss. How can we say that these end time believers were victorious when they were executed by the beast?
 - a. Because they did not give in to the beast, even in the face of death. They were faithful until the end – not loving their own lives
 - b. William Barclay writes: *“It was the very fact that they had died that made them victors; if they had remained alive by being false to their faith, they would have been defeated.” We know from documents of the early church that the day of a person’s martyrdom was called the day of his or her victory. It was a victory because they did not succumb to the pressure to compromise.... ‘The real victory is not to live in safety, to evade trouble, cautiously and prudently to preserve life; the real victory is to face the worst that evil can do, and if need be to be faithful unto death.’*
 - c. Death is not the end – it is only the beginning – there is nothing that man can do
 2. That is why we see these saints standing on a sea of glass
 - a. The sea symbolizes chaos, evil, rebellion, danger, and destruction
 - i. You see this in the disciples’ experience on the Sea of Galilee
 1. Jesus calmed the raging sea, Peter walked on water
 - b. The beast and the false prophet rise out of the chaos and turmoil
 - c. But the saints are pictured here standing on the sea – so calm and so still – that it looks like glass
 - i. Mingled with fire – God’s judgement
 - ii. *The chaos and danger are brought to an end - the sea is silent, it is still - God has put an end to the evil that has emerged from it*
 3. This echoes the Exodus story: Pharaoh’s armies came “from the sea,” but Israel stood on the other side of the Red Sea, singing the song of Moses (Exod. 15).
 - a. Revelation 15 – what are the saints singing - “the song of Moses and the Lamb.”

III. *The Song of the Saints*

- a. Harps given by God – this is His victory given to them
 - i. One commentator points out “The Lamb’s people do not sing the song in the comfort of a sanctuary. They sing the song standing on the sea, standing on the powers of chaos. The powers finally subdued by the Lamb.”
- b. Why is it called the “**song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb**”
 - i. Are there two songs here? Is John referring to Exo 15 and then what we have here in Rev 15 – two separate songs?
 - ii. Or, and I think this is more likely, is this the song of Moses sung now in the light of what Christ has done for us?

1. The Song of Moses was sung or at the very least read during every Sabbath celebration
2. It was also sung every Passover at the moment when the Passover lambs were slain
- c. Your works are great and marvelous, your judgement is right and true – Who shall not fear You? You alone are holy.
 - i. ***For all nations shall come and worship before You***
 - ii. Their song is rooted in scripture – As one author writes “*Why sing a new song using words of Scripture? Because they want to sing to God accurately, rightfully, and in a manner consistent with who God really is. God has revealed himself in the words of Scripture*”
 - iii. And it is God centered – YOU is sung 7 times

IV. The Tabernacle of Testimony

- a. Final quality of the people of God is found in verse 5
 - i. ***5 After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened***
 - ii. Testimony – witness – martyr
 - iii. What was the tabernacle of testimony and why does John see it now?
 1. The tabernacle of testimony (witness) in the Old Testament, contained the stone tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments (Ark of the Testimony)
 2. Located in the center of the camp, with the tribes arranged around it - It was God’s dwelling place where His presence resided among His people and where sacrifices, priestly ministry, and atonement took place.
 3. But the tabernacle of witness was born out of something far less ornate and ordered
- b. Moses meets with God
 - i. ***Exo 33: 7 Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp. 8 So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. 9 And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. 10 All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door. 11 So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.***
 1. Before the tabernacle of witness we had the tent of meeting – before the presence of God dwelt in the midst of the people, Moses met with God outside of the camp
 2. As Moses met with God in the tent of meeting what did want? ***Exo 33: 12 Then Moses said to the Lord, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ 13 Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in***

Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.” 14 And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” 15 Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.” 17 So the Lord said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.” 18 And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.” 19 Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” 20 But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” 21 And the Lord said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. 22 So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. 23 Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

- c. There is no tabernacle of witness without the tent of meeting
 - i. And there is no authentic praise with God’s presence – what we have seen in Revelation consistently is God’s people, in God’s presence, singing God’s praises
 - ii. There is no greater witness the one who spends time in the presence of Jesus
 - iii. *Act 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.*