

Bible Study Guide: Week of 10-30-2023

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

Revelation 15

Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended. ²And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and 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. ³And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: “Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, King of the nations! ⁴Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your judgments have been revealed.”

⁵After this I looked, and the temple of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, ⁶and out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues, robed in pure bright linen, with golden sashes across their chests. ⁷Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever; ⁸and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were ended.

Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended.

Here John sees another “portent” or “sign” in heaven. This is a good place to remind ourselves that John’s vision is just that—a vision. These “signs” are visions that point beyond themselves to a truth about God and the world. They are not necessarily visions of things that will come to pass literally. Once again, the number 7 has symbolic significance for John, representing God’s perfection and completion. The seven plagues are reminiscent of the plagues God poured out on Egypt prior to the Exodus. Evidently, this last outpouring of God’s wrath is the last such act in John’s vision.

²And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and 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. ³And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: “Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, King of the nations! ⁴Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your judgments have been revealed.”

John then reports on the actions of the saints of God who have overcome the beast. They gather beside a glassy, fiery sea with harps and sing praise to God. They sing the song of Moses, ostensibly a reference to Moses’ song in Exodus 15 which he and the people sang in praise to God for God’s deliverance through the Red Sea. In the same way Moses and the Israelites gloated over Pharaoh and his armies beside the Red Sea, God’s people will gloat over the beast beside the glassy, fiery sea. They also sing a new song; the song of the Lamb, the words of which John seems to give us here in vs. 3 and 4.

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The stage for chapter 16 is set here as the seven angels are laden with golden bowls full of God's wrath to pour out onto the earth. Smoke fills the temple, reminiscent of Isaiah's vision in Isaiah 6. The theme of waiting continues here as no one is allowed into the temple until the work of the angels is finished.

Discussion/Reflection Questions:

- 1. What do you think John is speaking of when he speaks of God's wrath?**
- 2. What do you think is the significance of the clothing of the angels in v. 6?**
- 3. Where is the good news in this passage? Where do we find comfort despite all of the frightening images here?**