

The Prelude to The Seven Plagues

Revelation 15:1-8



The Revelation of Jesus Christ

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Main Idea: God rescues and delivers His people through the fullness of His presence.

In chapter 15, we have the prelude to the seven plagues. After the harvest of the earth, we see those who resisted the beast without its bearing its name. They endured the consequences of resisting the one who parades as a king and attempts to conquer the spirit by controlling and indulging the flesh. Thus, those who endured, fixating their eyes on the eternal and one true King, receive the glory of eternity with Jesus Christ. They stand on the sea of glass mentioned similarly in Revelation 4. Yet, this time, fire mingles with the sea of glass. The wrath of God and the holiness of God is complete in the brining of the seven plagues. God's full presence physically manifests itself through the flames as smoke pours out of the tent of meeting.

The Song of Moses

In understanding the song of Moses, we have to conceptually understand what God directed Moses to do. The people of God who trapped in slavery under the thumb of Egyptian slave drivers and Pharaoh himself. For years, Pharaoh subjugated the Israelites in fear of their growing numbers and influence. God, hearing their prayers, through the acts of miracles, plagues, and hearing the prayers of the people, delivered His people from the hands of slavery and death. Yet, God did not abandon His people in the desert, even when they grumbled against Him. The song of Moses celebrates the redemption of the people of God by the hand of God through the persecution and sin.

However, when God finished the wrath and judgment with the final seven plagues, the story is the same as Moses but on a much grander scale. Rather than being saved from the slavery of the Egyptians, God saves his people from the slavery of their flesh and sin. Furthermore, at no time did God abandon His people through the desert of waiting on the Lord's promises, but guides

them at every step. We, like the people of Israel, receive the guarantee of a promise and await its fulfillment. Thus, the song of Moses awaits the fullness of the Lord's coming declaring that we are saved by the blood of the Lamb. The completeness of God's judgment roots itself in the heart of God who seeks to return His people to himself.

The Smoke of Glory

Throughout the whole of scripture, smoke often times comes from the glory of God's presence. Whether it be from God veiling Himself for the protection of the people or the world reacting to God's holiness, often times, a veil of smoke indicated God's nearness to the people. The world, being inherently sinful in need of salvation cannot withstand the full presence of a Holy God. In the throne room of heaven, the very throne could not sustain the presence of God without reacting violently with flashes of lightning and rolls of thunder. Thus, for the fullness of God's presence to be near, God withheld the fullness of His presence.

However, one important thing to note is the direction of the smoke. Previously, the smoke acted as a veil for the presence of God. Now, it leaves the tent of meeting, where people would have gone to the presence of God and goes out into all the earth. The rescue mission of God's people by the hand of God has always been an invasion where God becomes present in the everyday life of man to bring them out of their sin and sickness. The finality of the seven bowls with the seven plagues comes from the fullness of the presence of God in the every day. Those who experience a relationship with Jesus Christ experience a separate eternity than those who don't. The fullness of the presence of God will not be withheld from those whose identity roots itself in the person of Jesus Christ. Those who reject Christ will ultimately experience the fullness of God's presence as well through the finality of pouring out the seven bowls of seven plagues. Eternal judgment will reign down from the holiness of God.

Discussion Questions

- What does the song of the angels focus on? Does it celebrate the defeat of the dragon and beast or the goodness of God? What is the difference between those two things?
- Where do you see imagery and references to Moses and the Old Testament covenant? How do the two compare? In what ways does the Old Testament point to Jesus Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of the law and prophets?
- Should we fear the presence of God? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to experience the presence of God? How does experiencing God's presence change or affect a person?
- What are you most thankful for with your relationship with Jesus Christ? How have you experienced the grace, love, and protection from Jesus Christ? When did you most feel His presence in your life?