

Revelation 15

“Remember the Song”

Songs > Very Powerful > Open Memories > Hear Few Notes > Already Singing!
 HS Student Camping/Rafting Trip > Colorado River > CA & AZ Border
 Open Air Bar & Restaurant on River near our Campsite > Juke Box
 Ancient Relic > Record Player > Plays Records > Pre-Dates 8-Track Tapes!!
 Camp Director did NOT Like SONG “Candy Man” – Sammy Davis, Jr.
 BAD BOYS > went to Juke Box > All Coins for Endless Playing of “Candy Man”
 One of BAD BOYS > Can still Remember Most of Stupid Song 30+ yrs Later

Revelation 15 > SONG of VICTORY in Heaven > Song of HOPE on Earth

1. Sign of Certainty
2. Sea of Confidence
3. Song of Celebration

1. Sign of Certainty

v. 1 “I saw in heaven another *great and marvelous sign*”

a. Proof – SIGN = Act of God > POINTING to His Power and Glory

Jesus turning Water into Wine at Wedding in Cana
 Tongues of Fire on Believer’s Heads on Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem
 Signs Point BEYOND Themselves > Theological Meaning of History

ANOTHER SIGN “A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet...” Revelation 12.1

REVEALS God v. 3 “Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty”

God has TRUE SIGNS > Satan has COUNTERFEIT Signs
 “Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon” Revelation 12.3
 SATAN > NOT Great and Marvelous > COPYCAT, Liar, DECIEVER

Everywhere John’s Readers Looked > Rome was SOVEREIGN EMPIRE
 Idolatry was VIBRANT RELIGION > Caesar was INVINCIBLE LEADER

“the first beast...performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. Because of the signs...he deceived the inhabitants of the earth” Revelation 13.12-14

Things NOT ALWAYS as THEY SEEM > DON’T BE FOOLED

b. Plagues > TRUE SIGN OF GOD > Acts of Final Judgment on Earth

v. 1 “I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues”

Ch 15 > INTRODUCTION to Ch 16 > Details 7 Judgment BOWLS Poured Out

GLOBAL CALAMITY > From GOOD & GRACIOUS GOD > Perfect JUSTICE
“Great and Marvelous, Sign from HEAVEN”

v. 3 “Just and true are your ways, King of the ages.”

“Seven angels sent from God’s heavenly sanctuary stand ready to pour out bowls full of plagues, bringing utter destruction to the old, sin-stained, curse-infected earth, and to all who think themselves at home there.” Dennis E. Johnson

c. Purity Robes White > Pure Bright Radiance of Heaven

v. 1 “seven angels” // v. 6 “They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests.”

Golden Sashes > Emblem of Dignity and Authority of the Lord they Serve
Symbolic of Royal and Priestly Functions

SEVEN ANGELS > PLAYERS ON THE JESUS TEAM > SAME UNIFORM
“someone ‘like a son of man,’ dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest” Revelation 1.13

“The appearance of the angels symbolizes their spotlessness. It emphasizes the purity from which the wrath is poured out on the world. This is no bestial thing, evil with passion. It is a pure concern for the right.” Leon Morris

d. Perfect

v. 1 “seven last plagues--last, because with them God's wrath is completed”

Study // Climbing SPIRAL STAIRCASE > Wider Vista of God’s PURPOSE
PURPOSE > Centered in and through Christ > From 1st to 2nd ADVENT

DEEPER VIEW of Cosmic Conflict > Seen Already: 7 Seals & 7 Trumpets

VISIONS as John Saw Them > Not Necessarily CHRONOLOGICAL Order
7 Bowls > Downfall of Babylon > Defeat of Beasts and Dragon

“These visions provide varying camera angles on the same history-consummating battle, in which God and his Christ will triumph.” Dennis E. Johnson

7 = Being and Power of God > Confirms Completeness of His Work
Inevitability of God’s Purpose > in Judgment & Salvation

Pouring out 7 Plagues > Wrath of God is Completed > God’s Justice Satisfied
All Ready for New Heaven & Earth > New Creation free from Sin & Consequences

vs. 5 “After this I looked and in heaven the temple, that is, the tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened.”

JOHN SEES Tent of Witness in Heaven > Earthly Tabernacle was mere Shadow
“When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.” Hebrews 9.11

v. 6 “Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues”

EXPANDS EARLIER VISION > SAME BOWLS FILLED with PRAYERS
“four living creatures...each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” Revelation 5.8

See SAME 4 Creatures give 7 Golden Bowls full of Wrath of God to 7 Angels
From Bowls > Plagues will be Poured out on Earth > Next Chapter

From Fragrant Smoke of Prayers of Saints > NOW Smoke of Judgment RISES
Prayers of the Saints > Directly Connected to FINAL JUDGMENT of God

2. Sea of Confidence

v. 2 “And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire”

PASSAGE POINTS back to EXODUS –

v. 1 “plagues” / v. 3 “Moses the servant of God” / v. 5 “the tabernacle of the Testimony”

John’s Readers: Christians in Fallen Babylon // Hebrews in Egyptian Bondage

For OT Believer > RED SEA = GROUND ZERO > Holy Place of Redemption
 // NT Believer > CROSS of Calvary > Place where Redemption Accomplished

“Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man's behalf! He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the waters on foot-- come, let us rejoice in him.”
 Psalm 66.5,6

“You, O God, are my king from of old; you bring salvation upon the earth. It was you who split open the sea by your power”
 Psalm 74.12,13

What GOD DID in RED SEA > Completely CHANGED Situation of Hebrews

a. From Complaining to Confidence

Complaining: “All Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen and troops--pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they camped by the sea...the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, *‘Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt?’*”
 Exodus 14.9-11

Confidence: “When the Israelites saw the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people *feared the LORD and put their trust in him* and in Moses his servant.”
 Exodus 14.31

b. From Panic to Peace

Panic: “Didn't we say to you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians’? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!”
 Exodus 14.12

Peace: “The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea. The deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone. Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy.”
 Exodus 15.3-6

c. From Poverty to Plunder

Poverty: “A new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.

‘the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them’...So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor” Exodus 1.8-11

Plunder: “The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.” Exodus 12.35,36

d. From Slaves to Sons

Slaves: ‘The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God.’ Exodus 2.23

Sons: “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” Exodus 19.4-6

RED SEA: PROFOUND SYMBOL > All is Changed > Divine PERISTROIKA

EVERLASTING REMINDER > Hebrew leaders met God on Mt. Sinai -
 “Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like *a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.*” Exodus 24.9.10

God who RULED over SEA > God REIGNS from a SEA: Pavement of Sapphire
 Symbol of Clear & Translucent Holiness of the Divine Presence and Justice

John’s 1ST GLIMPSE of God’s Throne Room: “before the throne there was what looked like *a sea of glass, clear as crystal*” Revelation 4.6

Christians in Roman Asia UNDER ATTACK // Hebrews in Egypt

MARTYRS CRY: "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Revelation 6.10

“Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury.” Revelation 12.12

“The whole world was astonished and followed the beast.” Revelation 13.3

“No one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name” Revelation 13.17

Christians in Roman Asia UNDER ATTACK // Hebrews in Egypt

Ruler > Oppressive Beast / Worship > Godless Idolatry
Economics > Spiritual Abomination / Life > Chased by Devil filled with Fury

v. 2 “And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, *standing* beside the sea, those who had been *victorious* over the beast and his image and over the number of his name.”

FIRE > Judgment Fire has PASSED > VICTORIOUS ONES are STANDING

If ENEMY is PHAROAH or DRAGON or ANTI-CHRIST or FALSE PROPHET
Sovereign God is MIGHTY DELIVERER > People of God Victorious in Him

“The Israelites stood on the far shore of the Red Sea and observed the death of their enemies through God’s power. In the last days, victorious saints likewise stand on the far side of their troubles and the persecutions of the Beast.”

Vern S. Poythress

3. Song of Celebration

Ch 14 BEGAN with SONG : “And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders.” Revelation 14.3

a. Choir

1) Church Triumphant > Those who FINISHED WELL > Rewarded in Glory

v. 2 “those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name”

Preview of All Redeemed Rejoicing in PRESENCE of GOD > Victory over Beast

"These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Revelation 7.14

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” Revelation 12.11

v. 4 “All nations will come and worship before you” > Heaven will be an ICF!

Emerged Victorious > Not Abandoned Faith > nor yielded to Threats of Antichrist

2) Church Militant > Sing in the Battle because the Battle is the Lord’s

VICTORS: Greek present participle “the people who are conquering” ONGOING

v. 2 “They held harps given them by God”

“The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps” Revelation 14.2

Harps > Praise Instrument of Old Covenant

“By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’ How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?” Psalm 137.1-4

When they’re Restored to their Land as God’s Kingdom > take up Harps and Sing
When ISRAEL returned from Babylonian Captivity > Restored Temple Worship

Let Israel say: "His love endures forever" ...*The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation...* From the house of the LORD we bless you.
Psalm 118.2,14,26

Revelation > Sing Now! Christ has Died! Christ is Risen! Christ is Coming Again!

“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.” Revelation 2.7

“He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.” Revelation 2.11

“To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna.” Revelation 2.17

“To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations” Revelation 2.26

“He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.”
Revelation 3.5

“Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God.”
Revelation 3.12

“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.”
Revelation 3.21

That is WORTH SINGING ABOUT! Little wonder that they break out in song!

“In their song saints praise God’s works as well as His ways. The earthdwellers certainly would not praise God for His works, and they would never understand His ways. God’s works are great and marvelous, and His ways are just and true. There is no complaint here about the way God permitted these people to suffer! It would save us a great deal of sorrow if we would acknowledge God’s sovereignty in this same way today!”
Warren W. Wiersbe

b. Compilation > they Sing the BEST of OLD and NEW

Jesus: "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."
Matthew 13.52

vs. 3,4 “the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

Song Sung by Moses > Leader of God’s people out of Egyptian Bondage
“Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future.”
Hebrews 3.5

v. 8 And 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 completed.

POINTS BACK to Tabernacle / Temple > Strange CLIMAX to Story

PURPOSE > Meeting Place with God > Elaborate, Exact Construction
 When COMPLETED > Glory Cloud of God COVERED > BLOCKED WAY
 MEETING PLACE > But COULD NOT Meet > God Prevented the Meeting

Tabernacle FINISHED / BLOCKED > End of EXODUS > Book of Leviticus
 Tells HOW to MEET with GOD > With BLOOD > No Sacrifice, No Redemption

vs. 8 ECHOES EZEKIEL'S VISION OF GOD'S THRONE ROOM

"I looked, and I saw the likeness of a throne of sapphire above the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim... Then the glory of the LORD rose from above the cherubim and moved to the threshold of the temple. *The cloud filled the temple, and the court was full of the radiance of the glory of the LORD.*" Ezekiel 10.1,4

"God's presence is so awesome in expressing wrath that not even heavenly beings can stand in his midst... the time for intercession is past" G.K. Beale

Song of redemption began with Moses > Completed in Sacrifice of the Lamb
 Song of Lamb: "they sang a new song before the throne" Revelation 14.3

NEW SONG > Song of the Lamb > Shock! CHOIRMASTER is CRUCIFIED

"The Lamb of God who bears away the sin of the world is also the Lamb from whose wrath the impenitent and unbelieving will seek in vain to flee."
 Philip E. Hughes

Structure of Hymn > suggests used in Liturgy of the Early Church
 Practically Every Phrase of Hymn > taken from Rich Vocabulary of the OT

Extols God's "deeds" and his "ways" > evokes Wonder and Praise
 Emphasizes God's Justice and Faithfulness

NOT any Particular Event > All God's Redemptive Works > Great and Marvelous

God the ALMIGHTY > Power to Carry Out whatever he Determines to Do
 Title > 9 times in Revelation > ONLY Once elsewhere in the NT

God is the Almighty > Supremely Appropriate > Context of Ultimate Victory

King of the Ages > Sovereignty is Everlasting > Universal Recognition of the Lord
 Will NOT PLAY "My Way" by Frank Sinatra > It is ALL ABOUT GOD

“One of the most striking features of this song of the triumphant martyrs is the absence of any mention of their own victory and their own achievement. From beginning to end the whole song is a lyrical outburst celebrating the greatness of God.”
Bruce M. Metzger

“Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.”
Psalm 86.8-10

Complete Sovereignty of God > over Hostile Opposition of Beast and Followers
Glorify Name of God > Praise Him for what He IS and all that He has DONE

“Heaven is heaven because in it at last all self, and self-importance, are lost in the presence of the greatness and glory of God.”
William Barclay

c. Circumstance “Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.” James 5.13

May seem a STRANGE TIME to Sing > Between TWO STORMS of Judgment
End Ch 14 > Harvest of Earth > Grain Golden & Grapes Ripe > Blood Flowed
Ch 16 > 7 Bowls of God’s Wrath > Poured on Rebellious Inhabitants of Earth

WORSHIP Precedes Judgment > ch 5 before Seals > ch 8.1-5 before Trumpets
God’s Active Wrath > Never ARBITRARY or SPITEFUL > but Just & Righteous

Atmosphere of Awesome Solemnity > Final Outpouring of God’s Wrath
Seriousness of Situation calls for Assurance > God’s Ways are Just

“He saved them for his name's sake, to make his mighty power known. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up; he led them through the depths as through a desert. He saved them from the hand of the foe; from the hand of the enemy he redeemed them. The waters covered their adversaries; not one of them survived. Then they believed his promises and sang his praise.”
Psalm 106.8-12

‘Song of Moses’ > Exodus 15 > Probable Basis of our Text
Song of Israel’s Greatest Deliverance > sung on Sabbath evenings in Synagogue

Preached > Every Month for 6 Years > Kulani Correctional Facility, Hawaii
 Highlight of my Month > Wonderful Brothers > Powerful Worship > JOY!!!
 ELDERS > LIFERS > Probably Never Get Out > Don't Ask their CRIMES
 Brother Raymond > Hawaiian / Filipino > LIFER > Not Sure WHY
 WIFE & CHILDREN > Very RARE Visits > Lifetime of Regretting??!

Every Time we Met > Greeted with EMBRACE > 'How you doing Raymond!'
 SAME ANSWER > "The Lord is GOOOD and His Mercies Endure Forever!!"

Raymond teaches how to Live as CITIZEN of NEW JERUSALEM
 Even while we Temporarily DWELL in this FALLEN BABYLON World

MUST REMEMBER THE SONG > REMEMBER THE SONG WRITER
 May our Songs not be WORDS of our OWN JUDGMENT > Sing but not Serve
 By Grace may we be BOTH HEARERS and DOERS of God's Song

"The Silver Chair" from 'The Chronicles of Narnia' by C.S. Lewis
 Jill given TASK to RESCUE the PRINCE > Solemn Charge by Aslan the King
 Gives Jill FOUR SIGNS to Lead RESCUE Party through World of ILLUSION

"Remember, remember, remember the signs. Say them to yourself when you wake in the morning and when you lie down at night, when you wake in the middle of the night. And whatever strange things may happen to you, let nothing else turn your mind from following the signs...And the signs you have learned from here on this mountain will not look at all as you expect them to look when you meet them down in Narnia. That is why it is so important to know them by heart and pay no attention to appearances. Remember the signs and believe the signs. Nothing else matters."

from 'The Silver Chair' by C.S. Lewis

Revelation 15

1. I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues--last, because with them God's wrath is completed.
2. And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God
3. and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages.
4. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."
5. After this I looked and in heaven the temple, that is, the tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened.
6. Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests.
7. Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever.
8. And 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 completed.

“The redeemed are singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. Moses, of course, is the one through whom God established Israel as his covenant people, and the Lamb is the one through whom God restored Israel as his kingdom of priests, a kingdom that now includes the Gentiles.”

M. Robert Mulholland, Jr.