

SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 64

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

The Seven Last Plagues STUDY GUIDE

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

Revelation 15:1-4

Revelation 15 begins in verse one with an introduction to the seven last plagues. Then in verses two through four, we have an aside that takes us to another picture of those who sing the song of Moses and that Lamb. There is a parallel between this song in Revelation 15:2-4 and the first angel's message in Revelation 14:6. The parallel looks like this:

Revelation 15:4

- Who shall not fear You
- And glorify Your name
- For all nations shall come and worship before You
- For Your judgments have been manifested

Revelation 14:7

- Fear God
- Give glory to Him
- For the hour of His judgment has come
- Worship Him

Then in Revelation 15:2, we have those who have the victory over the characteristics of the beast that parallel the first four commandments:

They have the victory over:

The beast = no other gods (first commandment)

His image = no images (second commandment)

The number of his name = don't take God's name in vain (third commandment)

His mark = remember the Sabbath day (fourth commandment)

The song of Moses and the Lamb is a summary of the three angels' messages. Those who gain the victory in this worship crisis are loyal to God's first four commandments when the world makes them null and void.

Revelation 15:5-8

Presently, we can enter into the temple by faith (Hebrews 10:19-22). Christ is our heavenly mediator, applying His blood (rep-

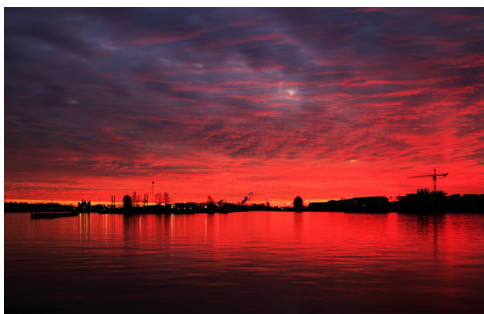
resenting the merits of His perfect life and penalty-satisfying death for our sin) to our prayers for forgiveness and cleansing (Hebrews 4:15-16; 8:1-2; 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2). However, there is coming a time, here depicted in Revelation 15:8, when no man can enter into the temple. Mediation will be over, forgiveness will no longer be available, and human probation will close. The seven last plagues will be poured out.

In verse five, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony was opened in Heaven. This is referring to the Most Holy Place and the Ten Commandment Law of God that was kept in the Most Holy Place. Then the angels with the judgments of God come forth. This shows that the plagues poured by these angels are in response to the direct violation of God's Ten Commandment Law. In the Old Test-

tament, the people were told that if they did not keep God's Law, the curse of God would be poured out upon them. This is the same language we see here in Revelation 15 for those who have rejected God's Law.

Revelation 22:10-11

The last chapters of Revelation are primarily judgment chapters revealing the pouring out of God's wrath on the earth and the reasons for it. These verses clearly reveal that everyone has



“Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.” **REVELATION 16:3**

KEY SCRIPTURES

Rev. 16:1 POUR OUT THE BOWLS OF THE WRATH

Rev. 16:3 EVERY LIVING CREATURE IN THE SEA DIED

Rev. 16:9 MEN WERE SCORCHED WITH GREAT HEAT

Rev. 16:15 I AM COMING AS A THIEF

decided for or against God by the time probation closes. This is not so much a pronouncement of what God has decided but rather what we have decided. God is simply announcing the reality of our own personal choices. After filling the entire world with His glory and giving all nations an opportunity to understand and accept the everlasting gospel, everyone has made their decisions for or against God's call. Now God can say that if time continued for another year, month, week, day, or hour it would make no difference. They that are unjust will not change and they that are righteous will not change. They that are filthy will not change and they that are holy will not change. It's time to end the reign of sin forever. God will only close human probation when He can make this declaration because He is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9).

Revelation 16:2

This first plague affects the flesh of those who refused to deny their fallen natures and follow the Lamb. God is saying that for those who desired the flesh, this is the consequence of trusting in the flesh. Each of these plagues reveals the principle of reaping what is sown.

Revelation 16:3-9

They have shed the blood of God's people, so God has given them blood to drink. They have worshiped the sun, so the sun scorches them with fire. These plagues are consequential, not arbitrary. God is giving us up to what we have chosen. Yes, this is still punishment. God could have just made all this go away but He didn't. We are free moral agents and God recognizes that and treats us as intelligent human beings and not animals.

Revelation 16:10

The seven last plagues are not an arbitrary act on the part of God. Rather, the wrath of God is primarily when He allows men to reap what they have sown. Here we see, for example, men gnawing their tongues because of the darkness and pain that came upon them. This is explained by Jesus in John 3:16-19. God loves the world and gives men the light of His love through the gift of Jesus Christ. If men turn from that light, they embrace darkness. The plagues that are poured out in heaven are a revelation of what men have chosen—i.e. darkness rather than light.

Revelation 16:12

This plague is based on the story of Cyrus, who was anointed by God to set His captive people free from Babylonian captivity (Isaiah 45:1). The kings of the east refers to God and

Jesus who are returning to deliver His people from Babylon and take them to the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 14:1).

The literal waters of the Euphrates were the support base for Babylon, supplying both water and protection to the city of Babylon under the siege of the Medo-Persian army. Once these waters were dried up by Cyrus diverting them out of their channel, his army marched down the river bed and through the unlocked gates and took the city. Just so in the last days, spiritual Babylon has a support base of a spiritual Euphrates. Revelation 17:15 identifies these waters as "peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues," who lend their support to the system of Babylon. During the seven last plagues, this support is dried up as the world realizes once the plagues begin to fall on them that they have been deceived. This prepares the way for God the Father and Jesus Christ as they return to Planet Earth to deliver His people.

Revelation 16:17-21

When this final plague falls, men continue to blaspheme God and as noted in earlier verses, remain unrepentant of their deeds (verses 9, 11). This is the final evidence that, even under the judgments of God that had brought men like Nebuchadnezzar and Manasseh, and entire cities like Nineveh, to repentance, they repent not. There is no changing their evil characters at this point. They are fully set to do evil and refuse to change. The city of Babylon is divided into three parts, noting the three powers that make it up: the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet. Judgments are meted out to all three according to their works.

Summary

The seven last plagues are a revelation of the wrath of God, which is not arbitrary on God's part; rather these plagues reveal the consequences of human choices. Also, understand that God will not give us over to our choices until He has done everything He can to win our hearts to His love and deliver His people from Babylon (spiritual confusion). Then God will honor our choices, allowing us to reap what we have sown. Please accept His pardoning love for all your sins, and give Him your life so that He can prepare you for Heaven and eternity. In Jesus' name, amen. ★

