

Voices from Heaven #4: The Triumph of God's Kingdom; Rest and Comfort to God's People

These lessons have all been looking at the various utterances, pronouncements, and songs that we see in the book of Revelation. So far we have covered the following points:

1. ***On the Nature of God***
 - a. ***God is Holy***
 - b. ***God is Worthy***
 - c. ***Honors that are Attributed to God (blessing, glory, honor, power, might, dominion)***
2. ***Pronouncements at the Great Judgments of God in the earth***
 - a. ***Appeals to God (by the martyrs) for justice and vengeance***
 - b. ***Thanksgiving***
 - c. ***Woe to the targets of God's wrath***
 - d. ***Announcements of God's judgments***
 - e. ***Warnings to flee the targets of God's wrath***
 - f. ***On the justice and righteousness of God's judgments***

To continue on that last point, Rev. 15:2-4 says "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, **Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.**"

What is "the song of Moses"? It occurs in Dt. 32:1-43, and was to be kept by Israel through its generations. Perhaps Rev. 15 refers to that song, but I think it more likely that it refers to the words that actually follow here. Maybe this is all or a portion of what Moses is singing in heaven.

This song magnifies God's great and marvellous works and his manifest judgments, and acknowledges that these judgments are done in absolute justice and truth. It also is leading up to the time when all nations will truly worship the true God (in the millennial reign of Christ).

3. The Triumph of God's Kingdom

Rev. 11:15 – "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever.**"

This reminds me of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the colossal image in Daniel 2. As you recall, it prophesies of the great world kingdoms that would arise in the earth – Babylon, then Medo-Persia, then Greece, and then Rome. But in the end, a great stone was cut out without hands and smashed the image on the feet, crushing it to pieces, and the stone became a great mountain which filled all the earth. This refers to Christ and the destruction of all earthly power and rule, and the establishment of God's kingdom, filling all the earth. In Rev. 11 at the sound of the last trumpet judgment, there is rejoicing in heaven that the vile and corrupt kingdoms and governments of this earth are at that time being replaced by the kingdom of God, whose reign will indeed be forever, in righteousness, and of his peace there will be no end.

Rev. 19:1-4 are rejoicings that God has judged the great whore (chapters 17-18), and then in 19:5-7 it says "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, **Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.** And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, **Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.**"

At the end of this age, God will take to himself his great power and set up his kingdom, reigning in omnipotence. While for the unsaved this is a time of great fear, terror, and anger at God, for the redeemed, it is the end we have been waiting for, and living for. We will see our Savior face to face and take part in the marriage of the Lamb to his bride, the church who has made herself ready.

4. Rest and Comfort to God's People

Besides all the above types of utterances, pronouncements, and songs, there are several encouragements to our eternal rest.

In the midst of some of the worst judgments on "Babylon", and in contrast to those in 14:9-11 who drink of the wine of God's wrath, and the smoke of their torment rises up for ever, those who worship the beast and receive the mark of his name, we see the following:

Rev. 14:12-13 – "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, **Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.**"

Martyrdom in that day, and even "normal" deaths of saints now, is to be seen not as a calamity, but as an entering into rest, and a reward for their faithful labors in God's kingdom. In some cases death can even be seen as a blessing. Isa. 57:1 – "The righteous perisheth, and no man taketh it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

Rev. 18:20 – "**Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.**" As the saints cried out to God back in 6:9-11 ("How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"), now in chapter 18 there is an answer. Lk. 18:7 – "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?" It may seem that the wicked are triumphing over us at times, but their end is coming (so pray God's mercy on them before it is too late).

But here is the great

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.....moment that we live for:

Rev. 21:3-5 – "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, **Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall their be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.** And he that sat upon the throne said, **Behold, I make all things new. ...**"

We know that Christ is typified in many ways by the physical tabernacle of the OT, and its furniture, layout, and practices, but here it says that Christ is the tabernacle of God. It is in him that we meet and commune with the Father. In that coming day, it will no longer be us down here and him up there, but he will be with us, dwelling with us! In that day there will be no more tears, death, sorrow, crying, or pain. All the former things (of this current life on earth) will be finished and we won't even remember them (at least in sorrow) any more!

Is this what you are living for now? Is this a living hope, and a real expectation? If so, then why would we fear death? 1 Cor. 15:54-58 – "... then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."