

### The Glory of Christ in the Final Exodus (Revelation 8-9)

Please take the Word of Christ and join me in Rev 8. Today we'll see the glory of Christ in salvation through judgment from another viewpoint. Last week, we saw that John saw saved Jews and Gentiles through what Rev 7 calls '*the great tribulation.*' This week in chapters 8-9 John's vision moves to the unsaved and what final intensified tribulation and judgment looks like for them and the lost world. Chapter 7 ended with loud heavenly worship for Christ's redemption, but as the scene changes so does heaven's response.

Rev 7:10 is the redeemed '*crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*'<sup>11</sup> *And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,*<sup>12</sup> *saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."*

Now Rev **8:1**: *When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.* [the song of praise was deafening, but now the silence is deafening. The heavenly hosts all fall quiet]<sup>2</sup> *Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.*

Now we need to keep in mind the context. Rev 4 says there are creatures in heaven around the throne that have been crying out "Holy, holy, holy!" all the time since the time of Isaiah through all redemptive history. They never stop crying out those words, John says. There's 24 elders shouting out loud praise as they're casting crowns. An angel with an even louder voice asks if anyone is worthy to open the scroll with 7 seals. Then a Lamb is introduced in Rev 5 as worthy and the praise gets even louder. It says in heaven there's an untold millions of angels, all saying '*with a loud voice, "Worthy is the lamb that was slain...!"*' (5:12). Then it says '*every creature in heaven*' lifts up its voice to Christ '*You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory*'...why? '*for You have created all things...*' This is about the glory of Christ our Creator, and from there He takes back the earth by the scroll of destiny and in Rev 6 begins to turn back creation as He gets to the 6<sup>th</sup> seal, removing islands and stars, the sun goes black, the sky rolls back (Peter says it will be loud noise)

But then when the 7<sup>th</sup> seal is opened there's silence in heaven for a half hour as if God rests like the 7th day, de-creation complete, its loud noise halted, the loud praise of heaven becomes a hushed silence. Or is it a shock and awe of seeing heavenly bodies dissolve or whatever 6:13 means by fell to earth (angels like 1:20?). God's force, fury, firepower shock and awe angels

In Rev 4 the loud praise of heaven was described as ceaseless, now even the perfect beings are speechless! At the first creation, the OT says angels sang for joy (Job 38:4-7), but when Rev 6:12-14 undoes it, the angels fall silent. Or others see this silence as a dramatic pause, an interlude in the drama of redemption, before we get to the final scenes, a chance to catch your breath and let sink in what was just witnessed. Whatever it is, 8:1 has a holy hush.

Keep in mind you had to first open the seals before you could read what's on the inside. Rev 6 isn't reading the scroll's contents or prophecies yet, it's just opening the seals, opening what's over the outside. What John views in Rev 6 I think is overview of what happens from the 1st century to the end of the age, nations in turmoil and conflict, death, famines, wars and rumors of wars. Jesus said those aren't signs we're at the end or near it, just beginning birth pains, i.e., actual final labor will intensify later when you can't predict. But as the 6th seal in Rev 6:12-17 opens, John hears what Jesus said would be *the end of the age at the time He returns* to earth in the clouds, so I think it lets us know the inside of the scroll has to do with that end, like the end of Daniel seals up a scroll and talks about a time of great trouble or tribulation right before the time of resurrection. I think Rev 7:14 confirms this is about *'the great tribulation'* that Daniel, Jeremiah, the prophets and Jesus spoke of

In Rev 8:1 the 7th seal is opened so now the scroll can be opened and read. As the scroll is unfolded, chapters 8-9 I think are unfolding the last chapter of history, His story that's in the scroll before He unfolds heaven as a scroll. It seems to me Rev 8-11 isn't just ideals, principles or symbols of invisible realities of good and evil in the spiritual realm every day, they're prophecies related to the last day that Rev 6 ended with. Rev 1 calls this book *prophecy* and *apocalypse* (Jewish writing that's symbolic to the end times). The key to the symbolism isn't the news, it's the OT Jewish writings. I don't think Rev 8-9 is only about events of the past or present so that we don't need to worry about any of this happening in the future, but there are things like what we read in Rev 8-9 that have happened, that are warnings of future judgment.

OT prophets often associated trumpets with warning of judgment about to come. Rev 8:6: *Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.*<sup>7</sup> *The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth.* Apocalypses use symbolic language, so we don't have to believe physical blood is going to be falling from the sky (same is true of moon turning to blood in Rev 6). But we don't want to explain away the reality of deadly judgment by nature.

Fire from the sky is a way ancients described lightning. Blood can refer to a blood-reddish color, and we know red moons can be caused by eclipses, and reddish rain and hail in certain conditions is known to science and history. One writes 'blood-red rain...today occasionally falls in the Mediterranean area as a result of red dust particles from the Sahara...the volcanic eruption in the Aegean islands in the first century...said to have turned they sky red ...The message would be, "You have seen something like this, but nothing this severe." ...blood raining from the sky was a common motif for divine judgment'<sup>1</sup> [ancient Roman authors Cicero and Pliny, Greek writer Homer]

[they also used the word 'star' for meteors, ex: stars falling in 6:13?]

v. 7b says there is worse to come:...*And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.*

<sup>8</sup> *The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood.* <sup>9</sup> *A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.* <sup>10</sup> *The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.* <sup>11</sup> *The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water, because it had been made bitter.* <sup>12</sup> *The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.* <sup>13</sup> *Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"* This confirms trumpets are warnings.

[These are warnings, partial judgments, before it's complete in Rev 16-19]

If you're hoping today I'll explain this chapter scientifically by phenomena we see today or nuclear war, or if you hope I'll explain the eagle represents America or where America fits, I'll disappoint you (eagles in NT times were an insignia of Rome but this may just be the eagle-like creature from before the throne of heaven in Rev 4). If you're hoping I'll explain *away* this text symbolically all in general terms of the present or history, or if your hope is I'll explain all this specifically in detailed timelines, I'll also disappoint you today. But my hope is to explain the text Scripturally to reveal Jesus' glory. Many modern books obscure that, but the OT shows us how it glorifies Him

- by His power in prayer (8:1-5)
- by His power over the natural world (8:6-13)
- by His power over the spiritual world (Rev 9)
- by His power at the cross

### **1st, the Lord is glorified by His power in prayer**

<sup>3</sup> *And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne [reminds us of their prayer in 6:9 there: 'how long?'],* <sup>4</sup> *and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.* <sup>5</sup> *Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.*

When we talk about the power of prayer, the power isn't ours, it's the power of God in response to prayer. It's been said: 'Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscle of omnipotence...in the lives of His people!'<sup>2</sup> Sovereignty doesn't negate responsibility. The fact that God is sovereign or omnipotent (which means all powerful) shouldn't make us ask 'why pray?' It's *why we pray*. People ask 'if God is sovereign, why pray?' I would ask it differently: 'if God is *not* sovereign, if He's *not* in charge and all-powerful, why pray?!' But because He's Almighty, in control, and can and does intervene in nature and can and does change our natures, because of His gracious nature, I pray.

[He said in Mk 11:23 prayer in faith can move mountains to the sea, like v. 8?]

The book of Revelation clearly teaches God is sovereign ruling history to an end He has determined, but it also in the same passage clearly teaches us He responds to our prayers. In what John Flavel called a mystery of providence God answers prayers and in some ways includes our prayers in the plans He determined from the beginning. He can say 'you have not, because you ask not' and 'ask and you shall receive' or sometimes He says 'wait' (Rev 6:11)

[He also tells us to pray in His will, in His name, for His glory]

In v. 4 here 'the prayers of the saints,' that just means all the saved, prayers go up before God's throne like incense, like a pleasing sacrifice, like in OT worship. And in response, God is moved to intervene on earth in v. 5. The prayers we bring before heaven's throne affect what happens down on earth.

['Thy kingdom come, *Thy will be done*, on earth as it is in heaven']

**Application:** Romans 12 tells us in view of God's mercies to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to be pleasing to God in our spiritual act of worship, and '*be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer*' (12:1, 12, terms right out of Rev 6-8). Rom 12 ends urging us to never take vengeance but our God will repay and Rev 6 and 8 also remind us of that. Hebrews says when we pray with thanksgiving it's *a sacrifice of praise* that pleases God as we seek to do good (Heb 13:15-16). Let's pray with thanksgiving and praise, offering ourselves. Heb 4:16 '*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*'

There's an OT application of this when Israel in Egypt cried out 'how long': Ex 2:23 *'Israelites groaned...and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning...God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them'* (NIV, or 'took notice/knew'). Then in the next chapter God comes and speaks through fire, a burning bush *'I have surely seen the affliction of My people...and have given heed to their cry...I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down ... the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me ... I have seen the oppression ... I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you ...'* (3:7, 9, 17 NASB)

In Rev 8:5 again in response to prayer for help, God hears, takes notice and looks on in concern and compassion, God knows what His people are going through, and He responds on earth, speaking first through fire. It says there was also thunder, lightning, and an earthquake in v. 5 then a trumpet in v. 6. When God speaks again in Exodus, it's with thunder, lightning, earthquake (19:16, 18) and trumpet blast before the Lord comes down to speak (v. 19). The unusual word order (thunder then lightning) is the same, recalling that, and reminding us God still cares for us and will come again like He did then

*The Lord is glorified by His power in prayer (v. 1-5), and that takes us to...*

## **#2. The Lord is glorified BY HIS POWER OVER NATURE (v. 6-13)**

Rom 1 says 'the wrath of God is being revealed' (present tense) in creation, His divine power is clearly seen so men are without excuse (v. 18-20). The power of God is shown in thunder and also tsunamis, tidal waves, typhoons, tornados, and terrible hailstorms like in v. 6, among other 'natural disasters'

Whenever we experience those things we should give glory to God, even as we know those are just fringes of His ways, foretastes of a future final day. I don't think we should limit the sort of warnings Rev 8 is talking about so it has no relevance or application to us today and only speaks of a future that you presume you won't experience. We can learn from idealist friends there are applications we can draw today from hurricanes or huge earthquakes or heavy fires in CA that remind us life is fragile and in God's hands, not ours, and that one day everything of earth will burn and be shaken or blown away

[those can be examples of the principle, but not the extent of the prophecy]

With an eclectic or combined approach I can also learn from preterists who tie images in Rev to past events but not only that or only right before 70 AD. The fiery mountain of v. 8 might have reminded some of John's readers of 79 AD, just 15 years earlier, Mt. Vesuvius erupted in fire, burying Pompeii, turning the sea red with lava. That blast like a trumpet warned of future fire.

But Rev 8 goes farther back, the OT. Can you think of a time in OT history when there was literally hail with fire, water turned to blood, water made undrinkable, and the sun darkened? The book of Exodus has all these events

There may be more than one background in some of these symbols. Jer 51 is like Rev 8:8, the object '*like a great mountain burning*' sounds like Jer 51 where God says to Babylon '*I am against you, O destroying mountain ... I will...make you a burnt mountain*' covered by the sea (v. 25, 42, Rev 18 ties final Babylon to that). I'm not sure v. 8 is just a *metaphor* for judgment like Jer 51 on the final kingdom of man, or if it's a *meteor*, maybe both? Even in Jer 51, though, the symbol was for a literal judgment in history and it looks farther back in history to the exodus for a comparison (Jer 51:21, 36, 42, 52)

Look at Rev 8:7 and listen to what Exodus says: '*the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been ... The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast [i.e., blood]...every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field*' (Ex 9)

[sounds like Rev 8:7, deadly hail and fire destroying plants and trees]

But God's people were spared through judgment, which echoes Rev 7:1-3. In the next trumpet judgment, 8:9 says when part of the sea becomes blood the sea creatures will die. That echoes Exodus when the Nile is turned into blood literally for 7 days and it says the fish literally died. God is saying to John who knew those stories well growing up, literal judgment is coming in the future again, not just for Egypt, for earth, not just a river, but the oceans, and later in Rev 16 all water, and a worse hailstorm, and fiery hell on earth!

[in Rev 8:7 a 3rd of earth burns, one day it will all burn, 2 Pet 3]

Look at Rev 11:3 for another parallel: *And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy...<sup>6</sup> They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague...* Sounds like Moses and Aaron, 2 witnesses to Egypt?

[Ex 4:8 (NASB) uses the word 'witness' for signs by Moses as Aaron speaks]

Look at v. 18 at the 7th trumpet: *The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants ...* The point is final judgment is near when those judgments take place, a day of wrath is near and resurrection with reward for God's servants. That's the point of the trumpets, warnings in nature, there are some now but it's going to get worse before the end. The hail and fire warns of future hell-fire. The blood and bitterness of this present age points to worse at the end of the age.

If you look back in Rev 8:12 a third of the heavenly lights are judged so the earth experiences greater darkness. In Exodus Egypt's land was judged with great darkness for 3 days but God's people weren't judged by it (Ex 10:23).

[if the past parallel judgments were literal, don't say future ones can't be]

Application: Come to the light before it's too late in hell's outer darkness. If God gets your attention with storms in nature or storms in your life, listen to the warnings, turn from the darkness and bitterness of sin to Jesus. He alone can protect you from future wrath and judgment. He can turn water to blood but He can also change sinners into blood-washed saints. He can replace the bitterness of sin & its plagues with sweet satisfying water (Ex 15:22-27). If you're in Christ, your sin is bitter, He's sweeter, tis so sweet to trust in Jesus

[in the sweet by and by, praise God for amazing grace, how sweet the sound]

*The Lord is glorified by His power in prayer and over the natural world ...*

now **#3. The Lord is glorified by His power over the supernatural world**

[there's both sweet and awful realities here, as we'll sing at the end]

In chapter 9 the scene shifts from earth to hell, or at least the abyss. Fallen angels I think are in v. 1 where a fallen angel is allowed to let loose others. In 9:3 John sees something like locusts come on the earth, another parallel to Exodus where locusts come on the earth in Egypt, but in Rev 9 it's worse. In Ex 10 locusts come one day and night and destroy all crops, in Rev 9:4-5 they leave the plants and torment people for 5 months. This seems to move beyond things we've seen in history in the natural realm to the supernatural. I think everyone agrees Rev 9 is fallen angels given power for a short time?

<sup>15</sup> *So the 4 angels, who had been prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third of mankind ...* [that sounds to me like it's not just general history, this is a specific future year/month/day/hour when a 3rd of men die, a last warning before final judgment in Rev 16-19?]

What do we read in Ex 12? On a specific year, month and day that became Passover on their calendar, at a specific hour (midnight, v. 18-29), He lets a 'destroyer' (v. 23 name of angel in Rev 9:11) a messenger of death kill every firstborn. Perhaps a literal third of that generation of Egyptians is killed that hour. John sees angels of death will 1 day do that with a third of humanity! But there was protection for those sealed with the blood of the lamb on their doorposts, the destroyer passed over believers sealed by blood. And here in Rev 9:4 these demonic destroyers can only hurt people without God's seal. Look back at Rev 7, the sealed, the saved in 7:14b *by the blood of the Lamb*. Ex 12:37 *the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses ... A mixed multitude* [i.e., mixed ethnicity, a multitude of other nations] *also went up with them...*

Some of the Egyptians feared God (Ex 9:20) and apparently other Africans went with Israel in the Exodus, like the black Cushite Moses later married in Numbers 12. Even the first Passover, Ex 12:48 had provision for Gentiles to worship w/ Israel, to be treated as full Israelites if they submit to the law.

Ex 12 lists the number of the people of Israel who had been sealed from the judgment but it shows also a bigger saved mixed multitude of other nations. Rev 7:4 lists the number of Israel sealed from the judgment, it also shows in v. 9 a bigger saved mixed '*multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes*' - the tribes have multiplied, also much like Ex 1:1-7!

SLIDE: Israel's tribes listed and become a multitude – Rev 7, Ex 1:1-7

God hears and responds to prayers of His saints – Rev 8:3-4, Ex 2:23-25

God speaks to earth through fire - Rev 8:5, Ex 3, 19

Hail with fire, water turned to blood and undrinkable, darkness,

locusts, angels of death, judgments through 2 witnesses – Rev 8-9, 11:6; Ex 7-11

Jews sealed and protected from judgment, saved with a multitude of other nations

– Rev 9:4, 7:4-9; Ex 12:13, 37-38, 47-49

Hard-hearted response by the unrepentant - Rev 9:20-21, Ex 13:15-16, 14:4

Despite plagues and power over supernatural, Pharaoh's heart hardens. Rev 9:20 says: *The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols*

...

Application: These warning trumpets end with a sobering warning to people who will not repent of their sin, who won't release the hold of their idols. It may not be a sun-god like Pharaoh, it may be a sex-god or a god of pleasure or people-pleasing or private sin you won't give up or pride bigger than God

[let it go, my friend, before God lets you go to destructive forces]

For the repentant, God's plagues and punishment of wrath were taken by the Lord Jesus, so we don't need to be fearful of eternal wrath. Our application is be thankful Jesus 'drank the bitter cup deserved for me, the Father's wrath completely satisfied, Jesus thank you.'<sup>13</sup> I don't have time for every detail in Rev 9, maybe I can come back to some next week, but a point not to miss is this: Christ is sovereign over the supernatural world. Satan and his minions are under Christ's control, in v. 1 they must have power 'given,' also in v. 3. In v. 4 they can only hurt the unsealed or unsaved, they're under orders, and in v. 5 they have to be '*allowed*' by God, and can't kill, all for a limited time. Christ is sovereign over Satan and will one day send him back to that abyss. Until then, He guides His people of Rev 7 like He did in Exodus, the final Exodus will be like the first, keeping them safe on earth through tribulation or taking safely home in death, protecting all from wrath and rebel demons.

SLIDE - pillar of cloud and fire on sea and land – Rev 10:1, Ex 14:19-24

Ex 14:19-24 '*the angel of God...the pillar of cloud...stood...between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel...made the sea dry land...the pillar of fire and cloud looked down...*' Look at Rev 10:1, there an angel of God comes down 'wrapped in a cloud' (that would look like a pillar of cloud) and the end of v. 1 uses the phrase from Exodus '*pillar of fire.*' In v. 2 the angel stood with 1 foot on the sea and 1 on the land, and in v. 5 raises his hand (echoing Ex 14)

God glorified as He judges His enemies – Rev 11:13, Ex 14:31, 15:1-11

God guides, provides for His own in a wilderness – Rev 12:6, Ex 15:22-27

His own on other side of sea sing the song of Moses – Rev 15:3-4, Ex 15

After much difficulty His people reach promised land - Rev 16-22, Ex 16ff

We'll see those in future weeks, but see Christ is glorified in a final exodus and final Passover. **Point #4: Christ is glorified by His power at the cross**

A power greater than the OT redemption of Israel from slavery is what took place on the cross, redeeming from slavery to sin. The sweet and awful, the dual nature of His wrath and mercy meet at the cross with power to redeem. In Rev 5:9 Christ is worshipped as the worthy Lamb slain to redeem people from every nation, making them 'a kingdom and priests' (another quote from Exodus, 19:6). In Rev 3:20 His glorious promise is that He will sup with us and we with Him in intimate fellowship. The Lord's Supper is one way that can happen in this life. It was at a Passover meal remembering many of the events of Exodus we read today, John, who wrote Revelation, had slain the lamb that day with Peter, everything in the meal reminded them of Exodus, including bitter herbs, unleavened bread, the cup; it was at a Passover meal that Jesus gave new significance to Himself as the Lamb and bread of life: '*This is my body which is given for you, do this in remembrance of Me ...*'

John from his childhood had heard his father Zebedee talk about the blood that sealed Israel in the Old Covenant so the destroyer would pass over the homes of believers, now he heard Jesus say with blood-red wine: '*This is the new covenant in my blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins...*' This is only for disciples who know they are in that covenant. Not for little kids, though the Bible expected them to ask about Passover's bread and cup and symbols, and that can be a teaching moment for little ones until they're disciples who can discern the body rightly with mature self-examination. If you're not a member of the new covenant or aren't sure if you're sealed, or if you have questions, or your life isn't right with Christ or His people today, better to let the plate pass and talk to a leader after or talk to God in prayer. As disciples, let's look inward and outward (sin to God or others), upward.

How sweet and awful is the place, With Christ within the doors  
While everlasting love displays, The choicest of her stores.

While all our hearts and all our songs, Join to admire the feast  
Each of us cry with thankful tongues, "Lord, why was I a guest?"

"Why was I made to hear thy voice and enter while there's room,  
When thousands make a wretched choice And rather starve than come?"

'Twas the same love that spread the feast that sweetly drew us in;  
Else we had still refused to taste and perished in our sin

Pity the nations, O our God, Constrain the earth to come;  
Send thy victorious Word abroad and bring the strangers home.

We long to see thy churches full, that all the chosen race  
may with one voice and heart and soul sing thy redeeming grace.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Grant Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary, p. 350-51, Homer as cited by Craig Keener, *Revelation*, NIV Application Commentary, p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> Jim Shaddix, *The Passion Driven Sermon: Changing the Way Pastors Preach and Congregations Listen* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 165.

<sup>3</sup> "Jesus Thank You

<sup>4</sup> "How Sweet and Awful," Isaac Watts.