

Revelation Chapter 15

In our previous chapter we discussed the reaping of the saints by an angel to salvation, the fall of Babylon the Great, the evil and sin-laden kingdom of the Antichrist, and, lastly, the reaping of the ungodly for torment who were described as drunken on the unmixed wine of the wrath of the Lord, and were then crushed in the winepress of the wrath of God resulting in an immense river of blood up to the bridles of horses and 200 miles long.

Today we will look at the rejoicing in Heaven of those Saints who overcame the Antichrist:

Revelation 15:1 KJV [Constantinople 1904] Text: And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and ~~them that had gotten the victory over~~ [those coming triumphant out of] 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. 3 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~~ [Nations]. 4 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. 5 And after that I looked, and, ~~behold~~, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 7 And one of the four ~~beasts~~ [living creatures] gave unto the seven angels seven golden ~~vials~~ [bowls] full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was ~~filled~~ [full] with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Revelation 15:1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Vladimir Moss: "The judgement summarized in the images of the winepress and harvest of chapter 14 is now described in more detail.

Revelation 15:2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and [those coming triumphant out of] the beast [i.e., the Antichrist], 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.

St. Andrew of Caesarea: "The sea of glass signifies the multitude of those who are saved, the purity of the future rest and the radiance of the saints, by the rays of whose virtues they shine forth as the sun (Matthew 13.43). As for the fire mixed with it, this can be understood from the Scripture of the apostle: every man's work, of what sort it is, shall be revealed by fire (I Corinthians 3.13). It will not harm the pure and undefiled in any way, for, according to the psalmist's word (Psalm 28.7), it has two properties: one - that of burning sinners, and the other,

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as St. Basil understood, that of enlightening the righteous. One should probably also understand by the fire Divine vision and the grace of the life-creating Spirit, for God was revealed to Moses in fire, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in the form of fiery tongues."

Archbishop Averky: "The harps signify the harmony of virtues in the well-ordered spiritual life of the righteous or the harmony which is to be observed in them between the word of truth and the deed of righteousness."

Revelation 15:3 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 [Nations]. 4 Who shall not fear, 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."

Ecumenius: ... the harps are a figure for the euphonious hymn to God sung by the saints. *And they sing*, it says, *the song of Moses*, clearly indicating that song that Moses sang when Pharaoh was drowned along with his entire army: *Let us sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and the rider he has thrown into the sea. He has become for me a helper and protector for salvation* (Ex. 15:1-2). This song of triumph is because of the punishment of the wicked and the victory of over the devil and the son of lawlessness, the antichrist. *And the song of the Lamb*, it says, referring to the agreement of Moses with the Lord and his just judgment against the wicked. And therefore, indeed, they marvel at the truth and righteousness of the Lord.

It says, *the king of the nations*. To be sure, Christ is the king of everyone; however, since it is said by Isaiah, *And there will be a root of Jesse, and he who arises to rule over the nations, on him shall the nations hope* (Isaiah 11:10), the prophecy [of Revelation] says that he is *the king of the nations* and that all the nations will come and worship him, and in this way this passage fittingly foretells the call of the nations and the faith that they will have in the Lord.

Archbishop Averky: "**The fact that the righteous sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb evidently indicates that they are 'those justified before grace under the law' and 'those who lived righteously after the Coming of Christ'**. The song of Moses is sung as a song of victory: **'It is fitting for those who triumph in the last, most important victory over the enemy to recall the first successes of their struggle, such as was the victory of Moses over Pharaoh in the history of the chosen people of God.** His song is also sung now by the Christian conquerors' (St. Andrew of Caesarea). This song sounds exceptionally triumphant: Let us sing to the Lord, for He has been greatly glorified - and in the circumstances it is completely appropriate."

Vladimir Moss: "The last part of this song, all nations shall come and worship before Thee, is not to be found in Moses, but in David (Psalm 21.27), in the same psalm which begins with the words: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? **This indicates the close relationship between the Cross and the Resurrection, the moment of near-despair and the**

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moment of victory. Time and again, the Lord chooses the moment when human resources are at an end to show that He alone is the Head and Saviour of the Church, and not only saves the Church from being overcome by the gates of hell but even brings a vast harvest of souls into her granary.

“This will pre-eminently be the case after the Third World War, when, according to Elder Aristocles [March 1917 -- a wonderworking Hieroschemamonk on Mt. Athos, who died in 1918 (see the testimony about the Elder Aristocles at the end of this chapter)], "believers will come out of Russia and turn away many from the nations to God", and when, according to the anonymous prophet of Mount Athos, "the Orthodox faith shall be uplifted and shall spring from East to West.”¹

Revelation 15:5 And after that I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

Æcumenius: In the holy Scriptures it is customary to call the tent constructed in the desert by Bezalel, the architect of the things made at that time, the *tent of witness* because it was the tent of the testimonies and ordinances of God. There was in it the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, the table, the altars either for incense or for fruit offering, the lampstand and whatever else God commanded the holy Moses to provide, saying, *According to all that I show you on the mountain you shall make for me* (Ex. 25:9). Therefore, in view of the image of the ancient tabernacle he has called also the supercelestial temple, whatever it might be, a tent of witness. From there, it says, *the seven angels came out*. From where else could the ministers of God be seen coming out other than from the heavenly temple?

Revelation 15:6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 7 And one of the four [living creatures] gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials [bowls] full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

St. Andrew of Caesarea: "After this the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened, according to the image of which God had commanded Moses in the Old Testament to construct the earthly tabernacle, and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues. The seer says that they were clothed in pure and shining linen garments, and their breasts were girded with golden girdles, as a sign of their power, the purity of their nature, and the absolute integrity of their service."

St. Irenaeus: If anyone will devote a close attention to those things which are stated by the prophets with regard to the end, and those which John the disciple of the Lord say in the Apocalypse, he will find that the nations are to receive the same plagues universally, as Egypt then did particularly (*Against Heresies, IV, XXX, 4, Ante-Nicene Fathers, I, p. 504.*)

1. Here he is probably referring to the harvest of believers resulting from the preaching and miracles of the two witnesses in the last times, St. Elijah the Prophet to the Jews, St. Enoch to the Gentiles, as well as St. John the Theologian to the Christians (cf. St. John of Kronstadt as quoted by Vladimir Moss in his book *Apocalypse, the Book of the End*)

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Archbishop Averky: "From one of the four living creatures, that is, senior angels, they received seven golden vials, or seven golden cups, full of the wrath (anger) of God, Who liveth for ever and ever. These living creatures were Cherubim or Seraphim - supreme zealots of the glory of God, filled with the deepest vision of the judgements of God, both past and future, which is shown by the very appearance of these blessed beings, filled with eyes in front and behind. They receive the command of God to authorize the other seven angels to pour out upon the earth the seven cups of the wrath of God before the end of the world and the last judgement on the living and the dead."

Revelation 15:8 And the temple was [full] with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Isaiah 6.2-4: Around Him stood the Seraphim; each had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

Archbishop Averky: "Through this smoke we recognize how terrible, frightening and tormenting is the wrath of God, which, filling the temple, on the day of judgement will visit those worthy of it and first of all those who have submitted to the Antichrist and have accomplished the works of apostasy."

Next Page: Fresco of the last of the plagues: The pouring out of the 7 bowls/vials of the wrath of God on the ungodly before the Great Judgment.

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The following is from Elder Aristocles as found in *Orthodox Russia*, No. 21, 1969

When the Satanic Forces seized Russia... How did the Holy Fathers React? by Abbess Barbara

The elder of God, Hieroschemamonk Aristocles, was from Mount Athos. After living many years there, he was sent to Moscow to the conventual house of St. Panteleimon's Monastery, in Lubianka on Nicholsky Street. He always served at the Chapel of St. Panteleimon, where, through his prayers, wondrous miracles of healing were accomplished, especially for those who had the misfortune to be [demon] possessed.

While there, Batiushka would receive endless numbers of visitors who thirsted for his spiritual counsels and guidance.

Through the mercy of God, he was a friend of our family for many years.

On the sixth of March, 1917, just after the Revolution had exploded around us, I visited him and we had a long conversation concerning contemporary events – it was all so dreadfully horrifying

Batishka noted, among other things, that this was the beginning of *the judgment of God upon all the living*, and that not one nation on earth would be left untouched, not one single person. It was beginning in Russia, but later it would spread. He had nothing to say of any comfort, except to repeat continually: "Just do not fear; there is nothing to be afraid of. The Lord will manifest His miraculous mercy."

I asked him about many things. He answered, but told me not to repeat what he said to anyone until after his death; only to my immediate family, for he had a great love for my late parents, and was my mother's spiritual father. He, of course, gave me permission to relate all these things to my spiritual father, Archbishop Arsenius, who was then the Vicar-bishop of Serpukhov living in the Chudov Monastery in the Kremlin, and later was martyred. He was also a great spirit-bearing elder, having received his gifts from other elders.

Then followed that terrible October when the satanic forces seized our Orthodox Russian homeland.

I constantly visited Fr. Aristocles, since my father was in prison and had been there for a long time. Batiushka comforted us and prayed for us, and whatever he said came true. Then we left Russia – a miracle!

Batiushka, at one seemingly oppressive and hopeless moment, had suddenly said to me, "You will go to other countries," And so it happened. At the moment, he said it, there seemed to be no possibility of it. "But it will be so," he said to me.

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At that point, in 1922, my father and my elder brother were confined to the Lubyanka Prison. We were separated! There was not the slightest hope. But suddenly, my brother was sent abroad into exile, and a few days later, my father came home from prison. And they had no explanation for it. Then in September, we were sent to Germany with some professors who had also been exiled.

Our dear Batiushka already was no more. He reposed on August 26, 1918. Ten days previously, I had been with him, and he blessed me with unusual warmth, saying, "Farewell, dear child of my soul, farewell."

This, of course, is only a brief sketch of the events.

In one of my conversations with him I said that the White Army was being organized, and there was hope of –

"No it will not be, for the spirit is lacking. It will be necessary to endure many, many things, and for all to repent deeply; only repentance through suffering will save Russia."

I said that the war was not yet over.

"There will be yet another," Batiushka said. "And you will learn of it in that country where you will then be, for the German armor will be hurled against the Russian borders."

(And so it was. We read of it all in the *Jerusalem Post*, in English, of course.)

Batiushka then continued: "But do not rejoice yet. Many Russians will think that the Germans will deliver Russia from the Bolsheviks, but it will not be so. The Germans, yes, will invade Russia and will do much, but they will leave, for the time will not have come for salvation. It will come later."

He mentioned other things, but I will omit all that now. I will say only what he knew through clairvoyance and by his words, that we are now experiencing the period prior to the antichrist. But he said that I would not live to see it. Russia would nevertheless, be saved. Many torments, many agonies would come. he said that Russia would become one enormous prison, and that one must pray to the Lord for forgiveness. One must repent of sin and be afraid to commit the least sin; one must strive to do good, even the slightest. "For, indeed, the wings of flies have weight," he said, "and god's scales are exceedingly sensitive. And when there is the slightest extra weight in the pan of goodness, then God will manifest His goodness upon Russia."

This is what he said, unequivocally.

When I saw him ten days before his repose, and he gave me such a touching blessing, he noted that the end would come through China. Some sort of extraordinary cataclysm would

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reveal the miracle of God that *one will be taken and another left*, as it is said in the Holy Gospel. And life will become completely different on earth. Everything will seem fine, but not for long. Then there will be trials in other countries. He even said that Germany will endure chastisement in its own land – it will be divided – and he said much more.

He told me where I would live, and all has come to pass as he foresaw and foretold. he said much, much more on different subjects.

And now, one must await the radiant miracle. Even though faith at times is weak and all seems so hopeless, nevertheless, I believe it will happen. And has not St. Seraphim said much the same thing? There will be a terrible oppressive time of trial – may the Queen of Heaven come to the aid of all! And how many righteous souls – in the grip of vice and bondage – cry out to the Lord. . . . The one thing that is very bitter is that those Russian who are free do not take seriously all that is now happening. They are dissolute and drawn to mirages of material happiness. But what kind of happiness can there be, so long as our homeland is still not free?

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