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## Plagues of Exodus and Judgments of Revelation

Scholars have noted the correspondence of the plagues of Exodus and the plagues of Revelation, especially the bowl judgments of Revelation 16:1ff. While there are numerous verses that echo elements of the plague narrative in Exodus chapters 7:1-12:51, the greatest number of comparisons are to be found in the judgment of the seven bowls of Revelation 16:1-21.

### Bowl Judgments of Revelation, Exodus Plague Judgments Compared

To set the message of the bowl judgments in context, they are related to the Exodus of Israel during the tribulation that is described in Revelation 14:14-20. These verses announce that God's angels are about to carry out His instructions to "harvest the earth," 14:15-16. There actually are two harvests described in 14:14-20. The first is the "ripe" fruit, which represents Israel, as 14:1-5 states. The second "harvest" is the "fully ripe" or literally "rotten" and "spoiled" fruit that is harvested and cast into the "winepress" of the wrath of God, clearly a figure of eternal judgment, 14:19-20. Chapter 15:1-8 follows and is a prelude that introduces the seven bowl judgments of 16:1-21.

1. **Plague and Bowl Judgments Begin With Warning.** Just as Exodus 6:1-30 clearly is the prelude to the nine plague judgments of Exodus 7 to 12, Revelation 15 is the prelude to the bowl judgments. So, both judgment passages begin with a prelude of warning. Note especially that the warning in Revelation 15 includes the so-called, "Song of Moses," lifted partially from Exodus 15:1-19.
2. **Bowl One.** Both judgments include skin sores. The **first bowl** judgment is a plague of "loathsome" sores that afflict all those who have identified with the Antichrist by accepting the "mark of the beast," 666, and who worshipped his images, Rev 16:2. This compares with the sixth plague of "boils" described in Exodus 9:8-12.
3. **Bowl Two.** Both the plague and the third bowl judgment include turning water to "blood." In the second bowl judgment, an angel pours out the bowl of judgment on the sea and it turns to "blood," 16:3. As with the water to blood in Exodus, scholars are divided on whether this refers to color or texture or both. Note the word "man" is in italics, and the phrase in the text literally says the water became like the "blood as dead," which could refer to some kind of deadly pollution. This judgment in Revelation has often been referred to as a phenomenon known as red tide.

Red tide is the common name given to the rapid buildup of a form of phytoplankton, which are a plant-like organism that varies in color from green to brown and red. These red tides often produce natural toxins that are harmful to marine life including coastal birds, fish, marine mammals, and aquatic life. These toxins generally affect the depletion of oxygen in the water. They are not associated with the movement of the tide itself. Red tide is not due to human pollution of the water. In the United States, this phenomenon sometimes occurs in Florida. Red tide or a similar effect could have been what God did in the Nile River in Exodus 7:14-25.

4. **Bowl Three**. The water to blood judgment is expanded in this judgment to include the rivers and streams in Revelation 16:4-7.
5. **Bowl Four**. This bowl judgment has no counterpart in the plagues of Exodus. This judgment included a sudden and rapid increase in solar temperature and the ability of the sun to burn human flesh. It was so intense that affected humans blasphemed the name of God and did not repent for His sending such a discomforting plague on humanity.
6. **Bowl Five**. The fourth bowl judgment was like the darkness of the ninth plague in Exodus. After being scorched by the sun in the third bowl judgment, this judgment brought intense darkness. It was so intense that humans gnawed their tongue because of the pain. Humans blasphemed the name of God and did not repent. This judgment compares to the ninth plague of darkness in Exodus 10:21-29.
7. **Bowl Six**. This judgment begins with a drought of the Euphrates River. Three unclean spirits arise from the river, like frogs coming from the mouth of the beast and the dragon. They are further identified as the spirits of demons who go out to the kings of the earth to gather them to the battle of the great day of "God Almighty." The kings are gathering to the place called Armageddon, which is the Greek version of the Hebrew *Har Megiddo*, "the hill or mount of Megiddo." This bowl judgment bears some resemblance to the plague of frogs, which was the second plague in Exodus 8:1-15. The Exodus plague involved real frogs while the bowl judgment in Revelation refers to demons that resemble frogs.

This passage may also be compared to the sixth trumpet judgment in which there are four angels [messengers] of death from the Euphrates River. As a result of this judgment, one-third of the human family will be killed, Rev 9:13-21. The end of time as we know it is announced in 10:6-7, cf. Zech 14:6-7.

8. **Bowl Seven**. This bowl judgment includes undefined noises, thunderings, and lightnings that finally erupt into a great earthquake that is greater than any the earth has ever sustained. As a result, the great city of Babylon is divided into three parts and all the cities of the nations fall. Every island disappears and the mountains are flattened. It is a great terrestrial cataclysm. Great hailstones mingle with fire falling from heaven. Each hailstone is gigantic and weighs about

150 pounds. The hailstorm is reminiscent of the seventh plague of hail in Exodus 9:13-35.

### Additional Judgments Common to Exodus and Revelation

1. **Locusts.** In addition to the seven bowl judgments, the fifth trumpet judgment was a judgment of locusts, Rev 9:1-12. In the locust plague in Revelation, the locusts come from the bottomless pit, so they are immediately associated with the adversary. Everything mentioned in Revelation that emerges from the bottomless pit is related to Satan's kingdom of darkness, Rev 9:1, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3. The locust plague of Exodus 10:1-20 is one of the longest accounts of judgment in the plagues of Exodus.
2. **Hail.** At the end of the seventh trumpet judgment in Revelation 11:15-19, there is great hail as compared with the seventh plague of Exodus 9:13-35 and also the end of the seventh bowl judgment in Revelation 16:21.
3. **Water.** The first plague of water to blood in Exodus 7:14-25 is similar to the judgment of the second and third trumpet judgments which bring a plague on the waters of the sea and the waters of the rivers. The sea became blood, Rev 8:8-9, and the waters of one-third of the rivers and springs became bitter. As a result of this bitter water "many men died," 8:11.
4. **Sun and Heavenly Bodies.** The ninth plague of darkness in Exodus 10:21-29, is similar to the fourth trumpet of Revelation 8:12-13 in which a third part of the heavenly bodies were smitten and had no light for a third part of each day and each night. Also the sixth and seventh trumpets announce the end of time as we know it. See also Zechariah 14:12-15 that describes some kind of realignment of the heavenly bodies to signal the end of time as we know it.

### Protection of God's People

1. **Exodus** - The Hebrews were protected from all the plagues that befell the Egyptians in the land of Egypt. They were protected from the swarms of insects according to Exodus 8:22. This verse also gives us a clue that in all the previous plagues including the water to blood, 7:19; the frogs, 8:2, 6; the gnats, 8:17; and the insect swarms, 8:22, the plagues were limited to the "land of Egypt" and did not affect the "land of Goshen" where the Hebrews lived. In addition, the livestock of the Hebrews were protected in the fifth plague, 9:6; the boils were only in the land of Egypt, 9:9; the hail did not fall in the land of Goshen, 9:26; the locusts did not plague Goshen, 10:19; and though darkness in Egypt was total, see 10:22, the Hebrews had light in Goshen, 10:23. In the tenth and final plague, all homes with the blood on the doorpost would be protected, 11:7, while all others would lose their firstborn, 11:4-6.
2. **Revelation** - While there is no indication of protection for Israel in the seven seal judgments, 6:1-8:6; the seven trumpet judgments, 8:7-11:19; or the seven

bowl judgments, 15:1-16:21, the believing Jews are raptured. In Revelation 14:14-20, two harvests of the earth are described. The first is of the ripe fruit, 14:14-16, which represents the rapture of believing Israel to protect them from the seven bowls of the wrath of God that follow in 15:1-16:21. Revelation 14:17-20 describes the second harvest, which is the "rotten" fruit that is thrown into the winepress of the wrath of God. That wrath begins with the seven bowls of the seven last plagues that complete the wrath of God, Rev 15:1. The wrath of God climaxes with all those who are objects of that wrath being cast into the lake of fire for eternal punishment, Rev 20:11-15; 21:8.

## **Conclusion**

The judgments of the Book of Revelation center around three cycles. These are the Seven Seal Judgments, 6:1-8:6; the Seven Trumpet Judgments, 8:7-11:19; and the Seven Bowl Judgments, 15:1-16:21. While the judgments of the Exodus plagues are not duplicated, there are many similarities. Many of the figures are the same as the water to blood, the frogs, the locusts, heavenly signs, hail mingled with fire, and darkness. What are the lessons of these judgments?

1. Satan is a liar, Gen 3:4-5; John 8:44. Satan lied when he told them to disregard the Word of God and they would be okay. He told them a half-truth, which is a whole lie. He said they would not die. While it was true they did not die instantly, what he did not tell them was sin would place them under the wrath of God.
2. The wrath of God is revealed against sin, Rom 1:18. This is a constant principle of God's character. He is holy and righteous. He blesses and rewards righteousness, but His wrath is constantly against sin and those who choose sin and death over righteousness and life.
3. The wages of sin is death, Rom 6:23. God told the truth when He warned Adam and Eve not to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil lest they die. Sin and ungodliness now will have a pay day one day when we all have to stand before God and give account of what we have done in this life.
4. God always warns before He judges. If the judgment of God against sin and sinners were a carefully guarded secret, one might have a logical argument that God was unfair. God clearly warns of the wages of sin from the warning in Genesis 2:16-17 to the final warning in Revelation 22:18-19.
5. Judgment in this life is redemptive, Exod 6:2, 6-9; 7:5, 17; 10:2; Eph 1:7. The purpose of judgment in this life always is redemptive. Noah preached and called people to righteousness for a hundred years, and all who died in the flood had an opportunity to receive the grace of God, 1 Pet 3:18-22. God wants us to be aware of the deadly consequences of sin so that we will be moved to repent and turn to Him for forgiveness and salvation through faith in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.