

December 25-31, 2023

## Revelation 15–22

“HE THAT OVERCOMETH SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS”

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**Summary:** *Revelation 15. Exalted Saints praise God in celestial glory forever.*

*Revelation 16. God pours out plagues upon the wicked—The nations assemble for Armageddon—Christ comes, islands flee, and mountains cease.*

*Revelation 17. John is shown that Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations, has become established throughout the earth.*

*Revelation 18. The Saints are called out of Babylon lest they partake of her sins—She falls and is lamented by her supporters.*

*Revelation 19. The marriage supper of the Lamb is made ready—The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy—Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.*

*Revelation 20. Satan is bound during the Millennium—The Saints will then live and reign with Christ—The dead stand before God and are judged out of the books according to their works.*

*Revelation 21. Those who overcome will be sons of God—The earth attains its celestial glory.*

*Revelation 22. The Saints will reign in celestial splendor—Christ will come, and men will be judged—Blessed are they who keep His commandments.*

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### Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

#### judgment?

What Israel witnessed at the hands of God through Moses described in **(Exodus 7–10, 11–13)** will be like the plagues described in the book of Revelation, which are to be lashed out upon the earth in the last days, preceding the return of the Lord. Thus, in we find the victorious saints singing; “. . . 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.” **(Revelation 15:3)**

How did the  
plagues in Old  
Testament Egypt  
become a  
prototype of future

How can I better understand the  
metaphor of harlotry and proper  
marriage?

The Biblically instructed marriage procedure still carried out by religious Jews to this day includes complete chastity. The intended bride and groom have no physical contact until the “temple wedding” which is depicted by a large *Talit* (prayer shawl with the 613-knots/strings) held over their heads and once that, or another *Talit* is draped over them – they kiss. Any pre-marital contact has been included in the terms adultery or harlotry. The marriage ceremony has “seven blessings and the marriage supper, when seven days of feasting would occur as a celebration of the marriage while the seven blessings were recited over the couple.” **(“Marriage,” in**

**Historical Dictionary of Judaism, ed. Norman Solomon (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 243)** The number seven itself is a metaphor of purity and/or purification.

### **How was ancient Israel taught to think “Temple?”**

In more than four-and-half-decades of being a tour guide in Israel, one of many experiences stands out as more touching. It is the experience of reviewing Israel’s history and some sacred ways that Jews arranged as a way of dwelling. In the exodus from Egypt there seemed to be a Telesstial, Terrestrial and Celestial identity. I see the Lord’s people as a “temple society,” a “Zion,” hence, “Zion’s Camp,” with twelve tribes, (Joseph had two inheritances; Ephraim and Manasseh) of the camp on the outside circumference. The outer tribal placement was; **North:** Asher, Dan, and Naphtali; **South:** Simeon, Reuben, and Gad; **East:** Issachar, Judah, and Zebulun; **West:** Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. Each tribe had stakes (poles) with colorful banners identifying them and their locations. They circled or surrounded one other tribe, the priestly Levites, who made an enclosure around the Lord’s “presence” – his tabernacle. That had three compartments, the innermost was the “Holy of Holies.” The tabernacle center part of the camp of Israel, was likewise identified by stakes that were draped with curtains (or veil material) because of its very holy and high priestly state. Eventually, Israel began to grow and wander from the unity the temple society required. So, a system of cities and of capital cities began to develop. The capital city had the tabernacle with temple courtyards large enough to handle tens of thousands of worthy Israelites to teach and remind them of ordinances that still applied to the whole Zion society. There still was an outer enclosure for the multitude that surrounded a center enclosure that was under the priestly

Levite administration. Only worthy members were able to be brought through the priestly (Aaronic) courtyard to participate in ordinances and sacrifices that occurred in the higher priestly part of the temple with its altar in front of the tabernacle with its “Holy of Holies,” (a Melchizedek environment). In the restoration, the temple courtyards gave way to sacred “temple buildings” with telestial, terrestrial, and celestial identity. Aaronic and Melchizedek instructions were and are given to prepare the people to be a Zion society. Again, its lesser and higher priestly environments and ordinances (eternal) are designed to bring us into the Lord’s presence.

### **How are we “going back to the future?”**

Going back in history, turning around, and looking at today, we begin to better understand the present and the future of temple buildings and the system of two capital cities, the Lord’s cities of new and old Jerusalem. We see the possibility of being the Lord’s people, dwelling with him in his cities. We have additional insights from the late Apostle Bruce R. McConkie. “Up to now, through all of earth’s long years, there has been one time, one time only, when the Lord’s system of capital cities has worked perfectly. Such was in the day of Enoch, the seventh from Adam. In that holy day, so faithful were the saints that the Lord, the Great Jehovah, “came and dwelt with his people,” even as he will in the millennial era that is to be. In that holy day, the saints “dwelt in righteousness,” even as they shall when the Lord comes again to dwell among mortals.” **(Bruce R. McConkie , The Mortal Messiah, Vol.1, p.84)** “And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them. And Enoch built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even ZION . . . And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the

midst of Zion; and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, ZION IS FLED.” (Moses 7:16-21, 69)

### **How do I know that some Temples will be “Cities of the Lord?”**

Other scriptures help us understand more about a ZION or “temple society.” “And he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come--after it should be destroyed it should be built up again, a holy city unto the Lord; wherefore, it could not be a new Jerusalem for it had been in a time of old; but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord; and it should be built unto the house of Israel.” (Ether 13:5) There is a parallel of old Zion and new Zion. Prophecies of one may apply to both. One thing is for sure: The Lord will come and He will dwell in his cities. That means that sanctity and cleanliness must exist in these cities. It is the same sacredness that any temple building requires. It will require us to be a “temple society.” “Thus, saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.” (Zechariah 8:3) The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “Judah must return, Jerusalem must be rebuilt, and the temple, . . . and all this must be done before the Son of Man will make His appearance” (History of the Church 5:337). “Jerusalem of old, after the Jews have been cleansed and sanctified from all their sin, shall become a holy city where the Lord shall dwell and from whence he shall send forth his word unto all people. Likewise, on this continent, the city of Zion, New Jerusalem, shall be built and from it the law of God shall also go forth. There will be no conflict, for each city shall be headquarters for the Redeemer of the world, and from each he

shall send forth his proclamations as occasion may require. Jerusalem shall be the gathering place of Judah and his fellows of the house of Israel, and Zion shall be the gathering place of Ephraim and his fellows, upon whose heads shall be conferred “the richer blessings.” (Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., Doctrines of Salvation, Vol.3, p.69 - p.70) “Now many will feel disposed to say, that this New Jerusalem spoken of, is the Jerusalem that was built by the Jews on the eastern continent. But you will see, from Revelation 21:2, there was a New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband; that after this, the Revelator was caught away in the Spirit, to a great and high mountain, and saw the great and holy city descending out of heaven from God. Now there are two cities spoken of here. As everything cannot be had in so narrow a compass as a letter, I shall say with brevity, that there is a New Jerusalem to be established on this continent, and also Jerusalem shall be rebuilt on the eastern continent (see Book of Mormon, Ether 13:1-12. “Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ, and he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come; after it should be destroyed, it should be built up again, a holy city unto the Lord, wherefore it could not be a New Jerusalem, for it had been in a time of old.” This may suffice, upon the subject of gathering, until my next.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Two 1834-37 p.86) “Jerusalem of old, after the Jews have been cleansed and sanctified from all their sin, shall become a holy city where the Lord shall dwell and from whence he shall send forth his word unto all people. Likewise, on this continent, the city of Zion, New Jerusalem, shall be built and from it the law of God shall also go forth. There will be no conflict, for each city shall be headquarters for the Redeemer of the world, and from each he

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### **Again, what are some of the "Sign of the Times?"**

As reviewed earlier, the conflicts that precede this great era are a refining fire. We are fortunate to have prophetic indications so that we can prepare ourselves for the future. As for the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, there are specific signs and even time frames to guide us through future peril. As some see it, among many other "2<sup>nd</sup>-coming signs, an "over-all" five-phase era brings us to and through the "Armageddon" scenario. (1.) The world turns against Israel. Hasn't the UN applied this already? The armies of 200,000,000 will gather against Israel. (Is that the size of the army or is it like the army of more than three hundred million people that was gathered for the Gulf War)? (Zechariah 14:2, Revelation 9:16) (2.) Two prophets will hold them back for three-and-a-half years.

(They will have political, military as well as spiritual influence.) (Revelation 11:3) (3.) A great holocaust ensues where the prophets will lie dead in the streets for three-and-a-half days. (One third of the population of Israel as well as two thirds of the population of Jerusalem perishes.) (Revelation 11:11) (4.) A great heavenly manifestation and deliverance follow. (The mount of Olives cleaves in two, the besieged of Jerusalem are freed.) (Zechariah 14:4) (5.) A great healing begins, as it takes seven months to bury the dead and the instruments of war provide seven years of fuel for the survivors. (Ezekiel 39:9-10)

### **Now, what?**

The comfort in following the Lord's way was expressed by the Prophet Brigham Young. "The Lord's time is not for me to know; but he is kind, long-suffering, and patient, and his wrath endureth silently, and will until mercy is completely exhausted, and then judgment will take the reins. I do not know how, neither do I at present wish to know. It is enough for us to know how to serve our God and live our religion, and thus we will increase in the favor of God." (Discourses of Brigham Young, 117-18)