

## “SONGS IN HEAVEN – 4.) SINGING BY THE SEA”

Revelation 15:2-4

There is a song written by Harold R. Atteridge in 1914. The chorus begins: “By the sea, by the sea By the Beautiful Sea You and I, You and I Oh! How happy we’ll be....”

I have always been happy by the sea. I’ve seen the Atlantic Ocean from its shores in Maine, New Jersey, Maryland, North Carolina, and Florida and its shores in the United Kingdom. I’ve waded in the Gulf of Mexico. I’ve seen the Pacific Ocean in California and from an island in Alaska. I only briefly rode in a boat on the ocean; I liked it very much.

The sea of glass before the throne of God is very mysterious. In the book of Ezekiel and once in the Revelation the rainbow and this sea of glass before God’s throne are associated with each other. When the elders of Israel saw it it was like a paving of sapphire stones like the very heavens in clarity, another time it is described as clear glass, and yet another time as the color of emeralds. It is rainbow like in its colors.

At times the Bible seems to describe the oceans and seas as being in league with the opponents of God. God pushed back the oceans in order that dry land might appear. He set boundaries for the seas and will not let them go beyond these bounds. He parted the Red Sea and later the waters of the Jordan River so that His people might cross over. It is interesting that although the Jews could eat fish if they had scales and fins, they could not offer them as sacrifices. The Beast came out of the sea to wreak havoc upon the earth. God has cast our sins in the depths of the sea. In the new heavens and new earth there is no longer any sea.

1.) Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. (Revelation 15:1-2 NKJV)

In an advertisement on television the pilot who landed his airplane on the Hudson River says that he has been called a hero. Then he introduces us to children who are battling cancer. He says that they are the real heroes.

In this passage we are given a glimpse of some heroes of the Christian faith. They gained victory over the beast, over his image, over his mark, and over the number of his name. Near the end of time the Beast, who is Satan, and the Antichrist, one or more rulers hostile to Christianity, rule for a brief time. During that time everyone is required to worship the Beast. They cannot conduct business unless the mark of the Beast and the number of his name is on their forehead and their hand.

The early Christians faced a similar trial. Every person had to worship at the altar of Caesar once a year. Christians would not worship Caesar. Every craft or trade had its own lodge. You had to belong to the lodge to conduct business in that trade or craft. Each lodge had its own patron god or goddess worshiped in lodge meetings.

The way our society is computerized, it would be possible to keep someone from working, owning land, even buying food if they refused to worship and serve a ruler hostile to Christ. The Christian heroes had victory over Satan refusing to worship the Beast and holding their love and faith in Jesus Christ. Many had to die for their faith and victory.

2.) They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! (Revelation 15:3 NKJV)

There are two songs of Moses. The first is in Exodus 15 and it celebrates the destruction of Pharaoh's army when the Lord let the waters of the Red Sea come rushing in on them. The Lord parted the waters of the Red Sea and the hundreds of thousands of Israelites led by Moses crossed over on dry land. When the chariots of Pharaoh's army attempted to follow, they were drowned by the returning waters.

The second song of Moses is sung at the end of his life. He begins by praising the Lord; he chastises the current generation for its unfaithfulness; he reminds them of the marvelous acts the Lord in bringing them into the Promised Land and defeating their enemies; he reminds them how God punished their fathers when they were unfaithful; he promises-

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, And render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people." (Deuteronomy 32:43 NKJV)

The song of the Lamb is a fulfillment of the promises in the Song of Moses. God delivered the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt and led them safely across the Red Sea though pursued by the mightiest army in the world at that time. This was a picture of God delivering His elect from the dominion of Satan though Satan inflicts cruel persecution and has many humans and demons in his service. The song sung by the saints and martyrs could as well be sung by the Israelites who crossed the Red Sea as by the Christians who endured Tribulation:

"Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!"

3.) Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested." (Revelation 15:4 NKJV)

It is beyond all comprehension why everyone in town is not in this church or some other church this Lord's Day. How can any be so foolish as to despise God, to have no fear of Him, to worship a god of their own imagining. How can they be so foolhardy as not to glorify God? The Psalmist says that "The fool has said in his heart There is no God."

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:17-18 NKJV)

Only the true God is holy – that wholly different from created beings. He loves us even though our sins took His beloved Son to the cross. He is willing to forgive the sins and adopt as His children all those who obey the Gospel. He gives salvation as a free gift. Why would a reasonable person refuse the free gift of God's love.

All nations, everyone in every land, will be compelled to bow their knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Why would any reasonable person wait to bow and confess as a conquered enemy? Why wouldn't they even now join the people of God who are being led everywhere in victory by God through Jesus Christ?

God has already shown His mighty hand in judgments in times past. Why would a reasonable person defiantly stand up against God waiting for His wrath to be poured out on a sinful, rebellious world. Are not the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile sufficient reminders of the power of God?

Turn, sinners, why do you wait? Jesus is calling you now!

