

## Revelation and the ‘New Exodus’

The entire book of Revelation—especially the seven judgements of trumpets and bowls—has strong ties to the book of Exodus and the story of God delivering his people from bondage in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The Apocalypse is significantly shaped by the Exodus narrative, and follows a similar script in order to lay out the plans for judgement and deliverance through Jesus, the Slain Lamb. By building off of the themes, language, and significance of the Exodus event, John depicts the future deliverance of God’s people, the Church, in terms of a *new exodus*.

Divine judgement is a major theme within Revelation. By patterning the seals, trumpets, and bowls after the Exodus—more specifically, the 10 plagues—the supreme glory, power, and sovereignty of the true God are highlighted. Throughout the entire OT, “the exodus narrative exemplifies the biblical pattern of salvation through judgement as Yahweh defeats and destroys Israel’s enemies in order to deliver his people.”<sup>2</sup> In Revelation, we find the realization of the last and great exodus, as the sovereign Triune God decisively defeats his enemies, executes judgement, and saves his people, all to the praise of his glory.

Notice the way in which the trumpets are paralleled after the 10 plagues against Egypt:<sup>3</sup>

Trumpets in Revelation 8-11	Plagues in Exodus 7-10
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet</i> : on earth/land; hail and fire (8:7)	<i>7<sup>th</sup> Plague</i> : hail and fire upon land (9:22-25)
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Trumpet</i> : on sea/water; water turns to blood; 1/3 of sea creatures die (8:8-9)	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Plague</i> : Nile to blood; fish die; unable to drink water (7:20-25)
<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Trumpet</i> : on rivers and springs; water turned bitter; die from drinking (8:10-11)	
<i>4<sup>th</sup> Trumpet</i> : on sun, moon, stars; 1/3 of sun, moon, and stars turn dark (8:12)	<i>9<sup>th</sup> Plague</i> : darkness (10:21-23)
<i>5<sup>th</sup> Trumpet</i> : abyss opened; darkness; locusts torment people (9:1-11)	<i>8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Plague</i> : locusts; darkness (10:12-15, 21-23)
<i>6<sup>th</sup> Trumpet</i> : four angels released at Euphrates; 1/3 of mankind killed; those not killed by plagues refuse to repent (9:13-21)	<i>No direct correlation</i> : however, the failure to repent parallels Pharaoh’s hard-hearted refusal to submit to Yahweh despite the ten plagues (cf. 4:21; 9:25; 14:4, etc.)
<i>7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet</i> : lightning, rumblings, thunder, earthquake, hailstorm (11:15-19)	<i>7<sup>th</sup> Plague</i> : thunder, hail, lightning (9:22-25)

At the climax of each series of judgements, in which the eschatological “Day of the LORD” is depicted, there are allusions to the glorious and awesome self-revelation of Yahweh in Exodus 19. The seventh seal, trumpet, and bowl all conclude with scenes of “flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and an earthquake” (Revelation 8:5; 11:19; 16:18). Each scene recalls the theophany on Sinai (Exodus 19:16-19). Throughout the rest of the OT, the imagery of thunder, lightning, tremors, and earthquakes associated with Yahweh’s appearance after the exodus become paradigmatic for depictions of God’s future, eschatological appearance to execute judgment.

<sup>1</sup> Many of the points made in this handout have been shaped by the discussion in Brian J. Tabb, *All Things New: Revelation as Canonical Capstone*, NSBT (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019): 143-62.

<sup>2</sup> Tabb, *All Things New: Revelation as Canonical Capstone*, 161.

<sup>3</sup> The following chart is adapted from Tabb, *All Things New*, 154.

## *Revelation and the ‘New Exodus’*

“[Revelation] returns repeatedly to the sights and sounds of Sinai to convey the transcendent holiness and thundering power of God. The refrain of lightning, rumblings, thunder and quake drawn from Exodus 19:16 signals that God is executing his new-exodus plans for judgement and salvation. The cycles of seven seals, trumpets and bowls of wrath each conclude with theophanic imagery [theophany = appearance of God] first introduced in Revelation 4:5 to make clear that the heavenly throne is the ultimate source of the climactic plagues of judgement...”<sup>4</sup>

Within the chapters containing the trumpet and bowl judgements, there are many additional connections to the Exodus narrative. Moreover, the entire book contains allusions to Exodus.

<b>Revelation’s Connection to Exodus</b>	<b>Exodus Reference</b>
Plagues (ch. 16-16, <i>passim</i> )	ch. 7-10
Hardening of heart and failure to repent (9:20)	<i>passim</i> , cf. 4:21; 14:4
Lightning/thunder/rumblings/earthquake (4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18)	19:16-19
God as ‘the one who is’ (11:17; also 1:4,8; 4:8; 16:5)	3:14
Trumpets (ch. 8-11, <i>passim</i> )	19:13,16,19
Bitter water (8:10-11)	15:23
Pillar of fire (10:1)	13:21-22
Song following salvation thru judgement of enemies (11:16-18; 15:3-4)	ch. 15
Groaning/crying out for deliverance and justice (6:10)	2:24-25
Slain Lamb/Passover Lamb (5:6ff)	12:6
Lamb’s blood ransoms people to become kingdom/priests (1:6; 5:9-10)	19:6
Moses, servant of God (15:3)	14:31
Song of Moses (15:3)	ch. 15
Ark of Covenant (15:3)	25:10
Palm branches connected w/ Feast of Booths following the exodus (7:9)	Lev 23:40-43
12 names, 12 stones (21:12-13)	28:21
Book of Life (3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27)	32:32-33
Sanctuary/Tabernacle filled w/ glory of God, no one can enter (15:5,8)	40:34
‘Sealing’ that protects from God’s judgement (7:3)	12:7,13
Plagues do not harm God’s people (9:4)	8:22-23; 9:4-7,26; 10:23

<sup>4</sup> Tabb, *All Things New*, 146.