

REVELATION 10-22: FINAL PLAGUES

Thursday, December 24
Reading: Revelation 15-16

Revelation 15:3 *Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the nations. 4 Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."*

Revelation 15-16 begins God's 'endgame.' As the seven last plagues are given to the seven angels all heaven breaks out in praise of God's greatness and worthiness. Someday all creation (even those who reject Him) will worship before Him (15:1-4).

In this solemn ceremony (15:5-8), these angels are given their bowls of wrath. Each angel is dressed as a priest as they will perform this as an act of worship to the glory of God. The smoke of God's glory fills the heavenly temple so that no one could enter. This pictures for us the finality of these judgments. The time for prayers of intercession is over. God's judgment will be completed. God's power and glory are seen not only in His forgiveness and mercy, but in His judgment and wrath.

Chapter 15 describes the final plagues on earth before the return of Jesus Christ. They will devastate the already shaky environment and physical health of the wicked. Revelation 16:5-6 tell us that God is merely giving people what they deserve. This is seen at the end of the chapter where humanity still refuses to repent but instead curse God. The final bowl judgments begin the war of Armageddon at the end of which Christ will return to destroy His enemies and afterwards rule the nations.

In the middle of his description concerning the 'war' of Armageddon, John records Jesus saying, "Look! I come like a thief" (16:15). While His judgment will come as suddenly and unexpectedly as a thief for unbelievers, those who love Christ should be ready. To "go naked" was a mark of shame. Believers are not to go about spiritually naked. In these last days, they will be blessed if they cling to the hope of Christ's return and keep their lives pure in anticipation of seeing Him face to face. The same is true for Christians today. Christ could return at any moment! Will you be rejoicing or ashamed when you see Him face to face?

POINTS TO PONDER:

"True and Just are Your Judgments." A lot of people want to question God. They ask, 'If God is good, why does He allow suffering? If God is all-powerful, why does He allow evil? If God is loving, how could He send anyone to Hell?' If these people were honest, they would admit that their problem is not with God but with themselves. They do not want to give up control of their life. They don't want to be held responsible for the sinful choices they make. God is always true and just. He is never wrong and never makes a mistake. One day God will set everything right, but according to His plan and in His time. Can you trust in God even when you don't understand what He is doing? Can you rest in God's will even when it seems everything is going wrong? How does the truth that God still holds this world in His hands help us with the struggles of today?

READ THE NT: Mark 14