

Revelation | Comfort

Revelation 15-16

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I. The Story So Far:

Things are bad, and they're going to get a lot worse before they get better.

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

- Matthew 24:21-22

II. Learning to Take Comfort in God's Wrath:

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.

- Revelation 15:1

1. God's wrath is inevitable but it's not indefinite. (15:1)

For His anger is but for a moment, and His favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

- Psalm 30:5

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire--and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

- Revelation 15:2

And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are Your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the nations! 4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. All nations will come and worship You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed."

- Revelation 15:3-4

2. God's wrath is worthy of worship because it proves His character. (15:3-4)

and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

- Revelation 15:8

3. God's wrath is necessary for His purposes to be accomplished. (15:8)

So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

- Revelation 16:2

And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, "Just are You, O Holy One, who is and who was, for You brought these judgments. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!" 7 And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are Your judgments!"

- Revelation 16:5-7

4. God's wrath is a means of ensuring that justice is done. (16:5-7)

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

- Romans 12:19

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east.

- Revelation 16:12

And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. 14 For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.

- Revelation 16:13-14

5. God's wrath is a powerful reminder that He is in complete control. (16:12-14)

...they cursed the name of God...They did not repent and give Him glory.

- Revelation 16:9

and cursed the God of heaven...They did not repent of their deeds.

- Revelation 16:11

...and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

- Revelation 16:21

The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

- 2 Peter 3:9

6. God's wrath is a gracious final opportunity for sinners to repent. (16:9, 11, 21)

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires

of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

- Ephesians 2:1-3

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith...

- Romans 3:23-25a

III. The Story Continues:

However bad things get, the ultimate comfort in God's wrath for followers of Jesus is that we are no longer objects of it. (Ephesians 2:1-5a, Romans 3:23-25a)

Study Questions

1. Read Revelation 15:1-8. What is your response to the reality of worship taking place in the context of the imminent outpouring of God's wrath? What does this reveal about the "why" and "when" of worship in your own life?
2. Read Revelation 16:1-21. What stands out to you most? What specifically encourages you and what challenges you?
3. How do you feel about the idea that God's wrath can actually be a source of comfort? Which of the six reasons given impacts you most and why? Which is hardest for you to grasp and why?
4. Why do you think that verse 15 is included in chapter 16? To what extent are you living in the light of this exhortation, and how could you heed it more faithfully?
5. Read 2 Peter 3:9-10. What light do these verses shed on what's happening in Revelation 16? How should the future events we read about in Revelation 16 affect our present reality?
6. As we conclude our study of Revelation chapters 6-16, which are undeniably focused on God's judgment, what have you learned? How will you live your life differently as a result?