why god’s judgment of earth is right

(Revelation 15)

Revelation 15:1-8 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. 2 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. 3 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! 4 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.﻿” 5 After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6 And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. 7 Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. 8 The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

April 20, 1999 was the date of the horrible tragedy that we know as the “Columbine Massacre.” On that day many students lost their lives as two male students walked through Columbine High School and killed 12 of their fellow classmates and one teacher. Cassie Bernall, a believer in Christ, was one of those students. In a book written in 2000 by her mom, Misty, entitled *She Said Yes*, Misty Bernall shares the story about her daughter’s death. As one of the shooters moved through the school, he confronted Cassie Bernall and asked her: “Do you believe in God?” Bravely, she answered, “Yes,” and was then shot to death.

--------

In our text from Revelation 15, John has a vision in which he sees 7 angels with the last 7 judgments of the tribulation (bowls---next week)!

Then immediately after that, John sees the Christian men and women who took a stand for Christ during the reign of the Beast standing before the throne of God.

They are called “those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name.”

Like Cassie Bernall, they too are martyrs.

In spite of the fact that they knew they would die, they refused to worship the beast, his false religion, and refused to take his mark so that they could buy the groceries and other things they needed to live.

It was very clear to them that choosing to confess Christ openly and unashamedly before men would not just result in some kind of verbal abuse----it meant death.

And now John sees them standing victoriously before the throne of God.

God judgments on the beast and his followers have been manifested and, in response, they are rejoicing and singing God’s praises. Notice once again v. 3:

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!

In a nutshell, they are saying**---“God, You are right in all You do. You are holy. Even Your judgments against evil are righteous and true.”**

But even though these martyrs see it this way, a lot of people don’t.

Many people struggle with the intensity of the judgments that God will unleash during the tribulation.

They read Revelation and say, “How could God do such a thing?”

So the question before us is this: “***Are*** His judgments just and true?”

Well, first of all, one reason I would say that they are just and true is **because of the persecution and murder of God’s people.**

When the tribulation martyrs stand before the throne of God, they are singing praise to God because He is about to administer justice---to avenge their blood and to set up His kingdom on earth.

One of the final judgments of earth involves God turning all of the fresh water on earth to blood. Notice what is said:

**Revelation 16:4-7** Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying: “﻿You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. **For it is their just due**.﻿” 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, “﻿**Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments**.﻿”

Another reason that God is right in judging the earth as He does is this: **it is in keeping with who He is.**

One of the lines in the song of the martyrs is this:

Revelation 15:4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? **For You alone are holy.**

If God is holy, His holiness demands that sin must be judged.

Ray Stedman said:

The book of Revelation surveys God's solution to the crisis of history; how he will bring about the long-promised world of peace and blessing. After centuries of patient waiting and putting up with might-is-right arrogance, hate, greed and the bloodshed that has characterized our earth so long, God says there comes a time when he will call a halt to the whole rotten business!

And because He is holy---because His holy character demands that sin be judged---God will do so, and He will be perfectly just in doing so.

Finally, God’s judgments are right in light of **man’s failure to govern the earth rightly.**

Once again, let’s look at verse 4:

Revelation 15:4 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.﻿”

For 1000’s of years, God has allowed men and women to rule over nations and states and cities. The result? For the most part---Wars. Greed. Extravagance. Bloodshed. Oppression. The Holocaust. The Killing Fields. Poverty. Waste. Misuse of peoples’ hard-earned dollars. Saddam Hussein. Hitler. Mussolini. Edi Amin. Khomeini. We could go on forever.

But in John’s vision, he sees the tribulation martyrs singing God’s praise because---FINALLY---He judges the nations and gives the world what it has needed for 1000’s of years----a perfectly fair, just, and righteous King---our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**Isaiah 2:2-5** Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord’s house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, “﻿Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.﻿” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

For many years here at Ridge Pointe, we have sung the song, “The Lord Reigns” as we look forward to His future reign on earth.

The Lord reigns!
Let the earth rejoice!
Let the people be glad!
For our God reigns!

But in that future day when we sing it, we will understand those words like never before, because the days of being governed by sinful men and women is over. During the Tribulation, the fires of His judgment will go before Him, and, according to Psalm 97 from which the song is taken, burn up all His enemies.

**Application**

It may seem strange to us that the passage we have studied today has believers worshiping and praising God for His just judgment of those who ruthlessly killed God’s people, but it is only because most of us have never had a family member or friend murdered in cold blood or because of their faith in Christ.

In my class this past week at Liberty was an Arab woman who grew up as a believer in Syria and when you listen to her speak about the persecuted believers in the Middle East, you begin to understand passage like Revelation 15 a lot better.

--- Pray for the persecuted church. (Right now, there **ARE** believers who are being martyred for Christ. Pray for their courage.)

---Share the good news in light of God’s future wrath. (Comments)