

A Study of the Book of Revelation

Source Material: *Come, Lord Jesus* by Mark Braaten

Week 11: November 29, 2009

Read Revelation 15:1-8

Old Testament Reference: Exodus 15 - Israelites standing by the sea singing a victory song following delivery from Egyptians

Exodus story reminds us that the judgement of God serves to liberate and redeem the people

“Verse 4 in the song proclaims, ‘All nations will come and worship before you.’ This is God’s will. Revelation is not just a book of divine vengeance. Quite the contrary, Revelation portrays God’s deepest desire as being the redemption of all people and all nations. That purpose is restated here. God is out to save the nations!” (Braaten, pg. 112)

Chapter 15 has returned to the theme of worship, what in your experience makes for good and helpful worship? Why is worship important to you?

Read Revelation 16:1-11

Bowls of Wrath (1-5)

1. Foul and painful sores on all who have the mark of the beast
2. Seas turn to blood
3. Fresh water turns to blood
4. Sun scorches God’s opponents
5. Plunges the Beast’s kingdom into darkness

Plagues 1, 5, 6, 7 are directed at Rome (the Beast) and it’s followers

Plagues 2 and 3 recall Exodus Plagues

Plague 4 reminds us that even when judged, some people will not repent

Why do you think these plagues would be seen as good news by Christians in places like Smyrna or Philadelphia?

Read Revelation 16:12-16

Bowl of Wrath number 6 - Euphrates River is dried up
- A reminder that threat of invasion by the Parthians

In the face of God’s judgement, evil doesn’t repent, but rather gathers resources for one last battle.

What do you think it means that John interrupts the 6th Bowl to remind us, “See, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake . . .”? (Rev. 16:15)

Armageddon

1. Verse 16 is the first and only mention in Revelation of Armageddon
2. Translation of the Hebrew word means “mountain of Megiddo” which is the northern plain of Israel which was the site of many OT battles (Braaten, pg. 116)
3. Problem for literalist - Megiddo is a plain, not a mountain
4. OT “references Megiddo as a place of destruction for the enemies of God” (Braaten, pg. 116) (Judges 5:19, 2 Chronicles 35:22)

Point of reference is not to establish a place, but to make it clear that it will be the place and time when God’s enemies are destroyed.

Battle is not fought here, but rather is introduced and fought in Chapter 19

Why do you think images of Armageddon capture the imaginations of so many people?

Read Revelation 16:17-21

Bowl of Wrath number 7 - Poured in air - lightning, thunder, hail, earthquake

“Rome is now judged and its destruction is complete. The point here is not to give exact details of the destruction of Rome, but rather to announce that the destruction is inevitable. As Caird points out, this imagery is best seen as a ‘political catastrophe, not a natural one.’ The point is that Rome will be judged..” (Braaten, pg. 117)

Helpful Note: The section ends by focusing on the people’s refusal to repent, not on the destruction. The question for the reader of Revelation is what will you do? “We should ask, will we in our lives be open to repentance and the newness of God?” (Braaten, pg. 117)

What do you think repentance and the newness of God looks like in our day and time?