



## Part 19: Warning Signs, Judgment, and Grace

Revelation 8:1-6; 15:1-9; 16:1

*God's wrath and judgment are part of His love and faithfulness to His creation and people.*

### THE CRY FOR JUSTICE

*"When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign God, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?'" Revelation 6:9-10*

*"Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed." Revelation 6:11*

God is not deaf to the cries of His people. God's answer to the cries of His people for justice are the seven trumpets and seven bowls of wrath.

*"And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. ... Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them." Revelation 8:2, 6*

*"Then I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues - last, because with them God's wrath is completed. ... Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, 'Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth.'" Revelation 16:1*

What John sees in these visions is horrific! It is symbolic imagery that is purposefully given to wake us and alert us to the reality of God's righteous judgment. It is apocalyptic imagery expressing the same warning as Jesus gave when he warned of God's great Day of Judgment.

## OUR MODERN REVULSION WITH WRATH AND JUDGMENT

Paradoxical times – we want justice, but we cringe at the thought of God’s judgment.

*“But justice and judgment are two sides of the same coin. You cannot have perfect justice without judgment. God cannot make things right without declaring certain things wrong. It’s the judgment of God that leads to a perfectly just world.” Trevin Wax, Rejoicing in the Wrath of God, Christianity Today (July/August 2012)*

- God’s judgment is good news because it is a reflection of His love.

*“God’s wrath is God’s war of love against everything that unnecessarily hurts others. God’s love would not be love if it did not work to remove all that ungraciously hurts. The wrath of God is the truth of the love of God. God’s love is a love that is not merely sentimental, for it grapples with inhumane forces.” Dale Brunner*

*“Judgment says God cares. Judgment says that our choices matter to God. Judgment says God takes evil and sin seriously. Judgment says God is not indifferent to, nor tolerant of, evil and sin. Judgment says that God moves against evil and sin.” Darrell Johnson, Discipleship on the Edge*

- God’s judgment is not arbitrary but according to His moral law.

*“God is holy, and He has made holiness the moral condition necessary to the health of His universe. ... Whatever is holy is healthy; evil is a moral sickness that must ultimately end in death. ... Since God’s concern for the universe is its moral health, that is, its holiness, whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. To preserve His creation, God must destroy whatever would destroy it. ... Every wrathful judgment in the history of the world has been a holy act of preservation. The holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the health of the creation are inseparably united. God’s wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hates the polio that takes the life of her child.” A. W. Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy*

- God’s judgment comes only after warning and a time to repent (the trumpets symbolize God’s warnings).

*“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9*

- Clear vision celebrates God’s judgments.

*“Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. 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 15:3-4*

## THE GRACE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

*“Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’” Revelation 6:15-17*

*“Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not to states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either - but right to every human heart.” Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago*

*“They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.” Revelation 9:4*

*“Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his father’s name written on their foreheads.” Revelation 14:1*

The only rescue from God’s wrath is in God’s grace in Jesus Christ, the slain Lamb.

*“Since we have been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!” Romans 5:9*

*“They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, who he raised from the dead - Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.” 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10*

*“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath, but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:9*

*“When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.” Revelation 8:1*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Take the time to read through the seven trumpets (Rev. 8:6-9:21; 11:15-19) and the seven plagues or bowls of wrath (Rev. 15-16). Admittedly, this is challenging reading. Without getting lost in trying to interpret the symbolism, what is your response?

- How do you relate to the martyr's cry for justice (Rev. 6:10-11)?  
Have you had an experience where you were crying out for God's justice?
- How do you relate to the reality of God's judgment against those remaining in rebellion against him – "the inhabitants of the earth" (Rev. 6:10)?
- What is your response to the four truths of God's judgment expressed in the sermon?
- How should this reality affect the way we live?