

Comments about the Judgments in the Book of Revelation

A. General comments

The events described in the book of Revelation are what John saw, when Jesus showed him what will happen in the future.

- Some of the events are symbolic.
- Some of them will occur in heaven, and will not be seen by people on earth (or will be seen from a different perspective).
- At least one passage in Revelation (Revelation 10:3-4) shows us that we don't know everything about what's going to happen.

At the time these events occur, how will they look to people on earth? In what order will they occur?

- The precise timing or order of these events is not given. They could occur in sequence, one after the other; or they could overlap.
- If the events of Jesus' *first* coming give us any clue, it is safe to say that some things will occur in unexpected ways. In retrospect, what occurred may be obvious; but beforehand, people will be looking for the wrong things.
- If nothing else, we can at least say that the intensity of the judgments will increase, as we approach the end. Things will get worse and worse, and will happen faster and faster.

Many of the judgments will be the consequences of human sin, or will be viewed as *natural* disasters. But as the judgments continue, it will become more and more obvious that God's hand is guiding them.

B. The world (including the fake "Christians") will deserve these judgments.

The good news about God's kingdom and salvation will be made known to the entire world; so those who reject God (and what he has told us in the Bible) will have no legitimate excuse.

- The world will reject the God who made them, and who gave them all the blessings of creation (which they have destroyed); and they will go after what is fake.

Therefore they will earn this judgment and wrath.

- The world will hate, attack and persecute God's people – both Israel (those who are his people *physically*, because of promises God made to their forefather, Abraham) and Christians (not the fakes, but those who are genuine disciples, God's people *spiritually*).

Therefore, God will give the world the judgment they *deserve*, and will remove the blessings they *don't* deserve.

- The world will still refuse to repent, even when they finally admit that God is judging them; instead, their sin will intensify.

Therefore the judgment they receive will intensify; and then the end will come.

C. There will be different reactions to the judgments:

The views of the unsaved world:

- "God has no right to do these things." (They may even describe it as "God wrongly interfering in *our* world"!)
- Some of the fakes who claim to be "Christian" may deny that God has anything to do with the judgments.

The views of God's people and of those in heaven:

- God is holy, righteous and just.
- God is righteous in giving those who reject God what they deserve, and in paying them back for the evil they have done to his people.
- All heaven will rejoice in the fact that evil is being brought to an end; and will look forward to the coming of the new heaven and earth, which is described as "the home of righteousness."

D. Good that will occur

There are some good things that will occur in the midst of all the evil and resulting judgment. Those who are evil will persecute both Christians and Jews; but God will use this to accomplish good.

- Those who follow Jesus will endure, even to death, if necessary; and God will reward them for their faithfulness.
- The Jews will turn back to the God of the Bible, who alone can save them. Then they, too, will follow Jesus. (Though as a nation, Israel has not turned back to God, there have always been individual Jews who have.)

E. The extent of these judgments

The world's entire value system is corrupt; it opposes the truth, either openly or by providing a counterfeit. Because of this, the judgments in Revelation are not only directed toward evil *people*, but toward the whole social-political-religious *system* that exists in the world. Even now, it is evil to the core. Any good that exists in it is because of God's gracious kindness (in restraining sin) and because of the presence of genuine Christians (who have a positive influence on it).

There are many implications from this fact. Three of them are:

- We are to live for *God's* kingdom, not for the things of the world. Anything we could possibly live for that is a part of this world will eventually be lost. The world will live for such things, and will rely on the social-political-religious system it has invented; but we (the genuine followers of Jesus) won't.
- Can we "reform" the system? Trying to fix it may result in some temporary good, but it will ultimately fail, because the system is corrupt to the *core*. Therefore, the kingdom of God should be our *primary* focus, not the system!
- A person's focus – his values – will tell us more about who he is, than will his words. If you *claim* to be a follower of Jesus, but are preoccupied with things of the world (including its values and perspective), we do not need to believe your empty (and false) claim. Jesus, our Master, told us that we can recognize you by your *fruit* (your actions and values). When it becomes a matter of choosing whether to believe *Jesus* or *you*... we choose Jesus.