

Lent, Day 12  
Tuesday, March 19, 2019

Revelation 6:1–17

When we were kids my mom would take my brother and I out each to go Christmas shopping for the other. Of course, we were sworn to secrecy. Of course, we made a deal, “if you tell me what mom bought me, then I’ll tell you what she bought you.” Bargain struck. Why did we do that? Why would we circumvent the anticipation of waiting and the thrill of discovery as we unwrapped our parcels on Christmas morning? We wanted instant gratification. To know of the purchase was to possess the thing immediately.

As a culture, this same desire, instant gratification, marks us too. We want things right away. That is why credit card and other borrowing debt is so high. Gone is the idea of finding something of value, working for it, saving toward it, and then purchasing it when able. Instead, we see it and we buy it. We’ll pay for it later and, because we want it so badly, we’re willing to pay extra in interest to have it now. This same impulse is why we struggle with God.

God is slow. In light of evolution we now ask how creation could have happened in six days. Prior to that the question is why it would have take God a whole six days. God is slow. He seems to have the ability to zapped things into being, but he instead takes his time. It’s the same with redemption. He seems to have the ability to zapped everything to make it right, but he takes his time.

So while God has already won the victory through the lamb the next thing to happen is the unleashing of the horsemen: conquering kings, the breaking out of wars, the setting in of famine, and death. Then we have the promise of more martyrs dying while important political events occur on the earth. Wright notes that these seven seals, along with the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls are all happening at once. They are all describing the same events from different angles of vision.

All of this is God allowing the anti-God powers their full range so that when God finally acts it will be out of a full and righteous judgment.

For us during lent, the season can be long. We can also, as God’s people, look at the injustice in the world and cry with the martyrs, “How long, O Lord?” This is why, through out Revelation, we hear a continuing refrain to patience. Lent teaches us to wait and to trust the Lord to judge rightly and in his right time. Hold on, embrace the better way of delayed gratification. That way the gift given will have its full effect.

Prayer

Almighty and eternal God, grant us the patience to wait on you to set all things right. Help us to journey slowly through this season and to join our voices to those of your holy martyrs which cry out for your justice. Amen.