

Lent, Day 17
Monday, March 25, 2019

Revelation 9:1–21

Identity. It's amazing what we tie our identities up with. In my own life, for example, I came to a crisis point. The question was, "who was I going to be?" What elements of my life would define me going forward. The old stuff or the new? This was the time when I was newly married, with a baby, and a new house. My old life kept pulling me. Smoking, drinking, swearing, and doing my own thing. Things were coming to a crisis point. I had to choose one or the other because they were inconsistent with each other. I chose my family and rejected my old life or self. But, interestingly, the old life wasn't done with me yet.

I had made the choice, but the pull was still there. I had to struggle to let go of the actual actions and that was hard. In part, it was hard because these things had become habits for me. But, more than that, it was because these things had been what I had made my identity. This was who I was, not just what I did. If I was giving up these things then who was I going to be? What was I going to do? Even more interesting, I found that all this identity question was tied up in one piece of clothing. My leather jacket. I had that jacket since I was sixteen years old. It was the visual piece of who I was. In order to successfully part with the old identity I had to part with that jacket and all it represented.

There's a lot happening in chapter nine. One of the things it talks about is the idolatry of humanity. The problem with idolatry is we become like what we worship. Idols are blind, deaf, and dumb. When we worship these things we become that too. Like the leather jacket, idols are a symbol of our identity. What we are called to when we turn to God in Christ isn't just giving up a couple of things God dislikes. Rather, we are turning from not-God to God. As a result our identity changes totally. From inhumanness to true humanness. It's about identity.

In lent we are intentionally in a process of giving up the idols that grip us. Classically, there are four areas that all humanity struggles with: money, power, sex, and spirituality. All of us will struggle with one or more of these areas. God's intention in chapter nine is to turn us from these false idols to true worship of him so we can regain our true identity in Christ.

Prayer

Lord who speaks to us and sees us, strip us of those things which hold us away from you and away from what you intend for us. Restore us to your good image. Amen.