

Lent, Day 28  
Saturday, April 6, 2019

Revelation 16:1–21

I am a huge fan of C. S. Lewis. One of my favourite works of his is, *The Great Divorce*. The premise is that a group of people take a bus tour from the town, which is Hell, into heaven. Once there, the people see ghosts coming to meet them and they experience pain as the grass is as hard as diamonds. Then a shift comes. They realize they are the ghosts and they are simply not solid (real/human) enough to walk on the real/heavenly grass. Those who come to meet them are relations from their past, there to help them to travel up and into heaven, if they would desire to go.

Story after story the opportunity is rejected. One ghost in particular is our observer who relates the events to us and he is met by a mentor of his who explains what is happening. In short, he explains that there are some who will only enter heaven if they can pull it down and make it hell. Of course, that cannot happen. As the book concludes our ghost is being warned of his own danger, and we are too through him. The promise is that so long as there is even the tiniest ember it will be fanned into flame, but that heaven will not blow ashes into its own eyes forever.

Some thing like this is happening in our passage. God's wrath is being poured out. Earlier only partial damage occurred so as to lead people to repentance. Now, destruction is total. God is only truly good if he finally deals with evil. He does. He allows it to be in order for it to suffer its own consequences, but finally he puts a stop to it. Babylon will not be allowed to oppress, harm, and destroy forever.

We are in the season of lent. This is not just a nice spiritual time of the year when we give up chocolates. This is a time of preparation for God's great action in Christ Jesus; his cross and resurrection. But, it is also a time of longing for God to finish what he started. We don't want God to rush his judgment because his mercy allows those who have so far said "no" to him to repent and say "yes" to him instead. But, we should long for his timing to say no more to the systems ranged against him and his purpose for his creation and his creatures.

Lewis, again, is helpful for us to embrace this. He reminds us that in the end there are only those who say to God, "your will be done," or those to whom God says, "your will be done." No one is in hell who doesn't choose to be there. God cannot not allow heaven to become hell to suit those who would not take his joy.

Prayer

Merciful God, thank you for your patience and grace. Stir up our hearts for you so we might embrace your love and salvation. Amen.