

Week of January 13-19

## **ETERNAL, NOT EVERLASTING**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Revelation Chapter 15

Eight verses. That's it. Shortest chapter in Revelation. In a world of extra-large pants and supersized fries, sometimes short still works. It certainly does in John 11:35 (Jesus wept), Luke 17:32 (Remember Lot's wife), 1 Thessalonians 5:16 (Be joyful always) or 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (Pray continually). Short verses but long on meaning. Read in seconds but meditated on for a life time to grasp and live their truths. One doesn't have to be everlasting to have eternal value. As the advice to preachers says, "If you haven't hit oil after 10 minutes, quit boring!" Sometimes (maybe more often than we want to admit), less really is more.

So what "more" do we find in this lesser lengthed chapter today? What eternal value is to be mined in this chapter of only 8 verses? We're introduced to seven angels who carry the seven last plagues of God's wrath in seven golden bowls. God's mercy has been evident throughout the church age. He has not been willing that any should perish but that all should come to know the truth. He has patiently waited, giving multitudes of sinners a chance to repent. Even in the previous judgments revealed in Revelation, as expressed through the seals and the trumpets, his wrath was limited to a 1/4 and a 1/3 of the world respectively. But God's patience is not without limit. His justice must also prevail. In the final seven plagues, his wrath will be exhausted on a sinful and rebellious world. There will be no holding back, no easing up on the judgments to be poured out. With these seven bowls, God's wrath will be completed on all who have aligned themselves with the beast. It is a sobering vision found in a short chapter and a reminder that John wasn't kidding when he wrote John 3:36.

We're also introduced to another completely different vision, a vision of triumph and victory for those who resisted the beast's allure and remained faithful to the Lamb. They may have lost the battle for their physical lives on earth but they won the war for their spiritual lives through Christ and were in heaven. They *"had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name."* By accepting God's gift of life through Christ in life, they found freedom from God's wrath in death. Given harps of worship, they sang out God's praise: *"Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O 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."* A beautiful song of praise found in the shortest chapter of Revelation.

Wrath and worship all wrapped up in one chapter. Wrath for those who follow the beast but worship by those who follow the Lamb. Judgment in full for those who reject Christ but deliverance and rest for those who reject the beast. Two paths. One choice. All wrapped up in one short chapter of Revelation. Who knew short could be so eternal?

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** Which path have you chosen for your life? The beast's or the Lamb's? Eternity hangs in the balance. Pray to receive Christ today!

**Take-a-way:** *It doesn't always take length to make an eternal point.*