



theme: End Times #4 – Judgment Day

materials: Poster sized white paper, red paint, brushes, bibles

This month the cells will all focus on “End Times”. What does Scripture mean by End Times? Can we know anything about the end of the world for sure? How much of what we think about the End Times come from Scripture, and how much from other popular sources?

welcome

What is the popular image through Hollywood and other sources of what Judgment Day – Or Armageddon – will be like? Which movies or TV shows have you seen that dealt with this in one way or another?

interact

The passage for today will be difficult for some, as it talks about the wrath of God. But God’s wrath is poured out over evil, sin and injustice, and those who refuse His goodness and love.

Write down all the injustices and evils you can think of in our world on a large white piece of paper. As you write down each evil or injustice, declare that Christ will be victorious over it, and has already won his great victory on the cross. Then get some red paint and brushes, and cover over all the evils with thick red paint, representing the blood of Christ, as well as the wrath of God over the evils done against His children.

Once it’s dry, hang up the red poster as a reminder of Christ’s victory and a warning of His wrath.

read

Read Revelation 19:11-21, 20:1-15.

How comfortable are you with the notion of a wrathful God?

Why is God wrathful?

How does God’s wrath square with your image of Jesus? Is it hard for you to see Christ in this passage as a warrior, carrying a sword, robe dipped in blood, destroying evil?

Who is Jesus fighting here? What have they done to get on Jesus’ wrathful side?

What is the destiny for those who are fighting against Jesus? Is this fair?

Why does evil need to be destroyed like this? Couldn’t Jesus find another way?

Do you think the description of what’s going on here is meant to be a literal prediction of what is going to happen, or just a description of spiritual warfare?

Would you want this final battle to come, or are you hoping you’re long dead and gone before all this happens?

How does the last section – the bit on the Final Judgment – make you feel? What is your response to it?

think

What do you think it means to have your name recorded in the Book of Life (verse 15)? How can you know that you’re on Christ’s side in this fight? What does it mean to be on Christ’s side here and now? (Does a sword coming out of your mouth have anything to do with it?)

We are not the final judges, thankfully. But how can we warn our friends about the coming judgment without sounding judgmental?



live & pray

Ask the Lord to reveal any evil, sin or injustice living in your life. We want to live lives pleasing to God, and need His help now to deal with whatever may be displeasing to him.

useful resources

- Website: <http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/revelation.php> - A huge number of sources that can help you understand more of what is going on in Revelation
- Website: http://images.acswebnetworks.com/1/163/AC_Esc_050731_B.pdf - A helpful breakdown of some of the themes in Revelation.
- Website: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/5951/ntb519b.html> - See especially the last section on the "Wrath of Christ".

leader's guide

God is wrathful because of sin, wilful disobedience, whether committed by Satan or by humans. Sin is rebellion against God, the King of Kings, and it is destructive to his creation, particularly his children. God will deal finally and fully with sin, and it won't be pretty.

Jesus offers forgiveness, and He does so at the cost of His own life. This is not something to be taken lightly. Jesus showed us a way to live that centres around forgiveness, grace, love and non-violence, but He also reserved Himself the right and responsibility to judge. We are not to judge in this way, but Christ has every right to judge his creation. The offer of salvation from destruction is there and clear.

Jesus is fighting Satan, the beast, the false prophet, and all their followers. They have been deceiving and creating great evil in the world. The followers have been worshipping these false gods. It is too much here and now to get into any discussion of the identity of these characters, but suffice it to say they represent all those who reject Christ as King.

The destiny of all those who oppose Christ according to this passage is the second death, being thrown into the lake of fire. The issue of whether or not it is fair has to be deferred to the issue of whether or not Christ is a trustworthy and capable judge. If we trust in Christ we must trust His judgments as well.

The book of Revelation is filled with apocalyptic and visionary imagery. The final events at the end of time need not follow this script exactly in order for us to be warned that following Christ is essential, opposing Christ is disastrous. That is the true emphasis of this passage, and indeed this book.