

## **Group Time Sharing Questions**

### QUESTION 1:

In Revelation 15:3, the saints are described as praising God for his “great and wonderful” deeds moments before the last of his judgments (the 7 bowls) are enacted. This seems contradictory to us. How does this relate to the gospel demand for mercy? How can a gospel of love be reconciled with the images of judgment in Revelation 15-16?

### QUESTION 2:

Revelation 15:5-8 describes the heavenly judgment liturgy in which angels pour out the bowls of wrath upon the earth in a series of judgments against both Jerusalem (ruled by the beast of the land) and, to a lesser degree, Rom (the beast from the sea). Do you ever think of the liturgy of the mass as the focal point of spiritual warfare and the nexus of world events? How can we as Catholics more fully incorporate into the practice of our faith the heavenly reality that we “are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Ephesians 6:12	<sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens.	<sup>12</sup> 因為我們戰鬥不是對抗血和肉，而是對抗率領者，對抗掌權者，對抗這黑暗世界的霸主，對抗天界裏邪惡的鬼神。
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### QUESTION 3:

In Revelation 15:8, the “dwellers in the earth” are described as marveling at the beast “because it was and is not and is to come.” The beast, in short, is sort of the original “Comeback Kid” and people are impressed (and grant it worship and admiration) merely because it manages to survive a major challenge. In this, it is sort of a parody of the resurrection itself, not by virtue of a truly risen life, but because people are wowed by the self-reliant pride of the beast. In what ways does our culture worship in the cult of self-reliant pride?

#### Web links

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/_INDEX.HTM)  
<http://www.catholic.org.tw/bible/index.htm>  
<http://www.cathlinks.org/ccc-toc.htm>  
<http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/cc.html>

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DIRECTING THE DISCUSSION OF QUESTION 1:

- This question touches on people's wrong understanding that God, who is loving, merciful, and forgiving, cannot be so "cruel" as to punish people. As a result of this misconception, many people feel uncomfortable in reading the Old Testament books, in which God's punishments are plenty.
- God is indeed loving, merciful, and forgiving. Otherwise, there would not have been salvation and redemption. Psalm 130 says it all: "If you, O Lord, mark iniquities, Lord, who can stand?"
- Like a good Father, God punishes. When we go astray, his punishment serves as a warning to us and helps us get back on track.
- God is not only loving, he is just too. He will do everything possible to guide and protect us. But if we stubbornly choose to do evil and resist his guidance and help, we must be punished for our sins.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DIRECTING THE DISCUSSION OF QUESTION 2:

- This question touches on the concept of Church Militant as confirmed by Ephesians 6:12.
- It also reminds us that the liturgies are our most powerful weaponry.
- Call to mind again the Ark of Covenant and how the city of Jericho was destroyed by liturgical power (orderly procession, chanting, blowing of trumpets, performance of priestly duties, etc.)
- Too many Catholics see the mass liturgy as "boring" and "routine" and fail to see its efficacy in fighting evil. The purpose of this question is to encourage your group members to discuss this teaching so that they will appreciate the mass liturgy more.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR DIRECTING THE DISCUSSION OF QUESTION 3:

- Note the line "it is sort of a parody of the resurrection itself". The beast "was and is not and is to come" because it represents Caesar Nero who bounced back after a mysterious suicide and regained power. The beast's bouncing back is like an evil mockery of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus is the real "Comeback Kid".
- However, the world often admires people who manage to survive a major challenge and bounce back, even if what these people do are immoral or evil.
- There are many examples familiar to us: The world loves Bill Clinton even though he was an adulterer; he is admired because of his ability to survive the challenge. In spite of her convicted criminal offence, the world loves Martha Stewart for the same reason.
- Invite your group members to discuss similar examples. Make sure they understand the fallacy of such inclination.