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Monday 9th Revelation 7

1-12 Are rich with imagery, both from the Old Testament and from other books of the New Testament. Those who look for God's justice are vindicated and redeemed, and both they and the angels, living creatures and elders shout their praise to God and the Lamb.

13-17 Are full of hope, as, in words repeated in the final chapters of Revelation, the elder tells John that those who have come through the great ordeal, will never again be hungry or thirsty and that God will dry their tears. These promises make me think of God's concern for the poor and the oppressed, working until they are exhausted, without sufficient to eat or drink, and until they have almost given up hope. Who do you think of when you try to translate these promises into our current world?

Tuesday 10th Revelation 8

1-5 When the lamb breaks the seventh seal, heaven falls silent, and the prayers of God's people can be heard. Perhaps there is a reference here to the Jewish tradition that the angels in heaven are silent in the daytime so that Israel's prayers can be heard. The implication is that the prayers of everyone of God's people are of great value, and will be heard. How important do we think our own prayers are to God?

6-13 These verses present a nightmarish vision. In this vision John sees the consequences of human behaviour as the natural world is disrupted, but the majority of humankind continue unrepentant. There are lots of parallels here with the Old Testament, especially with the plagues of Egypt. But the plagues were a prelude to God delivering his people from Egypt, so perhaps as through much of Revelation, the message to us is 'hang on in there'. For some people the pandemic has led to a greater appreciation of spiritual things. Has the pandemic led to us reviewing the importance of different aspects of our lives?

Wednesday 11th Revelation 9

1-12 The parallels with the Old Testament continue, for example in the plague of locusts. John's imagery is not meant to be taken literally, and we need to remember that the context for all these visions is the letters to the seven churches. Revelation is clear that it is human sinfulness which lies at the root of the destruction and devastation which he sees in these visions.

20-21 In John's vision the majority of human beings still do not recognise their part in the disasters which are happening and continue in their worship material things, instead of the creator whose work they are. Do we recognise the part we play in both the things that go wrong in our lives, and the world more generally, and the part we can play in in God's work in the world?

Thursday 12th Revelation 10

1-11 A mighty angel speaks to John in these verses suggesting that the message is of particular importance. Once again, as John is commanded to eat the scroll, there are parallels with the Old Testament, where both Ezekiel and Jeremiah eat scrolls, showing that the words they speak come from God. John and the other martyrs speak with their lives and show the world that despite everything there is hope, because God's purpose is one of redemption. Once again the message to

the churches is 'hang on in there'. What helps us to continue to hope when it seems that all we can do is hang on?

Friday 13th Revelation 11

1-7 Two witnesses give testimony. John sees the faithful testimony of the church, of ordinary Christians as of enormous importance, because witnessing faithfully is following in Jesus's footsteps.

8-14 Such is the disrespect for human life that the bodies of the witnesses are left unburied. However, God's witnesses cannot be silenced through death.

15-19 God's victory is declared, although we are far from the end of the book, and there is much death and destruction to come yet.

Do we see faithful witness as important of itself, even when it seems to be ignored or result in the persecution of those who witness?