

WEEK 3 - SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

# The Third Sunday of Advent

**Read: Revelation 15:1-16:7**

*'Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty!  
Just and true are your ways, King of the nations!'* **Revelation 15:3a**

I know where I was when I heard that Russia had invaded Ukraine, and the immediate feeling of injustice for all those caught up in another unnecessary war. If I was shouting 'This is not fair' to God, I'm sure the Ukrainians were shouting all the more; perhaps you can relate? God's people have been there, of course, not least during their time in Egypt, and yet God brought them out, and standing on the shores of the Red Sea Moses they sang a hymn of praise. That Red Sea episode seems to be what those in heaven have in mind as they sing their Song in 15:3-4, and when I first read this I wondered why? Since then God's people have grown significantly, of course, and yet still injustice reigns, still those in power oppress those 'below' them, and still many deny the Lord. Like God's people in Egypt many Christians are now crying out, having no one to hear them but God. Will He act again? Our reading today answers emphatically 'yes'.

Uncomfortable as we may find it, for evil to be overcome, for injustice to be made right, for God to be seen for who He truly is, judgement must fall on those who commit evil. Just as plagues fell on the Egyptians in the Exodus story, so we're told God's anger will fall on those who continue to act against His people (16:1). Time and again God has worked in human history to end evil regimes: just think of the empires of fascism, communism, and apartheid of the last century. One day He will do it again, and this time it will be forever. Then God's people, His Church, will once again *'sing the song of Moses'* (15:3a) as heaven finally comes to reign on earth.

In this time of Advent we look forward to celebrating the birth of a baby who marked the beginning of the end for all evil, for this baby was God Himself. In just a few days time we will be singing songs of triumph, to our God, echoing the song of Moses, as we cry out 'Joy to the World'. As we prepare for that joyful celebration, let us be praying for those who are oppressed around the world and for persecuted Christians, certain that He who came before will one day come again to save us once and for all.

**The Revd Michael Print, Vicar of St George's and All Saints', Chorley.**