

The Line That Runs Through Every Heart

A Home Bible Study | Revelation 15:5–16:21 | Canyon Creek Presbyterian

A note before you begin: This study is designed for families meeting in homes. Some questions are for the whole group. A few are marked **[Kids]** — these are entry points to bring younger voices into the conversation. Don't rush. The best discussions usually happen when someone says "I never thought about it that way." Open in prayer, then read Revelation 15:5–16:21 aloud together before beginning.

1. The Question Underneath Everything

The sermon opened with this: "Who is God, and does he have the right to do this?" Before you look at the bowls, sit with that question as a group.

- When you read about God pouring out wrath, what is your gut reaction — discomfort, relief, confusion? Where do you think that reaction comes from?
- Is it possible to trust someone's justice without fully understanding it? What would that require?

[Kids] *Has anyone ever told you something was fair when you thought it was unfair — or unfair when it was actually fair? What happened?*

2. Who Is God?

Read the Westminster Larger Catechism Q7 together:

God is a spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection; all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

- Which attribute in that list is hardest for you to hold onto in daily life — and why?
- The sermon said: "You do not have an inner God to express. You have a need for God to enter into you." Our culture often says the opposite. Where do you hear that message — that the divine is already inside you — in everyday life? At work, in your kids' school, in the shows you watch?

3. What God Shares With Us

God's communicable attributes — wisdom, holiness, justice, mercy, patience, compassion — are qualities he shares with us in a finite, derivative way.

- Think of someone in your life who reflects one of these qualities unusually well. What does it look like in practice?
- The sermon said these attributes flow from God to us — he is the source. What difference does it make to think of your own capacity for goodness as something received rather than something you generated?

[Kids] *Can you think of something kind or good you did recently? Where do you think that goodness came from?*

4. The Sanctuary Opens — Revelation 15:5–8

Read the passage again slowly. The sanctuary fills with smoke and no one can enter until the seven plagues are complete.

- Optional Reading/ Question: In the Old Testament, the smoke of God's presence filled the tabernacle and the temple at key moments — Exodus 40:34–35 and 1 Kings 8:10–11. Look those up if you can. What is being communicated when God's glory fills a space so completely that no one can enter?
- The doors being shut means no more intercession, no more delay. How does knowing that God was patient before this moment — that the trumpets came first — change how you understand the bowls?

5. Trumpets vs. Bowls

The sermon drew a clear contrast: the trumpets were partial and merciful — a third of the sea, a third of the rivers. The bowls are complete and final.

- What does the existence of the trumpets — warnings that came before the verdict — tell you about God's character?

- Is there an area of your life right now where you sense God has been patient with you — sounding an alarm you haven't fully responded to?

This question doesn't need to be answered out loud. But sit with it.

6. The Hardened Heart — Bowls 4 and 5

Under the fourth and fifth bowls, people are scorched, thrown into darkness, and in agony. And they curse God. They do not repent. Read Revelation 16:9 and 16:11 together.

- What does this response reveal about the nature of the human heart under judgment?
- The sermon said: "Pure justice, which we often think we long for, does not produce softened hearts. It reveals hard ones." Do you agree? Can you think of examples — in history, in your own experience — where external pressure revealed what was already inside someone rather than changing them?

[Kids] *When you get in trouble, is your first instinct to say sorry or to blame someone else? Why do you think that is?*

7. Armageddon — Where Is the Enemy?

The sermon offered this interpretation: Armageddon is not primarily a place to watch for on a map. It is a picture of a spiritual reality — humanity in rebellion against the holiness of God.

- Does that interpretation land for you, or does it raise questions? What are they?
 - Solzhenitsyn wrote: "The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either — but right through every human heart." How does that sit with you? Where do you feel resistance to it?
 - In the San Ramon Valley — in our particular kind of comfortable, achievement-oriented, politically sorted life — what are the specific ways we locate evil "out there" rather than seeing it in ourselves?
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8. The Clothing

The sermon made much of the contrast between the angels' clothing — pure, brilliant linen — and the nakedness of those under judgment. Then it connected this to Revelation 3:5: "The one who conquers will be clothed in white garments."

- What does clothing represent in this passage? What does nakedness represent?
- Think about the "garments" people in your community wear as cover — reputation, achievement, moral performance, political identity, religious habit. Which of those are you most tempted to trust?

[Kids] *If you had to describe what it means to be "naked" before God — having nothing to hide behind — what would that feel like?*

9. The One Who Conquers

The sermon closed with this: "The battle has already happened. And you lost. But there is one who conquers — and he is not standing over you as a conqueror gloats over the defeated. He is extending an invitation."

- What does it do to your pride to hear that you were never going to win?
- What does it do to your fear to hear that the one who won is offering you citizenship, not captivity?
- The invitation is to "lay down your arms." What would that actually look like for you this week — concretely, practically?

10. Bringing It Home

Close your time together with this question, and let everyone — kids included — answer if they want to:

The sermon said the line between good and evil runs through every human heart. Where did you feel that line most clearly this week — in something you did, something you wanted to do, or something you felt?

Close in Prayer. Share prayer requests with one another and pray for one another throughout the week.

Next week: Revelation 17 — The Great Prostitute | Reading: Revelation 17:1–18

A note for home group leaders: You probably won't get through all ten questions in one sitting — and that's fine. Questions 5, 7, 9, and 10 are the load-bearing ones if you need to prioritize. Questions marked **[Kids]** are designed to be genuinely interesting to children, not just simplified versions of adult questions. Let them answer first sometimes. They'll surprise you.