



News Story Summary

This week, jurors in the trial of movie theater shooter James Holmes are in the third and final phase of the trial. The first phase determined Holmes guilty in the murder of twelve people at the premiere of *The Dark Knight Rises* two years ago. The second phase was to determine whether the death penalty would be an option. The jury unanimously voted that there were no mitigating factors to keep them from considering capital punishment. Thus, in the final phase, jurors will hear testimonies from the victims' families before deciding whether Holmes should be executed for the crime.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using phrases such as "James Holmes murder trial." As of this writing, the jury was expected to reach a decision within a matter of hours, so check for the latest update.)

Focus Attention

Before the group arrives, write, the title of today's session on the board. Call attention to the two words, "Redeeming" and "Judgment." Ask, "In what sense can judgment be redemptive?" Invite responses, then summarize the details from the news story. Emphasize the three phases of the trial as outlined above. Discuss how the jury's verdict may or may not be redemptive, for the victims or for the perpetrator.

Introduce today's Bible passage by summarizing what you have learned from your study of Revelation to this point. We have studied God's encouragement and warning to the churches (Session 8). We've established Christ's absolute sovereignty (Session 9) as well as His worthiness to judge the world (Session 10). In a sense, our passage today deals with the sentencing phase of the trial. Encourage the group to pay attention to how the judgments described in Revelation 9 are redemptive.

Challenge

Remind group members of the opening illustration. Review the summary statements under In My Context for this session. Explain that we can have absolute confidence that God's judgments are always right, and that for believers they are redemptive. We also know that He is merciful, delaying His ultimate judgment of the world to give as many as possible a the opportunity to come to repentance (1 Tim. 2:4). Close with a time of prayer, asking God to help you share with others the truth of the gospel.