

St. Matthew's Church
Thursday Night Bible Study
Revelation
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Session VII | 15 November 2018 | Chapter 6-7

I. Structure Note: Ezekiel, Christ's Olivet Discourse, and the Seal Judgments

- A. There is a parallel structure between them as progressions of judgment.
- B. Ezekiel 14 and the divine judgments
 - 1. Sword, Famine, Wild Beasts, Plague
 - 2. The judgments are leveled against pagan nations in defense of the anointed people of God (Israel).
- C. Matthew 24 - The pronouncement of Christ over Jerusalem
 - 1. War, International Strife, Famine, Earthquakes, Persecutions, Deceit
 - 2. The judgments are leveled against Jerusalem for the rejection of its Messiah and would take place within the generation of the pronouncement.
- D. Revelation Chapter 6 and the Seal Judgments
 - 1. War, International Strife, Famine, Pestilence, Persecution, Earthquake
 - 2. Best seen as the heavenly perspective of the events described in the Olivet Discourse as they are executed against the enemies of the Messiah, Jerusalem and Rome its ally.
- E. See also: Mark 13 and Luke 21 for parallel versions

II. "The Son of Man" as the Lord of the Judgment

- A. Consider the phrase "the Son of Man coming on the clouds"
- B. Psalm 18

In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. Out of the brightness before him, hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds.

- C. Daniel 7:13-14

"I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were

prolonged for a season and a time. “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

D. Matthew 24:30

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

E. Revelation 14:14

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.” So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

III. The Four Horsemen

A. The number and color of the horses likely draw from Zechariah 6:

Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots came out from between two mountains. And the mountains were mountains of bronze. The first chariot had red horses, the second black horses, the third white horses, and the fourth chariot dappled horses—all of them strong. Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” And the angel answered and said to me, “These are going out to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth.”

B. Consider this as a lens through which to see Revelation 6:

Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer. When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword. When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!” When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its

rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

IV. The Darkening of the Sun

A. Ezekiel 32:7

“Son of man, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him [...] When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you, and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord God.”

B. Joel 2:31-32

“And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.

C. Revelation 6:12

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.

V. “The Seal of the Lord”

A. Probably a reference to Ezekiel 9:4-6

Then he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying, “Bring near the executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand.” And behold, six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his weapon for slaughter in his hand, and with them was a man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his waist. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar. Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub on which it rested to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed in linen, who had the writing case at his waist. And the Lord said to him, “Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.” And to the others he said in my hearing, “Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Kill old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one on whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary.

B. The fullness of Israel are sealed, and with them the peoples of the nations that are engrafted to their number to become an innumerable people, depicted as clothed in the priestly garment and carrying palm branches.

VI. The Great Tribulation

- A. Again this is a reference to the tribulation in Daniel 12 and Matthew 24
- B. Jesus and the other NT authors seem to understand the term “tribulation” as the constant, present reality of the entire Christian age.
- C. Out of this age of tribulation are identified those who are to be sealed, who have endured in faithfulness in the way of the Cross.

VII. “He who sits on the throne will dwell among them...”

- A. The faithful have come out of the tribulation and are with Christ.
- B. Christ the Lamb has made His dwelling among His faithful.
- C. For OT references that give us this imagery:
 - 1. Isaiah 49
Thus says the Lord: “In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages, saying to the prisoners, ‘Come out,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Appear.’ They shall feed along the ways; on all bare heights shall be their pasture; they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.
 - 2. Ezekiel 37
“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”