

St. Matthew's Church
Thursday Night Bible Study
Revelation
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Session X | 13 December 2018 | Chapters 13-14

- I. We're Halfway Through the Book. Let's Take a Look at the Book So Far...**
 - A. Chapter 1 | The Ascended and Glorified Christ Revealed
 - B. Chapter 2-3 | Liturgy of the Word; Prophetic Messages to the Churches
 - 1. Two churches doing very well
 - 2. Two churches doing very poorly
 - 3. Three churches a range of compromise
 - C. Chapter 4 | John/The Church Ascends in a Sursum Corda or "Lift up your hearts"
 - D. Chapter 5 | The Lamb, the Living Eternal Sacrifice
 - 1. The sacrifice that fulfills the covenant obedience
 - 2. The Lamb worthy to judge the world
 - 3. Symbolized in opening the scroll
 - E. Chapter 6 | The Six Seals Opened
 - 1. Judgments parallel to Christ's Olivet Discourse
 - 2. Beginning of the labor pains of the new heavens/earth
 - 3. Beginning of the death throes of the old world
 - F. Chapter 7 | Elect (Jews and Gentiles) are sealed and protected from Judgments
 - G. Chapter 8-9 | The Seventh Seal = The Seven Trumpets
 - 1. Escalation of Judgments
 - 2. De-Creation of the Old Covenant World
 - 3. No repentance in response to the unmaking
 - H. Chapter 10-11 | The mighty angel (Christ) swears the Testimony over land and sea
 - 1. Proclamation of Jesus as the Lord over All Creation
 - 2. Temple of the Faithful measured and sealed
 - 3. Outer Court of the Gentiles and Old Israel left to Judgment
 - I. Chapter 12 | The War in Heaven
 - 1. The Woman in the Heavens, the Child, and the Dragon
 - 2. Defeat of Satan (receiving the mortal wound)
 - 3. Cry of Victory to all "who dwell in heaven"
 - 4. Cry of Woe to the inhabitants of the Land
 - J. Chapter 13-14 | Spiritual Realities Behind Visible Entities
 - 1. Revelation of the True Trinity and the False Trinity

2. The King on Mt. Zion / Son of Man coming on clouds (Matt 26:63-4)

II. Textual Notes | Chapter 13

- A. The Great Dragon (from Chapter 12) has seven heads and ten horns
- B. The Beast of the Sea also has seven heads and ten horns
- C. The composite imagery of the Beast comes from Daniel 7. Check the parallels:
 - 1. *Daniel 7*: In the first year of a Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and c visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter. 2 Daniel declared “I saw in my vision by night, and behold the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. 4 The first was like a lion and had eagles’ wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it. 5 And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, ‘Arise, devour much flesh.’ 6 After this I looked, and behold, another, like a h leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast j terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; k it devoured and broke in pieces l and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and m it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and behold, n there came up among them another horn, a little one, o before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.”
 - 2. *Revelation 13*: And I saw a beast rising out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear’s, and its mouth was like a lion’s mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.
- D. Under this understanding, we see that the beast is the fulfillment of Daniel’s vision of the Kingdoms, which suggests strongly that this is Rome.
- E. The head wound of the Beast is a dense image with several sources:
 - 1. Genesis 3 foretells how the seed of the offspring of the Woman will crush the head of the serpent under foot.
 - 2. Isaiah 27 foretells the striking of the mortal wound to the beast of the sea
 - 3. Revelation 12 combines the Fall of the Dragon with the Victory of the Christ on the Cross. Thirteen shows the wrath of the Dragon through his image in the Beast of the Sea exercised against the saints.
- F. The apparent mortal wound and subsequent return serves as part of the Beast’s parody of Christ (if we read it in context of the rest of Revelation):
 - 1. Both were slain and rose (5:6 and 13:3)

2. Both have followers sealed with their names (13:16 and 14:1)
 3. Both have horns (5:6 and 13:1)
 4. Both have authority over all peoples (5:6, 7:9, 13:7, 17:12, 17:15)
 5. Both receive worldwide worship (5:8-14, 13:4,8)
 6. Both have a final coming (17:7-18)
- G. The prophetic exhortation of verses 9-10 is a reference to Jeremiah 15:2 and 43:11 and concerns the suffering of the covenant people and a call to endure through it.
- H. The Beast of the Land is a parody of Moses and Elijah as he “performs great signs” and “calls down fire from heaven.” This suggests a connection to Covenant Israel, which in league with the Beast of the Sea (highly suggestive of Rome) situates the acts of the Beasts in the time of John’s writing during which the collusion of Rome and Jerusalem against the Church wrought a wide-scale persecution.
- I. Carried further, the symbolism of the Beast of the Land becomes a parody of the Spirit and the Church in the performing of signs and making of converts. This is particularly true when compared to descriptions of the Church in Acts
1. Successor in ministry and authority (Acts 1:1-11; Rev. 13:12)
 2. Persuasion to worship based on resurrection (Acts 2:22-41; Rev. 13:12,14)
 3. Miraculous signs to show authority (Acts 2:43, 5:12, 15:12, Rev. 13:13)
- J. As in the OT, the image of Beast as it pertains to rulers refers to the sub-humanity that is the consequence of the worship of violence, power, and wealth. This will be contrasted with the “One like the Son of Man” a genuine and fully human ruler to come whose rule has not diminished their humanity.

III. Textual Notes | Chapter 14

- A. The image of the reigning Lamb on Mt. Zion in contrast with the terrifying rule of the evil powers of chapters 12-13 takes us back to the dual-image of Psalm 2 (which has made many appearances in Revelation so far). Let’s look at it:
- Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be*

angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

- B. The virginity of the 144,000 is an image of purity contrasted with repeated OT references to covenant disobedience in the image of sexual immorality. This begins to turn our gaze to the end of Revelation in which the new Jerusalem descends from heaven as a virgin bride and also begins to turn our gaze to the ultimate image of unfaithful Israel as a great Harlot.
- C. The Angel of the Gospel calls everyone to worship the one, true God in contradiction of the parody-evangelism of the Beasts.
- D. The Angel of the Declaration of Babylon's Fall certifies that those who worship worldly power will lose it.
- E. The Angel of the Warning declares the judgment coming for those who follow and worship the Beast and reject the King on Mt. Zion.
- F. The proclamations having gone forth, there is another prophetic calling to endurance echoing chapter 13, defining the saints as those who obey the commandments of their Lord and the blessedness of those who die for their covenant obedience to the Lord as well as the curses for the unfaithful.
- G. The arrival of the Son of Man with the clouds again echoes Daniel 7 and completes the vision cycle of chapter 13-14 in contrast of the emergence of the Beasts.
- H. Here are the events of this vision, and they are happening simultaneously:
 - 1. Beginning of eternal bliss
 - 2. A warning to repent
 - 3. Judgment the end of history
 - 4. The eternal consequences of the judgment
 - 5. Exhortation to persevere
 - 6. Judgment at the end of history