

**DAY
4****Revelation 14:13-20: The Winepress of God**

The interlude continues, and the theme of God's judgment dominates these 7 verses. Also reread verse 13, which is a transition verse. John is not providing a chronological timeline of events. He is providing a series of evocative images to make his main points.

The theme of judgment is overwhelming. Babylon is fallen. That fall will be fully described in Revelation 17-19.

Old Testament sources to look at are Isaiah 63:1-6 and Joel 3:13-16. Also see Mark 4:26-29; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 for images of harvest, reaping, and judgment.

The son of man, Christ, is on a cloud. Three angels are in this section. Each serves as a messenger communicating the time is NOW, from the temple where God dwells. For the theme of "coming on the clouds" see Matthew 24:30, 44 and Revelation 1:7. "A loud voice" is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 19x in Revelation.

(14-16) Describe the grain or wheat harvest. It most likely refers to the people of God who are "harvested" and brought safely home. This connects back to verse 13.

(17-20) Describe the grape harvest. It most likely refers to those who do not belong to God, or the unrighteous. Judgment is upon them. The language of the great winepress of God's wrath is repeated in Revelation 19:15. Again, judgment is upon those who "fought" against God. These verses were the source of the famous *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, which saw God's punishment poured out on both the North and the South during the Civil War.

The reality of Jesus as the One who comes to judge the living and the dead will be repeated in the chapters to come. God has permitted evil, for a time, but now God is acting to bring an end to evil. That end will involve justice for those who have been destroyed by evil, and judgment on the destroyers.

The number 1,600 stadia is about 180 miles. This number is 4 x 4, where 4 is the number representing all the earth, and 10 x 10, or the number of fullness. The result is 16 x 10 = 1,600 to emphasize that judgment is over all the earth and the judgment is total.

Judgment is a serious and sobering reality. Pray for those who do not know Christ. Witness to them with loving service and share Jesus.

**DAY
5****Revelation 15: The Plagues "On Pause"**

Chapter 15 is the shortest chapter in Revelation. The interlude continues, but with another scene.

(1) A new and final phase is introduced: A great sign, 7 angels with 7 "last" plagues. Last because these are the fullness of God's wrath against evil. No sooner does John see that, then he sees a different scene.

(2) A picture of heaven that introduces the next "cycle" of salvation and worship. Remember, John continually cycles between evil and judgment to salvation and worship and back again. This verse looks back to Revelation 4:6, which was the first time of worship. It is a scene in heaven, which is beautiful. The people worshipping are those who have overcome. They did not worship the image, nor receive the mark of the beast (Rev. 13:14-18).

(3-4) One of the worship songs of Revelation. This one is devoted solely to God the Almighty. Notice how God's deeds, name, ways, and character are described. That is what we do in worship. We know our God and we joyfully proclaim who God is.

That is what we do in worship. We know our God and we joyfully proclaim who God is.

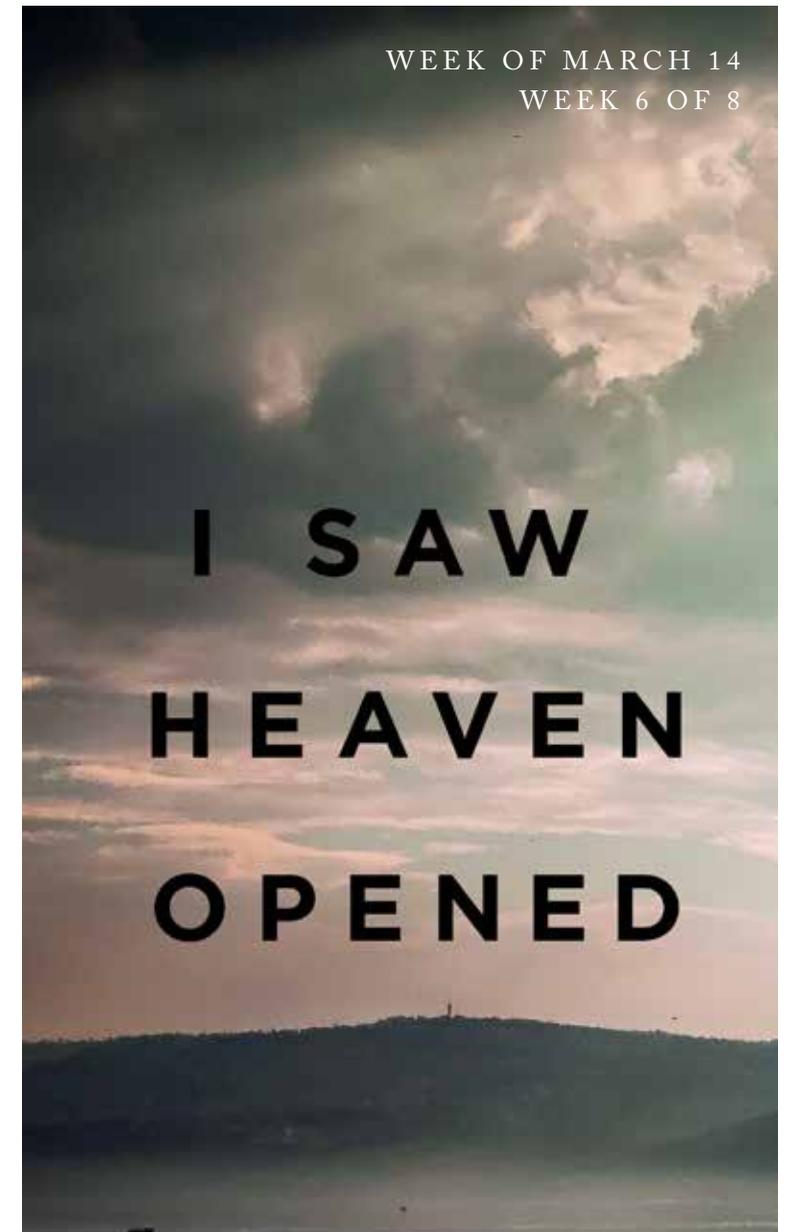
(5-8) Refers to the temple. This is important: The temple is always the temple in heaven. The temple on earth is destroyed, never to be rebuilt. There is no need for a rebuilt temple. Jesus is the true temple and the people of God

are the temple of God. The temple is where sacrifice for sin was made. Jesus is the final sacrifice (see Hebrews 9 and 10; Matt. 27:51-53). The temple in heaven now serves as the source of God's work being applied on earth, whether that work is the work of salvation or of judgment. It comes from the place where God is. The throne room and temple merge in heaven.

(6-8) Also returns to the theme of verse 1. The 7 bowls of judgment are about to pour forth. In anticipation, the temple is a place of holy glory. As terrible as the judgement to come will be, it is because God is holy, holy, holy (Isaiah 6:1-4).

Use the words of this chapter to form your own praises to God. Rejoice that you are one of those who "overcomes" by the blood of Jesus. God is sovereign and God is greater than evil. God wins!

WEEK OF MARCH 14
WEEK 6 OF 8



Sermon: Justice & Judgment



**DAY
1****Revelation 13:1-10: The Beast from the Sea**

Chapter 13 is a major chapter in Revelation and introduces the beasts of sea and land. In chapter 12, Satan failed four times in a direct spiritual assault against the woman and child. Now his strategy changes to use others. The two beasts (sea, vv. 1-10 and land, vv. 11-18) are predatory, blasphemous, deceptive, and murderous. Both beasts are described in language used by Daniel 7 and 8.

It is good interpretation to see the beasts in two ways. First, they represent the power of a fallen kingdom. The beast from the sea represents Rome—10 horns and 10 crowns on 7 heads. Rome was built on 7 hills and 10 represents either the series of Roman emperors or the vassal kings of nations conquered by and now in service to Rome. This is Rome's political, military, and economic might. The beast from the land stands for Roma, which is the religious version of imperial Rome. Rome invented both empire religion and emperor worship. The land beast is Roma that supports Rome.

Second, these beasts are the personification of the emperor (sea beast) and of the religious priests (land beast). And for the sea beast, the particular emperor in mind is Nero.

(1-4) The beasts get their power and authority from the dragon.

(1, 5, 6) The beasts are blasphemous. They vilify and denounce God. They aggressively persecute God's people.

(7, 10) They violently oppress, coerce, and murder all who resist.

(8, 10) They require worship or threaten persecution and death.

Chapters 12 and 13 present an unholy trinity. The dragon, the sea beast (also the anti-Christ), and the land beast (the false prophet) are an evil parody of Father, Son, and Spirit. For more on the anti-Christ, listen to the Wednesday Night Online March 10 teaching. Also, read 1 John 2:15-27 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17.

Think about the devil's strategy. It is a successful use of politics and religion merged in one fallen kingdom. In the 1st century it was Rome. But throughout history, nations and empires have fused politics, economics, military, and religion to advance their fallen agendas.

Verse 9 says those who have ears to hear should pay attention and discern what is being said. Verse 10 exhorts God's people to be patient, enduring, and faithful in the face of the hideous strength of this powerful evil. Pray and live accordingly.

**DAY
2****Revelation 13:11-18: The Beast from the Land**

(11-12) The land beast serves the purposes of the sea beast and glorifies the sea beast and forces worship of that beast. This is the religion of Roma serving the empire of Rome. (See Daniel 8:3 for a source.) Also, the land beast will later be the false prophet in Revelation 16:13; 19:20; 20:10.

The beast serves as false prophets did, to lead the faithful astray and into apostasy, falling away from true faith. The beast functions as a parody of Moses (great signs) and Elijah (calling fire down from heaven). Also see Matthew 24:24.

(12) The "fatal wound." Symbolically this refers to the apparently fatal wound of the Roman Empire in the late 60s and early 70s. It appeared that Rome's empire was coming to an end through terrible civil war and attacks from outside enemies. Instead, Rome survived and became even stronger.

The other 1st century historical connection is Emperor Nero, who was supposed to have died in Rome (he did), but a myth developed that he either did not die or that he was resurrected and was living in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, building an army to come back and attack the current Roman emperors. This was a widespread belief.

(14) Nero advanced emperor worship and this verse is also dependent on King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3. The emperors erected statues everywhere to support emperor worship. Pergamum and Ephesus were two major centers of emperor worship. Chapter 13 has many allusions and references back to the 7 churches in chapters 2 and 3.

(16-17) The mark (a word used for the emperor's seal on business contracts, and the imprint on a Roman coin) of the beast has many possible interpretations. For a 1st century explanation, it refers to the tattoos or branding people would receive to show they were faithful to Rome. It also refers to certificates given to those who participated in local festivals to honor the emperor, and to those who were a part of the economic guild system of the day. Popular pressure as well as economic pressure would become increasingly common. Those who worked for the local governments faced capital punishment for not complying. (The meaning of the number 666 was covered on Wednesday Night Online on March 10.)

Verse 18 says that in addition to the call for patient endurance (v. 10), now is the time for a call for wisdom and calculation about the number 666.

**DAY
3****Revelation 14:1-13: The Faithful and Three Angels**

Chapter 14 begins another interlude and cycle of God's salvation and the worship of his people. It is a bridge chapter, tying chapter 12 with the rest of the book. It looks back and it looks ahead.

(1) The 144,000 (see Rev. 7:4) are now those who did not receive the mark of the beast, but have the name of Father and the Lamb, from impersonal evil to intimate salvation.

(2-5) Now John gives a symbolic description of this group. They are worshiping with a new song, they are in the presence of God, they are martyrs-redeemed, they are pure, they follow the Lamb wherever he goes, they do not lie, they are blameless. The purity language has to do with the Israelite commands for soldiers who are headed to war. They prepare themselves through sexual abstinence, as an indication of their focus on God alone. Notice the 144,000 are not just Jews, they are from among mankind. And they are the first-fruits sufferers, of more to come.

(6-7) The first angel announces the preaching of the gospel (by the witness of the 144,000). (Also see Matt. 24:14.) Compare 14:6 and 13:7. Witness goes along with worship. More worship!

(8) The second angel says Babylon is fallen. This look back to the Roman beasts of chapter 13 and their fall will be described extensively in chapters 17-19. Babylon/Rome appears to be the victor, but in fact they are defeated. God's people take comfort in this. God wins! They do too!

(9-12) The third angel has the longest proclamation (and the hardest). It is a strong statement of judgment on both evil Babylon/Rome and on those who received their mark. They were not faithful. Now, these words of judgment are severe. This is the doctrine of judgment. Christians have debated the nature of eternal judgment. At the very least, we can all agree that John wants us to know the severity of falling away and being unfaithful.

(12) "This calls for..." This is the third time the phrase is used (see Rev. 13:10, 18). It will occur one more time (Rev. 17:9). All four times John uses it, it is a striking statement. Pay close attention and be faithful.

(13) Blessed are those who will die in the Lord, anticipating more suffering and martyrdom. They will rest. And their faithful deeds will follow them as the witness to their faithfulness.

Be faithful in suffering. Be patient, endure, be alert and watchful. Trust the future blessing God has in store for you.