

End Times Study Week 8

Act 1 Seven Churches Focus – Focus: Seven Branch Candlestick

Act 2 Seven Seals – Focus: Altar of Sacrifice

Act 3 Seven Trumpets – Focus: Altar of Incense

Act 4 Seven Tableaux - Focus: Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant is a symbol of God's powerful presence to save!

Tableaux – Each tableau is an explanatory scene that gives context for both what has already happened and what is yet to come. It gives understanding through seven flashback scenes from the past. They provide background and setting for *Revelation* within the history of the battle between good and evil. The outcome is never in doubt. Jesus was victorious over death and the grave through suffering and sacrifice in his substitutionary death on the cross as revealed on the third day through the empty tomb. Jesus is the creator (cf. John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2) and Satan as a fallen angel (12:7) is a created being (cf. Is. 14:12-15; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:14).

The tableaux are a reminder that the current battles are a continuation of what has gone on before and is not finished yet. God was present and his plan of salvation was and is in place for all who believe. For believers who follow Jesus' and have his seal (7:4) on them (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13), they have a much different future than people who will follow the Anti-Christ and have 666 (14:18) stamped on their forehead. God will shepherd believers through these events as he has other faithful believers before. This is not new, nor is it over, but God is with them and victory is coming.

11:15-19 Seventh Trumpet - Worship Preparation

11:19 The Temple is opened and the Ark of the Covenant is revealed with accompanying grandiose signs of the presence of God (Cf. Ezekiel 38:22-23). When God shows up it far from being merely an ordinary event. As with the birth of Jesus, a miraculous virgin birth, angels announcing, and a star guiding the magi.

12:1-17 First Tableau - Spiritual War in Heaven Tells of the Victory to Come

1. 12:1-6 Dragon attempts to Stop the Birth of Jesus and to Destroy Him
2. 12:7- 9 War in Heaven (cf. Ezekiel 38; Zechariah 14)
3. 12:10-11 Provision for the Faithful
4. 12:6, 12-17 Protection for the Woman (Church) Cf. Matthew 16:18

Unholy trinity now revealed Dragon (12:18) = Satan, Beast from Sea = Anti-Christ, Beast from Earth = False Prophet

The Dragon gives the power to the anti-Christ and False Prophet. He is the "deep state" of power behind the public figures. Cf. 13:5 given a mouth...authority; 13:7 granted and given authority; repeated in 13:14,15.

13:1-10 Second Tableau – The Beast from the Sea - Anti-Christ

A monstrous political beast from the sea who's power is from the Dragon.

The government becomes the religion, such as communism or socialism. We have seen it in atheistic communism, in autocratic Islam, and in dictatorial socialism. Each worldly system promises the world, and then purges enemies (13:15) and enslaves others. Each system has beliefs, rules and practices that are adhered to religiously. It's methodology is uniformity under a rigid system.

He is the (2 Thes. 2:3) "man of lawlessness" (:3 & :8) who is "revealed" (the big reveal :3 & :6) but is "doomed to destruction" by the breath of the Lord Jesus (:8). Also see Daniel 8:23-26. The prediction was fulfilled by Antiochus IV who adopted the title Theos (God) Epiphanes (Revealed/Manifest). His enemies twisted Epiphanes into Epimanes which means madman. Antiochus the manifest god became Antiochus the madman. This king from the past is an Old Testament type of the future anti-Christ. (Cf. 2 Thes. 2:4)

He is presented as the head of Satan's evil enterprise. Like a thief who knows he is eventually going to get caught, he does all the damage he can until he is caught, and the door slams shut on the jail cell of hell forever (Rev. 19:20).

His ten horns can represent the 10 Caesars from the time of the death of Christ to the book of Revelation - 7 major and 3 minor, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, [Galba, Otho, Vitellius - three reigned within a year's time], Vespasian, Titus, Domitian.

At the beginning the anti-Christ will offer peace and prosperity and will be admired and loved. Then the tables will turn and he will show his true colors and murderous deeds as Antiochus IV did. Deception will be his tool that lures people in and then he destroys them. He will be diabolical: persecuting the saints - Daniel 8:23-26, kills the two witnesses - Rev. 11:7; and will be used to lead the nations against Jerusalem - Zechariah 14:1-3. His Coexist banners will fly, join me and everything will be okay, accept everyone and their lifestyle as equals will be the call, and the demand will be follow the rules and you will be able to buy and sell. Order, respect, unity, and provision all sound appealing, but at what price and by who's standard. Under the banner of Christ is one thing, under the sin stained banner of the anti-Christ's, not so much.

13:3 One head seemed to be fatally wounded, but was healed. There was myth that Nero, who had survived many assassination attempts, had come back to life as Domitian. So the beast had an imitation "resurrection," his wounded head healed. Satan is not original, for he is a creature. He only copies and attempts to deceive with lies and to steal your loyalty and worship. He wants God's throne and to be worshipped.

The challenge is thrown down in 13:4 ***Who is like the beast? Who is able to wage war against it?*** We know who, The lamb who is the Lion of Judah (5:5)! *Who will stand* with Jesus 6:17? The 144k sealed 7:4; those in white robes under the throne 7:13-17; 12:11; 19:14.

13:11-18 Third Tableau A monstrous religious beast [False Prophet] from the land who seems to give life to the image of the Anti-Christ and performs miracles to appear legitimate. A complete mimicry of the Holy Spirit who gives life (Jn. 6:33) gives grace/power to serve 1 Peter 4:10-11, and reveals the truth of who Jesus is Jn. 16:13. The false prophet gives life to the image of the beast, gives power to buy and sell, and He enacts Satan's mark promoting his lies. The number of the anti-Christ name is 666. The concept of a number being required to exist is made more real by today's RFID technology of chips in phones, credit cards, and placed under the skin of dogs and soldiers. Do you have an Echo in your home, or a remote that allows voice commands? If so, then someone is listening in on every conversation and is recording every selection you make. They are profiling you for ads on web sites you visit. And then there are all the scams, frauds, phishing, and identity thefts.

"Do you believe?" that phrase will be used to ask someone about their relationship with Jesus, and is co-opted by Satan through the False Prophet to get you to believe in the anti-Christ. He is the believable human image, who is a direct representative of Satan. Satan masquerades as an angel of light and his false prophets fool people to "believe wrong, heretically denying Christ." 2 Cor. 11:14-15; 1 John 4:1-3.

"The Lamb & the Redeemed" - Now that we have met the evil unholy trinity, we meet the righteous victory team led by The Lamb.

14:1-5 Fourth Tableau - The Lamb & the 144,000

A Lamb is meek, humble, and appears innocent. It is the sacrificial animal that provides forgiveness of sins. The unholy trinity leads into sin, death and hell. The Lamb provides the way of salvation. Don't underestimate the Lamb, who is loving. The Lamb is also the Lion of Judah, powerful and mighty. Satan tries to imitate and intimidate with fear "roaring like a lion" 1 Peter 5:8. We are to "Resist him, firm in the faith" 5:9, and as previously said in 5:5 "clothe yourselves with humility... for God resists the proud (like Satan) and gives grace to the humble."

Humble does not mean weak. Humble means sure of who you are and who's you are. Humble means being confident and strong to stand in the power of Christ and His resurrection – Ephesians 1:19-21. Paul prayed that the Ephesian church would understand the "immeasurable power of God."

Christ leads all the true Christians in the battle – (remember Romans 8:31,37). There is more power in Jesus' "breath" 2 Thes. 2:8 and spoken "word" Rev. 19:15, than all the united armies and weapons of earth. The 144k sing 14:3 – the power of praise.

14:4 Speaks of virginity of the redeemed, which means they have not participated in the world fertility religions such as the patron god of Ephesus, Diana. Nor had they lied, compromising themselves in saying the untruth, "Caesar is Lord." Thus they

were blameless 14:5. Jesus is their only Lord and they bear God's name on their forehead, in contrast to the mark of the beast.

14:6-13 Interlude: Announcement of Victory in Jesus by the Three Angels

Eagles pronounce "woes". Angels pronounce victory. A prophecy of what is to come.

:6-7 Eternal Hope Offered In ancient days a runner would have to be sent back to "headquarters" to announce victory. Angels act as heavenly runners announcing the victory the gospel brings and calling all to bow in worship.

:8 Babylon Fallen Babylon was a decadent, wicked and immoral power, and the representative enemy of the people of God. In Revelation 18:2ff we learn much more about Babylon as a place of demonic spirits and occultic religions, where God is pushed out. G.K. Chesterton said, "The opposite of belief in God is not a belief in nothing; it is the belief in anything." 18:3 Reflects speaks of trade using the language of inappropriate sexual encounters or fornication to describe the lack of principles in trade deals. And all the nations have fallen under the spell of riches with Babylon being the center of material trade. Materialism is the opposite of spiritual faithfulness to God. Desires for materialism and riches has seduced the world to trade with her. Imagine every kind of vice and unethical behavior. 18:5 "Sin City", her sins reached to the heavens. 18:7 Babylon has glorified herself as a queen. 18:13 Human trafficking is included, trading in "slaves and the souls of men." 18:24 Babylon will also be responsible for the "blood of prophets and saints." She will fall.

:9-11 Warning of the Wrath of God Eternal Judgment Declared

Sinful works leads to eternal consequences – "forever and ever" torment, and no rest.

:12 Call for Endurance for the Saints

Obedient to God's Commands and Faithful to Jesus. Go back to the challenge of 6:17 "Who is able to stand?" & 12:11 "They conquered by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony."

:13 Beatitude #2 Blessing to those who die in the Lord from now on.

We have already seen what this blessing looks like in Revelation 7:14-17. In contrast to the judgement of no rest :11, God's children are promised "rest," and that the works of their life count toward blessing. (cf. 21:1-27. Those who enter the heavenly Jerusalem are those whose names are "written in the Lamb's book of life." Sealed, shepherded, measured, counted, rested - God knows His children and blesses them.

14:14-16 Fifth Tableau - The Son of Man on a Cloud

The harvester revealed = the judge. (Jn 5:22, 27, 30, 8:16 Jesus & the Father judge) Jesus came to save. His mere presence judges – some accept and some reject.

14:17-20 Sixth Tableau – The Harvest of Grapes

His judgment is complete. 1600 stadia = the length of Israel, from Tyre in the North to Egypt in the South.

15:1-4 Seventh Tableau – The Hymn of the Lamb

It is a hymn of victory around the throne, and a declaration of faith.