

The Revelation to St. John

Collect Prayer -

O GOD, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord.

Amen

Are there questions or comments from the last session? For those of you following online you may email Fr. Bart at frryanssc@frontiernet.net

Revelation 10

¹Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. ²He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, ³and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring; when he called out, the seven thunders sounded. ⁴And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." ⁵And the angel whom I saw standing on sea and land lifted up his right hand to heaven ⁶and swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there should be no more delay, ⁷but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God, as he announced to his servants the prophets, should be fulfilled.

⁸Then the voice which I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll which is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." ⁹So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll; and he said to me, "Take it and eat; it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth." ¹⁰And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made

bitter. ¹¹And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

I. The Little Scroll - used to differentiate from the sealed scroll

A. It is an open scroll - not sealed

1. To be read

2. Of greater importance than it's size - universal message

B. The Angel here has more of the traits of Daniel's "Son of Man" 7:13

II. In apocalyptic literature visions are sealed to be revealed at a later time

A. Do not seal up - this means the time is near for the fulfillment of the prophecy - thus an unsealed scroll

B. We also read to seal up part of the prophecy is to be hidden - "Seal up and Do not write"

1. G.B. Caird (Oxford head of Biblical Studies 1917 - 1984) - the leading authority on the Book of Revelation writes of this passage:

"Treated as an integral part of its context, the sealing has a weighty theological meaning. If God's prophet is ordered not to write down what he has heard the seven thunders say, but to seal it away, this can only mean that God has canceled the doom of which they were the symbol."

2. Daniel 12:4-9 is the key to this understanding

Daniel was ordered to seal up what was to happen in the future - and God has reversed the situation as it is revealed to us in the later time.

3. Our response to this mercy of God should be to cease producing the instruments of our own distraction - **Remember** - God does not destroy, but he will allow us to destroy ourselves

C. The sealing up of the action of the thunders may also be understood as connected to the proclamation of god after the flood - I will destroy no more

III. Opening the scroll

A. Ezekiel is remembered as we hear the angel instruct John

1. Eat - bitter and sweet
2. Sweet - because it proclaims the triumph of the church
3. Bitter because it includes the suffering of Christians

B. Prophecy Again - marks a new beginning - a new mission

1. Ezekiel was restricted to the house of Israel
2. John is to proclaim to all the nations - the new mission

The Good News here is a challenge - there is no greater calling than to be authentically Christian and from that vocation to be called to teach and preach - but the sweetness is also bitter - preaching and teaching - living a life that is an example to others is also disappointing when they do not see, hear, understand and have the Metanoia experience

Revelation 11

¹Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told: "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ²but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the holy city for forty-two months

I. The Temple Measured - An abrupt shift!

- A. The event is similar to the sealing of the servants of God
- B. What is measured is under God's protection - support through the suffering to come
- C. Symbolically the Temple is the Christian Community

II. The contrast in the Trampling of Holy City in the great Tribulation

- A. The community will be sheltered - the unprotected will be trampled

B. There is again the Christological focus and the theology of the Cross in evidence here - The church will survive in the face of every trial, every assault - people may die to this world but that only means triumphant

Think of our modern parallel with the Episcopal Church - property is lost, people are financially ruined or at least challenged, but that death is nothing compared to the real second death

The Good News is that we will survive - just as those with Jesus in the boat asked, do you not care if we survive, when he storm threatens to overturn the boat. (Mark 4:38) We too may wonder if God cares if we drown, but the Word resonates in our hearts if we listen,

33I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

(John 16:33)

Revelation 11:3-14

3And I will grant my two witnesses power to prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”
4These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth. 5And if any one would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; if any one would harm them, thus he is doomed to be killed. 6They have power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. 7And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit will make war upon them and conquer them and kill them, 8and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. 9For three days and a half men from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, 10and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those

who dwell on the earth. ¹¹But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹²Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up hither!” And in the sight of their foes they went up to heaven in a cloud. ¹³And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. ¹⁴The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come.

I. Another Abrupt shift - The Two witnesses

A. They represent the church in its role at witness Act 1:8

⁸But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.”

B. The number two like the number seven is used to represent the whole community - it is all of us who are to proclaim the Gospel

C. The two also indicate the dual roles of the church, priesthood and kingship (Servant leadership not royal prerogative)

D. These are faithful witnesses - that is to remind us that being faithful can mean unto death

II. The two witnesses are protected and have miraculous powers for the allotted time 42 months - then the final battle

A. Their death is without dignity - Jerusalem conquered by Rome

B. The Roman Empire rejoices as the Jewish problem is settled

Another victory for Rome another difficult province settled into the Roman Way

C. But "The Beast" will not have the last word - we are to understand neither in this case or in any case - the faithful witnesses are called home.

D. The Earthquake is part of this coming home - Knocking the Dust from your feet as you leave a town, Jesus Said.

E. The number of the dead 7000 is again symbolic - the meaning is a clear victory for God and His faithful people against the backdrop is destruction for those who chose not to follow His way

15-19

¹⁵Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." ¹⁶And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying, "We give thanks to thee, Lord God Almighty, who art and who wast, that thou hast taken thy great power and begun to reign.

¹⁸The nations raged, but thy wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, for rewarding thy servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear thy name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."

¹⁹Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

I. The Seventh Trumpet and the Third Woe

A. We again turn to the Heavenly Liturgy - the connection between things of heaven and things of earth - the canticle is from the 24 Elders

B. Clearly designated is the third woe - now is satan to have his triumph

II. This is the close of the second part of the Revelation - now Judgment

A. Three classes receive reward

1. God's Servants - Saints and Martyrs
2. The Prophets - Those who carried God's word to His people
3. God's People - who fear His Name - faithful people

B. The destroyers are now to be destroyed - not the rest of the inhabitants of the earth (Confusion exists because of the Left Behind Series) but those who actively destroy

Who would that be?

C. The Holy of Holies is thrown open representing what?
(Restoration)

1. Hebrews 10:19 "Therefore, brothers and sister we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus."

2. Through Jesus - thus the restoration is universal not only for the Jewish people

III. The Good News

A. The Restoration is coming for all who believe

B. Suffering, separation, doubt and fear are all abolished in God's Kingdom.

C. The subversive message of the Gospel - What Jesus Taught the world turned upside down is true and real and will be realized.

Revelation 12:1-6

And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; 2she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery. 3And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads 4His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; 5she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God

and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

I. Revelation 12 is based on Two sources

A. Individual portions are found in many sources in the O.T.

B. The first close parallel is the birth of Apollo

Leto becomes pregnant by Zeus. The dragon python foresaw that this child, a son, would replace him as the ruler over the oracle at Delphi. He sought to kill the child at birth. Zeus commissioned the North wind and the sea god Poseidon to aid Leto, She gave birth to Artemis: Apollo slew the dragon Python

Why did John use this account?

Dragon - Python - the devil

Role at Delphi is to be the intermediary between the gods and man - Jesus is our only mediator and advocate