

## Resolve: Week 6

**Takeaway:** See evil clearly

**Read:** Revelation 12-14

*What stood out to you from this passage?*

### Things You Need To Know

*This section is some of the most difficult to understand and interpret, so we'll go section by section here.*

#### Revelation 12:1-6:

- When John says “a great sign appeared,” that is a clue that what we are about to read is rooted in symbolism.
- The woman is a representation of Israel. The twelve stars symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel. Mary is nowhere mentioned or alluded to in Revelation so we should not associate the woman in Revelation 12 with Mary, the mother of Jesus.
- The Dragon is the “ancient serpent” of Genesis 3.
- The stars symbolize angels. What we are seeing here is the rebellion of Satan. When the tail swipes a third of the stars, or angels, that is Satan bringing his followers down with him. There were three archangels, Michael, Gabriel and Lucifer, each overseeing a third of the angels. When Lucifer fell, he took his third with him and they became demons.
- Satan’s ultimate goal was to oppose Jesus’ mission on earth, thus the reason he waited for the child.
- The child was brought up to God and the woman (Israel) went to the wilderness in preparation for the coming King.
- ***Remember, this is all symbolic.***

#### Revelation 12:7-17

- This section reveals the time and setting of Revelation 12. It seems odd to have a war in heaven but Paul alludes to what is happening in the spiritual



- realm in Ephesians 6:12.
- Michael and his angels defeat the dragon (Satan) and his angels in a heavenly battle, resulting in them being cast from heaven (See also Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28).
  - Michael and his angels symbolize the victory we have in Christ.
  - Revelation 12:13-16 is an echo of Pharaoh's pursuit of the Israelites in Exodus and the parting of the Red Sea. The woman here continues to symbolize the faithful remnant of Israel.
  - The language of verse 17 parallels Genesis 3:15 (which is the first Gospel message recorded), alluding to that while we might suffer from Satan's influence, in the end we will be victorious.

#### **Revelation 13:1-10**

- This section has close relations with Daniel 7 and the four beasts from that vision.
- The beast stands in sharp contrast to the Lamb of God.
- The mortal wound that was healed (v. 3) is a parody of Jesus coming back from the dead. The phrase "who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" also parodies the phrase "who is like the Lord almighty?"
- Who does the beast symbolize?
  - At its core, it symbolizes a godless government.
- The duration of 42 months is symbolic; what John is alluding to is that evil has an expiration date.
- The dragon is the one who gives the beast authority and the people worship the dragon. Satan is behind all evil and uses others as his puppets.
- The call for endurance and faith is a call that transcends history.

#### **Revelation 13:11-18**

- This second beast symbolizes false religion
- That this new "lamb" speaks like the dragon mirrors Jesus' warning to his disciples when he says "be wary of the wolves in sheep's clothing."
- What gives away this "lamb's" identity is its motivation. The true Lamb Of God was rooted in humility. This "lamb" is rooted in pride and power.
- Keep in mind the audience of John's letter: most dealt with idol and



emperor worship so this section in particular would have resonated with those churches.

- The use of a mark to enforce national or empire-wide unity already had a long history that would have been known to John's audience.
- **Verse 18:** 666 should be read as "six hundred and sixty-six." In Hebrew, letters had numerical values and when you added up the numbers of the letters, it would give a value. In Hebrew, the numerical value of 666 spells out "Nero Caesar" referring to the Evil Emperor who set half of Rome on fire and blamed the Christians, leading to many people dying for their faith. Paul and Peter were believed to be among those who were martyred under Nero's reign. The mortal wound on the first beast (13:3) that is healed would have been seen by John's audience, who had first hand experience with the terror of Nero, as a resurrection of the Emperor. That is not to say Emperor Nero is going to be resurrected as the final antichrist. What this is saying is that the antichrist will come in the spirit of Nero. One can look throughout history and find them scattered throughout the ages (Hitler, Stalin, bin Laden, and al-Zarqawi would be the most recent that come to mind). The reality is that Satan does not know when Jesus will return so he always has antichrists at the ready. What will reveal the identity of the final antichrist is when Jesus returns to earth to defeat him.
- One more note on numerical values: as we've seen, 666 symbolizes evil. It can be seen as a parody of 777 which is perfection. Then you have the name Jesus Christ, whose numerical value is 888, a step above perfection.

#### **Revelation 14:1-20**

- **Verses 1-5:** This begins John's version of "a tale of two cities", between the Great City of Babylon and the Holy City of Jerusalem that will last through chapter 20.
- The people mentioned in 14:1-5 are symbolic of those who follow Christ. They are blameless and pure, having not been defiled by the evil ways of the Great City, Babylon.
- **Verses 6-13:** In books of prophecy, "good news" is not just about God's restoration of the faithful, but also of the judgment of their enemies.



- In Revelation, John’s audience would have understood Babylon as symbolizing Rome. For us today, Babylon could be any great city that has indulged in the immorality of the world (NYC, Los Angeles, etc.)
  - **See Jeremiah 51:6-7**
- *Verses 14-20*: The imagery is similar to Revelation 1, which was subsequently based off of Daniel 7.
- The first harvest (v. 14-16) is up for debate about the intent.
- The second harvest (v. 17-20) is clearly a harvest of judgment against those who oppose God.

**Questions:**

1. Satan was cast down because he coveted a place of authority and honor. How are you tempted to covet places of honor, and how can you work to humble yourself in those areas?

---

---

---

2. Consider each of the descriptors for Satan in 12:9. What do these tell us about his character and his goals for humanity? How can we keep an awareness of these things?

---

---

---





3. What does it mean to have victory as described in Revelation 12:11-12?  
What does this show about the importance of our stories?

---

---

---

4. Why does the beast imitate Christ in Revelation 13:1-10? How is all sin ultimately a perversion of God's goodness?

---

---

---

5. The false prophet in Revelation 13:11-18 looks like a lamb but talks like a dragon. What role does speech play in revealing what's in our hearts?

---

---

---



6. What would you say to someone who believes that, in the end, everyone goes to heaven? How does Revelation 14 correct that belief?

---

---

---

7. What motivation is there to plead to God on behalf of those who are far from him? How do these chapters shape your view about telling others about Jesus?

---

---

---

