

KEC ORDER OF SERVICE/SERMON OUTLINE 29th August (KEC SERVICE ONLINE)

Before the livestream starts at 9am:

KIDS VIDEO will be made available by 8.30am. This week, come and learn about the book of Revelation as a whole!

Direct link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-qB8nicLWY>

9am – Livestream starts

Livestream link should be available by 8.55am latest.

0. Starter discussion question: “When Christians always seem to be on the losing side, what are some of the ways we typically respond?”

1. CALL TO WORSHIP – Daniel 7:9-14

2. WORSHIP in SONG (with Daniel Langat)

SONG 1: Behold our God

SONG 2: You have won the victor’s crown

3. Doctrine is for Doxology: Jesus the Judge (Heidelberg Catechism Question 52)

- Q. What comfort is it to you
that Christ *will come to judge
the living and the dead?*
- A. In all my sorrow and persecution
I lift up my head
and eagerly await
as judge from heaven
the very same person
who before has submitted himself
to the judgment of God
for my sake,
and has removed all the curse from me. ¹
He will cast all his and my enemies
into everlasting condemnation,
but he will take me and all his chosen ones
to himself
into heavenly joy and glory. ²

1. Lk 21:28; Rom 8:22-25; Phil 3:20,21; Tit 2:13, 14.

2. Mt 25:31-46; ¹ Thess 4:16, 17; ² Thess 1:6-10.

4. Prayer for our nation Malaysia

5. Bible reading: Revelation 13:1-15:4

13 The dragon^[a] stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ² The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. ³ One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. ⁴ People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?”

⁵ The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. ⁶ It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷ It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. ⁸ All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.^[b]

⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.

¹⁰ “If anyone is to go into captivity,
into captivity they will go.
If anyone is to be killed^[c] with the sword,
with the sword they will be killed.”^[d]

This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people.

¹¹ Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. ¹² It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³ And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. ¹⁴ Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵ The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. ¹⁶ It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, ¹⁷ so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

¹⁸ This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man.^[e] That number is 666.

14 Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. ³ And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he

goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. ⁵ No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

⁶ Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷ He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

⁸ A second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,^[a] which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.”

⁹ A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, ¹⁰ they, too, will drink the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.” ¹² This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.

¹³ Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”

“Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.”

¹⁴ I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man^[b] with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵ Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, “Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” ¹⁶ So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

¹⁷ Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸ Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, “Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth’s vine, because its grapes are ripe.” ¹⁹ The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God’s wrath. ²⁰ They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses’ bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.^[c]

¹⁵ I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God’s wrath is completed. ² And I saw what looked like a sea of glass glowing with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name. They held harps given them by God ³ and sang the song of God’s servant Moses and of the Lamb:

“Great and marvelous are your deeds,
Lord God Almighty.
Just and true are your ways,
King of the nations.^[a]

⁴Who will not fear you, Lord,
and bring glory to your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship before you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

SERMON HANDOUT: The beast and the Lamb (Rev. 13:1-15:4)

**REVELATION 13:1-15-3: ENDURE: THE UNHOLY/MOCK
TRINITY DECEIVES AND MAKES WAR AGAINST GOD’S
PEOPLE BUT CHRIST JUDGES AND REDEEMS**

**The Dragon authorises the First Beast from the Sea to make the
world worship them, and to mislead and make war against
Christians, and Christians are urged to suffer and endure (13:1-11)**

MAIN THEME:

Satan/dragon inspires a 1st beast from the Sea as its agent (the beast being political, economic, religious, cultural, & military power as seen in Rome & Nero) which has miraculously recovered its power from a fatal wound (c. AD 68 and near fall of the Roman Empire) to deceive the world into giving worship to the dragon and the beast, and is permitted by God to persecute and kill the followers of the Lamb/Christ.

MAIN PURPOSE:

John draws on the characteristic of all the beast-empires, as if to say, ‘This the threat of Roman imperial power – but it is actually the threat of any human empire which claims what only God can claim.’ And his use of highly metaphorical language, in which the actual subject of the metaphor is not specified, allows subsequent audiences to see the same patterns of behaviour at work in later contexts.¹ John’s

vision report then offers a challenge for both his immediate audience and subsequent audiences.

For his immediate hearers and readers, the challenge is to make decisions about their loyalty to the empire or to their faith in the light of John's claims about the nature of the empire and its source of power and authority, and Christians are urged to persevere and endure the persecution of the 1st beat and be alert to its deception.

MAIN APPLICATION:

For later hearers and readers, the challenge is to discern where similar patterns of authority are at work and – knowing that we too are living in the time between Christ's 1st and 2nd comings, when we too will know both suffering and victory, when we too are in a time for testimony and patient endurance – to make hard decisions about our own loyalty and faith.

The 2nd Beast from the Land exercises the religious and economic authority of the first beast and makes/performs signs to deceive the world into forcing the worship of the first beast (13:12-18)

MAIN THEME:

A 2nd beast/false prophet (perhaps the high priesthood of emperor worship) deceives the world into worshipping/paying homage the first beast by making &

performing miraculous signs and in controlling all economic transactions in the name of the 1st beast, and has the number “666” – cf. 17:9.

Excursus: 666:

There has been considerable debate on gematria, the number “666” and the identity of the 1st beast/Anti-Christ. The sum of the name “Nero Caesar,” spelt in a Hebrew form, is “666.” And the sum of the Greek for “beast” when spelt in Hebrew is also “666” while “angel” is spelt as 144. 666 is “six” repeated thrice in Greek as well as in English. It is also a double triangular number (and is also the triangle of a square.) Thus, 666 is a remarkable number, and the number itself falls short of the number of God’s perfection “777” and indeed stands in contrast to the 144,000 (a rectangular number) in 14:1 and 21:7 which represents the people God and the New Jerusalem, indicating that “666” symbolizes sinful humanity at its worst in opposing God’s Will for his people and his future plan.

There is also the popular 1st century myth that Nero somehow escaped death & will rise against to conquer the world. For, John “666” may refer to the historical Nero, but Nero also becomes a type for the future Anti-Christ. In 13:3, 15, Nero/the 1st beast/the Anti-Christ seems to have fatal wound, & returns to life, parodying the death & resurrection of Christ, and perhaps refers to Nero’s death in AD 68 & the seeming collapse of the Roman Empire & the Empire’s “resurrection” in AD 70, to new power, for many hundreds of future years. It also may allude to Gen 3:14-15, where the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman suffer fatal wounds, signifying that Rome has been fatally wounded by the cross, yet Rome did crucify Christ, but both “revive,” And Rome still rules in John’s day, and Christ eternally as the risen one.

Yet, Ch. 17 foresees the return of “Nero.” In 17:8f, 11ff, Nero/the 1st beast/the Anti-Christ has a 2nd coming, as a demonic rival to Christ, and parodying the 2nd coming of Christ, cf. 2 Thess 2:1-12. Thus, the historical Nero has been turned by John into a type and symbol of a future Anti-Christ figure at the End of Time.

MAIN PURPOSE:

John’s purpose is for the hearers not to work out the precise identity of the “666” but to understand its characteristics: It is an evil, totalitarian, idolatrous political, military, and cultural Empire, allied to the second beast/from the land, which represents idolatrous religious power that serves political power. John is offering us the anatomy of human totalitarian rule and its defiance of the sovereignty of God.

MAIN APPLICATION:

We can see enough connection with the world of the first century to know how vivid his descriptions would have been to his first audience. But we can also feel the rhetorical power of what he says to find correspondences in subsequent generations, including our own. John is here not just heightening the significance of the decisions of loyalty that those described in the seven messages must face; he is raising the stakes for all subsequent readers who must also examine their loyalties, their compromises and the question of faithfulness.

**The Lamb on Mt Zion with 144,000 redeemed leading to 7 angels and a harvest, so the hearers must endure in order not to be condemned to hell but rather be victorious and overcome and sing God's praises
(14:1-20; 15:2-4)**

MAIN THEME:

Because of Christ's victory, God protects the Peoples of God (144,000) from the hatred of the unholy/mock Trinity (the dragon/Satan, the 1st beast, the 2nd beast.) God accomplishes his glory through the saving presence of Christ with his peoples from all nations. God will judge the world, which will face an End-Time judgement, but will reward the faithful.

It is sometimes argued that this vision of the 144,000 is only of those who have been martyred, that is, who have died for their faith, rather than of the whole people of God. This is on the basis of the small actual number, the language in 13:15 of those who refuse to worship the beast 'being killed' and the language in 12:11 of 'not shrinking from death'. But the language of dying to self and carrying one's cross is elsewhere assumed to be the universal commitment of those who follow Jesus, and the sevenfold description of the group uses images that apply to all God's people. The

number 144,000 is clearly symbolic, and the strong links with Revelation 7 show that this is another description of the same group, those 'redeemed' from 'every tribe, language, people and nation'. They are the saints who praise God around the throne even while they experience the suffering that comes with following the lamb in a world which mostly worships another.

MAIN PURPOSE:

The two harvests of grain and grapes correspond to the basic need for food and drink in bread and wine, though John's vision report does not appear to make anything of that. Rather, the grain harvest is a positive image of the one like a son of man bringing into final safety those who are faithful to God, and the text in these verses runs parallel to other New Testament images of harvest without drawing much on Old Testament ideas. By contrast, the grape harvest, delegated to an angelic harvester, draws extensively on Old Testament images of judgment of the nations who oppose God and his people. As with other episodes in Revelation where consecutive sections offer different perspectives on the same reality, John is giving us a symbolic description of two aspects of judgment. For those who have responded to the gospel, and faithfully endured in their lives suffering, it is the best possible news, but for those who have not believed or endured, it is the worst possible news.

MAIN APPLICATION:

In this passage we start to encounter some of the most challenging language about judgment in the book of Revelation. The idea of torment which lasts for ever and ever presents a problem not simply for the tender conscience but also for

developing a biblical theology of evil and judgment in the context of God's description in the Bible as loving and gracious.

The point is that while salvation in Christ is offered to all, we can only find a God of love and grace in and through Jesus Christ and his blood. If we try to find God outside Christ, we will only find a God whose holiness we have offended by our idolatries, and a humanity in bondage to evil, and hence the only just judgement is the wrath of God forever. Further, we must remember that one aspect of salvation is rescue from evil powers and the establishment of universal judgement, and that requires a final judgement on sin.

QUESTIONS:

- . How do we know who the two beasts of chapter 13 represent?
- What is the message of chapter 14?
- How does the evil/mock trinity operate today?

BOOK RECOMMENDATION:

Chapple, Allan. *A Gospel Pageant: A Reader's Guide to the Book of Revelation*. Resource Publications, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Connect Cards
- Zoom Games – after service!
- Equip class – collect your textbooks! (NT1)
- Church Reopening: 13th September
- Giving
- Prayer Meeting

BENEDICTION

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

- Revelation 22:20-21