



**A Great Need For A  
Discerning Mind**

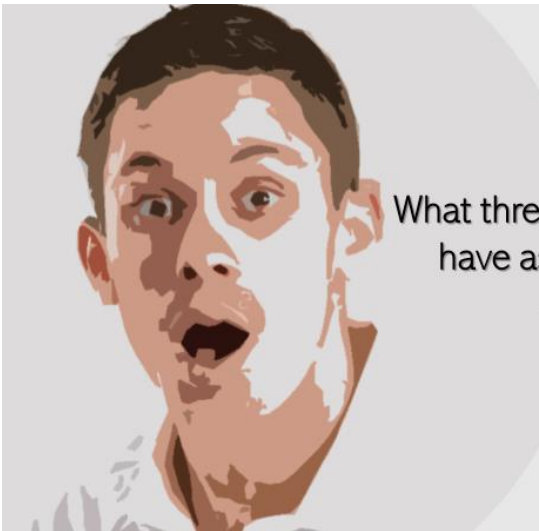
Revelation 17

**Sooke Baptist Church**

Sunday, September 5, 2021

9:30 am, In-person

also on Facebook and YouTube



**Coffee/Question:**

What three things in the past year  
have astonished you and why?

**03:00**





...is given to his church, and was written in language that uses vivid symbols... pictures that are highly figurative, drawing upon the writings of the OT prophets... in order to escape the censorship of John's Roman captors, but also to convey to the people of God, the purposes of God in the last days – the time between the ascension of Jesus and his return to earth.

In this present age, things are not as they seem.  
What does that mean?  
Jesus reigns from heaven over the earth.  
As the church of Jesus ...

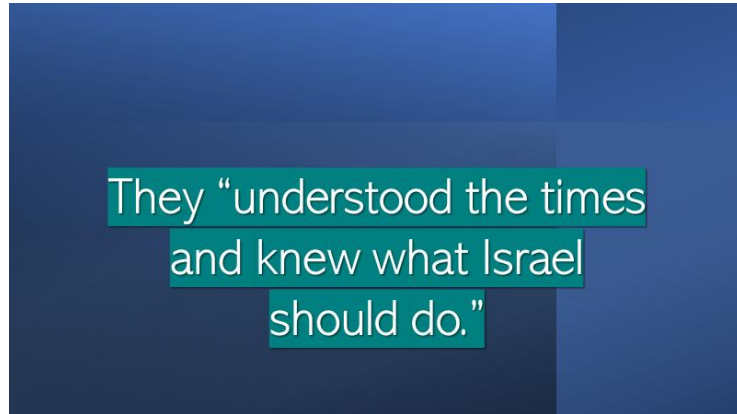


We are not rattled by the news headlines, but rather draw our hope from God's person and God's word.

In this present age, things are not as they seem.

The book of Revelation not only reveals that Jesus reigns... it also makes known to the people of God the powers that are unmaking the world... and the glorious fact that in God's sovereign wisdom...even they serve his purposes and advance his mission.

It was said of the men from the tribe of Issachar, the men who lived in King David's time, that...



This is what our Lord Jesus desires for his church.

As we root ourselves, as we steep our lives in the Scriptures, we acquire from them wisdom...

...wisdom that as James 3:17 says...

...comes from heaven...

...wisdom that is both practical and insightful...

...wisdom that enables us to perceive where the Father is at work in the seen and unseen realms...

...wisdom that informs and directs our words, our actions and responses.

In the vision of chapter 17 what did John see?

He saw...

## Revelation 17

v.3b – a woman

v.3c – a woman seated on a scarlet beast

v.4a – a woman dressed in purple and scarlet

v.4b – a woman wearing gold, precious stones and pearls

v.4c – a woman holding a golden cup in her hand

v.5 – a woman who had a name written on her forehead

v.6 – a woman who was drunk

v.3b – a woman

v.3c – a woman seated on a scarlet beast... a beast that was covered with blasphemous names... and had seven heads and ten horns

v.4a – a woman dressed in purple and scarlet

v.4b – a woman wearing gold, precious stones and pearls

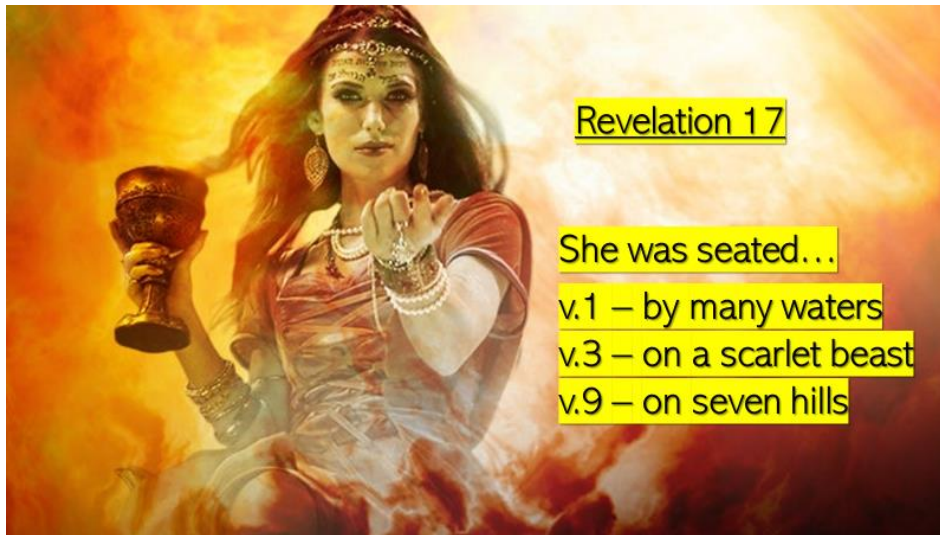
v.4c – a woman holding a golden cup in her hand... But that cup was filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries

v.5 – a woman who had a name written on her forehead... a name that was said to be a mystery – Babylon the Great, the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth

v.6 – a woman who was drunk... with the blood of God's holy people, those who bore testimony to Jesus

But this was not all that John saw.

He also saw that this woman was seated...



The vision of this woman caused John to be, v.6... greatly astonished.

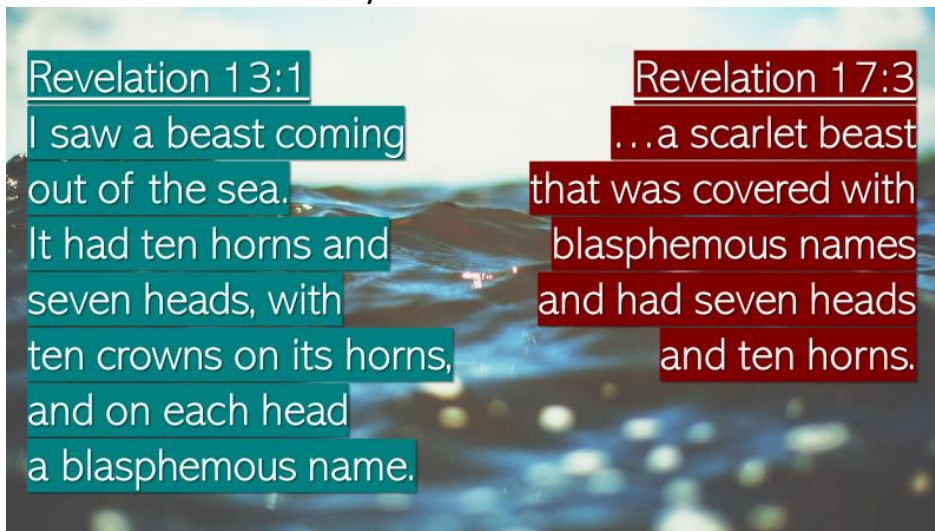
The same holy angel who showed to John this vision, asked him in v.7... why he was astonished by the woman.

Then the angel proceeded to explain to John the mystery of who the woman is and the mystery of the beast upon which she rode.

To us it would seem that the vision was focused on the woman, and the beast was secondary.

And yet, the angel began his explanation with the beast.

From the description in Revelation 17:3... the reader realizes this is the same beast that we've already seen in Revelation 13.



Revelation 13 makes known to the reader that the beast from the sea is aligned with the dragon and the beast from the earth.

The three of them are a parody of the triune God – they are an anti-trinity.



**The dragon** – who is Satan... is the anti-God.

**The beast from the sea** – which is political powers and structures manipulated by the dragon... is the antichrist.

**The beast from the earth** – which is the false prophet... religious powers and structures manipulated by the dragon... is the anti-Spirit.

What specifically is being communicated to the reader in Revelation 17 by this image of a beast... with seven heads and ten horns?

Let me remind you of how we interpret apocryphal literature.

There are numbers and descriptors used by the Bible to which a particular meaning is consistently assigned.

- Seven and ten are... numbers of completeness
- A head is... a symbol of authority
- A horn is... a symbol of strength

### Regarding the beast's seven heads...

The seven heads of the beast are said to be...

v.9 – seven hills

v.10 – seven kings

“The seven hills and the seven kings represent the oppressive power of world government throughout the ages which take to itself divine prerogatives and persecutes God's people when they do not submit to the state's false claims.”  
GK Beale

Beale, p.367

### Regarding the beast's ten horns

**The ten horns of the beast  
are said to be ten kings...**

v.12 – who have not yet received a kingdom.

**The ten horns of the beast  
have one purpose...**

v.13 – to give their power and authority to the beast,  
who will wage war against the Lamb.

Who are these ten kings?

They are those who are described in Revelation 16:14, 17:12-14, and 19:19.

16:14 - ...they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

17:12-14 – The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They will wage war against the Lamb...

19:19 – Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against [the rider called Faithful and True].

GK Beale says...

“The ten horns who are ten kings represent the final phase of the dragon’s efforts to oppose God and to conquer his church using political powers.”

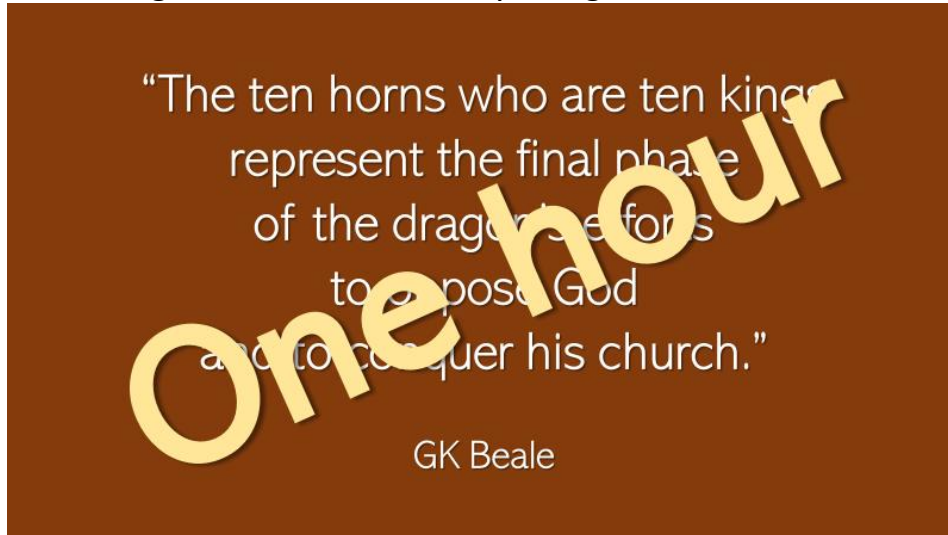
GK Beale

p.372.

The vision which John saw is frightening.  
But there is a detail that we must not miss.



These kings will receive authority along with the beast for but...

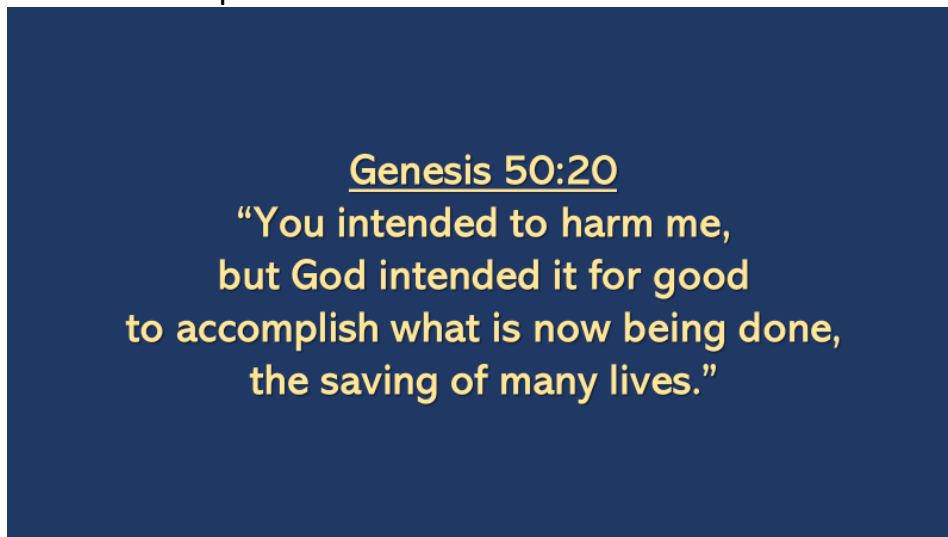


It is God and God alone who determines the parameters and the time in which they will act.

There is even more.

Look again at v.17 – ultimately... they will bring about God's purposes.

Does this not remind you of what OT Joseph learned while living first as a slave and then as a prisoner?



This is the great frustration of evil – God turns the things intended for harm and uses them to save many.

This is important for us to understand.

This is why the angel told John, look again at v.9,

**“This call for a mind with wisdom.”**

We need to connect the beast of Revelation 13 and 17 to a vision seen by Daniel.

Daniel 7:3-7: Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

<sup>4</sup> “The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it.

<sup>5</sup> “And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up and eat your fill of flesh!’

Daniel 7:3-7: “After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back, it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.

<sup>7</sup> “After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.

In the vision seen by Daniel... the four creatures had a combined total of seven heads... and the last beast had ten horns.

In the vision seen by John there is but one creature with seven heads and ten horns.

What does this mean?

"The creatures seen by Daniel represented kingdoms that spanned from Babylon to Rome, whose dominance continued for several centuries after Christ.

In a similar fashion the seven headed creature of Revelation 17 likewise spans many centuries and likely all of history since the features of the four Daniel empires are applied in Revelation not to four different beasts but to one."

GK Beale

p.367

Let's press into this even further.

The deception of the dragon throughout history has been... might is right.

The spirit of Babylon, which first manifested in ancient Babel... has always strived to build a culture in which God is non-existent or irrelevant.

Do you know what was the motivation of the people who built Babel?



Genesis 11:4

The spirit of Babylon from the very beginning has been... self-focused rather than ...God-focused.

"We will be in charge."

"We will decide how to live."

"We will define truth."

"We will do as we please and how we please."

But the building of human culture without God needs power and authority.

And so, as we are shown in Revelation 17, the spirit of Babylon draws its authority and strength from political power and authority manipulated by the dragon... who as the Bible tells us... is only too happy to assist in the refashioning of humanity in his image.

This is what is being communicated by “Babylon” riding upon the beast.

It is difficult to read in Revelation 16-18 about the ultimate outcome of life without God.

But it is an outcome that shouldn't surprise.

History has repeatedly confirmed ... any city, any nation, any empire, any civilization that draws its authority and strength from other than the living God always self-destructs... there are no exceptions.

Darrell Johnson says, “Birds fly in the air; fish swim in the water; and life without God implodes in on itself.” p.297

Just as the dragon, the beast from the sea (which is political power and structure), and the false prophet (which is religious power and structure), are a counterfeit of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, so is “Babylon” a counterfeit. DJ, p.298.



A counterfeit of what?

Babylon the Great, the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth... is a counterfeit...



What do we mean by that?

God very purposefully reveals in Revelation 19:6-7 a stunning image... that of the wedding of the Lamb and his bride.

**Revelation 19:6-7**

**Hallelujah!**

**For the Lord God Almighty reigns.**

**Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!**

**For the wedding of the Lamb has come,  
and his bride has made herself ready.**

**Fine linen, bright and clean,  
was given to her to wear.**

**(Fine linen stands for  
the righteous acts of God's holy people.)**

Who is the bride of the Lamb?

The bride of the Lamb is the church of Jesus comprised of all who have been saved by grace through faith in Christ alone.

Marriage between a man and a woman is a picture of the kind of relationship God purposes to have with his people.

- A covenant relationship.
- An exclusive relationship.
- A union of two who are different

Look at Ephesians 5:32

**Ephesian 5:32**  
This is a profound mystery –  
but I am talking about Christ  
and the church.

**What is the profound mystery?**

Of how two who are different, a husband and wife, become one flesh.

And this mystery points to a more profound mystery.

God who is different than us, and we who are different than God, will forever have our lives joined together.

This is where the purposes of God are headed... a wedding.

This is what God is doing as he saves sinners and brings men and women to himself.

He is choosing a bride.

God very purposefully also reveals in Revelation 21 a stunning image... that of the holy city, the new Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven, like a bride – 21:1-8.

This city, the new Jerusalem and its culture... are not one where God is excluded. Rather God is present... God is with.... God is at the center.

### Revelation 21:3-4

Look!

**God's dwelling place is now among the people,  
and he will dwell with them and be their God.**

**He will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
There will be no more death,  
or mourning or crying or pain,  
for the old order of things has passed away.**

This is as far as we'll go today.

This passage connects to our lives in two ways.

1. We've talked about this many times – how the gospel of Jesus that forgives our sin, also restores our identity.



You and I ...as followers of Jesus....are engaged to be married to Jesus.  
This is who we are... we belong to him.

Jesus has pledged himself to us and we have pledged ourselves to him, when we believe in him and receive him into our lives.

Jesus is faithful to us ...every day and in every circumstance.  
And in response to his love, the passion of our lives is to be the same... to be faithful to him unto death.

This commitment to Jesus has radically changed the orientation of our lives... from a focus on self, to a focus that is on our God and Savior.

We no longer live to do what is right in our own eyes.  
We live to do what is right in his.  
We no longer live by the values of "Babylon," but rather of heaven.

Why does the Scripture repeatedly remind us to remember who God is and who we are because he has saved us?

Because the spirit of Babylon... is everywhere.  
Though we live in the world, we are not of the world.  
Why is which since his ascension, Jesus has drawn his people into local communities, which he calls the church.

We need each other.  
Living in the midst of Babylon is no easy thing.  
We need the influence of each other, not only to persevere, but to thrive in the place where God has asked us to live.



# Discipleship Essentials



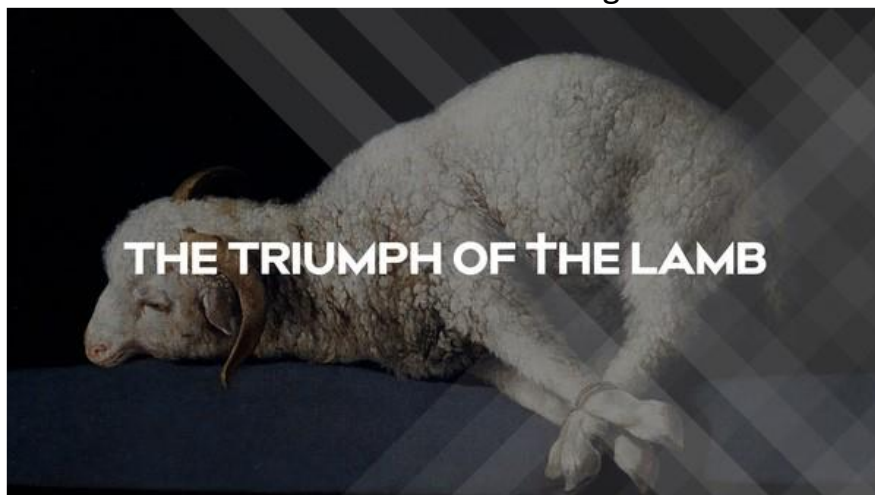
This is why DE groups are so important.

We need to spur one another on in the faith – to love God, to love others and to serve passionately.

We need the encouragement of one another to stand our ground, and to spend our lives for the cause of the gospel.

2. The power of the beast and the woman who rides on it can appear sometimes to be so powerful, so comprehensive that we may despair of how God can break in and rescue us.

Our passage reminds us that there is nothing and no one greater than our God. God has told us in advance... how this age will end.



The Lamb will triumph.

We need to hear the reason why that is given in v.14.  
“Because he is the Lord of lords and the King of kings.”

The kings of the earth will gather to war against God.  
The kings of the earth will draw upon the power of the anti-trinity as they do so.  
But the anti-trinity will utterly fail and be defeated, as will those who’ve joined with them.

Followers of Jesus, dear church, look who is with Jesus... when he triumphs.  
v.14 - ...and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.

Nothing and no one can separate us from the love of God.  
We are his and he is ours.

Babylon will fall.  
The new Jerusalem will come.  
This is our certain and unshakeable hope and confidence.

