

life group study guide

November 15, 2015

Revelation 17-18

Revelation 17 is full of powerful and confusing imagery. A prostitute, a seven headed beast, and a war against the Lamb. So what do we make of it? Discernment and interpretation are needed in this area, and we need to be careful to not to do so lightly. Yet we can still learn a lot about the sovereignty of God, the power of Christ, and the allure of sin from these passages.

Read 17:1-8

Read Matthew 13:22

The main focus of this section is a woman, the great prostitute. She is adorned in great wealth - expensive fabric and jewels, and is drunk on obscenity and immorality. The kings of the earth are drawn to her and commit adultery with her. She sits astride a great beast with multiple heads and horns. It is such a sight that John stands amazed at the spectacle - and is called out for it by the angel guiding him. He tells John that those whose name is not written in the book of life will be amazed at the appearance of the beast, who will die and be resurrected. The fact that John himself is in "complete amazement" speaks to the danger of the Prostitute and the Beast.

We see in Matthew 22 that many will be distracted from the Gospel by worry and the pursuit of wealth. The prostitute is the center of a force that is driven by hedonism and the "relentless pursuit of wealth" (to quote the ESV Study Bible).

Q: How is the warning in Matthew 13 similar to the imagery we see in Rev 17?

Q: What is so amazing about opulence and idolatry? What draws us to it?

Read 17:9-14

Read Math 16:18

The rulers of the earth hand over their power to the Beast, who goes to war against the Lamb, Jesus Christ. It is a futile effort, and Lamb, named Lord of Lords and King of Kings, defeats the army with his faithful and chosen at his side.

Q: How do you see the world that the goes to war against Christ? How is it similar and different to the times we live in now?

Q: How does the victory of the Lamb portrayed in verse 14 give us hope now? Does it change how we look at the present world and go about our day to day lives?

Read 17:15-18

Read Romans 13:1

After the lost battle, the beast and his kings turn on the prostitute, who is revealed to be the ruling city of the entire world, and kill her. And what's more is that they do it in order to fulfil the will of the Lord, who put the plans in their hearts.

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Q: What does Romans 13:1 tell us about those in authority? What implications does this have for modern events and events portrayed in Revelation?

Q: What does this teach about the sovereignty of God?

Q: Does the prostitute being a city and not an actual person change how you see the events in Rev 17?