

**BOOK OF REVELATION, WEEK 7**  
**CHAPTERS 14 AND 15**

*After the battle between the Dragon and the Woman moves from heaven to earth, John is given the striking image of the victorious Lamb standing on Mt. Zion, the ultimate sign of the eschatological end of God's reign on earth. This marks the true end, giving the Church confidence that what is about to unfold and be described is the end of things that God had planned from the very beginning. After the war has been fought between the devil and God's people on earth, God will vindicate His Church and the faithful in an act of final judgment, carried out without any suspense, but upon humanity according to the mark that they carry.*

**REVISITING THE WITNESSES OF THE DRAGON, THE TWO BEASTS**

The First beast copies the life of Jesus in many ways and is able to lead some astray because of his ability to mimic the power and authority of Christ. However, signs also abound for those who are attentive.

The second beast leads astray those who seek earthly power and wealth. They take on his mark through their actions.

Together, these represent two significant ways that people will be drawn away from God: Idolatry and Earthly Greed; the worship of other gods or self-worship.

While much interpretation has attempted to focus on recognizing who the beasts are, or what particular nations and leaders they represent, their actions, powers and ways of tempting people have played out throughout human history. There is, as Williamson stresses, a reality that the beasts are always present throughout human history, in different forms. but no matter how these have played out in history, the promise of Christ remains that the gates of Hell shall never prevail over the Church and the final end is assured, which is the victory of the Lamb and judgment of God that will befall the beast(s) in its followers.

Of final note is that Revelation describes those who worshipped the Dragon because they followed the beast. While they may not have explicitly known they were following the Dragon, in worshipping the beast--those who mimic the lamb, but truly act in defiance of the Lamb, or who seek earthly wealth and power over the things of heaven--these do in fact worship the Dragon.

**THE LAMB ON MT. ZION**

*APPEARANCES OF THE LAMB IN REVELATION:*

*5:6* The first appearance of the Lamb is when he is standing in the midst of the 24 elders. The Lamb is affirmed as Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

*6:1* The Lamb alone is worthy to break open the seals on the scroll, breaking open that which holds salvation from the world.

*7:9* After breaking open the seals, the Lamb stands at the throne with God.

*14:1* After the appearance of the Dragon and the two beasts, the Lamb appears on Mt. Zion, the mountain that is often the symbol of God's dwelling place on earth and fulfillment of the eschatological promises.

*17:14* A clear explanation is given that the Lamb, with those who belong to him, is the one who conquers the beasts and all who oppose God.

*19:7* The wedding feast of the Lamb begins.

*21:22* The Lamb is with God in the Temple of Jerusalem.

In the seal, we are given an image of the Holy Trinity: The 144,000 who have been sealed with his name and the name of His Father; the Seal also represents those who are sealed in the Holy Spirit.

The mentioning of those sealed at this at time emphasizes that everyone has received a seal, whether it is by the Seal of those belonging to the Lamb, or those with the seal and mark of the beast. For humanity, and the Church, there is no escaping the act of being sealed. One cannot attempt to play both sides, or remain on the fence indefinitely. It also responds to the early descriptions of those churches, or those in the Church, who had become tepid.

Placing this within the movement of the whole vision and history of salvation, a significant portion of the work that is happening through the events on earth, spread out over centuries and throughout history, is that people are being aligned on one side or another. We can connect this image to the call of the saints from under the throne when they previously asked God to take out His judgment and He responded that their number was not yet fulfilled. This is not simply a statement that there will be more martyrs sacrificed for the Church, but a recognition that the sides were still in flux; there was still time remaining for repentance and for those who had sinned or opposed God to repent. Now, as we will see in the outpouring of the cups (bowls) of wrath, people have made their choice and received the seal according to the one they follow.

### **THREE ANGELS**

*First Angel:* Proclaims salvation and the Gospel

*2nd Angel:* Calls for repentance

*3rd Angel:* Proclaims judgment for the inhabitants of the earth

### **WHAT SUSTAINS THE HOLY ONES**

What follows may be a disturbing image for some: a description of eternal fires and smoke rising from pyres that are fueled from the corpses of the inhabitants of the earth who followed the beast. It may sound as though they are taking joy and receiving sustenance from the vengeance of God's wrath. There are a few other options being conveyed:

Is 34:8-10 and 48:22 provides source for this imagery and the final judgment.

Victory of the Lamb is the hope that is sustaining.

The eternal nature of the flames indicates that this judgment is permanent. The outcome of the war is final and will not be undone.

Williamson further points through the division of the verses that this clause gives a three-fold response for Christians: faith, obedience to God's commandments, and perseverance.

Perhaps we also hear echoes of the letters to the 7 churches here.

There is also a divine justice playing out. Through the destruction of evil, those who persevered are promised an everlasting peace. Also, the Church Fathers describe how the destruction of what opposes God is an act of God's Mercy

### **THE GREAT HARVEST**

The harvest takes place using two common symbols for harvesting: grain which represents the nourishing and sustaining fruit of the earth; wine grapes which represent the harvest of suffering and the opponents of God. This image resonates a similar harvest described by **Joel 4:12-13**.

The distance of the wine given matches the dimensions of the land of Israel. The untranslated description (not converted into miles) is 1,600 stadia, which equals 40 \* 40, a more clear number representing fullness. All of the land outside of Jerusalem is filled.

This is the Second Death, the final judgment of the earth when there is no resurrection for those who are turned over to the winepress of God's wrath.

## **CHAPTER 15: THE COMING OF GOD'S WRATH**

With these plagues, the wrath of God is ended. These plagues are in fact, the first description of God's judgment, wrath, and fury.

The progression begun with the breaking open of the seals is brought to completion:

Consequences -- Remedial -- Punishment

It is noteworthy that the Church is described as the one who was victorious over the beast, the Lamb, though leading the army, was not the victor over the beast.

The image is further enhanced, recognizing that those who conquered the beast were now carrying harps, whereas before the 24 Elders held the harps. Here, we are given an expanding image of those who are drawn closer to the throne of God. Not only does the history of the Church on earth lead a greater and full number of those who will enjoy eternal life, but these members are also raised to a greater height than previously experienced.

### *OVERFLOWING OF GOD'S PRESENCE*

These 7 plagues brings the total number of plagues to 10, matching the number of plagues in Egypt. There is also direct reference to the Song of Moses (Ex. 15:1-18)

The effulgence of smoke in the temple relates directly to Ex 40:35 and 1 Kg 8:11 when the presence of God was so strong none could enter the Temple. We may see here the culmination in a gradual increase of the signs and strength of God's presence from the Son of Man coming on a cloud to all encompassing and filling every corner of the Temple.