

Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

Background:

Beasts and dragons and the like, oh my! John is utilizing symbolic language to speak of the emperors of Rome and their claim to being deities themselves. If one did not burn incense to the emperor (worship him) one could suffer greatly, even be put to death. In other words, the emperors believed themselves to have the final say over life and death. In Hebrew numerology, seven was perfect and therefore six was imperfection. To follow Caesar and their rule was to choose an infinitely imperfect path toward life (salvation). You could attempt to save the flesh but lose your soul.

Theology Connection:

John is making it clear, there is no compromise between the ways of Caesar and Christ. Caesar's reign is one of terror, whereas Christ's is the way of peace. While we must live in this world, we do not need to give into its values or its ways. Such a choice is destructive to our soul, even if we believe it will save our skin. Like Luther, we need to be prepared to take a stand if necessary.

Application:

We have all witnessed the slippery slope that we follow when we begin to compromise with devilish forces. We think we have appeased the voracious appetites of these forces only to be asked for more. Every compromise leads us further and further down a path that becomes harder to walk back. John is right to refer to it as a beast that will devour us and leave us soulless.

The Text: Revelations 13: 1-18

The dragon 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. 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. 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. 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?"

The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 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. 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. Whoever has ears, let them hear. "If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed."

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

Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. 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. And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. 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. 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. 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, 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.

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

ADULT

We recognize that compromise and negotiation are a part of life. Nonetheless, we need to be aware of what it is that we are unwilling to compromise, because without such a foundation that too can be sacrificed. To know what our core values and convictions might be and to stand for them no matter what is a task that requires us to look deeper into ourselves than we might normally do. What are your core uncompromising values and convictions?

YOUTH

Please read Revelations 13:1-18

Welcome to the monsters of Revelation 13!

There is so much description of the beasts. It's a combination of many animals put together. Seems like something out of a sci-fi movie and I find it hard to relate to.

I had to read this passage a few times to really try to understand and get a visual of what the author is describing. Something that stood out to me is, what does it mean for the beast to look like a lamb, but to speak like a dragon?

Let us pray:

Dear God, we pray that you will open the eyes of my understanding to the deeper truths contained in your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

CHILDREN'S

Have you heard of the book of the Bible called Revelation? The book of Revelation is all about God revealing things to us. When you gift something to someone, they reveal the gift when it is time. God gave us the book of Revelation because He had something that He wanted to show us. So, God had something to reveal to people, and it had something to do with the end of the world. It is a scary thought to imagine the world coming to an end, isn't it? There are lots of things that might frighten us in life, but who should we turn to when we are feeling this way? That's right, God! God sees us. He sees how we worship, the things we care about, and how we take care of one another. He wants us to live in a way that honors Him and follows His instructions in the Bible. You may think God is too big or busy to notice you, but He is not! We are all His children, and He loves us all the same.

Think:

1. Is there something in your life that brings you fear or anxiety? How can you turn to God with these things?
2. In what ways does God bring you comfort?
3. In what ways can you show God's comfort to others?

Pray:

Dear Lord,

Thank You for promising us a place of love and peace with You in heaven. Please help us to turn to You in our times of need. Amen.