

The New Testament Church
Last Things #4 – Marked by Christ
Pastor Paul Jehle – October 17, 2021

I The Doctrine of Last Things – Eschatology

A. The Last Days began with Jesus' ascension

1. We cannot discern passages on “last days” without Christ’s judgment in 70 AD
2. *Last Things* involve the preparation of the Church for maturity – not a rescue mission
1. Two extremes to avoid - obsession – *avoid responsibility*; avoidance – *ignore accountability*

B. Our Church position – focus on occupying until He comes, not taking a position on how

1. He will return in bodily form; be prepared if He comes today or occupy until He returns
2. The Return of Christ is not a rescue mission; it is the culmination of the maturity of the Church in birthing a measure of the Kingdom on earth
3. The foundation for understanding prophecy is how OT predictions were fulfilled in the NT and 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem (Jew) and applied today (Gentiles)

II The Book of Revelation – Revelation 1:1-8

A. How do we read such a book?

1. It is *apocalyptic, prophetic and an epistle* – symbolic, figurative and metaphoric language
2. Is it *past? Present? Future?* Or a combination of all three?
3. John wrote Revelation on the Isle of Patmos as a political prisoner – probably before 70 AD
4. The book must be interpreted in the context of the 1st Century – “near at hand”

B. The Mark of Christ – Revelation 9:4 – *the seal of God on their foreheads*

1. The seal or mark is not physical, it is spiritual – a devotion to Christ’s Kingdom that involves your passion (heart), thoughts (forehead or mind) and deeds (hand)
2. 2nd Timothy 2:19 - ... *the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: the Lord knows those who are His, and let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity*
 - a. The kingdom net is going to draw all kinds of people in – God knows who are His
 - b. We must be careful not to be the final judge on who is His and who is not!
3. Ephesians 1:13 – *after you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*
 - a. When you are converted, God “seals or marks” us – all persecution is limited by God
 - b. It might shock us who will turn away, and who will come out of the shadows to join!

C. The Mark of the Beast – Revelation 13

1. Who are the beasts? (the sea, and the land) – state and church worshipped (system)
 - a. Beast of the sea – humanity – the State or Civil Government
 - b. Beast of the earth – worship (like a lamb, but dragon) – the false church
2. Nero as the Beast or Anti-Christ of Revelation
 - a. Revelation 13:3 – head wounded (Nero-Rome) but revived later under Vespasian/Titus
 - b. Revelation 13:5-7 – persecuting in 64 AD, until he committed suicide in 68 – 42 months
 - c. Revelation 13:10 – five kings fallen, one is (Nero)...
 - d. Revelation 13:17-18 – the number/name of a man, the number 666 (ancient alphabets)
 1. Number in Greek – 1005; but John had to conceal it...; in Hebrew – 666
 2. When the Bible was copied into Latin, the number was given as 616 – but in Latin the number of Nero’s name (Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus) was 666.
 - e. Revelation 13:16-17 – the “mark” on the forehead and hand (identity and power)
 1. The coin of Nero recently found in Mt. Zion with his portrait as the “son of god”
 2. To enter a market gate, you had to pledge allegiance to Rome (Caesar or Nero)
 3. Then ashes placed on right hand and forehead to indicate your worship

As we face uncertain days and increased pressure, let us focus on the fact that we are His – marked!