

RAINBOW CITY

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



GROW GUIDE

Week of April 30, 2017

Get a filled-in version and listen to the audio of the sermon at rbcfumc.org/sermons.
The Grow Guide is available at noon Sunday; sermon audio available by Tuesday at 8am.

God's Dream Will Come True
Sermon 11 of 11 in *The Roots of Redemption*

SERMON NOTES

Revelation 5:1-14
Rev. Dr. R. Brandon Harris

Eschatology means "talk about 'the end'"

Apocalyptic means "being uncovered"

The one who is worshiped in heaven and the end of days is not a mighty warrior king; it is a slaughtered
lamb.

Two consistencies in biblical apocalyptic texts

1. Some powers in opposition to God's reign will not go quietly.
2. God will sustain his people through those trials and will deal with those powers who stand against him and his faithful.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mon. 5/1/2017 Revelation 4 *John's first glimpse of heaven*

In John's first vision of heaven he sees a myriad of creatures surrounding the throne of the Almighty. These creatures are wonderful, fearsome, and glorious all at the same time. The description of the throne room is mysterious, but clearly intended to convey magnificence. All the "elders" (the biggest deals of all) are seen to be casting their crowns at the feet of the one sitting on the throne and declaring that he alone is worthy to receive the praise of all creation.

Tues. 5/2/2017 Revelation 7:9-17 *The multitude from every nation*

John witnesses a great multitude of white-robed individuals gathered before the throne of God—so many that he couldn't count! He asks one of the elders who these people are, and the elder responds that they are those who have come through the great ordeal. The "great ordeal" is a reference to the persecution that Jesus-followers have endured as they sought to live out lives of faithfulness. John sees that they are rewarded for their faithfulness: "They will hunger and thirst no more...and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Wed. 5/3/2017 Revelation 9:12-21 *A vision of judgment*

After witnessing the saints, John is shown a vision of judgment. It is not sugar-coated. Judgment is difficult and often painful for those who must endure it, but judgment is not the same as condemnation. Even in the midst of the judgment of all humankind there is opportunity to repent for those who will hear the judgment of God as righteous (vv. 20-21), yet tragically many will persist in their sin.

Thurs. 5/4/2017 Revelation 11:15-19 *A vision of judgment's completion in the reign of God*

The trajectory of judgment is made plain: "rewarding [God's] servants...and destroying those who destroy the earth" (v. 18). The theme of creation's goodness that began the bible is brought back into focus through its redemption in the reign of God. Those who destroy the earth and wreak havoc on its goodness cannot inhabit it any longer. Note that the reign of God is fulfilled on earth and is not in some far away Neverland-type heaven.

Fri. 5/5/2017 Revelation 18:1-24 *The final end of the big deals and their domination systems*

In Revelation, "Babylon" is a code word for Rome, but in reading the text do not get hung up on particular nation-states. Both of these empires represent the domination systems made familiar by Pharaoh's Egypt. The excesses of such systems (vv. 7, 9, 11-14, 16, 19) come only by the marginalization and exploitation of the "least of these." It's worth reading Mt 25:31-46, Jesus' little apocalypse, alongside Rev. 18. There Jesus decries the exploitative patterns of big deals who ruin the lives of "the least of these." Babylon and all it represents must come to an end in order for God's reign to be completed.

Sat. 5/6/2017 Revelation 19:1-10 *The marriage feast*

The partner people, God's covenant people, God's beloved people, are finally wed to the one who loves them with an everlasting love. They have given themselves to God's ways of manna and mercy and have been made ready through God's own mercy.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Download this week's prayer list from <http://tinyurl.com/prayer-2017-04-26>
