

SMALL GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

Sunday November 28th, 2010

“The Lamb, the Praying Church, and the Unfolding of History”

Rev. 6:1-17; 8:1-5 (the 7 Seals)

Pastor Brian Buhler

Dear brothers and sisters,

Just an encouragement - work hard at connecting the text at hand with John's original intention for his 7 congregations. We must always be asking ourselves, “How did these original Christians in Asia Minor, under Roman rule, hear these words and interpret them?” This will keep us from reading something into the text that's not supposed to be there. We'll never get it completely right, and we'll make mistakes along the way, but better to try and fail, than to keep this great book under lock and key. Hold the disagreements loosely. Hold on to one another tightly. Interpret the mysterious passages in the light of the clear passages. Have fun!

1. The four living creatures are given a dominant role in the first 4 seals. Who are they summoning? Who's given them the authority to act in this way?
2. As you read through verses 1-8, how would the 7 churches interpret the 4 horsemen of the apocalypse? Would they have viewed these events as something that would happen way into the future, or in their own lifetime? Or both? Why?
3. It is my personal opinion that these 4 horsemen have been galloping through the world for the last 2000 years and will be stopped only by the second advent of Jesus. Are there any good grounds for this interpretation? Others believe that these 4 horsemen are still coming. We haven't seen them yet because their time to be revealed is during the 7 year tribulation. Are there any good grounds for believing this interpretation? If so, what immediate value would this be for the 7 churches? For the last 2000 years of church history?
4. What does the 5th seal (vs. 9-11) tell us about the dead in Christ? What are they doing? Why is this significant? Or not? What event will end the “completion” of martyrs? As it turns out, the “little longer” period of waiting has already been 2000 years. Peter said something very similar, when he told his brothers and sisters that their suffering would only last “a little while longer”. How do you explain this?
5. How do you interpret the 6th seal? Have the judgments, thus far, produced repentance?
6. What is the significance of the “silence in heaven” in the 7th seal (8:1-5). I'm not trying to be cheeky, but what are the Christians still doing on the earth if the church has already been raptured? How would the 7 congregations interpret this passage? What would it communicate about the power and privilege of prayer?
7. How does this passage speak to us about the place of prayer in our lives, in our church? Is there a paradigm shift needed in the North American church when it comes to prayer? What would that shift look like?

A good time to pray.

Bless you,
Brian