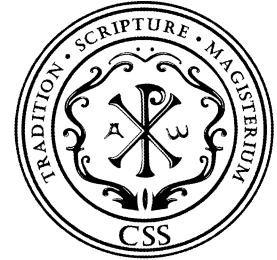


## Lesson 13 . . . Heavenly Zion and Fallen Babylon

# Revelation

---



### **Notes from the Podium**

By Fr. Matthew Kauth

**These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson. Please use as an aid to help document the main message of the lecture.**

### **Revelation 14:1-20**

- I. Vs.1: an image of the 144,000 standing with the Lamb on Mt. Zion
  - A. Contrasting Armies:
    - 1. Satanic Army:
      - a. The Dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns
      - b. Beasts coming out of the land and sea
      - c. Blasphemies
      - d. The Whore of Babylon
    - 2. The Lamb's Army
      - a. A Woman
      - b. A Child
      - c. Martyrs
      - d. Chaste virgins
      - e. Harp players
      - f. A Lamb
    - 3. This contrast emphasizes that God conquers the mighty from their thrones by raising up the lowly – He takes the weak and despised of this world and shames the wise.
    - 4. God always uses the small
  - B. John sees the *true* Lamb again
  - C. The 144,000
    - 1. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes.
    - 2. Described as chaste virgins
      - a. Catholicism only place for virgins, fundamentally there is no real theology for Our Lady outside of Catholicism.
      - b. St. Paul describes all Christians, the Church, as a virgin or chaste bride, like Our Lady Eph 5:25-27
    - 3. Salvation history always discussed Israel in terms of the marriage that was to take place between God and His people
      - a. Israel referred to as a harlot, in terms of being unfaithful and given over to idolatry. (Idolatry = Harlotry)
      - b. Contrast the Harlot to these ones (the 144,000) who are faithful, like chaste virgins
    - 4. Chaste is understood here in terms of:
      - a. The genuineness of consecrated life, those who dedicate themselves completely to Christ.
      - b. Those who are pure of heart, like children.
    - 5. Like Children
      - a. They had the name of their Father on their forehead – implying that they are children.
      - b. Children implies innocence, receptivity, and weakness
      - c. Hans Urs von Balthasar – “Everywhere outside of Christianity the child is always the first to be sacrificed” They are first because they are weak.

## Notes from the Podium (cont)

- d. When one grows older and desires to repudiate his weakness, he takes it out on the child
  - e. Christ is the *eternal son* of the Father and therefore He perfectly manifests childhood in human form.
  - f. The Father, when speaking in the New Testament says, “This is my beloved son”
  - g. Christ is “eternally begotten of the Father”
  6. An Army of Children
    - a. Led by a Lamb that never becomes a Ram
    - b. The little ones, the 144,000, follow the Lamb wherever He goes, to death and then to life.
    - c. You can almost see them dressed in armor that is too big for them. –Like David before he fought Goliath.
    - d. It is the war against the Holy Innocents: The first thing that was manifested by that Dragon (Herod and the Herodian Dynasty) when the dragon was furious and wanted to attack the offspring of the woman – the death of the infants – the Holy Innocents.
    - e. Recall Gen. – “I will put enmity between your seed and hers.” It is all about children.
    - f. But not about childishness, rather the innocence and receptivity of childhood
- II. It’s all about children:
- A. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Doctor of the Spiritual Child
    1. No *childish girl*
    2. Grew out of her 1<sup>st</sup> childhood into a 2<sup>nd</sup>, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> maintaining it’s innocence, purity, and receptivity but gaining wisdom. (Recall Matt 10:16, “...be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”)
  - B. We *grow-up* into this childhood, in terms of our intelligence, our ability to know, and our ability to will, but we remain ever the children of the Father.
  - C. Our Lord gave us His Mother, the Mother of the Church to whom we must be humble before– we are again reminded that we are children
  - D. Joan of Arc – “The victory of France was due to God alone and to prove it, He armed the arm of a child” -Charles Péguy
  - E. St. Agnes – her 12-year-old wrists too small for the chains, yet she conquered, singing a new song (A new song was always struck when victory was won to commemorate the battle).
  - F. All of the Innocents – the small children. The Church venerates these children as martyrs; they are the first buds of the Church killed by the frost of persecution; they died not only for Christ, but in his stead (St. Aug., "Sermo 10us de sanctis").
- III. “Who can stand on that great and terrible day at the coming of the wrath of God?” – Mal 3.
- A. This is the very same Old Testament passage that is coupled with the Gospel reading, Luke 2:22-40, at the Feast of the Presentation of Lord.
  - B. Note the image: When the day is here when the Son of God comes to the temple, this day is wrath, and He is just a baby?
  - C. But in *that* Baby – all the power of God and yet all the wisdom, innocence, and simplicity of the pure, all in the infant Christ, the Child, the Son of God.
- IV. “Amomos”
- A. In the Old Testament, the lamb had to be without blemish, pure, simple, unspotted.
  - B. Christ is called “The Amomos” 1 Pet 1:19, Heb 9
- V. Battle
- A. This is a fight between the children of God and those who would not be children of God.
  - B. Throughout Scripture there is this constant *David and Goliath* theme.
    1. David cannot even put on the armor of Saul
    2. Jericho
    3. Noah against all the world
    4. Abraham, against his own age

## Notes from the Podium (cont)

5. Joseph, against all of Egypt
  6. Moses, against all of Egypt
  7. The Maccabees, against the Selucids
  - C. If God is going to allow the dragon to ravage the small and innocent and if that is considered a victory then something has to change with death.
  - D. Warlike themes – Deut. Those who fought in the Holy Wars had to abstain from relations, they had to keep themselves pure.
    1. Not because relations were evil but as a way of dedicating oneself to God.
    2. So this image of those (the 144,000) not defiling themselves is because they are in battle.
      - a. They are given over to one purpose – following the Lamb wherever He goes.
      - b. They have been redeemed by God as the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits for God and the Lamb.
- VI. Another Angel
- A. Mid-heaven – so that everyone will hear
  - B. Eternal Gospel proclaimed to those who dwell on Earth, to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.
  - C. “Fear God and Give Him Glory!”
    1. This follows right from the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment, “I am the Lord your God”
    2. A statement of existence, of being
    3. As if to say, “I am the Lord your God...” *and you are not.*
    4. First stage of Wisdom, the growing wisdom of a child, understanding that “I am not God”
    5. First movement of fear of the Lord that can then grow into the genuine reverential fear that stands before God and adores.
- VII. The Hour of His Judgement
- A. 2<sup>nd</sup> Angel: “Fallen, Fallen is Babylon the Great, she who made all nations drink the wine of her impure passions”
  - B. 3<sup>rd</sup> Angel: “If anyone worships the beast or it’s image and receives it’s mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also shall drink the wine of God’s wrath poured unmixed into the cup of His anger. He shall be tortured with fire and sulfur (brimstone).
    1. “...The cup of His anger.” – Recall, “Father if it be possible that this cup should pass from me, not as I will but as you will.”
    2. What is this “cup” that He speaks of in the garden?
  - C. “They have no rest”
    1. A parody on the 4 living creatures that have no rest worshipping day and night.
    2. But these are tormented day and night.
  - D. Here again is the call for the endurance of the Saints
    1. Keeping the commandments
    2. Maintaining faith in Jesus
- VIII. “Blessed are the dead...”
- A. Why does evil prevail? Evil seems to do whatever it wants and the faithful of God always get trampled upon.
    1. This is the great secret, the secret of Calvary
      - a. When the Lamb is trampled upon, when the Lamb drinks the cup of the wrath that was ours (the cup of which he warned James and John they would not be able to drink), it is victory.
      - b. Death is swallowed up.
    2. St. Paul says, “Where is your sting, death?”
    3. Other Saints: “Don’t stop them if they want to kill me”, “Don’t listen to me if I say anything other than what I say now”
  - B. Previously, to be “blessed” only applied to the gods because they did not die.
  - C. Now “Blessed” is being applied to the innocents, to those with the mark of their Father on their forehead.

## Notes from the Podium (cont)

1. Why? –Not because they don't die but because they do.
  2. He has made death the very possibility of Life
    - a. Even as a child is ravaged by a dragon, the child is gaining eternal life.
    - b. This is how He swallowed up death and this is how evil is defeated and cannot triumph.
- D. Ultimately evil's efforts are futile, only noise.
1. But you must have eyes to see this. When we see the innocence betrayed in our Lord, in our children now, when the just are slain, without eyes that can see the truth you will see only the facade. But it is not real, only noise.
  2. This is why He says "endurance", we must endure and keep the commandments and the faith we have in Christ.
- E. Christ came back from the dead and is the only one who can tell us what happens on the other side.
1. The dead are blessed indeed. Blessed as in the beatitudes where everything is reversed.
  2. This is the path to blessedness, the Royal Road and the King is on it. That is the direction He goes.
  3. It is narrow and few find it because who wants to go in *that* direction. All natural inclinations rebel against following.
  4. But Grace perfects and elevates natures above and beyond its own capacities. Hence the need to prepare for the great and terrible day when we will be asked to endure:
    - a. Discipline
    - b. Practice of the virtues
- IX. "...That they may rest from their labors and their deeds follow them."
- A. They rest in the rest of God.
1. This is what is meant by the Sabbath.
  2. A perpetual worship of the Lord
  3. Not asleep
  4. A genuine joy and rest of contemplation, when your intellect finally sees what it has been searching for, God, face to face. A vision of His Glory.
  5. No more questions; no more searching.
- B. "...Their deeds follow them."
- C. Deeds do not outlive people in this world
1. People are always wanting to leave their mark, leave their name on things
  2. Consider here the debate among Christians regarding "works"
    - a. "not those who say 'Lord, Lord', but those who do the will of my Father"
    - b. Works have relevance
    - c. We are body *and* soul – we manifest our love for Christ and our faith in virtue of the flesh. Faith is incarnate, just as our Lord is.
    - d. When things are done in Christ they have eternal consequences, eternal ramifications, *eternal life*.
      - i. The woman comes to Jesus and breaks the oil over Him.
      - ii. Judas protests – typical of those who have need to calm their own conscience.
      - iii. Christ says, "This will be remembered forever", this act of generosity.
    - e. The smallest act done with and by the power of Christ, working with His Grace, is eternal. (Example, a needed smile)
    - f. These deeds have eternal merit when they are done in Christ. Eternal!
    - g. Just as the very acts of Christ always exist.
      - i. How could we penetrate the Crucifixion at mass when it happened so long ago" – Because the acts of the God-Man are eternal acts.
      - ii. So are ours when they are in Christ – they take on an eternal character.
- X. The Harvest

## Notes from the Podium (cont)

- A. Image from the Gospel: Our Lord said that the weeds were to grow with the wheat and at the end the angels would separate them.
  - 1. Wheat gathered to the barn
  - 2. Weeds thrown into the fire.
- B. Image from the Old Testament: The Vine as Israel, “*Visit us this vine your right hand has planted....*”
  - 1. Our Lord changes this when he says, “I am the vine...”
  - 2. Israel now has to be grafted to Him to have life.
- C. Christ appears here in the image of a farmer (not the grim reaper, which is a parody of Christ). Catch the irony:
  - 1. There is a big battle going on and here is Christ coming out like a farmer to gather in His grapes.
  - 2. Meanwhile the angels are gathering the “weeds” and their experience of the “reaper” is agony.
  - 3. The experience of the grapes: “Ah, we are going home.”
  - 4. One is like the winepress of God’s wrath and the other is like the making of wine for the precious blood.
  - 5. The difference isn’t in the action, but in the individual.
  - 6. The same sun has very different effects on wax and mud.
  - 7. The same love of God, justice of God, the very same beauty, goodness, innocence, and simplicity of God, the very same harvester, is experienced very differently depending upon our response to that Grace.
- D. “...and the winepress was trodden outside the city...” as was the crucifixion
- E. “...blood flowed one thousand six hundred stadia.” 20 miles from the wine press.
  - 1. The abundance of that comes forth from Calvary covering the whole Earth.
  - 2. The difference is in the soul that can or cannot receive it.