



river west church

Living Above the Lie

Revelation 13
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God Has Something Better For You

Something is wrong with our world, desperately wrong. Everybody knows it. Sometimes we see this clearly. Other times, on sunny days when everything is clicking, we may briefly forget. But it's never long before we are reminded once again. Often, we are reminded by the news headlines. Sadly, we are also reminded by the sins and hurts we experience in our own lives.

God reminds us too. He does this in the Bible. The Book of Revelation is a prime example of this. In Revelation we are given extreme pictures of the brokenness and evil of our world. God shows us these things in His Word for a reason. It's a "reality check" for us. God wants us to see things as they really are. So He shows us. But as He shows us these things He does also show us something more. He shows us His ultimate purpose and plan. He shows us what He Himself has done to redeem this painful situation. He gives us hope.

This is one of the most important lessons of the Book of Revelation. The intense focus on what is wrong in our world only sets the stage. The rest of the story is the main event. Here is a message that you need to hear and believe with all your heart; God has something better for you. It's true! It's true in terms of the big picture. You can read Revelation and see the ultimate picture of what God has prepared for those whose lives belong to Christ through faith. It's awesome! But it's not just about the future. It's about the present too – right here and right now.

Asking Questions in Revelation 13

Revelation 13 is a chapter that graphically portrays the evil in our world. The themes in this chapter are legendary; the beast from the sea, the beast from the land and the number of the beast – 666. People have exerted a lot of time and effort to figure out who the beast might be, what the number means and how this number might be used to control people.

These are legitimate questions. But there are other questions that are equally important for us to consider. What is the lie that the beast is promoting? Why are people willing to buy into this lie? What does this teach us about the workings of evil in our world and in the human heart? And most importantly, how can we "live above the lie?"

Boldly Living in the Truth of the Gospel

Ultimately, the Book of Revelation isn't just about identifying the players in the end time drama. The power of Revelation is that it reveals the truth about God, our world, our own lives and what it means to live by faith in Christ right in the midst of our fallen evil world. When we look at the "flow" of the Book of Revelation, we see a chapter that depicts evil in extreme form (chapter 13) followed by a chapter describing the followers of Christ in the victory of their faith (chapter 14). The point is, not everyone buys into the lie. Not everyone worships the beast. No way!

The Gospel changes everything. The truth of Christ sets us free from the lie. Christians have an entirely different view of things. We live from a different truth, for a higher purpose. We refuse to define our lives

by the values of a world that has forgotten the truth of God and deified human experience instead. We know that God has something far better for us. This is our joyful calling as believers in Christ. May the Lord help us to live it out each and every day!