

Reformation Sunday  
“The eternal Gospel to proclaim!” Revelation 14:6-8  
October 27, 2024  
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this Reformation Sunday is from our first reading in Revelation 14:6-8.

**“6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— 7 saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” 8 And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”**

So far the text...

“Fear God and give glory to Him”, another angel said with a loud voice, a messenger preached to those who dwell on the earth. The message was for everyone...every tribe, tongue, and people.

For the message comes from heaven, from God Himself, the Creator of heaven and earth. God alone must be worshipped, honored and glorified. No one can supplant God’s authority and position and speak as if one was a god.

But that is what we see happening in chapter 13 with the imagery that St. John describes. That imagery details of the beast who speak blasphemies and were allowed to make war against the saints, who has been given power by the dragon, Satan himself.

**“7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”**

This beast, the Antichrist, seeks the worship of all the people. And all fall to his deceptions instead of worshipping the one True God, the Lamb who was slain since the foundation of the world, are most sadly lost and condemned. Their names are not found in the Book of Life.

After hearing of such evil and power of the beast in chapter 13, we are comforted with the beautiful imagery of chapter 14 of Revelation. We hear the glorious pronouncement that Babylon is fallen! The deception and delusion of the Antichrist is revealed and unmasked. How? By the proclaiming of the eternal Gospel.

“Soli Deo gloria: Glory to God alone” – not to the Antichrist was one of the 5 solas of the Reformation in 1517. No church ruler could claim the seat of authority and be worshipped as a god. No church ruler could claim that his word was divine and must be obeyed.

“Fear God alone” - spoke another messenger – spoke Martin Luther. Honor God alone. Give glory to God alone! And one gives glory to God alone by proclaiming God’s Word of the eternal Gospel! What is that Gospel? Oh, we heard it so clearly in our epistle reading from Romans 3, didn’t we?

**“21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”**

The Gospel is apart from the law, witnessed by Moses and all the prophets, and another angel, another messenger – Martin Luther. For Martin Luther found no teaching in the books of Moses and the prophets that told men that they were saved by their own righteousness, their own works...or that they could pay for their entrance into heaven with an indulgence!

No! Martin Luther read God’s Word and found that all glory must be given to God because He alone is the author of our salvation. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Our righteousness is as filthy rags! But, the eternal Gospel spoken by Moses and the prophets reveals to us a righteousness that is apart from the law. God’s righteousness! And this righteousness is given through faith to all and on all who believe!

“Sola fide: Faith alone”. The gift of faith comes by the power of the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit spoke through His messengers the glorious Gospel of salvation in Jesus and 3000 people believed and were baptized. The New Testament church was born. Yet, the glorious eternal Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and risen for the sins of the world became hidden by the church in the ages to come.

Instead of worshipping God, the saints were worshipped. Instead of salvation through the work of Jesus alone – “Solus Christus: Christ alone”, an elaborate system of works righteousness, an deception by the Antichrist, was proclaimed – such as pilgrimages, adoration of the relics, treasury of the merits of the saints, purgatory, and indulgences.

Against such a great deception, Martin Luther took a stand. He took a stand at the Diet of Worms in 1521 “Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me.” Yes, Luther took comfort from our Psalm 46 that we heard today. **“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”** It is by “grace alone: Sola gratia” that a man is saved. He looked to God’s Word alone, not the word of sinful man sat in the church on the throne and spoke as if he were god. No! – “Sola scriptura: Scripture alone”.

**“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”**

And thanks be to God that this message of salvation continues to echo in the proclamation of the Gospel through other messengers – another angel, and another angel. All God’s people – pastors and laymen are God’s messengers of His eternal gospel!

And all who believe this Gospel do not worship the beast.

**“12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”**

The saints – washed of their sins through Holy Baptism, given the righteousness of Christ, hold on to and keep the Word of God with patience in the face of much ungodly opposition and deception. For through God’s Word and Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, God’s people are strengthened and keep the faith in Jesus!

“This is My body.” Luther wrote on the table in Marburg in 1529 as he argued with Zwingli. God’s Word says “is” and not represent. So it must be is. Jesus body is truly present in with and under the bread. And His blood is in with and under the wine for the

forgiveness of sins. And this is the patience of the saints – receiving strength through this sacrament – often until God takes one to his or her eternal rest. So we heard these beautiful words last week. And we hear them again.

**13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ”**

**“Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”**

There is no purgatory. For those who die in the Lord are blessed eternally, eternally resting from their labors. They need no merits of the saints. For they have trusted in the merit of Jesus – His righteousness. The only merit that saves. And the lives of the believers, the saints reflected this thanksgiving by the works that attested to their faith. They were not saved by their works, but only by the work of Jesus on the cross – the eternal Gospel. All glory to God! Soli Deo gloria. Blessed Reformation Day!

Amen.

**“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**