

Tales of the End: A Study of the Book of Revelation

Session 13: The Last Word On Politics

Scripture: Revelation 12-14

The Politics of Jesus

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ is more **political** than we imagine, but in a way we never guess.
- The Kingdom of God is a political **metaphor** and is key to understanding the Gospel.
- The “Kingdom” insists that everything and everyone is under the **rule** of God.
- The Kingdom of God invites misunderstanding because of **HOW** we understand politics.
- Politics – the exercise of **power**.
- Earthly Politics: Manipulation of **force** (militarism)
- Earthly Politics: Manipulation of words (propaganda)
- We assume Kingdom **politics** must be like this.
- Jesus announces the presence of the Kingdom of God (Political)
- Yet, **Jesus** does not practice earthy Politics (Means)
- Rejects Satan’s offer.
- Rebukes **James** and John
- Orders Peter to put away the sword.
- Dies on a cross
- Christians often miss the point and power of Kingdom Politics.
- Jesus politics – less pretentious and little immediate **award**.
- All politics Involve 2 elements:
 1. The use of ruling **power**.
 2. The means by which power is used.
- 2 Temptations towards Christians and Politics.
 1. Control the political dimensions of the kingdom by using earthy **politics** (force). (End justifies the means)
 2. To give **up** the politics of the Kingdom and simply exist in our fellowship – abandoning the world.
- Temptation is greater when politics of Jesus have been **bullied** by the politicians of Rome (State/world)
- Revelation enables the Christian community to maintain all the political dimensions of the kingdom while resisting all the political **demons**.

The Woman

- Rev. 12 begins with an imaginative retelling of the Nativity Story.
- It is response to the establishment of God’s **Kingdom**.

- Rev. 12 introduces us to a new image of **Mary**, the mother of Jesus.
- “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah,
- and he will **reign** forever and ever.”
- As lovely as this woman is, an equally as ugly being then appears: A **Dragon**.
- Woman and Dragon
- The Limits of the best and **worse** we can imagine.
- Woman gives birth.
- At the last moment, the **child** is rescued from the Dragon.
- This child is the one who will **rule** the world.
- Consequence of the birth: **War** spreads out over the heavens.
- Battle between Michael and the Dragon.

The Dragon

- Jesus’ birth motivates more than wonder, it also motivates **evil** (Herod, Pilate, Judas)
- We tend to overestimate the politics of Rome (World) and underestimate the politics of **Grace** (Jesus)
- In this telling, John makes explicit what is implicit in the **Gospels**.
- The Nativity calls us into the world in praise and **Kingdom** Living.
- The earth also defeats the dragon
- The failed dragon contemplates his failures and looks for **help**.