

# Alton Baptist Church e-Service 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## Truth is the first casualty in war

### Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You that whether we are in the church building together or thinking about You alone, You are with us and hear our prayers.

Help us to spend time each day singing your praises, reading and contemplating Your Word, praying for one another and those issues You bring to our attention. Amen

**Song:** We are here to praise You –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hs3I7Xi8Tds>

**Prayers** - In your own words just praise and thank the Lord, for who He is, for what He is, for what He has done. Confess your need of forgiveness.

**Song:** We are standing on holy ground –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLCUq6yTezs>

### Prayers of Praise, Thanks and Intercession

Pray as you feel led. Finish with the Lord's Prayer.

### Some thoughts:

Soon after God had created the heavens and the earth and declared them very good – Satan entered the scene with the first lie.

**Reading:** Genesis 3:1-5 *The Fall* – **The first Lie**

**3** Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

**2** The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

**4** "**You will not surely die,**" the serpent said to the woman. **5** "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

There is no surprise here that Satan should be the first liar, as Jesus describes him thus.

He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he **lies**, he speaks his native language, for he is a **liar** and the **father of lies**. John 8:44

To understand God, Jesus and the bible it is essential that you understand that there is a war in progress between God and Satan. It is documented in the bible, beginning in Genesis 3, and ending on VE day (Victory on earth) in Revelation 20.

**Reading:** Revelation 20:7-10 *Satan's Doom*

<sup>7</sup>When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup>and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. <sup>9</sup>They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

<sup>10</sup>And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

In our day, we are part-way between the beginning and the end. Probably nearer the end, with the biggest battles still to come.

The book of Revelation starts with a blessing.

<sup>3</sup>Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. Rev 1:3

So it is a good idea to read Revelation, even if it is hard to understand. One topic many have heard of, is the coming of the four horsemen of the apocalypse. We are going to consider the first one.

**Reading:** Revelation 5:1-14, *The scroll and the lamb*

<sup>5</sup>Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup>And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" <sup>3</sup>But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open

the scroll or even look inside it. <sup>4</sup> I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. <sup>5</sup> Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

<sup>6</sup> Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. <sup>8</sup> And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
because you were slain,  
and with your blood you purchased for God  
persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

<sup>10</sup> You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,  
and they will reign on the earth."

<sup>11</sup> Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. <sup>12</sup> In a loud voice they were saying:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength  
and honour and glory and praise!"

<sup>13</sup> Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
be praise and honour and glory and power,  
for ever and ever!"

<sup>14</sup> The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

It is widely accepted that Jesus is the Lamb of God. So it is Jesus who opens the seals of the scroll. The scroll describes the beginnings of the judgements of God.

**Song:** Worthy, O worthy are you lord. -

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQSeoO-\\_Xxk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQSeoO-_Xxk)

**Reading:** Revelation 6:1-2 *The seals – Rider on a white horse*

6 I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, “Come!” <sup>2</sup> I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

There are two main theories as to who is the rider on the white horse. We can choose between Jesus and the antichrist. Some might think Jesus, because he is described as a rider on a white horse later in Revelation.

Reading: Revelation 19:11-16

<sup>11</sup> I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called **Faithful and True**. With justice he judges and wages war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. <sup>13</sup> He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the **Word of God**. <sup>14</sup> The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. <sup>15</sup> Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron sceptre.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**

The rider in Revelation 19 is undoubtedly Jesus. He is called Faithful and True, His name is the Word of God, He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The first rider (of the Apocalypse) is described in a sealed scroll opened by Jesus, the Lamb of God. The rider is called out by a living creature below Jesus in status. The rider is given a crown and rides out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

Many believe this to be a false Christ (possibly the antichrist) sent out to deceive and conquer the nations.

So what?

We live in time when it is very difficult to determine the truth. Most nations seem to be very divided in what they believe to be true. If we know our bibles we should expect this, for when asked about signs of the end of the age, Jesus answered:

<sup>4</sup>“Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.” Matt 24:4-5

So today’s message is simple –  
Do not believe everything you hear.  
Don’t be naïve.  
Expect to be deceived –  
especially by those who seek to control you.

Paul expresses this well in his advice in Romans.

<sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

And Jesus said:

<sup>31</sup> ....“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup> Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32

**Song:** Turn your eyes upon Jesus -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTZtKoAwf0U>

### **Grace**

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Love of God,  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us now and always.

AMEN

Robin