**Beasts from the Sea and a Lamb on the Throne
*(with a focus on the images in St Barnabas’ Sanctuary)***

**Advent Talk Part 2 : Deacon Sue Gillingham
13 December 2023 7.00 pm**

**Outline of Talk**

1. **Beasts in earlier Apocalyptic Writings: What and Why? (Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 7)**
2. **Beasts in Revelation: What and Why? (Revelation 13 and 4)**
3. **Why Jesus as the Lamb? (Revelation 5)**
4. **Beasts, the Lamb, and Christ in Glory:**

***Some Light on our own Sanctuary Iconography (see images on website)***

1. **Beasts, the Lamb, and Christ in Glory:**

**Relevance for our post-Covid and War-scarred Age.**

**Five Relevant Readings** (*best to read these beforehand!)*

1. **Ezekiel 1:1-28: Android Beasts sent from Heaven**

 1 In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

 2 On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin),

 3 the word of the LORD came to the priest Ezekiel son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was on him there.

 4 As I looked, a stormy wind came out of the north: a great cloud with brightness around it and fire flashing forth continually, and in the middle of the fire, something like gleaming amber.

 5 In the middle of it was something like four living creatures. This was their appearance: they were of human form.

 6 Each had four faces, and each of them had four wings.

 7 Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like burnished bronze.

 8 Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus:

 9 their wings touched one another; each of them moved straight ahead, without turning as they moved.

 10 As for the appearance of their faces: the four had the face of a human being, the face of a lion on the right side, the face of an ox on the left side, and the face of an eagle;

 11 such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above; each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies.

 12 Each moved straight ahead; wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went.

 13 In the middle of1 the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches moving to and fro among the living creatures; the fire was bright, and lightning issued from the fire.

 14 The living creatures darted to and fro, like a flash of lightning.

 15 As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them.1

 16 As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of beryl; and the four had the same form, their construction being something like a wheel within a wheel.

 17 When they moved, they moved in any of the four directions without veering as they moved.

 18 Their rims were tall and awesome, for the rims of all four were full of eyes all around.

 19 When the living creatures moved, the wheels moved beside them; and when the living creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose.

 20 Wherever the spirit would go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them; for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

 21 When they moved, the others moved; when they stopped, the others stopped; and when they rose from the earth, the wheels rose along with them; for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

 22 Over the heads of the living creatures there was something like a dome, shining like crystal,1 spread out above their heads.

 23 Under the dome their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another; and each of the creatures had two wings covering its body.

 24 When they moved, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of mighty waters, like the thunder of the Almighty,1 a sound of tumult like the sound of an army; when they stopped, they let down their wings.

 25 And there came a voice from above the dome over their heads; when they stopped, they let down their wings.

 26 And above the dome over their heads there was something like a throne, in appearance like sapphire;1 and seated above the likeness of a throne was something that seemed like a human form.

 27 Upward from what appeared like the loins I saw something like gleaming amber, something that looked like fire enclosed all around; and downward from what looked like the loins I saw something that looked like fire, and there was a splendor all around.

 28 Like the bow in a cloud on a rainy day, such was the appearance of the splendor all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of someone speaking.

1. **Daniel 7:1-28 Menacing Beasts emerging from the Sea**

 1In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head as he lay in bed. Then he wrote down the dream:1

 2 I,Daniel, saw in my vision by night the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea,

 3 and four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another.

 4 The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then, as I watched, its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a human being; and a human mind was given to it.

 5 Another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear. It was raised up on one side, had three tusks1 in its mouth among its teeth and was told, "Arise, devour many bodies!"

 6 After this, as I watched, another appeared, like a leopard. The beast had four wings of a bird on its back and four heads; and dominion was given to it.

 7 After this I saw in the visions by night a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth and was devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that preceded it, and it had ten horns.

 8 I was considering the horns, when another horn appeared, a little one coming up among them; to make room for it, three of the earlier horns were plucked up by the roots. There were eyes like human eyes in this horn, and a mouth speaking arrogantly.

 9 As I watched, thrones were set in place, and an Ancient One1 took his throne, his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and its wheels were burning fire.

 10 A stream of fire issued and flowed out from his presence. A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him. The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.

 11 I watched then because of the noise of the arrogant words that the horn was speaking. And as I watched, the beast was put to death, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.

 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

 13 As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being1 coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One2 and was presented before him.

 14 To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.

 15 As for me, Daniel, my spirit was troubled within me,1 and the visions of my head terrified me.

 16 I approached one of the attendants to ask him the truth concerning all this. So he said that he would disclose to me the interpretation of the matter:

 17 "As for these four great beasts, four kings shall arise out of the earth.

 18 But the holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever -- forever and ever."

 19 Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped what was left with its feet;

 20 and concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and concerning the other horn, which came up and to make room for which three of them fell out -- the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke arrogantly, and that seemed greater than the others.

 21 As I looked, this horn made war with the holy ones and was prevailing over them,

 22 until the Ancient One1 came; then judgment was given for the holy ones of the Most High, and the time arrived when the holy ones gained possession of the kingdom.

 23 This is what he said: "As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth that shall be different from all the other kingdoms; it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces.

 24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them. This one shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings.

 25 He shall speak words against the Most High, shall wear out the holy ones of the Most High, and shall attempt to change the sacred seasons and the law; and they shall be given into his power for a time, two times,1 and half a time.

 26 Then the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and totally destroyed.

 27 The kingship and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the holy ones of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them."

 28 Here the account ends. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly terrified me, and my face turned pale; but I kept the matter in my mind.

1. **Revelation 13:1-18 Menacing Beasts emerging from the Sea**

1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads; and on its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads were blasphemous names.

 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave it his power and his throne and great authority.

 3 One of its heads seemed to have received a death-blow, but its mortal wound1 had been healed. In amazement the whole earth followed the beast.

 4 They worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

 5 The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.

 6 It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

 7 Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them.1 It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation,

 8 and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.1

 9 Let anyone who has an ear listen:

 10 If you are to be taken captive, into captivity you go; if you kill with the sword, with the sword you must be killed. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

 11 Then I saw another beast that rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon.

 12 It exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and it makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound1 had been healed.

 13 It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of all;

 14 and by the signs that it is allowed to perform on behalf of the beast, it deceives the inhabitants of earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that had been wounded by the sword1 and yet lived;

 15 and it was allowed to give breath1 to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast could even speak and cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

 16 Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead,

 17 so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

 18 This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person. Its number is six hundred sixty-six.1

1. **Revelation 4:1-11 Android Beasts sent from Heaven**

 1 After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

 2 At once I was in the spirit,1 and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne!

 3 And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald.

 4 Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads.

 5 Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God;

 6 and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal. Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind:

 7 the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle.

 8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come."

 9 And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever,

 10 the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,

 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

1. **Revelation 5:1-14 The Lamb Standing by the Throne of God**

 1Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed1 with seven seals;

 2 and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"

 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

 4 And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

 5 Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

 6 Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

 7 He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne.

 8 When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

 9 They sing a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from1 every tribe and language and people and nation;

 10 you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving1 our God, and they will reign on earth."

 11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,

 12 singing with full voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

 13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

 14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.