

The Book of Revelation

- Authorship
- Genre
- Theological approaches
- Theology of Revelation
- The millennium
- Significance of the Apocalypse

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The Book of Revelation

What is your experience with the Book of Revelation?

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Authorship

- Debate over authorship.
 - Author identifies self as John (1:1, 4).
 - Which John? Tradition = John the Apostle.
 - Greek is very different from Johannine writings.
- From the same tradition as the Johannine Gospel and Epistles.
 - Asia Minor; emphasis on light and truth.
 - Dualistic imagery - heaven/earth, light/dark.
 - Life as main soteriological concept.
 - Jesus as Word of God, Lamb of God, Son.

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Genre

- Revelation includes what three genres?
 - Epistle
 - Prophecy
 - Apocalypse
- Prophecy
 - Foretelling?
 - Forthtelling?

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Genre

- Apocalypse = unveiling = revelation.
 - Traditionally: events surrounding end of history.
 - Recently: current events in cosmic imagery.
 - Often in form of dreams or visions, often given through angelic mediator.
 - Dualistic worldview; highly figurative.
 - Battles, cosmic cataclysms, final paradise.
 - Originates in crisis; designed to give comfort.
 - Flourished between 200 B. C. and A.D 200.

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Genre

- Other examples of apocalypse:
 - Daniel
 - Isaiah 24-27
 - Zechariah 9-11
 - Ezekiel 38-39
 - Olivet Discourse (Mark 13 and parallels)
 - 1 Thessalonians 4-5
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12
 - Many apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books

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Theological Approaches

- Theological approaches to Revelation:
 - Preterist - All events are already past; all belongs to the first century.
 - Historicist - Panorama of church history from first century to end times.
 - Idealist - Symbolic picture of struggle between good and evil; no historical events.
 - Futurist - Prophecy of future events surrounding the end times. Includes the Great Tribulation and the Millennium.

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Theological Approaches

- Which view do you find most persuasive?

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Theological Approaches

- Theological themes in Revelation?

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Theology of the Apocalypse

- Revelation pictures the struggle between God and Satan, and God's ultimate victory through Christ.
- A dramatization of 1 Cor. 15:25 - Christ must reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet.
- Stephen Neill: Revelation contains the words "victor," "victory," and "vanquish" more than the other NT books put together.

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Theology of the Apocalypse

- Mundane level: persecution of the church.
 - Evil political system = Roman Empire.
 - Beast = Emperor, represented by Nero.
 - Evil religious system = emperor cult.
 - Inspired by the dragon = Satan.
 - Intense persecution of the people of God.

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Theology of the Apocalypse

- Spiritual level: struggle between Christ and Satan.
 - The dragon and the woman's child (Ch. 12).
 - Woman gives birth to Messiah.
 - Dragon cast down from heaven.
 - Satan can't destroy Messiah, so he tries to destroy the people of God (v. 17).
 - Decisive defeat at the cross and resurrection.
 - Choose sides: whose mark will you bear?

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Theology of the Apocalypse

- God's judgments on those who oppose him and his people.
 - Seven trumpets and seven bowls.
 - Probably not chronological but telling the same story multiple times.
 - Judgments intended to cause people to repent.
 - Some will be protected from judgment.
 - They are warned to come out of Babylon so they don't experience the judgment.

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Theology of the Apocalypse

- The victory of God and the vindication of God's people.
 - The kingdom of God comes on earth (11:15).
 - Christ's victory is described in 19:11-16.
 - Violent imagery, but the blood on his robe may be his own, and he conquers by his word.
 - The *parousia* – or missions?
 - The new heavens and new earth (21:1ff).
 - Final vindication of God's people (21:3).
 - The end of salvation history.

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The Millennium

- What the theological significance of the millennium?
 - Ladd: necessary for the universal acknowledgement of Christ's lordship.
 - Bridge between this age and the age to come.
 - Matera: vindication of the martyrs.
 - Early church fathers: suitable that the martyrs be rewarded for their suffering in this state with a vindication and reign in this state.

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The Millennium

- Millennial views (see handout):
 - Amillennialism (no literal millennium)
 - Postmillennialism (church age; improvement)
 - Premillennialism
 - Dispensational (pre-tribulational)
 - Historic (post-tribulational)
- Different views become popular as the church's circumstances change.
- Remember this is only 3 verses in the NT...

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Significance of the Apocalypse

- Significance of Revelation for today?

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Significance of the Apocalypse

- Revelation is a book of worship.
 - "This book is a revelation of Jesus Christ in the context of worship." Jerry Flora, *Adults Approach the Revelation*.
 - Revelation was not meant to be read and analyzed, but listened to, experienced, and obeyed. See Rev. 1:3; 22:18 - read aloud.
 - If we come away from Revelation without worshiping Christ, we've missed the point!

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