

COR@9
Revelation
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“Though St. John the Evangelist saw many strange monsters in his vision, he saw no creature so wild as one of his own commentators.” G. K. Chesterton

I. Introduction

- Literal or figurative interpretation?
- Historical or not? Contemporary or future?
- The danger of pet theologies

II. Characteristics of apocalyptic literature

- Born out of the Jews' historical situation during the intertestamental period
- “Revelatory” – dealt with visions and signs
- Divine revelation was mediated by a spiritual being to a human recipient
- Dealt with the interplay of the spiritual and temporal worlds
- Apocalyptic literature as Jewish theodicy – looked to the future to explain the present difficulty

III. Characteristics and themes of Revelation

- Revelation as the “Christian apocalypse”
- Social situation – not all the recipients were being fed to lions
- “Antichrist” – one person or the worldly system?
- “God wins” – sovereignty in the book of Revelation
- Paradoxical encouragement

IV. Focus passages

Revelation 18:1-8 “Come out of her”

1. What Old Testament stories come to mind as you read this passage?
2. What specific sin is Babylon being judged for in this passage? Why do you think that particular sin is chosen as a synecdoche for all Babylon's sin?
3. Throughout Revelation good and evil are presented as strict polarities. Does the violence of the judgment against Babylon in this passage rub you the wrong way? Why or why not?

Revelation 22:1-5 “Come, Lord Jesus”

1. How many parallels can your group find between these verses and the first few chapters of Genesis?
2. Discuss the imagery of a river and tree in these verses. What does that image connote for you? What other trees in Scripture come to mind?
3. Why is it significant that “they will see his face” (v. 4)?
4. Discuss the repeated use of these images throughout Scripture.

V. Application

1. Think about the ways “Babylon” has permeated your own life, in subtle or not so subtle ways. What does it mean for you to “Come out of her” (18:4)?
2. Spend some time reading and meditating on the last two chapters of Revelation. What would our faith be like without these chapters? How do these chapters change the way we live in the present?

“Even so, Lord come.”