

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE FOR ALL ITS WORTH

CHAPTER 13 – REVELATION:
IMAGES OF JUDGEMENT AND HOPE

PROBLEMS IN REVELATION

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 - Judgement in the form of earthquakes

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 - 7 churches in 7 known cities with clearly stated issues
 - Judgement in the form of earthquakes
- Parts are full of symbolism and obscurity
 - 2 witnesses
 - Dragon and beasts

NATURE OF REVELATION

- 3 distinct types of literature
 - Apocalypse

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 - Prophecy

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REVELATION AS APOCALYPSE

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 - Literary form that does not exist in our present day
 - There were dozens of apocalypses written between 200BC and 200AD

REVELATION AS APOCALYPSE

- Common Characteristics

- They are not concerned with God's action *within* history, but rather God's violent and radical *end* to history

- This is good triumphing over evil

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 - Much of Scripture was spoken first and written later, but this was written first

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 - Most were considered to be written by ancient sages
 - They were then told to “seal them up” for a later day

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 - Beasts, dragons, 7 heads, etc

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- Prophets would have used imagery, but the images would have been taken from reality

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 - John was specifically told NOT to seal up the scroll

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 - This does not mean there are not secondary meanings at play, but we must first understand the primary meaning.

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 - When John wrote this, Matthew and 1/2 Thessalonians were not well-distributed

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 - Texts readily understood by contemporaries are the focus of meaning

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 - These are very much intended and must be well-studied

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 - John was concerned with expressing that God is in control in a very tense time in church history

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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- God seems to be silent and the saints seem to be of no concern

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 - The churches (2:1-3:22)

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 - All heaven praises

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 - Ch 6-7, 8-11, 15-16
 - Ch 8-11 showcase the suffering of the church and the judgement of God on the enemies

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 - The Woman and the Dragon

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- Multiple commentaries and exegetical study of the Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel are necessary

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- The church would struggle, Judah would be captured, Rome would “win”, and all would be lost
- But God...the Lamb and the Cross stand center stage and is timeless as an encouragement and hope

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- “Soon-ness” must have an eternal perspective, not our understanding of “soon”
- To read the book to interpret today’s events is a misunderstanding of John’s writing.

HERMENEUTICAL QUESTIONS

- While there are likely yet to be fulfilled aspects of Revelation (anti-christs, cataclysmic events, etc), there is no clarity provided. Intentionally.

HERMENEUTICAL QUESTIONS

- The aspects of the book to point to the future end times, the eschatological should still be taken as such. These are warnings and encouragements.

HOMework DISCUSSION

- What is your biggest question on Revelation and the end times?
- How would you answer it?