

David and the Psalms

by Dan Jenkins

My appreciation for the book of Psalms is far greater than I had as a younger Christian. It may be because of a better grasp of the Bible, or perhaps, I have a greater understanding of the purpose of life. Most of the psalms were written by David, the man whose heart was like God's heart. It is in the historical books we read about the thrilling events which happened in his life. However, it is in the psalms where David opens the depths of his soul so we can learn about his heart. Look at Psalm 131 to see this.

David, himself, and the world. "Lord, my heart is not haughty (*marginal reading is "proud"*), nor my eyes lofty (*marginal reading is "arrogant"*). Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me" (v. 1). Our world is so amazingly complex, and all that happens in it can so easily distract us as we try to figure it all out. Wars, rumors of wars, pestilences, earthquakes, revolution among the nations, political unrest in our own land and the struggles created by ungodly men can so easily overwhelm us. There are those things which are, to use the words of David, "great matters" and "too profound for me." David's solution was not to become haughty or to focus his eyes on such matters. David understood there were *greater matters* and *more lofty matters* on which to focus. What are these greater matters? Look at the next verse.

David, himself, and God. How did David react with the complexity of life around him? "Surely I

have calmed and quieted my soul. Like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me" (v. 2). A newborn baby is helpless, for he understands nothing about his new world. One thing he does know is that his midnight cries bring his mother to hold him, to embrace him and to nurture him. There is no place more comforting on this earth for that infant. The same is true of a child who is weaned. He no longer needs his mother to feed him, but, oh how much comfort his mother's kisses, hugs and loving words bring to him—even as an adult. David had found the way and the perfect place to have that same peace in his life.

David, himself, and the future. Where was that place? "O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forever" (v. 3). David, how do you handle the "great matters" and the "things too profound for me"? How do you handle the profound complexities of life? His answer—*hope*. One word sums it up. God is in charge, and He promises He will handle our future (Heb. 13:5-6; Rom. 8:28). How did David instruct the Jews to deal with "great matters and profound things?" *One word—hope!* How does David's psalm show us how to deal with things we cannot understand or control? *One word—hope!* If a young child finds comfort when held by his mother, how much more should we find comfort in His arms? Remember David's *one word—hope!*

Studying Apocalyptic Literature

by Sam Dilbeck

As the United States of America approaches election season, predictions of the world's demise escalate. As thoughts of the possibility of conflict rise, many people look to the Bible trying to decipher the signs of the times. Some read the visions found in the apocalyptic and prophetic literature of the Bible and offer theories of their meaning. Often their conjecturing is wild and confusing, and clashing with the rest of God's word. Much of the misperception comes from an improper reading of apocalyptic and prophetic literature.

To properly interpret a text, we must take into account what genre of literature it is. A history book reads differently than a love letter which in turn reads differently than a sports column. Knowing the genre allows the reader to begin with certain understandings, ideas, and expectations, and aids in interpretation.

The book of Revelation presents unique challenges since it is composed of multiple genres. Beasley-Murray observed that Revelation identifies itself by three genres in its opening verses: apocalypse (1:1), prophecy (1:3), and epistle (1:4).¹ Generally speaking, it's the apocalyptic portions that cause modern confusion.

According to Bruce Waltke, the key features of apocalyptic literature are (1) its focus on the end of the ages; (2) its dynamic method of revelation; (3) its frequent dualisms; (4) its oppressed and persecuted audience; (5) its bizarre images; and (6) its call to repentance.²

In the Apocalypse of John, an angelic tour guide leads the apostle through a dramatic series of visions. These visions were intended to provide persecuted saints an insider's view of their ultimate victory. Like other apocalyptic writings, Revelation uses curious imagery to convey its message.

Knowing apocalyptic and prophetic literature are written in decidedly different style compels readers to approach it differently than an epistle or narrative. Here are six things to keep in mind while reading and studying this genre.

1. *Begin with an open heart.* Confusion comes when people approach the text with a determined point of view. In the book's obscurity these readers find latitude for their false theories. Instead of drawing the meaning out of the text, they read their doctrines into the text. The humble heart may be confident in its understanding, but is willing to consider other ideas when the biblical evidence warrants it.

2. *Seek how the original readers understood the message, then make application to modern circumstance.* Dispensationalists see "signs" in modern times, then go to Revelation to decipher them. The first century saint would not have understood a 21st century reference. What did John want the seven churches of Asia, to whom the book was first addressed, to know? Answering that question allows readers to identify similarities between the original readers and modern readers, and make contemporary applications without making the book irrelevant to the original readers.

3. *Focus on the big picture.* Error often comes when readers get lost in the forest of details and lose sight of the main idea. A grasp of the main idea helps give meaning to the details.

4. *Read the unknown in light of the known.* Because of its fantastic imagery people like to start their New Testament journey in Revelation or some other obscure text. We should allow the truths revealed in the rest of Scripture to inform our interpretation of apocalyptic literature.

5. *Know the Old Testament.* Keener says Revelation contains more Old Testament references than any other New Testament book. He estimates roughly 70 percent of the verses in Revelation contain an allusion to the Old Testament.³ Ignorance of the Old Testament turns Revelation into a thousand piece puzzle with seven hundred pieces missing!

6. *Assume a reference is symbolic unless the context demands it is literal.* Usually biblical texts should be taken as literal unless it becomes absurd to do so. When it comes to Revelation, Gregg cautions, "Though this is a good rule when dealing with literature written in a literal genre, it is the exact opposite in the case of apocalyptic literature, where symbolism is the rule, and literalism the exception."⁴

God's word is challenging, not confusing (1 Cor. 14:33). No doubt apocalyptic literature will always present an interpretive challenge. But by beginning with some basic understanding and guidelines readers will be better equipped to receive the message God intended them to have.

1 G.R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, New Century Bible Commentary, (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1974), 12.

2 Bruce Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 550.

3 Craig S. Keener, *Revelation*, NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 33.

4 Steven Gregg, *Revelation, Four Views: A Parallel Approach*, ed. Steven Gregg, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1997), 11.

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Westhill Works

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Cherokee Children's Home - www.chc4kids.org
House to House, Heart to Heart
In Search of the Lord's Way
Preaching Students - Southwest School of Bible Studies
The Truth in Love - www.ttil.tv
WVBS Online School - school.wvbs.org

Prison Works

La Poynor Prison Ministry - Steve & Carrie Handley

Foreign Works

New Zealand Harvest Missions - James & Emily Cammock

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Cory Myers - 512.627.6672 (Youth & Family)
Tim Cooke - 903.641.5515 (Seniors)

Prayer List

Barbara Shore had surgery Friday for her broken ankle. Pray for her speedy recovery and for patience over the next couple of months.

Paula Spillards is excited to report that she will not need chemotherapy. She will begin radiation treatments this month.

Anna Bolton, Velma McDougald's sister, suffered a light stroke on her left side. Please, pray for her.

Adrian Chilcoat, Donna Brooks' uncle, is struggling with wounds that won't heal and a blood clot. He is not doing well and needs our prayers.

Frankie Torres, Josie Horn's uncle, has cancer all over and is not expected to live much longer. Please, keep their family in your prayers.

Our Love & Sympathy are extended to James & Josie Horn and their family at the passing of Josie's aunt, Ada Chovanec.

Continue to Remember: Jimmy Bess, Don Bowen, Melba Bower, Gwen Culwell, Buster Hayes, Marjorie King, Neta Marshall, Velma McDougald, Bud Moore, Henry & Eula Parrish, Patty Williams, Meagan Gould, Jayme Schafer, Keith Weaver

Youth Night at Mabank Lectures Friday, April 15. We will leave at 5:30. Please, sign up at the back of the auditorium if you'd like to go.

Prom Alternative will be April 30. More details coming soon.

Senior Graduation Banquet is set for Thursday, May 26 at 6:30 PM. Seniors, please, get your pictures and song choices to Dianne Stewart as soon as possible.

Birthdays This Week

April 6 - Gwen Culwell
April 7 - Stayton Thomas

Next Week's Adult Class

Jesus Walks on Water
(Mat. 14:22-36; Mark 6:45-56; John 6:15-24)

Records for March 27, 2016

Bible Class	183
AM Worship.....	288
PM Worship.....	150
Wednesday	134
Contribution	\$8,829.66

Privileged to Serve

Song Leader	David Baumgartner
Opening Prayer	Paul Stewart
Communion Leader	Rusty Owens
Communion Servers	
Bryan Bearden	Carter Bearden
Dan Gibson	Ricky Jennings
David Mahoney	Percell Milton
Darrell Olsen	Eric Olsen
Brody Owens	Austin Roughton
Billy Roughton	Larry Rowden
Jose Sosa, Jr.	
Closing Prayer	Brian Hand
Nursery	Claire Barham & Christie Beamon
Security	Mike Drain, Zach Drain, Billy Roughton
PM Song Leader	Joshua Haden
PM Opening Prayer	Dan Gibson
PM Closing Prayer	David Shastid
Wed. Song Leader	Justin Mahoney
Wed. Devotional	Russell Bankes
April Contact Elder	Paul Stewart - 903.872.3464

Service Men: Clay Bayes, Jason Book, Alston Compton, Robert Johnson, Ryan Payne, Douglas Ramsey, Ryan Stewart, Morgan Weaver, and Payton Weaver

Announcements

Open Door Thursday this week. Jr. High & High School students are invited to hang out in the Outreach Center Thursday from 3:30-6:30 PM.

Spring Seminar hosted by the Young at Heart Group this Friday, April 8 at 6:30 PM. Jay Lockhart will address the theme "Press On." Everyone invited!

Going Away Ice Cream Supper for James & Sue Welch Sunday evening April 17. Please, join us to let James & Sue know how much we love and will miss them as they make their new home in Mabank.

Annual Mabank Lectures coming up April 15 - 17. Various speakers will address topics on the theme "Be Not Deceived."