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UNIT 19 - "YAHWEH'S FINAL WORD": The Writings of John - pt 2

"And though St. John the Evangelist saw many strange monsters in his vision, he saw no creature so wild as one of his own commentators. The general fact is simple. Poetry is sane because it floats easily in an infinite sea; reason seeks to cross the infinite sea, and so make it finite. The result is mental exhaustion...The poet only desires exaltation and expansion, a world to stretch himself in. The poet only asks to get his head into the heavens. It is the logician who seeks to get the heavens into his head. And it is his head that splits."

G.K. Chesterton in *Orthodoxy*, pp. 21-22

"The Book of Revelation fascinates and also perplexes the modern reader. For the present generation, it is the most obscure and controversial book in the Bible. Yet...it may well be that with the exception of the Gospels, the Apocalypse is the most profound and moving teaching on Christian doctrine and discipleship found anywhere in the Holy Scripture. Neither the fanaticism of some who have fixed their attention on prophecy buy not on Christ, nor the diversity of interpretive viewpoints should discourage us from pursuing Christian truth in this marvelous book." **Allan F. Johnson in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, p. 399**

I. "REVELATION: PRESCRIPTION, PREDICTION & PORTENT"

- A. Where We Start Will Determine Where We _____ — Five Vital Factors
1. My convictions regarding the nature and scope of "_____."
 2. My convictions regarding the nature and scope of the "_____."
 3. My understanding of the nature and purpose of apocalyptic _____.
 4. My convictions regarding the *purpose* of _____ prophecy.
 5. My convictions regarding the role of _____ in the arrangement of the New Testament canon.
- B. What We Honestly _____ Will Effect How Much We Can Learn
1. This is a very _____ book for even the best of scholars:
 - a. There are at least four different "_____" built around its relation to *time* (e.g. past, progressive past, future, and pure symbolism).
 - b. There is disagreement regarding its literary _____ (epistle, prophetic, Jewish apocalyptic, etc.).
 - c. We have no other New Testament literary grid to _____ us (the OT books are not much help).
 - d. The closest modern genres we have are _____ (Lord of the Rings) and science fiction (The Matrix).
 2. There is enormous _____ regarding the purpose, sequence, and interrelationship between two periods of time and two events.
 - a. Two time periods:
 - (1) The Great _____ (6:9-11; 7:14; Mt 24:21,29).
 - (2) The "_____" (ch 20).
 - b. Two Events:
 - (1) The "_____" (no mention in Revelation; 1 Th 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-2).
 - (2) The Second Coming of Christ (19:11-21; 1 Th 1:9-10; 2 Th 1:5-10).
 3. There are at least two views regarding the _____ of the "new heavens and earth":

- a. A renewed but not _____ creation (Gk *kainos* Rev 21:1 and 2 Pet 3:13 can mean “renewed” or “remade”)
- b. A totally _____ creation (Gk *kainos* in Rev 3:12; 5:9; 14:3; 21:5 clearly means similar to something pre-existing, but still “new” in the normal sense of the word).
4. We need to assess the reasons for our _____ (or lack of it) in this final word from God:
- a. A basis for hope in the face of suffering and motivation for _____ living in the present?
- b. A Nostradamus-like cipher to explain or _____ modern events, a sort of “Christian _____”?
- (1) There are 15,500,000 “hits” on Google for “The Book of Revelation” and “The Revelation of John,” nearly _____ as many as for Paul’s letter to the Romans.
- (2) Christianbook.com has nearly _____ books dealing with Revelation.
- (3) There are a host of Bible teachers all claiming to have “_____” the book to one degree or another, even though they disagree among themselves.
- *Because the Time is Near: John MacArthur Explains the Book of Revelation* by John MacArthur
 - *Revelation Unveiled*, by Tim LaHaye
 - *God’s Final Word: Understanding Revelation* by Ray C. Stedman
 - *Revelation: Four Views* edited by Steven Gregg
 - *The Book of Revelation: Unlocking the Future - Twenty-first Century Biblical Commentary* by Ed Hindson
 - *The Final Word: The Book Of Revelation Simply Explained* by Steve Wilmschurst
 - *The 12 Gemstones of Revelation: Unlocking the Significance of the Gemstone Phenomenon* by Mary Trask
 - *What the Bible Really Says: Breaking the Apocalypse Code* by Thomas A. Howe

C. The World *Behind* the Text: — _____: The First Step of Bible Study

1. The opening _____ of the book is an important “clue” — *apokalupsis* (to unveil, to lay bare, to disclose the unknown)
- a. This word does not appear _____ in Classical Greek literature!
- b. “Apocalyptic” was a literary genre that was _____ years old by the time John recorded these visions.
2. Five Characteristics of Apocalyptic Literature (from: www.jewishencyclopedia.com)
- a. Contains revelation of things beyond _____ knowledge *and* experience:
- (1) *the purposes of God for mankind*
- (2) *secrets of heaven itself*
- (3) *angels’ (good/evil) characteristics and roles*
- (4) *impending events (especially those related to Israel)*
- (5) *future of mankind*
- (6) *end of the world, judgment and eternity*

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- b. A *literary* (i.e. written) genre consisting of _____ and _____ recorded in first person (205 first person pronouns in Revelation).
- c. Angels rather than God are _____ communicators and servants (74 refs to angels; 1 every 6 verses!).
- d. Primary chronological _____ is the future, particularly God’s ultimate purposes:

“...and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.” **Daniel 10:14**

“...Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”
Revelation 4:1b

- e. Literary and _____ peculiarities:
- (1) _____ use of numbers (“seven”- 55x for 18 different things “twelve,” etc.)
 - (2) Descriptions of real or _____ creatures (“lion,” “eagle,” “dragon,” “beast”)
 - (3) Excessive use of _____ (“horn,” “star,” “lampstand,” “seals,” “bowls,” “trumpets,”)
 - (4) The Book of Daniel and The Book of Enoch are examples of classic _____ apocalyptic literature:

“Daniel declared, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles’ wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it.”
Daniel 7:2-4, c. 550 BC

“And after that I saw thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand, I saw a multitude beyond number and reckoning, who stood before the Lord of Spirits. And on the four sides of the Lord of Spirits I saw four presences, different from those that sleep not, and I learnt their names: for the angel that went with me made known to me their names, and showed me all the hidden things. And I heard the voices of those four presences as they uttered praises before the Lord of glory. The first voice blesses the Lord of Spirits for ever and ever. And the second voice I heard blessing the Elect One and the elect ones who hang upon the Lord of Spirits. And the third voice I heard pray and intercede for those who dwell on the earth and supplicate in the name of the Lord of Spirits. And I heard the fourth voice fending off the Satans and forbidding them to come before the Lord of Spirits to accuse them who dwell on the earth.”
The Book of Enoch, 40.1-7, c. 120 BC

D. The World Of The Text: Getting Inside John’s Apocalyptic _____

1. Revelation is a record of _____ *apokalupsis* to “His bond servants” that was given to Jesus Christ and mediated to John by an angel!

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.” **Revelation 1:1-2**

2. This is first and foremost a book about Yahweh and His purposes, not us and our _____:
 - a. There are _____ references to God and to the Lamb.
 - b. Of the 10 times God is referred to as “_____” in the New Testament, nine are in this book! (Heb, *shaddai*, Gk, *pantokrator*)
 - c. There are _____ references to angels and to beasts and the dragon.
 - d. There are less than _____ references to saints, prophets and apostles.
 - e. The book opens with an identical _____-like vision of God’s throne room:

“And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’”
Revelation 4:8

“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”
Isaiah 6:1-3
 - f. The book closes with Isaiah-like _____-descriptions by Yahweh and Jesus:

“And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.”
Revelation 21:6

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”
Revelation 22:13

“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.’” **Isaiah 44:6**
3. Because The Story is “...the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time...” (Eph 1:9, 10), it too _____ an “Alpha and Omega” (i.e. a “beginning and an end”).
 - a. Yahweh unrolls the whole _____ in the first eight verses:

R e v e l a t i o n	O l d T e s t a m e n t
<p><i>“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Revelation 1:5-8</p>	<p><i>“...and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”</i> Exodus 19:6</p>
	<p><i>“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.”</i> Daniel 7:13</p>
	<p><i>“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”</i> Zechariah 12:10</p>
	<p><i>“Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called! I am he; I am the first, and I am the last.”</i> Isaiah 48:12</p>

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- b. Even though there isn't a single direct OT citation, there are over _____ allusions to the Old Testament "Story" in 404 verses!
- c. The _____ "ends" where it "began":
- (1) The Tree of Life is _____ in the new "garden" (Rev 22:2; Gen 2:9; 3:22)
 - (2) The _____ of Life is present again in the new "garden" (Rev 22:1; Gen 2:10)
 - (3) Yahweh Himself is _____ in the new "garden" again (Rev 21:2-3)
- d. The "Bride" of Christ (i.e. the Lamb) is the New Jerusalem representing all those from both " _____ " of the Story:
- "Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed-- on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Revelation 21:9-14*
- e. The Story "ends" on earth, *not* in "heaven," with the redemption of everything God originally declared to be " _____ ," that was corrupted by sin.

E. The World Before The Text: Living In Light of the Story

1. Imagine yourself in a 5-act play:

- a. Act I — Introduction of major _____; (Gen 1-2)
 - b. Act II — _____ Introduced; (Gen 3-11)
 - c. Act III — _____: conflict grows and intensifies; (Gen 12- Malachi)
 - d. Act IV — _____: the turning point in the Story; (Gospels)
 - e. Act V — _____: all aspects of the conflict are resolved; (Acts - Rev)
- f. But, Act V has three "scenes" and the *second* is _____!
- (1) Question:** "How Then Shall We Live?"
- (2) We need to be people of sacred _____.
- (3) Peter's final word says it best:

"Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!...Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace." 2 Peter 3:11-12,14

2. Of the seven “_____” (i.e. “blessed”) in this book, four of them have to do with how I choose to live until Jesus returns (Re 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14).
3. The best thing we can seek to do, in the “in between time,” is to live so as to be able to say the same thing to Yahweh that _____ did, when we meet Him:

“I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.” John 17:4

*“Too often our view of the future has emphasized solely the salvation of the individual person apart from the full creational and relational context in which human beings live their lives. Often the whole of the biblical story seems to revolve around ‘me.’ Yet the vision of Revelation, indeed the whole story of the Bible, leads us to look forward in hope to a creation restored to wholeness. Every facet of it is to be brought back to what God has intended for it. And within that glorious fullness and perfect wholeness, there is a place for US. Redemption is cosmic in its scope” **The Drama of Scripture, Bartholomew and Goheen, p. 212***

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