

Mary, Mother of Jesus Church
Adult Faith Formation – Lent 2022
The Apocalypse /or/ The Revelation to John
Presenter: Mary DeVille
Week 1 – 05 March 2022- Handout 1

Throughout our study, never forget:

God is on his throne and Christ is in control.

“of that day, and hour, no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” Matt. 24: 26

Apocalyptic writing

Apokalypsis = Greek for unveiling

Three Literary Genres

- Epistolary
- Apocalyptic
- Prophetic

Four Literary Devices

- Recapitulation
- Allusions
- Figurative language and symbolism
- Number symbology

One must study and understand *The Apocalypse* in three distinct time periods

- 1st Century CE at the time of its writing
- The end of time
- The times within church history between 1 and 3

Typology: the major principle of Biblical writing and interpretation

- God works in recognizable patterns throughout history
- The relationship of the OT to the NT
- Events in the OT serve as types that prefigure antitypes = events or aspects of Christ described in the NT
- Eg: Jonah in the OT is the type that prefigures rising from death in the NT

I. Time of the writing

- c. 95 CE
- reign of Roman Emperor Domitian (81-96 CE)
- massive re-building program in Rome
- major wars in Britain
- both Jews and Christians heavily persecuted

II. Who was the author, John?

- Strong point of academic debate
- Identifies himself by name.
- Describes himself as prophet, servant of God, brother, companion in tribulation
- Relationship between the author of *The Apocalypse* and John the author of the Gospel and Epistles
- Jewish-Christian prophet, John of Patmos

III. Theological interpretations of *The Apocalypse*

- 1) Historicist: book foretells the history of Christianity in a linear manner
- 2) Preterist: book speaks primarily if not exclusively of events that happened during the 1st century
- 3) Idealist: book presents images and narrative of the struggle between good and evil that have no specific relation to history or actual events
- 4) Futurist: book describes predictable event of the 20th and 21st centuries, pertaining to recent years of human history and events that will happen before the Second Coming of Christ

IV. Will I be left behind at The Rapture?

- Parousia = Second Coming of Christ
- How many times do you believe that Christ will come to earth? Do you believe in a Third Coming? (If you believe in The Rapture, you must believe in a Third Coming!)
- The term “rapture” is not mentioned in *The Apocalypse* (only in I Thes. 4: 16-17)
- “The Rapture” began as a 16th-century movement, called Futurism, led by Spanish Jesuit, Francisco Ribera
- 1585: Ribera wrote a 500-page commentary on *The Apocalypse*. Chap. 1-3 related events that happened in pagan Rome. Chap. 4 began a future period of 3 ½ literal years until the Second Coming/Rapture
- Two views of the Rapture
- 1) Pre-Tribulationists: Rapture will occur before the time of tribulation. Jesus Christ will come in 2 stages: 1) a secret Rapture at the beginning of the 7-year Tribulation and true believers will be taken up. At the close of the Tribulation, Jesus Christ will come again (the Second Coming) Regarding the Rapture being a secret coming of Christ in which believers will disappear, Rev. 1: 7 clearly indicates that Jesus Christ, descending from heaven will be no secret!
- Pre-Tribulationists
- Rapture
- 7 years of Tribulation
- Second Coming of Christ
- 1000 year reign of peace
- 2) Tribulationists: Rapture will occur after the time of tribulation
- Biblical basis for the Rapture: I Thes. 4: 16-17

- Early Church Fathers, such as Origen, saw this as a spiritual rapture, not a physical state of being...those who were “dead or alive in Christ”. This will occur at the Second Coming.
- The Rapture is not a doctrine of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran faiths, as well as some ritual Protestants such as Methodist

V. Old Testament Allusions

Especially the Books of Daniel and Ezekiel

VI. Symbolism

Symbolism features strongly in *The Apocalypse*

Extensive use of symbolism is intended to suggest the ineffable mystery that is spoken of but can never be understood

- Woman = people, city
- Horns = power, especially dynamic power
- Eyes = knowledge
- Wings = mobility
- Trumpets = superhuman, divine voice
- Sharp sword = word of God which judges and punishes
- White robe = world or state of glory
- Palms = triumph
- Crowns = kingship
- The sea = evil element, source of death
- White = joy of victory
- Purple = royalty, luxury
- Black = death

VII. Number Symbolology

- 7 = fullness, perfection
- 12 = 12 tribes of Israel, people of God who have reached eschatological perfection
- 4 = universality of the visible world
- 666 = The Beast, Antichrist

The central theme of *The Apocalypse* is that God is on his throne and the Lamb is in control.

“...of that day, and hour, no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone”