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What About The Book of Revelation?

The book of Revelation received renewed interest and study the last half of the last century from those of the past and we have come to understand much more in light of the time we are living regarding prophecy, even as God told Daniel for the time of the end.

* “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and **knowledge** shall increase.” Dan. 12:4

When the “Time of the Gentiles” revealed by God to Nebuchadnezzar ends, the raptures will take place and the time of Jacob’s trouble will begin, seven years of tribulation. Dan. 2; Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27

1. The key factor is that Israel returned to the land May 14, 1948,
2. The Lord’s coming for His church is imminent, at any time beginning the Day of the LORD!
3. The majority of the book of Revelation deals with Israel and the Anti-Christ, thirteen of the twenty-two chapters. Rev. 6-19
4. The book of Revelation is the only one promising a blessing if you read it and the only one with a table of content, to insure we do not mess it up. Rev. 1:3; 19
5. The book of Revelation has a clear declaration that it is not a sealed book. Rev. 22:10
6. The book of Revelation has a stern warning to those who would tamper with the book. Rev. 22:18-19

We want to answer the question, “What about the book of Revelation?” by first looking at three important qualities of the book of Revelation.

- I. The nature of the book of Revelation.
- II. The authenticity of the book Revelation.
- III. The particulars of the book Revelation.

I. **The nature of the book of Revelation.**

- A. The book of Revelation is apocalyptic in nature.
 1. Like Ezekiel, Zechariah, Daniel and others that fulfill many of the prophecies.
 2. The literary genre is found in the first verse by the word Revelation “apocalupsis”, which means to lay bear or make naked, so as to reveal the truth or make visible.
 - * Much like a new car model covered with a tarp, then removed to reveal it clearly!
 3. There are seventeen books of prophecy in the Old Testament, but the Revelation is the only prophetic book in the New Testament, dealing with the future events.
 4. The book of Revelation is eschatological in that it deals with the end times, the last seven years of human history on this earth as we know it, when God will bring to an end the world that is under the god of this world, known as “the present age”.
 5. The book of Revelation is apocalyptic revealing the unveiling of Jesus Christ, the all powerful God, who will set up His

kingdom on the earth in righteousness, known as “the Age to come”.

6. The present temporal world and the two conflicting powers of our God and Satan should never to be thought of as “dualism” equal powers, for Satan is a created being, created by God.
 7. Apocalyptic books deal with symbolic language describing literal events through visions and symbols that for the most are interpreted for us in the book of Revelation in their context and are the fulfillment of many of the end time prophecies of Jesus and the epistles. Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21; 1-2Thess.
 8. The authority is divine as he spoke the word of God, not his own, unlike the apocalyptic literature of the Old Testament. Rev. 1:1-2, 3: 22:7, 10, 18, 19
 - a. Seven times the word “prophecy appears in the Revelation. Rev. 1:3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19
 - b. “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of **prophecy.**” Rev. 19:10g
- B.** The Old Testament apocalyptic literature flourished from the Maccabean period, between 200-100 B.C.
1. They sought to strengthen and encourage God’s people in their sufferings, knowing that inspired revelation had ceased.

2. The literature was pseudo-pigraphic, the ascribing the writing to some great man of Israel’s past instead of the actual writer, like Abraham, Moses, Ezra, etc.
3. The purpose of the writings were to remind people of God’s intervention in human history to end and destroy the wicked, but the present was presented without meaning and very pessimistic.
4. Visions, figurative language, angels were all part of this literature but it was not inspired, for no prophet was prophesying during the four-hundred years of silence.
5. The apocalypse of John is different in that it is Inspired by the Holy Spirit, not pseudo-pigraphic and the unveiling of future things by God’s Spirit results in true hope of God’s deliverance and the present is very meaningful, God is at work in His redemptive work to bring about the final act.
6. This being after the nature of the prophetic office John occupied by his own words recorded. Rev. 1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19; 22:8
 - a. He is acting as a Seer, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.” Rev. 1:3
 - b. He is the last prophet closing the canon of Scripture.

7. Revelation remember means “unveiling”, it is the unveiling of Jesus Christ. Rev. 1:1a

The nature of the book of Revelation is apocalyptic!

II. The authenticity of the book Revelation.

A. The external evidence.

1. Revelation has the most abundant evidence of early recognition, more than any other News Testament book.
2. The fact that it was addressed to seven churches assured its wide circulation and acceptance.
3. Some believe that Papias, bishop of Hieropolis, a neighboring city to Laodicia, was the first to use Revelation because Andreas of Caesarea in Cappodocia quoted remarks on Revelation 12 on his commentary in 614 A.D., in the early part of the Second century.
4. Justin Martyr who lived at Ephesus for some time in the first part of the second century, 130 A.D., accepted as written by John and mentioned it in his writings. 100-165 A.D.
5. Melito, bishop of Sardis wrote a commentary on Revelation in 175 A.D.
6. Irenaeus in his work Against Heresies, quoted from nearly every chapter 202 A.D.
 - a. Iraneus speaks of “all the genuine and ancient copies” of the Revelation of John”, indicating its early circulation.

- b. Iraneus is important because as a boy he had know Polycarp who in turn had a close relation and disciple of John the apostle.
7. Eusebius records Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, using the Revelation to oppose false teaching 180 A.D.
8. The Muratorian Canon includes the Revelation as universally recognized at Rome, 170 A.D.
9. Clament of Alexandria accepted it as the work of John between 155-215 A.D., as well as his younger contemporary Origen, 185-253 A.D., etc.
10. Tertullian quotes from all bur four chapter of Revelation as he wrote from Carthage, believing John to be the author, in the early third century..
11. Hippolytus, the most important third century theologian of the Roman church quoted Revelation repeatedly and considered it to be written by “the apostle and disciple of the Lord”, in 236 A.D.
12. One most important find was from Gnostic material discovered in 1945 at Chenoboskion in Upper Egypt, a document of Apocryphon of John, cited Rev. 1:19 and claimed to be written by John., dating in the first part of the first century. (N.T. Com., Robert h. Mounce:11)

- 13.** Morris cites B.W. Bacon who said, “There is no book of the entire New Testament whose external attestation can compare with that of Revelation in nearness, clearness, definiteness, and positiveness of statement” (N.T. Com., Robert H. Mounce:11)

B. The internal evidence.

- 1.** John uses his own name five times, distinct from apocalyptic literature. Rev. 1:1; 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8
- 2.** He identifies himself as a servant, brother, companion in tribulation and a prophet as already noted. Rev. 1:1, 3, 9; 10:11; 22:9
- 3.** He declares to be in Patmos for the testimony of God’s Word. Rev. 1:9
- 4.** The evidence of Johnian words are found throughout the book.
 - a.** The word “Logos”, to speak of Jesus as in his gospel. Jn. 1:1, 14; 1Jn. 1:1; Rev. 19:13
 - b.** The word “Lamb”, a title for Jesus is found twenty-eight times in Revelation, even as John uses it in his gospel also. Jn. 1:29, 36; Rev. 5:6, 8, 12, 13
 - c.** John is the only gospel that records the piercing of Jesus’ side and mentions it. Jn. 19:34; Rev.1:7
 - d.** The word true “alethinos” occurs ten times in Revelation, eight times in the gospel of John, four times in First John.

- but only five times in the rest of the New Testament and three of the five are in Hebrews. Rev. 3:7, 14; 6:10; 15:3; 16:7; 19:2, 9, 11; 21:5, 6
- 5.** The word “witness” is one of the favorite words of John, Twenty-five in the gospel, eight in First John, three in second John and four in Revelation. Rev. 1:5; 2:13; 3:14; 20:4
 - 6.** The word worship appears twenty-four times in the book of Revelation.
 - a.** The most common word for worship in the New Testament is “proskuneo” which means to kiss the hand or the ground, once again the idea is prostration and adoration and worth..
 - b.** The word is used of God, Christ, man, demons and idols and it appears the most numerous in Revelation, twenty-four times.
 - b.** The twenty-four elder in heaven worship Jesus faces to the ground casting their crowns before the throne, “You are worthy, O Lord to receive glory and honor and power: for you created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” Rev. 4:11
 - c.** The four living creatures and twenty-four elder after Jesus took the scroll from the Father’s hand, “Saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals;

For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”Rev. 5:9-10

- 1) Taking us from lost to saved.
 - 2) Taking us from enemies to sons and daughters of God.
- d. John tells us that the angels and elders around the throne fell on their faces and worshipped God. Rev. 7:11
- e. Those martyred Jews and Gentiles that had victory over the beast, his image and mark, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God, “They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before you, For your judgments have been manifested.”
Rev. 15:3-4

C. The opposition to the Revelation.

1. It began with Marcion, the second-century heretic rejecting all non-Pauline writings.

2. Not much later a group of heretics in Asia Minor, the Alogi” who opposed Montanism rejected both the gospel of John and Revelation.
3. According to Epiphanius, they attributed the Revelation to the Gnostic Cerinthius.
4. Dionysius attributed Revelation to “John the Elder” by misinterpreting the clear distinction of the apostle John “the Elder” in the writings of Papias, setting the pattern for modern criticism as he objected to the Revelation due to language and style, 250 A.D.
* Yet until the time of Origin, including him, the whole church knew of only one John, “the apostle”. (Lenski:10)
5. In the west from the Second century on the Apocalypse had won wide acceptance and the East began to reverse its negative position.
6. In the fourth century Athanasius in Alexandira endorsed it without hesitation and the Third council of Cathage, 397 A.D. listed the Apocalypse as canonical and appropriate for public reading in services.
7. The Third Council of Constantinople, 680 A.D., gave formal acceptance to the Apocalypse as New Testament scripture.
8. Interesting that Luther was offended by the book of Revelation and regarded it, “neither apostolic nor prophetic”.

This is the authenticity of the book Revelation!

III. The particulars of the book Revelation.

A. The Author and date of the Revelation.

1. The author is clearly stated to be John the apostle by name five times in the Revelation. Rev. 1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8
 - a. He is called a “servant”. Rev. 1:1b
 - b. He is called a brother and companion in tribulation. Rev. 1:9b
 - c. Some credit the Revelation to John Mark, John the elder, a disciple of John the Baptist or a Jew, without internal evidence.
2. The chain of command for the Revelation is given. Rev. 1:1
 - a. The Father gave it to the Son, Jesus.
 - b. The Son gave it to his angel.
 - c. The angel gave it to John.
3. John says that he saw, heard these things and commissioned to write them. Rev. 1:19; 21:2; 22:8
 - a. Sixteen time John is told to “write”.
 - b. He was told, “Write in a book. Rev. 1:11f
 - 1) The book is mentioned by John, the angel and Jesus, plus indicating it being written already and completed. Rev. 1:11; 22:6-19; 22:7-15; 22:18-19

2) It is incorrect to think John waited till he returned to Ephesus to **write** the Revelation.

- c. “**Write** the things which you have seen”. Rev. 1:19a
 - 1) He said, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day.” Rev. 1:10
 - 2) He said, “And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain.” Rev. 21:10
 - 3) Thirteen times John mentions the Holy Spirit as the agent as the source of the Revelation directly. Rev. 1:1, 10; 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22; 4:2; 14:13; 17:3; 21:10; 22:17
- d. Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to **write**; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not **write** them.” Rev. 10:4
- e. “**Write**: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on’”. Rev. 14:13b-c
- f. “Then he said to me, “**Write**: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.” Rev. 19:9
- g. Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He

said to me, “**Write**”, for these words are true and faithful.” Rev. 21:5

* Notice the writing was simultaneously.
Rev. 1:19; 14:13; 19:9

4. John received the Revelation through visions in the Island of Patmos. Rev. 1:9
 - a. Patmos was a small barren rocky island 75 miles southwest of Ephesus in Aegean Sea, particularly used for banishing political offenders.
 - b. John was sent there in 95 or 96 A.D., under Domitian who reigned 81-96A.D., after being boiled in oil tradition tells us, but failed to die.
 - c. Emperor worship was well known and strengthen the empire by making their claims the authority of divine status.
 - d. Caesar accepted worship as a god during his lifetime, while Augustus was more cautious in the city of Rome but did sanction temples to himself in the provinces, being worshipped widely in the western provinces after his death.
 - e. Caligula demanded homage to his statue, by the time of Nero the imperial cult was established as a religious institution.
 - g. I was not until Domitian, who was the first to demand worship of a living emperor and failure to honor the emperor as a god became political offense and

punishable by death by failing to burn a pinch of incense to Caesar as god.

- h. Emperor worship was well known before Domitian, but he was the first to demand worship of a living Emperor, A.D. 81-96.
5. The book of Revelation has been dated as early as Claudias, A.D. 41-45 to as late as Trajan, A.D. 98-117
 - a. There are some who place it under the reign of Nero around 65 A.D. , prior to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - b. The death of Domitian was in September 18, 96 A.D., therefore the Revelation was probably written about 95-96 A.D.
- B. The Revelation is addressed to the seven churches. Rev. 1:4, 11
 1. They are identified as the seven churches in Asia, therefore the Revelation is Pastoral in nature, addressed to Pastors. Rev. 1:4b
 2. John names the seven churches as he heard a voice saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.” Rev. 1:11

3. John writes a particular letter to each of the seven churches by name. Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14

C. The Revelation is the only New Testament book which is prophetic in nature and contains the Old Testament phraseology. writing under a Divine command. Rev. 1:10-11, 19

1. The purpose of the book is to inform the church of future things, “things which must shortly take place” Rev. 1:1, 19
2. The future Revelation is not given just to inform and satisfy human curiosity but in order:
 - a. To bless those who hear and obey. Rev. 1:3
 - b. To encourage and give hope to those under persecution. Rev. 1:9
 - c. To provoke people to live holy. Rev. 3:4-5
 - d. To warn of coming judgement. Rev. 3:10
 - e. To insure the complete defeat of Satan and the establishing of the kingdom of God. Rev. 12:10

* “Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the **kingdom** of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.””

- g. To assure His people of His coming.
 - 1) “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to **come**, the Almighty.” Rev. 1:8
 - 2) To the churches He said, “I will come”.
 - 3) “He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, **come**, Lord Jesus!” Rev. 22:20

- D. The majority of what is in Revelation is found in the Old Testament.
1. There is not one single direct quote from the Old Testament in the entire book, yet it is full of Old Testament influence in images, allusions, language and thought.
 2. Exodus, Psalms and the major prophets are used most frequently.
 3. There are according to some scholars 348 identifiable allusions found and nearly 70 of these allusions are to Daniel.

* These figures will differ from one to other.
 4. They tell us that there is an average of fifteen Old Testament allusions per chapter.
 5. Some of the key verses already noted. Rev. 1:1; 3, 7, 18, 19, 20; 19:10; 22:16-21
 - a. The origin of the writing, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things

which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John.” Rev. 1:1

- b. The affirmation of the origin, “who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.” Rev. 1:2
- c. The promised blessing, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.” vs. 3
- d. The return of Jesus to be seen by all, “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” vs. 7
- e. The conquering King, “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.” vs. 18
- f. The table of content to the book of Revelation, “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.” vs. 19
- g. A”nd the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come.

Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” Rev. 22:17

These are some of the particulars of the book Revelation!

Conclusion

We have answered the question, “What about the book of Revelation?” by first looking at three important qualities of the book of Revelation.

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