

The Revelation to St John
Study Notes

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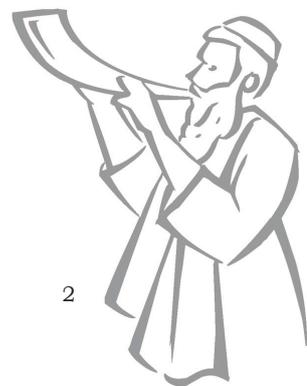
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1. God's Self-revelation - 1:1-20

a) Five presupposition for reading the Revelation to St John

1. Critical - it is only about the struggles between church and State in the end of the first century
2. Preterist - everything written in it only applied to the time of writing and mainly to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD
3. Futuristic - it is mostly about the distant future
4. Symbolical - everything is symbolical, and applicable to any era
5. Historical - it gives us the future from the time of writing until the return of Christ

b) When was the book written

Scholars have suggested mainly a date before 70AD (Fall of Jerusalem), or around 95-96AD (Emperor Domitian).

c) Apocalyptic literature in general

Literature of this kind is often marked by: Special revelations - created in time of oppression - focus on comfort - focus on future - dualistic - dreams, visions, symbolism - carefully developed structure - writer unse a pseudonym

d) Lessons from Rev 1:1-20

1. John speaks of "what must soon take place" and "the time is near". (1.1, 1.3) What do those words normally communicate?
2. The revelation is in the first place a message for seven churches in Asia Minor (1.4, 1.11). What impact should this have on our understanding of the whole book of Revelation?
3. The book is solidly 'Trinitarian'. (1.4). Trinitarian images will occur often in the book. For John and his Messianic readers, this was not new but it was confrontational with the other Jews.
4. What impact would the description of Jesus in 1.5a have had on the original readers?
5. John applies the unique covenantal words (between God and Israel) from Exodus 19.6 and Isaiah 61.6 to the recipients of his letter. (1.5b-6). Consider the impact of this on the readers.
6. Jesus Christ will return in a spectacular manner, visible for all people. Especially those who pierced him. (1.7) (John 19:36-37; Zechariah 12:10; Isaiah 53:5) What do we learn from this?
7. The introductory vision places John in the environment of the temple with the image of the seven golden lampstands. (1.12). Is Jesus portrayed as High Priest?
8. The Son of Man (1.13) is Jesus Christ; this term 'Son of Man' likely refers to Daniel 7.13. If you read the description (1. 13-16) of Jesus there, does that strike you as 'a Son of Man'?
9. What do the seven candles and the seven stars signify? (1.12,16,20). How would the seven churches have received this message?
10. What is the 'lesson' for the seven churches of the description of Jesus in 1.16-18 on the seven churches John wrote to? And on the Jews of those days?

