

Revelation - Introduction, Part 3

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COURSE COMMENTARY



Anti-supernatural Bias

- **Evangelical Distinctives**
 - 1) The Scriptures are inspired (God-breathed, *theopneustos*, (2Ti. 3:16)). Revelation is a supernatural process apart from which the things of God cannot be known. The natural mind cannot produce divine revelation apart from God (2Pe. 1:21).
 - 2) The original texts of Scripture are inerrant. In the same way that Jesus is fully God and fully human, but without sin, so the Scriptures were given through human vessels, yet without error.
 - 3) The Scriptures are taken at face value as an accurate representation of historical facts.
- **Compromising on Evangelical Principles**
Some commentators deny one or more of these evangelical fundamentals in their approach to *The Book of Revelation* or the rest of Scripture.
- **Wolves in Sheep's Clothing**
Those who deny evangelical principles are generally loath to admit it up-front since Evangelicalism is the standard-bearer of historic, orthodox Christianity. Instead of **explicitly** admitting their non-evangelical beliefs, it often is only found **implicitly** in their teachings.

Examples of Anti-Supernaturalism

- **Author not Named John**
In discussions of authorship, some suggest that the author uses the name John, but is not really named John. This asks us to believe that God set forth divine truth packaged as a lie!
- **Genesis as Legend**
Some commentators deny the historic reality of Genesis. Since Genesis and Revelation are intimately related, this undermines the historic relevance of Revelation. (This view is known as **limited inerrancy**).
- **Book of Daniel Written After-the-Fact**
Some commentators hold that the Book of Daniel was written in the time of the Maccabees (B.C. 168-165) as a devotional work and its prophecy is retrospective. (Daniel is foundational to understanding Revelation.)
- **John Incorporates Pagan Legends and Apocryphal Themes**
John did not simply record the things which he saw in the vision, but carefully crafted a document using his own initiative and incorporated pagan legends and apocryphal themes from **extra-biblical** sources.

Style of Writing

- **Greek Categorized as 'More Primitive'**
The Greek text violates some of the normal rules of Greek grammar.
- **Differences from John's Gospel**
John's gospel contains fewer grammatical irregularities (although **1 John** also contains irregularities).
- **Some Conclude the Author Can't be John**
This is the **primary** evidence used by many to discount John the Apostle as the author of the Book of Revelation, assuming some other 'John' instead. (We discuss authorship later.)

Possible Explanations

- **Hebraic Material and Thought Pattern**
Many solecisms occur in Old Testament allusions, as if Hebrew was translated into Greek without attempting to conform to the Greek idiom. (Reflecting the intimate tie between Revelation and the Old Testament.)
- **Heavy Dependence upon Septuagint**
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- **Emotionally Vivid Content**
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- **Not From Ignorance**
The writer gives evidence of a sufficient knowledge of Greek to have potentially avoided the solecisms if this had been his intent.

Genre

- **Genre Defined**
"A category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, marked by a distinctive style, form, or content." (American Heritage Dictionary)
- **No Precise Definition**
Assessing Genre is problematic since both the definition of genre and the elements it involves are highly subjective.
- **Apocalyptic Genre**
Revelation is often categorized as a work in the "apocalyptic genre" as if it were more-or-less on a par with uninspired writings also placed in the same genre.

Motivation

- **Blurring Inspired/Uninspired Boundaries**
The boundary between inspired Scripture (the canon, which includes Revelation) and uninspired Scripture (e.g., Jewish apocryphal writings) is blurred.
- **Revelation: An Imaginative Human Production**
Characterized by borrowing of sources, devotional intention, and after-the-fact prophecy, as other apocryphal writings.
- **Damaging Conclusions**
 - 1) the book should not be interpreted literally
 - 2) prophetic content motivated by desire to be optimistic
 - 3) likely the work of redactors
 - 4) a veiled political document employing hyperbole
 - 5) primarily devotional rather than factual

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).