

Revelation – Big Picture

=> READ REVELATION 1:1-3

OK, let's digest that, because it tells us right there a lot of things in just 3 verses.

- **The WHAT – What is this?**
 - A Revelation
 - From the Greek word ἀποκάλυψις, an unveiling, uncovering, revealing of things that could not be known without it
 - Jewish Apocalyptic Literature (Much of this taken from Introduction to Old Testament Apocalyptic Literature by Richard A. Taylor on thegospelcoalition.org)
 - Not much in OT, just occasional hints, until Daniel
 - By second century BC we see a strong emphasis on apocalyptic writing in Jewish extrabiblical literature.
 - This is during the Second Temple period (post Babylonian exile)
 - **Characteristic Features**
 - Literary expression - for the most part was written instead of oral tradition like much of the early rabbinic tradition
 - Revelatory content - content is, duh, revelatory in nature. Readers gained insight. Recipients believed the message rose above anything resulting from innate human insight
 - Remind you of anything? Horoscope, palm reading, psychics, etc
 - Revealed through Dreams and Visions, or trance states
 - Pseudonymous Authorship - author hoped to secure greater authority and wider acceptance for their writing

- Hiddenness and Secrecy - writings are opaque and mysterious, written for an intended audience who would already be part of the mindset
- Pervasive symbolism - up to and including the strange and grotesque. Appealed to religious imagination
- **Themes**
 - Developed angelology - while limited in OT, extrabiblical apocalyptic texts reflect a highly developed angelology. OT only 2 (Michael and Gabriel in Daniel). Enoch - dozens of angels and describes their activities in considerable detail.
 - Ethical dualism - huh? Belief that complexities of human society were reducible to a struggle between polar opposites (good/evil, light/dark, righteous/unrighteous). Good would eventually prevail, but only through divine intervention. The oppressed could live in anticipation of a promised reversal of fortunes.
 - Deterministic Outlook - these things will eventually come to pass. All the views take for granted that God has predetermined the flow of history and that the outworking of history is characterized by specific numerical patterns.
 - 70 weeks in Daniel 9:24-27
 - Four kingdoms in Daniel 2 and 7
 - 10 successive weeks in Apocalypse of Weeks (Book of Enoch)
 - Four ascents of time, an hour of the age, 1 periods of the ungodly age, period of 12 hours on Earth (Apocalypse of Abraham)
 - 12 divisions in 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch
 - 6 1000 year days followed by a seventh 1000 day of rest in 2 Enoch, following Genesis 1 template
 - Imminent crisis - writing brought encouragement to those without hope through divine intervention

- A faithful remnant - those who believe / persevere / carry on will be included
 - Divine Judgement - literature implicitly addresses the question "Why does God allow suffering and evil in the world, and why do suffering and evil so often affect the righteous more so than the ungodly?" Writers find resolution in the theology of divine judgement. We find this in Biblical and extrabiblical texts.
 - Eschatological hope - although writing focused on the difficulties of the righteous, it doesn't lose hope in the eventual resolution of life's problems.
- **The Who - Who Wrote It, Who is it About, Who is it For?**
 - What can we learn / discern from 2 verses?
 - Revelation of...? Jesus Christ
 - => Why is this striking?
 - What had happened to Jesus?
 - When did the Jews expect Him to return?
 - Had He?
 - Which God gave Him to give to His servants
 - Who gave it?
 - God gave to Jesus
 - Father to Son
 - To give to whom?
 - His servants. God's servants.
 - Humans? Angels? Both?
 - So Jesus is both the Revealer and the Revealed
- **The When**
 - 95-96 AD during John's exile on Patmos