



Crean Lutheran High School Chapel Service, Tuesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012



# REVELATION AS APOCALYPTIC AND THE 7 CHURCHES + US

# Revelation as Apocalyptic

- Devout Christians are agreed that the Holy Bible is the Word of God!



# But How Do We Interpret Revelation?

- First off, make sure you know it's ONE revelation and not PLURAL!

1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:1 mentions TEACHINGSSSSSS of demons. The devil uses multiple, plural teachings in order to confuse and start controversies to distract.

Whereas Scripture has ONE revelation, ONE teaching, ONE message, ONE Gospel!

# So we must know HOW to approach Revelation

- Two popular views:

1. Approach it as FUTURISTIC PROPHECY that treats the book in a LITERALISTIC fashion. Those are fancy words, what do they mean?

Those interpreters who do this treat the 21 judgments & calamities of the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls to say that these things will literally happen in the future on earth = so Revelation 8:12: the sun will lose  $\frac{1}{3}$  of its light in the future.

People Go Crazy with This Stuff!



# Apocalyptic Movies Also Spread Scary Ideas



# Movies like Hunger Games, The Book of Eli, and even Wall-E are Post-Apocalyptic





# What's the problem with this approach?

- Jesus is not trying to SCARE you into heaven! Instead: Matthew 11:28 "Come...give u rest."






# So what's the other approach?

- Revelation is not futuristic literalistic prophecy, BUT...
- 2. APOCALYPTIC: That means it uncovers God's message that is presented in symbolic and figurative language to convey Christ's victory *already won!*



# Why Did God Use Symbolism?

- Because when John wrote this exiled on the island of Patmos, the Christian Church was being persecuted within the Roman Empire.
  - So, the coded symbolic and figurative language was designed so that ONLY CHRISTIANS could understand it!
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You have to see SYMBOLS to understand, e.g. Rev. 5:6




# A Lamb...with seven horns and with seven eyes...

1. Christians knew the significance of LAMB = the clean sacrificial animal used in the Old Testament to make atonement and the fulfillment by "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)
2. SEVEN = God's number of PERFECTION, e.g. seven gifts, seven churches, seventh day of rest after creation, etc.
3. HORNS = power.
4. EYES = wisdom.



# So...

1. A Roman soldier unfamiliar with the Old Testament would read “lamb with 7 horns and 7 eyes” as gibberish.
  2. But the Christian with the Old Testament as their foundation would know that the lamb refers to Jesus who possesses the PERFECT POWER and WISDOM of God since He is the Son of God...the figure in Revelation 5:6 = JESUS!
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Apocalyptic = using figures and symbols to reveal Jesus!







OK, but what about Jesus  
precisely?

Answer: Revelation is about:


THE VICTORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST  
OVER


EVERYTHING THAT OPPOSES GOD AND HIS  
PEOPLE!






# Practical Value

- How easy it is for us to feel overwhelmed!
  - From the book *Generation iY* by Tim Elmore...
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# Challenges of YOUR i-Y generation (Elmore, p. 31):

- In 1999, Teens believed the U.S. was broken, but they planned to fix it; in 2009 60% of them return home to Mom after college with no plan.
  - In 1999, 90% of teens planned to go to college; in 2009 30% of teens didn't even graduate from high school.
  - In 1999, many had dreams of transforming the world; in 2009 many face a “quarterlife crisis” at age twenty-five.
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# Why this trend?

- Because of the belief that life is overwhelming:
  1. Job security is lacking.
  2. Depression on the rise.
  3. The world is at war.
  4. Threats of terrorism.
  5. The cost to go to college.
  6. The information, technology age while exciting, can make one feel overwhelmed.
  7. Rapid change and the lack of stability.

# Enter Revelation



# The Lamb Sacrificed to Conquer Sin and Satan!

- Every source of stress and pressure; every cause of depression and loss of hope; every threat from the outside or the inside...all of these things that come from the SOURCE of sin and the devil have been DEFEATED by the LION, and the LAMB with all power and wisdom and authority...that is, these have been DEFEATED by Jesus Christ! This is what Revelation is about!




# And First Major Section is HUGE: the 7 Churches!


- So how do you get connected to the Lamb's victory and protection?
- Answer: The Church! HIS Church! The Church is represented in Revelation by 7 actual, real-life churches that existed in Asia Minor in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, but remember 7 = PERFECTION, so they ALSO represent the UNIVERSAL church, the WHOLE church...ALL Christians.


# Revelation 1:13...

- “AND IN THE MIDST OF THE LAMPSTANDS [REVELATION 1:20 TELLS US THESE ARE THE SEVEN CHURCHES] ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN...”
- THAT IS, JESUS IS IN THE MIDST OF HIS CHURCH = HE IS WITH HIS PEOPLE!




# WHERE DO YOU FIND THE HELP AND POWER OF JESUS CHRIST?

- In His Church, among the seven lampstands...why the symbolism of lampstands?
  - Because through the Word and Sacraments of Jesus, Jesus enters into the lives of His people and SHARES HIS LIFE and HIS LIGHT!
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# Through His Word in His Church, Jesus Gives Light...

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. WHOEVER FOLLOWS ME WILL NOT WALK IN DARKNESS, BUT WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE." – JOHN 8:12



# WE ARE TO STUDY HIS MESSAGE TO THE 7 CHURCHES & APPLY IT

- Some of my favorite parts:
  1. Rev. 2:4 to the Church in Ephesus: Don't abandon your FIRST LOVE!
  2. Rev. 2:10 to the Church of Smyrna: Don't fear suffering; just be faithful and you will receive a crown of life!
  3. Rev. 3:15 to the Church of Laodicea: Don't be lukewarm = complacent = but keep your FERVOR, think of 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:7!