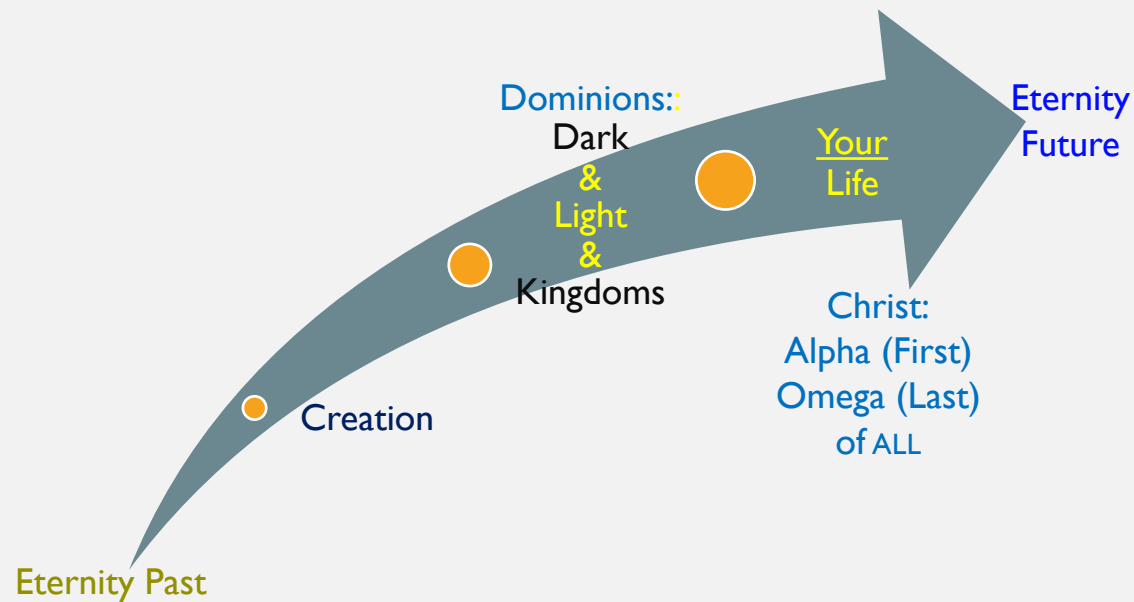


REVELATION 09 – CHURCH- CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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Revelation 1:9-11

PROLOGUE – ALPHA-OMEGA: EVERYTHING



- Creation did not determine its beginning nor its end
- Satan-Man dominions *believe* they have Control but enslaved to Sin {Darkness}
 - Christ determines who rules: Ex: Cyrus
- You do not choose your birth, nor your death: Your choice is Light (Ac 9:1-19)
- Lord Christ *did* choose His Death, for you on the Stauros (Nu 21:4-9; Jn 10:14-18; 19:29-30)

PROLOGUE – PREAMBLE END OF THE BEGINNING

- Preamble ends on the high note of glorifying Christ who is the author (Beginning) and Finisher (End) of Faith; i.e., Salvation (He 12:2-3)
 - John begins with Christ as High Priest {Melchizedek} and ends with Spirit and *Bride* calling people into Eternity Future with them: “Come...” (Mt 11:28-30)
- Church Letters emphasize failure of people to remain faithful **except** in meekness, via Spirit, on Him (Mt 5:2-12; Ro 11:24)
- Body of Revelation balances Failures of the Lost with their ultimate Second Death with Salvation of the Saved culminating in their Second Life
- Christ, Alpha-Omega, is the focus of every *word* of Revelation; and the Bible

CHURCH-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: FROM JERUSALEM TO ASIA

- End of 1st Century Christianity's HQ moved from Jerusalem to Asia (Ephesus)
- Early persecution of Christians increased
- Jerusalem destroyed A.D. 70 disrupting Judaism {Pharisees}
- Council of Jamnia declared The Way: Not Judaism; not Rome sanctioned
- Ephesus Temple of Artemis (A.D. 56)
(Ac 19:23-41)
- Paul-John HQ there to reach Mediterranean Basin and North Africa



PATMOS: ISLAND OF HIS DEATH

- Patmos was more a title than a name: it was one of several penal islands where political prisoners were exiled to hard labor: Patmos means My Death
 - Ephesus, *neokoros* city to Artemis {Diane}, built a temple to Domitian to be declared *neokoros*, temple guardian of Domitian; i.e., special status above other cities (Ac 19:23-41)
 - Showed shift from *ancient* paganism to *modern* man-worship as Domitian arbitrary and capricious in his frequent retributions: Promoted godless society (Pr 28:21; 29:12; 30:27)
 - Theorized John spoke against this temple, and as a leader of a non-state approved religion, Ephesus exiled him to penal island to work himself to death (A.D. 90s)
 - Apostles *never* exalted themselves above others; this move was already underway in church hierarchy resulting in official church offices: Pope, Bishop, Priest, Pastor (Mt 23:8-12)

THE WAY: OF PERSECUTION

- Christianity, an illegal religion separated from Judaism, was in a precarious position (Pr 25:26)
 - Tolerated if it remained in the shadows; not oppose popular or official policies
 - If it entered the *limelight*, its leaders and members could be prosecuted as a danger to state order; esp. with growing reliance upon emperor worship for state cohesion
- John identifies his situation with generalized *insidious* cultural **tribulation**
 - Exiled for spreading the Word (Gospel) and Teaching of Jesus' Kingdom (Jn 18:33-38)
 - Not centrally mandated but emanated from local societal-governing-religious peoples
 - Darkness rejecting Light and more so as it sees judgment approaching (Jn 1:1-18; Re 12:9-12)

IN THE SPIRIT: MYSTICISM OR NEW COVENANT?

- John writes that on the *Lord's Day*, Sunday, he was *in the Spirit* which sounds foreign to our ears; however, it should be normal state for *New Covenant* saints
 - John is not writing about some mystic trance akin to today's heretical Charismatic – Pentacostal – Gnostic movements
 - John simply states he is not grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit (Ep 4:30-31; 1Th 5:19)
 - He is worshiping Jesus via the Spirit rather than blaming Him for his banishment
- Not reserved for Sunday {Church}; it is to be one's continual frame of mind
 - Always in a state of Worship; what is the object of our worship? Self or Christ (Ep 6:5-9)
 - John probably in **prayer** when Christ appeared (Ro 8:22-27)

TRUMPET CALL: LAST REVELATION

- John hears a voice like a trumpet blast {Imperative}, “Write...”
 - Harkens to Paul’s words that Christ will come with a loud voice no one can ignore
Examples: Father at Mt Horeb and coming Rapture (Ex 19:16-20; 20:18-19; 1Th 4:15-18)
 - This is the final revelation ending what began with Moses, Pentateuch composer;
except John saw holy High Priest Jesus instead of *holy fire, burning bush* (Ex 3:1-6; He 3:1-6)
- “...what you see...”
 - John not to add his interpretations or theories; i.e., change Jesus’ word (Re 22:18-19)
 - Fulfilled Christ’s words to Peter about John: Living until Christ appears (Jn 21:20-23)
 - Jesus ignores Jerusalem, Judaism, concentrating on Churches, Asia; Jews time is suspended until events detailed later in Revelation: Our time to be witnesses which Jews failed; and we will fail also (Mt 4:12-17; Ro 11:1-12; Ga 4:21-31)

SEVEN CHURCHES: RESPONSES TO TRIBULATION

- These churches were the hub of Christianity in John's time
 - Second century would see Christianity's focus shift to North Africa as Romans left Rome and colonized this rich region and Asia regresses in importance
- Jewish and Pagan hostility toward The Way were populous movements supported by local governments
 - Believe letters to these churches reflect various responses to generalized persecution; no evidence Domitian initiated empire-wide Christian persecution movement
 - Letters detail Churches' greater failure: We have indwelling Spirit; longer time span (Mt 28:18-20; Ro 11:13-26)
 - Churches, individuals, respond in like manner adopting current philosophies to *blend in* which moves them away from *their* changeless Melchizedek-like High Priest Christ