

TEXT - Revelation 13:1-2

REVIEW

Summary/Theme/Main Idea of the Middle Section of Revelation (chs. 6-19)

Rome, Perverse and Powerful, Persecutes the Saints;
Christ, Pure and Prevailing, Protects the Saints

When will these things happen?

Historicist interpretation with application from Idealist view

The middle section of Revelation contains three sets of seven things, which communicate to us how Rome will oppose the churches, and how our Lord Jesus Christ will protect the churches, and bring judgment on Rome during three periods of time.

Chapter 6 - seven seals - Rome non-Christian pagan

Chapters 8-9 - seven trumpets - Rome Christian or Arian

Chapter 16 - seven vials or bowls - Rome Antichristian or Papal

Why does Revelation not mention Rome or Caesar by name?

It is so that the disciples of Jesus Christ could not be misunderstood as being subversive of Rome or traitors against Caesar.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not come to set up an earthly kingdom to rival the Roman Empire, or to be a king to rival Caesar. Our Lord Jesus and His apostles did not teach us rebellion against Rome or Caesar, but instead to honor, pay taxes to, submit to, and pray for Rome and Caesar. But Jesus' enemies still accused him of treason against Caesar; and when He was crucified for our sins, the official charge was treason against Rome for calling Himself the king of the Jews; they accused His apostles of the same thing; and they continued to accuse His disciples of treason against Rome and Caesar, to get them in trouble. So our Lord Jesus, by His Holy Spirit, taught us, His disciples, what to expect in the future about God's judgment and wrath on Rome, without mentioning Rome.

Why Rome?

Corrupt religion allied with corrupt government have persecuted the saints many times in many places, and still do today, and will until the Lord Jesus comes back. But Rome has been so much the center of such persecution, that our Lord Jesus showing us in powerful symbols how He will protect us from Rome and bring judgment on Rome gives us all the assurance we need that He will care for us, whether or not our troubles come directly from Rome.

But how can the interpretation of Revelation have so much to do with Rome, when Rome is never mentioned? not Rome, Roman, Romans, Caesar, Latin How can it be right for the pastor to tell you, “Most of the book of Revelation is about Rome” when none of the words that refer to Rome are even in the book of Revelation?

LESSON

We could expect the prophecy in Revelation to be about the Roman Empire because that is where the prophecy in Daniel left off.

The disciples of Jesus Christ had the Old Testament scriptures already. Anyone familiar with the book of Daniel, who then read the book of Revelation, would immediately see that it is the same kind of literature (the same genre: apocalypse), and that it even uses some of the same symbolism. And they knew that they were living right when the prophecies of Daniel had left off, so they could study Revelation, to see if it might take up where Daniel left off, and it does!

The prophetic visions in Daniel started right when he was living and told of events several hundred years into the future in terms of kings and kingdoms or empires that would rise and fall. The end of the prophetic visions given in Daniel is the time of the Roman Empire, when the kingdom of God has come in through Christ, and His kingdom is overwhelming the Roman Empire. So, it makes sense for the reader of Revelation to suppose it will do the same, starting in the time of John and extending several hundred years into the future in terms of kings and kingdoms that would rise and fall.

Look in Daniel with me to see what I mean.

Daniel 2:26-45

2:28-29 God has revealed by vision what would come to pass in the future, hundreds of years into the future,

2:38 but starting right then

Four kingdoms or empires are foretold by vision; what were they?

-The first kingdom is the Babylonian empire, of King Nebuchadnezzar, since Daniel said he was the golden head in the vision.

We can read what the second and third are: Daniel 8:20-22

-The second kingdom is the Medo-Persian empire of King Darius and Cyrus the Great.

-The third kingdom is the Greek or Grecian empire of Alexander the Great, who died young, and whose empire was divided into four parts by four of his generals.

-The fourth kingdom, then, is the Roman Empire, which we know, from history, came next after the Greek Empire.

So, the four kingdoms or empires were

- Babylonian
- Medo-Persian
- Greek
- Roman - iron

Then, in the time of the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire, the kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven would be set up.

So, the prophetic vision in Daniel chapter 2 takes us to the place in history where the kingdom of God is interacting with the Roman Empire.

Daniel 7:1-28

7:17 Four kingdoms or empires again
the same four.

-7:1 see how it starts with Babylon, which was still in power

-7:7 see how the fourth one again is strong as iron

-7:25-27 see how the vision takes us to when the Roman Empire is interacting
with the kingdom of God

When the people of God received the book of Revelation from the Lord Jesus by
the apostle John, and when they read of the visions the Lord has given John, of
such symbols as

Revelation 13:1-2

a beast rising up out of the sea

ten horns

leopard, bear, lion

the congregations could know that the prophecy given through Daniel, which
followed history up to the point where the kingdom of God was overcoming the
Roman Empire, would take up again at that same place and continue

and they could know that the prophecy would begin in their own time, and go
hundreds of years into the future