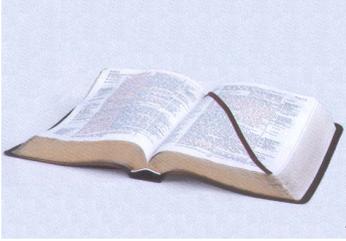
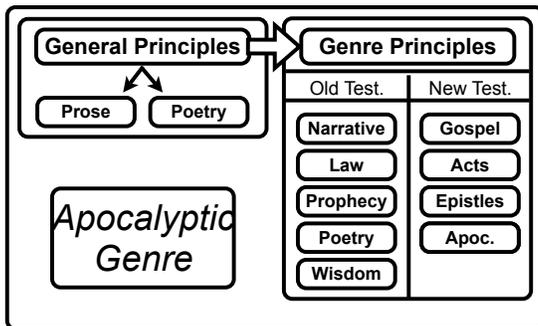


Biblical Hermeneutics



Genre
Principles:
Apocalyptic 1

Literary Interpretation



Hermeneutics—Literary Interpretation

John Calvin on Revelation

“Even the great Reformer, John Calvin, admitted his uncertainty about what to do with the book of Revelation.”—KBH

Hermeneutics—Apocalyptic: John Calvin

General Observations

“When turning to the book of Revelation from the rest of the New Testament, one feels as though he or she were entering a foreign country.”—FS

Hermeneutics—Apocalyptic: Observations

General Observations

“Our job is to recononize an inspired text that no longer is inspiring because we have so completely abandoned its gospel hermeneutic.”—Dr. Stevens

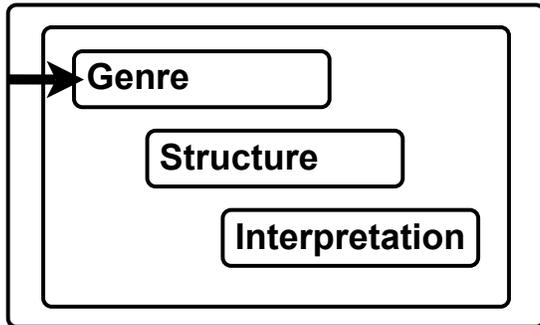
Hermeneutics—Apocalyptic: Observations

General Observations

What is most desperately needed is to banish the rampant ignorance about Revelation's complex, hybrid genre, but most especially about the apocalypse as a genre of literature.

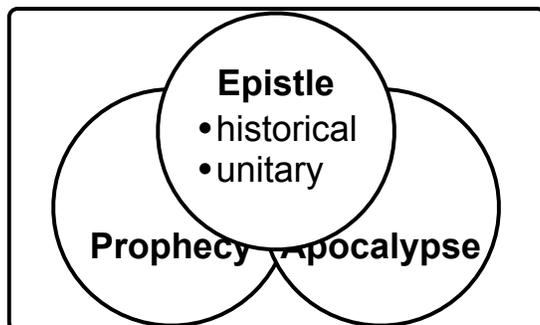
Hermeneutics—Apocalyptic: Observations

Apocalyptic: Revelation



Hermeneutics—Apocalyptic: Revelation

Revelation: Genre



Hermeneutics—Introduction: Purpose

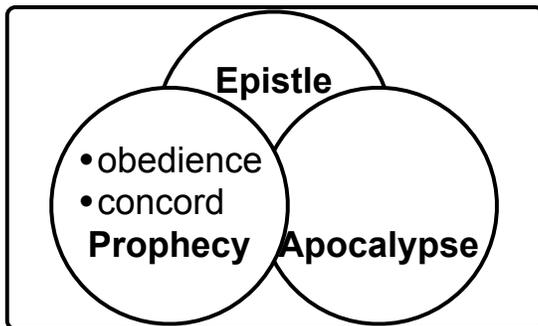
Genre: Epistle

- 1—contextualize within historical setting
 - first century, Asia Minor, persecution
 - local references in Seven Letters (2–3)
 - historical allusions in Judgment Cycle (6–19)
- 2—unitary whole of composition
 - epistolary *inclusio* (beginning/end)
 - hermeneutical key to all in-between
 - introductory prologue = christological key (1:1–8)
 - introductory vision = apocalyptic key (1:9–20)

Hermeneutics—Rev.: Genre-Epistle



Revelation: Genre



Hermeneutics—Revelation: Genre



Genre: Prophecy

- 1—obedience of faith is the goal
 - Old Testament pattern (forthtelling vs. foretelling)
 - church judged in Seven Letters (2–3)
 - world judged in Judgment Cycle (6–19)
- 2—concord with New Testament
 - harmony with the gospel message
 - authority in its canonical concord
 - must recanonize the message
 - must reenlist the church

Hermeneutics—Rev.: Genre-Prophecy



Prophecy Questions

- Q1: question of prophetic fulfillment
 - preterist = all past (all prophecies fulfilled in original setting)
 - historicist = all history (prophecies trace historical developments of age of church)
 - futurist = all future (all prophecies remain to be fulfilled in the future)
 - idealist = all symbolic (prophecies symbolize timeless struggle of good and evil)

1st Cent. A.D. Church History Tribulation

Preterist Historicist Futurist
Idealist

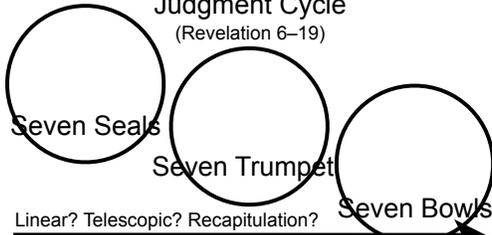
Hermeneutics—Rev.: Genre-Prophecy



Prophecy Questions

- Q2: question of cycle* interpretation

Judgment Cycle
(Revelation 6–19)



*Cycle = "Judgment Cycle" = Rev. 6–19 = three series of seven judgments each (Seals, Trumpets, Bowls)

Hermeneutics—Rev.: Genre-Prophecy



Prophecy Questions

- Q2: question of cycle* interpretation

- linear = chronological sequence (judgments unfold in strict linear sequence in time)
- telescopic = connected series (judgments in linear series, but each seventh introduces next series)
- recapitulation = climatic series (three cycles with same truths, but dramatically building to a climax)

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

*Cycle = "Judgment Cycle" = Rev. 6–19 = three series of seven judgments each (Seals, Trumpets, Bowls)

Hermeneutics—Rev.: Genre-Prophecy



Prophecy Questions

- Q3: question of millennial interpretation

- premillennial = literal, Jerusalem (Christ's return establishes 1000 year reign from Jerusalem)
- amillennial = symbolic, church (Christ's return reveals his spiritual reign throughout church age)
- postmillennial = symbolic, church (Christ's return celebrates church's eventual evangelistic success)

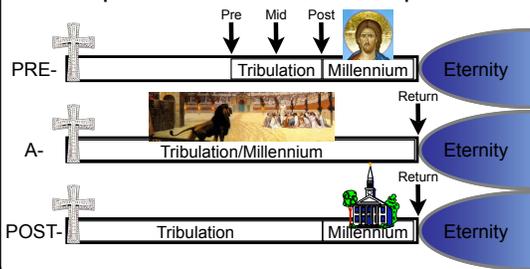
(millennial = Rev. 20:4, 6 = mention of a 1000 year reign)

Hermeneutics—Rev.: Genre-Prophecy



Prophecy Questions

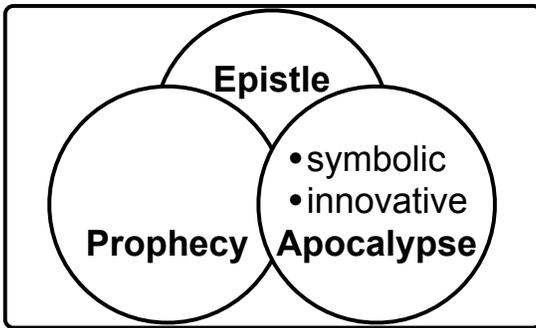
- Q3: question of millennial interpretation



Hermeneutics—Rev.: Genre-Prophecy



Revelation: Genre



Hermeneutics—Revelation: Genre



Genre: Apocalypse

- 1—John’s language highly symbolic
- Jewish literature background (Dan. 7–12, Zech. 12–14, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, 1 Enoch, Qumran)
- Christian literature development (Sibylline Oracles, Apocalypse of Peter, etc.)
- interpretive implications:
 - numerology (numbers symbolize ideas)
 - zoomorphism (animals symbolize rulers)
 - imagery intentionally fantastic, weird, unreal

Hermeneutics—Rev.: Genre-Apocalypse



Symbolic: 2 Esdras Example

- 2 Esdras texts
 - original in Hebrew/Aramaic
 - survives only in Latin manuscripts (from Greek)
- 2 Esdras content
 - composite work showing history of use
 - chs. 3–15 = main Jewish work (cir. A.D. 100)
 - chs. 1–2, 15–16 = Christian additions (A.D. 100–300)
 - laments loss of Jerusalem, A.D. 70

Hermeneutics—Rev.: Symbolic-2 Esdras



Symbolic: 2 Esdras Example

- 2 Esdras imagery
 - cosmic disturbances (sun, moon, stars)
 - earthly disturbances (terror, tumult, abnormalities)
 - messianic expectations (400 year reign)
 - numerology (series of sevens)
 - woman as a city (Jerusalem, huge proportions)
 - visions, dreams, interpretations
 - zoomorphism (eagle: 3 heads; lion: human voice)
 - written visions, hidden book, only for the “wise”

Hermeneutics—Rev.: Symbolic-2 Esdras



Genre: Apocalypse

- 2—John's imagery highly innovative
 - heavy use of Old Testament themes, images, but *always transformed christologically*
 - original meaning does not guarantee John's meaning
 - illustration: Dan 7 vs. Rev 13 (beasts and kings)
 - beasts: 4 separate beasts into 1 composite beast
 - kings: 10 *sequential* kings of Seleucid dynasty vs. 10 *simultaneous* kings of beast's reign



Innovative: Daniel Imagery

Dan 7	Rev 13
Four Beasts	One Beast
4th beast	→ ten horns
3rd beast	→ leopard
2nd beast	→ bear
1st beast	→ lion



Innovative: Daniel Imagery

Dan 7	Rev 13
Ten Kings	Ten Kings
10 sequential, Seleucid kings preceding infamous Antiochus IV	→ 10 simultaneous kings contemporary with the beast



Revelation: Genre

