MORE THOUGHTS ON DANIEL AND REVELATION

A Faith Statement by Charles E. Wheeling

Recent events in and from the Middle East now stir the thinking of millions regarding Bible Prophecy and the End Times. For obvious reasons, many are focusing special attention upon the apocalyptic writings of Daniel and the Revelation. For some, reading these prophetic writings in light of current events poses a challenge because they hold preconceived opinions and interpretations.

To express the matter simply, these persons are at once confronted with the difficulty of holding onto past interpretations while, at the same time, considering Daniel and the Revelation as new or present truth writings. For a variety of reasons, they believe many of the prophecies contained in Daniel and the Revelation have already met fulfillment. For some, interpreting Daniel and Revelation as present or future truth borders upon heresy.

It seems most unreasonable to me that anyone could, after becoming acquainted with the context of Daniel and Revelation, hold such an uncomfortable and untenable position. Both of these ancient prophets wrote concerning the distant future, i.e., distant from their day. Both Daniel and John were told in their visions that the things being shown to them pertained to the time of the end. This is why both writings are considered to be apocalyptic writings! Daniel, for example, was specifically commanded by a mighty angel to "seal up his book until the time of the end."

How then is it possible for anyone to claim fulfillment of these apocalyptic writings before the time of the end? Are we to believe, for example, that Alexander the Great (c. 330 B.C.) has fulfilled apocalyptic prophecy? Impossible! The only reasonable conclusion here is that all previous attempts to interpret Daniel and Revelation with past history represent applications, not fulfillments! In truth, past applications are but shadows of a future fulfillment (filling to the full), not the inverse.
Dedicated students of Bible prophecy should be aware of some critical problems (scholarly issues) associated with the two books, Daniel and Revelation. For example, many Bible scholars do not consider the Book of Daniel to be older than 200-165 B.C. In plain English, many Bible scholars believe the book of Daniel was written perhaps 150-200 years before Christ was born. The difficulty here of course is that the author of the book, Daniel, claims to be living circa 600 B.C. This alleged contradiction, for some, makes suspect the genuineness of the book, and thus casts doubt upon its end-time predictions.

Unless, or until, additional copies of the book of Daniel can be discovered pre-dating the Dead Sea Scrolls, the historicity (historical authenticity) of the person (Daniel) and the writing itself cannot be considered beyond scholarly dispute.

Similar scholarly issues surround the book of Revelation in the New Testament. The great German Reformer, Martin Luther, considered the book of Revelation as unworthy of Scripture. He did not believe the writing should have place in the Sacred Canon. Yet, the author of Revelation claims to be John, the youngest, beloved disciple of Jesus and claims to have received words and visions directly from Jesus Christ.

There is a simple solution to this "tempest in a teapot," however, that I wish to offer. I accept Jesus of Nazareth as being a genuine, historical person, even though archeological evidence or extra-Biblical evidence regarding the man Jesus is rare. Nevertheless, I personally believe He lived, died, was resurrected and is alive today in Heaven. For me, this is a faith transaction. I accept Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of Scripture, and He accepted the person of Daniel and the book of Daniel as authentic! Jesus quoted from the book of Daniel. Jesus spoke of "Daniel the prophet," and even more significantly, Jesus placed the context of Daniel's visions at the time of the end!

Personally, I accept both apocalyptic writings, Daniel and Revelation, as valid, with the same faith that I accept Jesus as the Christ. For me, this is the only reasonable position to hold. I believe the book of Daniel in Old Testament Scripture and the book of Revelation in New Testament Scripture contain apocalyptic prophecy, that is, having to do with the end of time. I reject every claim to fill-full their visions at any other time in history than at the time of the end.

I cannot believe that Alexander the Great fulfilled Daniel's second vision (Daniel, Chapter 8) or that Antiochus IV Epiphanes (c 175-163 B.C.) fulfilled Daniel's third and fourth visions (Daniel, Chapters 9; 10-12). While it may be reasonable to take the position "history repeats," I cannot see that it is reasonable to propose multiple fulfillments of prophecy. Multiple applications, absolutely, but fulfillment means to fill-in-full. To fill-in-full means 100%. What can one add to 100%? Though some events or persons in past history may parallel or appear similar in some respects to apocalyptic predictions, the past is the past, and past history is not the time of the end!

-- Charles Wheeling is author of this faith statement. Others may freely copy or quote this statement, but in its entirety, please. Questions or comments may be directed to: Charles Wheeling, PO Box 352, Jemison, AL 35085, USA; PH (205) 646-2941 or e-mail: semantics@inbookseast.org.
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