

The *Book of Revelation* and Catholic answers to “end of the world” prophecies

- I. Humanity’s obsession with **death**; the “*instinctual*” desire to live forever
- fear of dying is conquered by: knowledge about death and beyond —
- A. China / India = reincarnation
 - B. Greek / Roman = Hades / Ellysium (reward / punishment)
 - C. Inca / Aztec = new life for the fortunate of this world
 - D. Mayan = cyclical calendar – 2012 is end of major cycle
 - E. Egyptian = continuation of this life without fear of dying again
 - F. Modern Science = ever expanding universe – cosmic eternity

II. Judeo-Christian Faith:

God, our Creator, has placed in the heart / soul a yearning for reunion with Him.

As we see from other religious beliefs, all people know this world is limited, yet we “feel” we are created for more than what we have here.

Christians, as others, want to explain, *have knowledge about*, death and life, thus ...

how we approach the *Book of Revelation*:

1. there is “secret” knowledge for those clever enough to decipher the “code” (these ideas limit themselves to a material or three-dimensional vision of reality)
2. Revelation is spiritual and symbolic with a *total vision* of life, not merely material; God is in charge and there is no need to “explain” everything.
— this is John’s truer understanding of his work —

III. The *Book of Revelation* = Sacred Liturgy

** John’s Gospel does not have the Institution Narrative (Last Supper) because the Church was fully aware of the Eucharistic Liturgy by the time of his writing. And, they would have seen the *Book of Revelation* also structured to match the Eucharistic Liturgy! **

- A. I. Liturgy of the Word = seven letters to the churches
with exposition on the History of Salvation

II. Liturgy of the Eucharist = the Lamb's Heavenly Banquet

Thus, the book was written to match the lived-experience of those who would hear / read the revelation. There was no need to "hide" anything, (a sub-text).

- B. Written for the *current* day, **not** for the future!
 - true for all, each generation!
 - no waiting for a future event;
every liturgy completes Revelation!

IV. Allegorical Imagery

- A. A type of literature which uses symbols to convey meaning.

Contemporary examples: "that person is a work-horse"
"raining cats and dogs" or "snail mail"
We easily recognize these as non-literal!

- B. The intention: to move the reader out of an earth-bound life into a spiritual awareness:
We are destined for a heavenly home, so don't worry about this world; it is all passing away. Focus on God and giving Him glory!

V. **God has a plan**

- A. God wants all people to be saved, so He does not *hide* things which must be "discovered" and "decoded" or limit His signs to a few with "special knowledge."
This is the heresy of Gnosticism!
- B. Rather, God invites us to trust and accept His plan. Live each day connected to God, and the book shows you what you can expect to experience.

VI. *Jesus warns us not to worry but be prepared!* (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21)

Matt 24:6: "see that you are not alarmed"

Matt 24:23: "'here is the Christ!' . . . do not believe it." see also 24:26

Matt 24:29-31: Coming of the "Son of Man" – quotes Isaiah, prophesy against Babylon
Ezekiel, prophesy against Egypt
Amos, prophesy against the greedy

Matt 24:32-35: "this generation" meaning it happens for each of us.

Matt 24:36-44: No one but the Father knows. Always be prepared;
we will all give an account of ourselves.