



LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

May 14th 2017 — Part 2

“Revelation & the Biblical Storyline”



Charting the Biblical Storyline

	Act 1	Act 2	Act 3	Act 4
The Four Act Drama:				

	Inn.	H.G.	Prom.		
The Dispensations:					

The Chiastic Structure¹ of Scripture:

_____	<u>A</u> Creation of heaven and earth (Genesis 1-2) <u>B</u> Marriage: Adam and Eve—the bride comes to the garden-sanctuary from which rivers of water flow for the nations (Genesis 2) <u>C</u> Satan’s destruction promised (Genesis 3)
_____	<u>D</u> The Law, the Writings, The Prophets—God makes for Himself a people (Israel) to whom He makes unconditional covenant promises and through whom He intends to bless all nations. (Genesis 4—Malachi 4)
_____	<u>E</u> The incarnation and ministry of Messiah (The Gospels) <u>E’</u> The crucifixion & resurrection of Messiah
_____	<u>D’</u> Acts, the Epistles, Revelation—God makes for Himself a people (The Church) by extending the Gospel to all nations of the earth. He then delivers the church from His final judgment on the earth in order that the people of Israel might repent and receive His promises.
_____	<u>C’</u> Satan’s destruction accomplished (Revelation 20) <u>B’</u> Marriage: Lamb & Bride—the bride comes to a city-sanctuary from which rivers of water flow for the nations (Revelation 21) <u>A’</u> Creation of a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21-22)

Observations:

1. The first three chapters of Genesis and the last three chapters of Revelation form an _____.

⇒ Think of an inclusio as bookends or brackets. Its purpose is to establish the theme to which everything else within the inclusio is related. Example: Ps. 113

Theme: God is glorified as He _____ among His worshippers.

- This theme is repeated throughout the Old and New Testaments (Exod. 29:45; Lev. 26:11; Ezek. 37:27; John 1:14, 14:17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3)

2. The _____ and _____ of Christ is the center of the biblical storyline.

⇒ The life of Christ is integral to the accomplishing of God’s plans and purposes.

Purpose: It is by the _____ death of Christ that God _____ mankind, making it possible for Him to once again dwell among them.

¹ The epilogue/prologue structure and text taken from *A Biblical and Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* by Miles V. Van Pelt

The Authorship of Revelation

- The author of Revelation identifies himself as “John” twice within the first chapter of the book.
Rev. 1:1—The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John
Rev. 1:9—I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
- While some throughout church history have disputed the authorship of the book, the majority have identified the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee (the brother of James) as the “John” of Revelation.
 - ⇒ Church Fathers such as **Justyn Martyr** (c 150 AD), **Irenaeus** (c 180 AD) who was from Smyrna and claimed to have heard Polycarp (a disciple of the apostle John), and **Melito** bishop of Sardis (165 AD) all argue that the apostle John was the author.

Similarities with John’s Gospel:

(Jn. 1:29) The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, *the Lamb of God* who takes away the sin of the world!”

(Rev. 5:6) And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders *a Lamb standing, as if slain*.

(Jn. 1:1) In the beginning was *the Word*, and *the Word* was with God, and *the Word was God*.

(Rev. 19:13) He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called *The Word of God*.

The Significance of the Authorship of John the Apostle

1. John was known as the “_____” Disciple, emphasizing the closeness of his relationship to Jesus.

⇒ John was given the responsibility to care for Mary, the mother of Jesus (John 19:26).

2. John was a part of Jesus’ _____ (along with Peter and James).

⇒ He was a witness to important events in the life and ministry of Jesus such as the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:37), his transfiguration (Luke 9:28), his crucifixion (John 19:26), and his resurrection (John 21).

3. John was the disciple who _____ the longest following the ascension of Jesus.

⇒ The book of Revelation was written during the reign of the emperor Domitian (81-96 AD) according to the church historian Eusebius:

“Domitian, having shown great cruelty toward many, and having unjustly put to death no small number of well-born and notable men at Rome, and having without cause exiled and confiscated the property of a great many other illustrious men, finally became a successor of Nero in his hatred and enmity toward God. He was in fact the second that stirred up a persecution against us, although his father Vespasian had undertaken nothing prejudicial to us. It is said that in this persecution the apostle and evangelist John, who was still alive, was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos in consequence of his testimony to the divine word.”

—Eusebius (4th C), *Church History*, 17-18.1

⇒ Having lived so long, John had a deep knowledge of the OT. His Gospel and Revelation are therefore steeped in OT language and allusions. John also presents the most highly developed Christology in the NT.

4. John had _____ for the name of Christ and the spread of the Gospel.

⇒ His exhortation to the church therefore concerned their faithfulness to the Word of God and their sharing the testimony of Jesus Christ even in the midst of great suffering or persecution.

Point of Emphasis: The most significant ministry of John’s life took place in his _____ because of his increasing knowledge of Jesus Christ through the study of Scripture as well as his availability to God to be used for His plans and purposes.

Because of his knowledge of Jesus Christ both in His earthly life as well as from the Scriptures, the Apostle John was the perfect person to bring the biblical storyline to a close!