

Introduction of the Revelation of John

Session 1 – August 28

The Last Book of the Bible

- Is a letter
- A Pastoral letter
- Written to specific congregations
- Meant to be read out loud
- During worship
- And to be studying by a community

“The Last Book” a five part drama

- Creation (Genesis)
- Covenant (Exodus – Malachi)
- Christ (Gospels)
- Church (Acts – Jude)
- Consummation (Revelation)

Controversial from the Start!

- Opposing Teachers rejected; yet within a few decades wide circulation: Egypt, North Africa, Rome and Southern Gaul
- 250 Bishop of Alexandria – not by same hand as Gospel of John
- 340 Eusebius: accepted, rejected, disputed
- Part of canon by beginning of 400's

Reformation and Revelation

- Luther – includes in Protestant Canon...but lacking good theology...
- Zwingli – “no biblical book”
- Calvin – passed over, writing 26 NT commentaries not 27!

Christians in Asia, late 1st Century

- Asia name of Roman province/Turkey
- Populated by religious refugees and immigrants (Jewish and Christian) Increased immigration after destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, 70 AD
- The beginning point is best set at 96 AD, by John, a Christian Prophet, to churches in Asia he believe would be facing a terrible persecution.

Central question

**WHAT DID IT MEAN
TO BE A CHRISTIAN,
TO TRY TO FOLLOW
JESUS AS LORD,
IN SUCH A TIME AND PLACE?**

Growing Turmoil

- Jewish-Christian identity
- Emperor Worship
- Natural disasters

religious-political situation

- Christians becoming a suspect group: mostly lower class, no long history, meeting in homes, odd theology/rituals
- Refused to participate in Emperor Worship
- Rejected by Jewish authorities
- Beginning of state violence against them

Options re: State religion

- Quit
- Lie
- Fight
- Change the Law
- Adjust/Accommodate
- Die
 - John's only commendable option

John, a Christian Prophet

- Not predictive, but interpretative
- Addressed to specific audience/time
- Interprets God's ultimate goals (promises)
- Offered new theological content to the reign of Christ (new Christological titles and images)

Written in apocalyptic language

And that, my friends,

Is next week's

Lesson!