

Revelation: Promises for a Dangerous World

Week 12: Revelation 20:1-21:8

All handouts will be available at <http://www.nathangilmour.com/hardly/sunschmaterials/>

Gilmour's Four Rules for Reading Revelation

1. Always look for a reference to the Old Testament. (Footnotes are your friends.)
2. Always ask what a first-century audience would have heard.
3. Always look for a promise, not a threat, from God.
4. Always think of yourself as overhearing God's words to the first-century Christians.

What is the most fundamentally *unfair* thing (as opposed to the saddest or most inspiring) about the times when the righteous die for their righteousness? Casting your mind back to Daniel 12:1-4, how does the death of the righteous connect with resurrection there, and how does it connect with the thousand-year reign of the martyrs in Revelation 20:1-6?

Why would it be important to the first-century Christians that God promises a thousand years within the scope of real time rather than simply sharing what happens after the end of things?

Revelation 20:7-10 is the last of the battles-that-do-not-happen in Revelation. Again, what sorts of promises do such stories communicate, and what is the proper Christian response that such stories call for?

What “deeds” or “works,” then, do Revelation 20:11-15 seem to imply as the ones for which the dead answer?

As the final triumphant vision begins in Revelation 21, where is the Church, and where is the Church headed? How does this pair of locations differ from how folks often picture the end of the world as we know it, and what promise is God making in the relationships between these locations?

What sorts of things does the vision of final judgment in Revelation 21:5-8 emphasize? How does it speak particularly to the first-century Christians' moment, and how does it speak to our own? Why is writing this vision so important?