

Comparing Revelation And Ezekiel

by Casey Head

The book of Revelation is largely misunderstood. Many view it as being apocalyptic and they interpret the images and pictures literally. While modern scholars acknowledge the similarities between Revelation and certain Old Testament books, let us focus our attention briefly on the book of Ezekiel. Certain points will be made in this article to deny the apocalyptic and millennial views.

In Ezekiel 1:5-14, we learn of “four living creatures.” Verse ten reveals the appearance of these four creatures. One had the face of a man. Another had the face of a lion. The third creature had the face of an ox, and the final creature had the face of an eagle. These four living creatures are found also in the book of Revelation. We are told in Revelation 4:7, “And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.” Is it a coincidence that the same four creatures are mentioned in both Ezekiel and Revelation? Not likely.

Furthermore, in Ezekiel 1:26-28, a throne scene is described. In verse 28 specifically, we find that there was “the appearance of a bow” over the throne. The same exact scene is described in Revelation 4:1-5, and we even see in verse three a “rainbow round about the throne.”

Thirdly, the prophet Ezekiel was instructed to eat a scroll in 3:1-3, “Moreover he said unto me, son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.” As you may already know, John was instructed to eat “the little book” in Revelation 10:9-10. John said of the book that it was “sweet as honey.”

Finally, it says in Ezekiel 9:4, 6, “And the Lord said unto him...set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark.” The same language is used in Revelation 7:3 by an angel, “Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” In both prophetic books, the people of God were to be marked or sealed.

As you can see, these four similarities between the early chapters of Ezekiel and Revelation cannot be ignored. It is not a coincidence that they happened to use the same language and imagery. Now the question arises- why did they use the same imagery? Is it that both books have apocalyptic significance? No. After all, the book of Ezekiel was directed towards the people of Israel prior to Babylonian captivity (Ezek. 2:1-10; 21:18-23), and the book of Revelation was directed towards Christians in the first century (Rev. 1:1, 4, 9). Old Testament language was used in the book of Revelation so that the early Christians, and the early Christians ONLY, might understand the book. If a Christian during the first century read the prophetic book, they would understand it because they had been raised with a deep understanding and appreciation for the Old Testament. If a Roman soldier, however, read the book, all he would see was fanciful imagery and pointless symbols. This point, while subtle, *helps* to prove the fallacy of the millennial doctrines.