The Bible (Unmuted) Transcript Episode 6

Revelation: The Mistakes We Make, Part 2

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Episode Summary:

In this episode, Matthew continues his discussion on Revelation. In the previous episode, Matthew talked about one mistake people make when they read Revelation -- namely, not knowing that Revelation is a letter to seven first-century churches (it's not a book in the modern sense of the word). In this episode, Matthew talks about two other common mistakes people make. He draws awareness to the fact that Revelation is an apocalypse, which is a genre of ancient writing that includes the use of symbols to convey important truths. He also corrects mistaken ideas about prophecy. Since Revelation describes itself as a prophecy, does this mean Revelation is all about predicting future events? Is biblical prophecy primarily about prediction? Check out this episode to find out!

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Transcript:

- 0:00 Hey everybody! Welcome to the podcast! My name is Matthew Halsted. Thank you for tuning in. This podcast is all about engaging the bible. While every episode is different, the goal is always the same: learn more about scripture and how to interpret it. So sit back, grab your favorite beverage, and enjoy the show.
- 0:35 Welcome back to another episode of The Bible (Unmuted). In the last episode, I mentioned how there were three common mistakes people tend to make when they read Revelation. This episode continues that conversation. So, if you haven't had a chance yet to listen to part 1, you'll want to do that before listening to today's discussion, which is part 2 of that.

Just as a quick recap, to jog our memories a little bit, in the last episode I mentioned how sometimes readers forget that Revelation is actually a letter. That is, I think, the first common mistake that people make when they read Revelation. The fact is that it is a letter. Revelation is not a systematic theology; it was never intended to offer an exhaustive treatment or play-by-play account of all things eschatology. That is something I mentioned in the last episode. And the fact is that Revelation is a letter written to the churches of Asia, which was a province of the Roman Empire in the first century. It was specifically addressed to seven churches within that province – most notably to Ephesus, which was one of the Empire's largest cities at the time. Other cities mentioned too, and very important cities such as Smyrna, Pergamum, and Thyatira — were important in their own right. But all this to say, these cities were most likely singled out because of their political/religious significance in the culture of Asia. And the author of Revelation, John, definitely intended for his letter to circulate not just among these seven churches, but also among all the Asian churches. And, as we know, the letter has had a good shelf life: It's been circulating

across the globe for 2,000 years now. Just remember the fact that it's a letter. This is so important to remember. You've got to have that down. If you don't, then you might get your interpretations off to the wrong foot.

I also talked about how knowing Revelation is a letter can help us understand it. As more of a recap, let me go down that road a little bit further. I am reminded of Craig Keener's comment in his Revelation Commentary, which I highly recommend that you go and get. He says, "Revelation-because it was a letter-must have been discernible and understandable to its original audience." And this is something that Craig talks about quite often, but you can find some of those comments in his commentary as well. But, that's a good point to consider. I mean, if revelation was a letter, it must have been discernible and understandable to its original audience. This means that behind and beneath all the cryptic and mysterious language, signs, and symbols that Revelation offers its readers—Revelation must have made sense to its first century audience. I mean, John even says that he wants his readers to "keep" and obey what he writes in Revelation. This raises a question. How could the first-century audience have kept and obeyed Revelation's message if it wasn't understandable in the first place? They couldn't. This observation is helpful for us today. As we search for Revelation's meaning for our own world, we can start by seeing what it meant for the first-century world. As a first-century letter, after all, it must have had meaning for the first-century audience. By becoming familiar with that meaning, we can find the text meaningful today.

As a side note, that's how hermeneutics works. The biblical text can have multiple layers of meanings (I talk about this in my new book on eschatology that will be released sometime next year with Lexham Press). But as we look into the layers of meaning a text might have, it is perhaps helpful to become familiar with how the original audience found it meaningful for their time. A biblical text has its own "horizon of understanding," its own context. And modern readers have their own "horizon of understanding." So we have two horizons here. The horizon of the text and the horizon of the modern reader. And what we want to do as modern readers is be aware of our own horizons, to be aware of our own assumptions, as we seek to dialogue with the text's original horizons, and with the text's original assumptions. One way you can keep your own modern assumptions in check is by letting them come face-to-face with ancient assumptions. Sometimes our assumptions are different and distinct. And that's okay. We just need to be aware of them so that our modern assumptions don't smother the text's assumptions. The goal, I guess you might say, is for both horizons —the text's and the reader's—to fuse together into fresh understanding and application in our lives today. This is something Thing that the great hermeneutics theorist Hans Gadamer mentioned in his book, Truth and Method. So while we do not live in the Roman Empire, we do live in a world that needs the critique and message of Revelation. We still need its message in the modern world. By recognizing Revelation is a letter, we are forced to dive deep into the context of Revelation and the historical situation of Revelation to see how its message was fleshed out. This will give us a theological grammar for speaking to our world today.

6:52 Lots more to say on this topic, and in the future, I'll be chatting more about the hermeneutic/interpretive relationship between an original ancient text and modern contexts. I'll have more to say about that in the days ahead. In the meantime though, if you are interested in this topic, if you are a hermeneutic nerd like I am, I wrote a book called *Paul and the Meaning of Scripture*, which is an in-depth explanation of how I think it all works. I use Paul's letter to the Romans as a case study of sorts for how hermeneutics works. The first section of the book is about hermeneutic theory, and the second part is all about Paul's interpretations of the Old Testament in Romans. So check that out if you are an interpretation nerd, or just check the book out if you need something to help you fall asleep at night. It works for that too (laughing).

Okay, enough of that... but go back and check out last week's episode where I give some examples for how knowing Revelation is a letter helps us interpret it.

In today's episode, we will chat about two other mistakes people make when reading Revelation. These two things are this: A lot of people forget that Revelation is an apocalyptic text and, along with this, they aren't quite sure how to read an apocalypse. The other mistake is that a lot of people aren't sufficiently familiar with what biblical prophecy is all about. Revelation calls itself a prophecy, so it is a prophetic book. But because we tend to be confused about *how* biblical prophecy works, we tend to be confused with how to read a prophetic book like Revelation.

- 9:00 Before I start discussing apocalyptic and prophetic stuff, I want to share a cool announcement. Next week, I'll be interviewing Dr. Scot McKnight about his new book on Revelation. It's called Revelation for the Rest of Us: A Prophetic Call to Follow Jesus as a Dissident Disciple. It was published and released by Zondervan in February of this year. So, it's hot off the press. At any rate, I look forward to chatting with Scot about this new book. So, be on the lookout for that.
- 9:34 Okay, let's talk about *apocalypse*. Scholars often describe Revelation as being a text characterized by multiple genres. It is, for example, of the epistolary genre (that is, a letter or an epistle). It's also part of the prophetic genre, which I'll chat more about that in a moment. Let's jump to the third genre that Revelation is often said to be. Revelation is also an *apocalyptic* writing. Scholars typically talk about how "apocalypse" is a genre of literature. Revelation is considered to be a part of that genre, too. To understand Revelation's message—to interpret it rightly—modern readers need to learn a thing or two about the characteristics of the apocalyptic genre. Before I say more about that, I'd like to talk about the word itself, apocalypse, which I think is often misunderstood.

The English word "apocalypse" is almost always used in modern contexts as being about disaster. We say things like "the end of the world will be apocalyptic," meaning that "the end of the world will be destructive." The word "apocalypse" has basically become a synonym for disaster or destruction or cosmic upheaval, etc.

But that wasn't the original meaning of the word. Our English word "apocalypse" comes from the Greek *apokalypsis*. And it simply means to uncover or to disclose something or to unveil. It's often translated in modern Bible versions as to reveal or revelation. In fact, that's why Revelation is called "Revelation." The very first word of the text of Revelation is *apokalypsis:* ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, "The apocalypse of Jesus Christ" or as modern translations put it: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:1).

The entire letter of Revelation is about the unveiling or revealing of the rule and the reign of Jesus Christ in the cosmos. This unveiling has a double meaning: It is the revelation that comes from Jesus Christ and the revelation that is Jesus. And I think that's what the opening line of Revelation 1:1 is all about.

The basic idea is that John's original readers needed reminding that what they see in the physical realm does not represent what is actually true of reality when taken as a whole. When you take reality as a whole, you get the full truth. And only an apocalypse can give you the reality of the entire cosmos. The first century church lived under the reign of the Roman Emperors — such as Nero and Domitian, irrational actors, who were quite destructive and evil. If they weren't careful, the first-century church might be tempted to despair. They might be tempted to give up hope. All they could see was how evil was getting its way. All they could see was the twisted rule of Rome.

But what Revelation reveals is that there is more to the story. Rome did not have the final say. The eternal city of Rome was not, contrary to popular opinion at the time, actually going to last forever. The Roman empire was but a small footnote in the annals of world history. Rome would be judged, and a new city—the New Jerusalem—would replace it. The New Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God and humans, would be eternal.

So, this is the truth that Revelation reveals. That message would be a comfort to the churches—that their troubles would come to an end. It would give them tons of hope and strength to live their lives. And too, Revelation acted as a sort of lens through which the church ought to interpret reality. When they looked at, say, the Roman Imperial system, what they should really see is a monster empowered by a serpent (Satan), who would be destroyed by the Lamb who was slain. Revelation offered the church a fresh way of seeing reality. As an apocalypse, it helped them see themselves as part of God's ruling people. They, the early Christians and like all Christians today, are followers of the Lamb, and we will rule and reign with God. And as a side note, for those of you who are familiar with Mike Heiser, think of the Divine Council stuff. If you're not familiar with Mike's teaching on the Divine Council, you really should go do some research and reading on that. Mike has left us a great treasure of teaching on the topic. Go check out the material at Awakening School of Theology or his website. Go get the book, *The Unseen Realm*, and all that stuff. It's really, really helpful.

15:23 In one of David deSilva's books, he makes a comment that I think is actually quite helpful for those who want to study Revelation. I think it's in his book *Unholy Allegiances*, where he says something like: *Revelation does not require an interpretive key to unlock its message; to the contrary, Revelation is the interpretive key to unlock the meaning of the world around us (that's not exactly word-for-word, but it a close paraphrase from memory). At any rate, I do think that deSilva is spot on here. Revelation, as an apocalypse, is intended to shed light upon the world, to help us understand it. That's one thing apocalyptic writings do. They allow you to see to peel back and look beyond the scene realm and into the unseen realm, as Mike would put it.*

Let's talk a little bit more about the apocalyptic genre. Going back to David deSilva, this time in his *Discovering Revelation* book (published 2021), he offers a good summary/overview of apocalyptic as a literary genre. Here's what he says starting on page 25.

"Scholars now use the term apocalypse to refer to the larger body of texts that contain such narratives of Divine Mysteries disclosed through ecstatic experiences as a literary genre. In one sense, therefore, reading Revelation 1:1 as an announcement of the book's literary genre, is anachronistic. In another sense, however, as these text all represent literary narrations of the same kind of allegedly lived experience, the revelation of heavenly mysteries through visions, conversations with supernatural beings, and the like, the use of the term to denote a literary genre is quite apt." (In other words, he's saying it's okay to call Revelation an apocalyptic text. And he continues. He says.) " Other texts that fit in this pattern include 1 Enoch, the Testament of Levi, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, and the Apocalypse of Abraham. Though in one respect, these are unlike Revelation in that they are written from the perspective and in the voice of a revered figure of sacred history, whereas John writes from his own perspective and in his own voice." (He goes on and he adds,) "Apocalypses share an interest in what is going on in the unseen realms of God and of the forces of evil and chaos that provide the cosmic backdrop for their authors and audiences experiences in the visible world. They also share an interest in the past history and the future events that frame the present moment and interpret its challenges and choices. They play the readers lived situation within the context of a bigger picture of time and space that provides

the interpretive framework for the audiences everyday realities and responses to those realities. The narrative form of apocalypse is in general and of Revelation in particular, allows hearers and readers to experience vicariously the ecstatic revelatory experience of the prophet author. An experience that both legitimates the message as coming from beyond, and changes the hearers and readers perspectives on and responses to their situation in the light of the same." And here he draws a little bit from Aune's commentary on Revelation. Anyway, I think that's a good summary of this situation that Revelation is actually part of a type of ancient text that we now call apocalyptic. So, anyway, you might want to rewind and go back and relisten to that summary. It's an excellent summary, and I highly recommend this book.

19:53 There's a lot we can say about apocalyptic literature. One thing that is important to remember about it is that it relies heavily on symbolic communication. It uses symbols to convey truth. In other words, it's not meant to be taken "literally" in the sense that it's meant to be taken woodenly. For example, when John uses the symbolism of "beasts" to describe the Roman imperial system, it's not saying that Rome was literally a monster. It's a symbol for how Rome acted beastly. Its system was monstrous. Likewise, when it depicts Jesus as a lamb, it's not suggesting that Jesus is literally a four-footed farm animal. The image of "lamb" is symbolic. For starters it points us back to the Old Testament. The image of Jesus as a slain lamb points us back to those Old Testament stories and that link to the Old Testament is super important here. It also holds imaginative value by pushing the reader to feel the story. The protagonist in the story of Revelation (the slain Lamb) comes face to face with the vicious dragon and its beasts. One might be tempted to ask; how could a slain lamb ever conquer these monsters? John's visions reveal something very important in this respect about the crucifixion of Jesus: The slain lamb conquers the beasts not in spite of his weakness but through his weakness. In fact, the message is that the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of the enemies of God. If you are familiar with the way the story ends, the humorous fact is that there is no final battle. The dragon and the beasts are easily conquered by the slain lamb. The cross and resurrection of Jesus is the source of victory. Think about how that feels to read, that if you are in the situation like the seven churches who are being persecuted, or at least have the threats of persecution always at your neck, this message will resonate. You can feel it through these images. These images are illustrations. They're almost like verbal poetry which evokes images that the readers can enter into. I use these as examples of the power of symbolism in apocalyptic literature such as Revelation. Symbols are the means by which important truths are communicated. If you don't get that, you're not going to get Revelation. You're not going to understand it.

And in fact, And in fact, , let me just stop here for a moment. Don't take my word for this, right? I mean, this isn't Matt's idea here. Because Revelation tells us explicitly that its message is communicated through symbols. For example, take a look again at Revelation 1:1. I'm reading from the NRSV, which says, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John" (NRSV).

The words "he made... known" is a translation of the Greek word *sēmeion*. This words means "sign" or perhaps "symbol." We get our word "semiotics" from it, which is the branch of philosophy that studies the symbolic nature/essence of language, etc. Anyway, my point here is to show that, according to its own testimony, Revelation says that the revelatory message it communicates is made known through signs and symbols. This is something that Craig Keener often points out; you can find some of his comments on this in his commentary. This is a very important point. Again, this is not Matt's idea. It's not David deSilva's idea. This is what the text is saying and we need to really pay attention to what the text is saying.

So here's my point. One mistake modern readers make when reading Revelation is that they forget that it's an apocalypse. Or maybe they just aren't aware that it's an apocalypse. And by "apocalypse," we mean that Revelation is a text that reveals reality in a highly symbolic way. It reveals unseen reality in a highly symbolic way. And when we forget that Revelation communicates truth through symbols, metaphors, and vivid imagery, we end up interpreting things perhaps too woodenly and we get our interpretations off on the wrong foot.

24:58 I'm convinced that one way to prepare ourselves for a text like Revelation is to spend lots of time reading poetry. Poetry, as you know, often depends on metaphor and other literary devices. And too, we can't forget just how indebted Revelation is to the Old Testament prophets—who made it a habit of writing poetry! Many Old Testament prophetic texts depend on poetic devices, such as personification, metaphor, etc. And you have to be familiar with all those things. Those Old Testament prophets depend on those poetic devices. So, don't be surprised when you read a text like Revelation and it's doing some similar things. It's heavily dependent on the Old Testament, which those Old Testament prophets were heavily dependent on using poetic devices to communicate truth. That's how the prophets worked.

Speaking of prophecy, let's turn our attention to a third common mistake people make when Reading Revelation. Because Revelation describes itself as a prophecy, a lot of modern readers think Revelation must, therefore, be all about the future. I want to propose that this is a wrong way to look at Revelation and a wrong way to think about prophecy.

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27:40 If we take a look at Revelation 1:3, we read these words, "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near."

At this point, a lot of people get side tracked by a misunderstanding about how to interpret Revelation as a prophecy. It's that word prophecy that we get stuck on sometimes. The reasoning goes that, since Revelation describes itself as a prophecy, then it must be a book all about the future. After all, that's what a prophecy is. And so, because this is a prophecy, then it must be some sort of play-by-play account of future events.

I think this is a wrong way to think of biblical prophecy. Prophecy in Scripture isn't always about predicting something. You can't reduce the biblical prophecy down to the forecasting of future events.

When modern people think about that word "prophecy," that's exactly what we tend to think. The mental images of words like "prophet" or "prophecy", sometimes the images that pop into our heads sometimes resemble Nostradamus, crystal balls, or some such. But again, that's not how ancient Jews would have thought about prophecy.

Many biblical scholars describe prophecy as not "fore-telling" but about "forth-telling." That is, it's not about *predicting* things but *preaching* things. And this would make sense of a text like Revelation. As we discussed a moment ago, Revelation is a letter and an apocalypse—and as an apocalypse, it seeks to unveil the truth of reality. And as a letter, it sought to unveil the truth about reality to its original first century audience. And as a prophecy, it has to function in accordance with those two things as well. If it was all about predicting events of the far distant future, there would have been little relevance for the original readers. But as a letter it has to have relevance to its original readers. So, Revelation—as a letter, an apocalypse, and as a prophecy—has to function consistently with each other. So all those three things have to be understood and function together. And if we reduce "prophecy" down to just being about prediction, it won't function or work that well together with Revelation also being a letter and apocalypse.

So the good news is that we don't have to think of Revelation just as being all about the future. That's because the Jewish idea of prophecy isn't all about the prediction. And I can prove it.

30:35 I often say that if we want to learn how to interpret Scripture, we should follow the examples set by the biblical authors themselves. And I think the same applies here. If we want to understand how biblical prophecy works, we should look to biblical authors who worked with prophetic texts. The biblical authors talked a lot about prophecy; they read the Old Testament prophets! So, let's do that. Let's take a deep dive into that. For instance, let's look at how a Gospel writer like Matthew interprets Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15.

In Matthew 2, we read how Herod wants to kill Jesus. So, Joseph is visited by an angel and told to take Mary and Jesus to flee for safety in Egypt. Once Herod dies, Jesus and his family are able to leave Egypt and come back home. You know the story pretty well. At that scene in chapter 2:15, Matthew says that, "This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son" (2:15, NRSV).

Notice the language of *fulfillment*. Matthew thinks that Jesus' trip to, and return from, Egypt is a fulfillment of Hosea's prophetic text "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

Now when you go back and look at the context of Hosea 11:1, you'll see immediately that Hosea is not predicting the future. He's not predicting anything at all, in fact. Instead, he seems to me reflecting on the past—namely, the original Exodus event when the *nation* of Israel left Egypt. And for Hosea, from that time on, God was with Israel as a father is to a son (in the exodus story in Exodus 4:22, Israel is called God's son).

I think you can see why this observation is important for our study of Revelation. For second-temple Jews like Matthew, a prophecy cannot be reduced down to just a "prediction-fulfillment" scheme. It's not just about predicting the future. If you make biblical prophecy to be all about predicting the future, then you're going to hit some snags along the way — I mean, you're not going to be able to make sense of texts like Matthew 2:15. Because Matthew thinks Hosea's prophecy is fulfilled, even though Hosea was not predicting anything. In other words, the Old

Testament prophetic word has to function in a way other than simply the profit protecting the future. It has to.

What Matthew is doing is seeing in Jesus a re-enactment of the story of Israel. For Matthew, Jesus is a sort of interpretive lens that allows him to see Scripture as one big story—a story that is all about the people of God. Jesus unveils the Old Testament in this sense. In a very real sense, Jesus is the Revelation of God—Jesus is the apocalypse! He is the divine apocalypse, the divine unveiling. For Matthew, the people of God, Israel, are embodied in the Messiah. Isaiah's servant has arrived. And that Servant is someone who will rescue wayward Israel—because the Servant is himself the true Israel who has the ability to rescue everyone. (This is the fulfillment of Abraham's covenant—that his family would rescue the world). And that's what Jesus has done. He is the true Israel who can rescue the entire world—including wayward Israel. Matthew sees all that because Matthew knows Jesus is the Messiah.

For Matthew, Hosea's story of Israel's Exodus from Egypt is a symbolic world that gives narrative shape to the story of Jesus. In other words, Jesus is not some individual, Palestinian prophet doing his own thing. No, he is continuing and fulfilling the ongoing story of Israel. He is the story of Israel; in him Israel's story is enacted/fulfilled, etc. And in this sense, Jesus himself is the divine revelation—an unveiling of the fulfillment of the story of Israel.

And I think Revelation is a prophecy in much the same way as Hosea 11 was for Matthew. Revelation is an "apocalypse of Jesus Christ," the text of Revelation is all about Jesus. It unveils the truth about Jesus. You'll find predictions in Revelation (such as the return of Jesus). But that doesn't mean we can reduce everything in Revelation to be about predicting the future. Instead, it's a lot like Hosea is for Matthew. As a prophecy, it is a symbolic world—a story—that, if we have ears to hear, gives narrative shape to followers of Jesus wherever they might be. As a prophecy, Revelation invites prayerful meditation and careful application.

35:40 Think about it like this: as Christians, we are the body of Christ, and we are part of a much bigger story. Ours is a story of navigating life in a world dominated by beastly realities. Revelation, as a *prophetic* apocalypse, sheds light on our lives as followers of the Lamb, showing us how to speak truth in our world—to *forthtell God's Word in our context*. Revelation helps us find hope in our here and now by reminding us that the way of the Lamb is the *way* that conquers every beast. And so, Revelation's prophecies become for us a story to be fleshed out as we follow the ways of Jesus. Revelation shows us how the church today can be prophetic to its world.

Just like Jesus embodied the story of Israel in his life and ministry, so too are we called to *embody Christ* in our lives and ministries. We are called the *body of Christ*, and we are to *embody* his story in our stories. As we do, we fulfill—and keep— the prophetic text of Revelation. Its in that sense that Revelation is a prophecy. I mean, it contains all the other stuff too. There are predictive elements, but I think it's primarily in that sense of us living out the story of Jesus in our own stories, that we will fulfill and follow the prophecy that is Revelation. Think of it like this: we embody the story of Jesus, like Jesus embodied the story of Israel for Matthew, thus fulfilling the prophetic text of Hosea. Paul says in Romans that, as Christians, we are grafted into the Jewish story. So we—in Christ—embody the story of Israel. And we fulfill the story of Israel by a virtue of us being in Christ. That's how prophecy works. We are fulfilling those prophecies, I guess you might say. I think you see how it all of this might be relevant.

Again, I'm not suggesting that Revelation contains no future predictions. Not for a long shot, in fact. I have a partially futurist perspective of Revelation. For example, I think Revelation predicts the physical, bodily return of Jesus. That has not happened yet. So it's a future prediction. I don't deny that there are future predictions. What I do think is that Revelation can't be reduced down

to just a bunch of future predictions. And I don't think that, just because it calls itself a "prophecy" that it's a book all about the future for the reason I mentioned a moment ago. Its not in that sense that it is a prophecy. At least not ultimately so.

In my eschatology book that comes out sometime early 2024, I go into a lot more details—give some more examples, and so on. And trust me, I'll be talking a lot more about this topic as time goes on. For now, though, I'm just tossing out these issues in an "overview", introductory sort of way.

38:50 Okay, so let's just recap everything we've talked about in the last episode and in this episode. There are three common mistakes that people often make when reading Revelation: First, we forget that it's a letter (last week's episode). Again, you have to take into account this fact. It is an epistolary genre of a writing is part of Revelation's literary context. Interpretation 101 is that context is king when it comes to interpretation. So you must take into account Revelation's literary context.

Second, we can't forget that Revelation is an apocalypse. We can't forget that. And remember, an apocalypse doesn't mean "destruction" or "story of destruction." It's about unveiling hidden truths of the hidden reality (or, as Mike Heiser would say, the unseen realm). It lets us take a peek into the unseen realm. An apocalypse by design makes visible the unseen realm – into our world and context. An apocalypse tells the rest of the story. That's a good way to think of it. And it employs symbols as it tells that story. And it expects readers to interpret those symbols appropriately.

Third, we can't forget that Revelation is a prophecy. And, importantly, we can't forget what a prophecy is and is not. Biblical prophecy is *not* all about predicting the future. Prophets have been known for predicting the future; but the ministry of a prophet can't be reduced down to just predicting the future. What would be the point of that? What relevance would that have for people living in the present world? Again, prophets, as we often say, aren't busy fore-telling but forth-telling.

If we keep all these things in mind, I'm confident your reading of Revelation will go from a black and white 2D to 3D high-definition visual image. The image will become clearer, sharper, and much easier to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

41:23 That's the end of today's episode. And thanks again for listening to The Bible Unmuted. If you like this podcast, consider rating it on your podcast platform, subscribing to it, and sharing with your friends. You can also support the podcast by becoming a patreon member. Go to: https://www.patreon.com/TheBibleUnmuted - or simply find the link in the description of this episode. Thanks for listening. Until next time, friends.