

John's Kaleidoscopic Vision in the Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation is revealing. That, of course, is why the book has the title that it does. It seems mysterious with its dragons and trumpets and beasts, but John's vision is meant to unveil. It is unveiling what is going on behind the scenes - behind the scenes of the stuff in our lives.

The vision is a caricature. It is much like those cartoon drawings you can have made of yourself at the amusement park. The kind of drawings where Donald Trump's hair is the size of a tsunami wave or president Obama's ears are the size of his head. Things are larger than life in Revelation.

The throne room of God resembles the Jewish temple, but everything is magnified and comes to life. There's not just a dragon, but a 7 headed, 10 horned dragon. An army the size of the countries of Russia and France combined marches out in battle. All of this tells us that there is a warning sign on this book – "Caution: Images At Work".

These images don't always follow a linear progression. For instance, at the end of chapter 11 it seems as though God is bringing final judgment, but the book provides 11 more chapters of judgment visions before the end. In chapter 8 all of the grass is burned up, but in chapter 9 the locusts were told not to harm the grass. In chapter 6 all of the stars have fallen to the earth, but in chapter 8, 1/3 of the stars are struck.

The best way to look at Revelation is like seeing events through a kaleidoscope. Rather than a clear linear progression, there are images meant to convey a clear message. That message is that despite all appearances, God is the one who is in charge and he will ultimately win the day. This message is intended to encourage beleaguered believers who feel like giving up.