

The Nature of Yeshua in the Revelation Given to John

say that the law should be kept 'from *aleph* to *tau*.' That God is the beginning and the end of history means that he rules over all events in between."⁹²

- Grant R. Osborne: "The title is built on Isa. 44:6 and 48:12, 'I am the first and I am the last' (cf. 41:4), which meant that Yahweh was sovereign at the beginning of the nation and would be in charge at the end as well. In keeping with this title, God began history at creation and ends it at the eschaton. But the title means he controls not only the beginning and the end but also everything in between; in other words, he is sovereign over history. For the readers, this means that they can know God is in charge now because the Bible recorded his sovereignty over past history, and the prophecies in this book have demonstrated his control over future history. Therefore, they can be assured he is also sovereign in the present time of trouble."⁹³

God proper declaring "I am the Alpha and the Omega" in Revelation 21:6 is not an issue for those who hold to either a high or low Christology. In the immediate context, God as the Beginning and the End affects those who are either redeemed or condemned (Revelation 21:7-8). Further on in Revelation 22:13, however, Yeshua the Messiah Himself says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Would a supernatural, yet ultimately created being or entity, be permitted to speak such words? Aune addresses how the Messiah speaking this undoubtedly serves to indicate how the power and sovereignty of the Father and Son are interconnected:

"In 1:8a and 21:6 it is used of God, while in 22:13...it is used of Christ. In each context the title is not used alone but is juxtaposed with other titles, each of which emphasizes the absolute power and sovereignty of God (in 1:8 and 21:6) or of Christ (in 22:13), and each of which also serves to define and expand the others."⁹⁴

Revelation 21:22-23

"for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple"

"I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb."

Readers and examiners over the centuries have not fully agreed on what is represented by the "temple" here in Revelation 21:22-23. Some think that themes from Ezekiel 48, what this writer concludes to be the future Millennial Temple, are employed, and others take a more allegorical or metaphorical approach to what is described. Regardless of how the specific language is taken, regarding the future Eternal State, what is of high importance is how to approach *ho gar Kurios ho Theos ho pantokratōr naos autēs estin kai to arnion* (ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ναὸς αὐτῆς ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ ἀρνίον), "for~the Lord God, the Almighty [the] temple of it is, and the lamb" (Revelation 21:22, Brown and Comfort).⁹⁵ It is not just God proper which composes this Temple in the Eternal State; this Temple is composed of both God and the Lamb. This surely bears some significance on what can be deduced about the nature of the Lamb, in relation to the Lord God.

Mounce offers the rather general observation, "The final state toward which this points is eternity itself, where the presence of God the Father and the Lamb permeates and sanctifies all

⁹² Beale, 1055.

⁹³ Osborne, *Revelation*, 738.

⁹⁴ Aune, 52c:1126.

⁹⁵ Brown and Comfort, 910.

that the heavenly Jerusalem symbolizes.”⁹⁶ Yeshua the Lamb is hardly depicted here as an independent agent, who acts entirely on His own. Beasley-Murray interjects the thought, “Such an association of God and the Lamb in the eternal city inevitably suggests their unity of being. Yet it is possible that the language has in view a more specific concept, namely that the Lamb of God, who has wrought redemption for the world (1:5f., 5:6ff., 12:11), retains his role as mediator in the eternal city.”⁹⁷ It is appreciable that he has noted how the association of the Lord God and the Lamb should be taken as a unity of being, but whether Yeshua the Messiah in the Eternal State must actually mediate between redeemed humanity and God the Father can surely be questioned. Osborne more correctly concludes that the association of God and the Lamb as Temple, is indicative of how Yeshua the Messiah is to be approached and venerated the same as God the Father, sure proof of a high Christology:

“Christ the sacrificial Lamb became the conquering Ram (see Rev. 5:6) and takes his place alongside God the Father as the temple of the eternal city. This also continues the emphasis in the Apocalypse on the unity of God and Christ on the throne (4:2 = 5:6), as the Alpha and Omega (1:8 = 1:17; 21:6 = 22:13), as worthy of worship (4:8-11 = 5:9-14), as judge (14:17-20 = 19:11-21), and now as the temple in the Holy City.”⁹⁸

Revelation 22:1-3

“The Throne of God and the Lamb”

“Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him.”

Varied approaches are witnessed among Revelation examiners with how to approach the language employed, describing the Eternal State. When it is said, “Then the angel showed me a river of the water of life—bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1, TLV), connections have been made with the statement of Ezekiel 47:9, describing the Millennial Temple: “It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and *the others* become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes.” Connections have also been made with the declaration of Yeshua in John 7:37: “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.” Differing vantage points can also be present with what it said regarding the tree of life, the fruit, and the leaves of the tree (Revelation 22:2). Suffice it to say, the paradise of Eden which was lost (Genesis 2:9; 3:22), has now been restored.

The condition of the Eternal State is asserted by Revelation 22:3a to be one where “There will no longer be any curse” or “Nothing accursed will be found there any more” (NRSV). God the Father and Yeshua the Lamb are present, *kai ho douloi autou latreuousin autō* (καὶ οἱ δούλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύουσιν αὐτῷ), “and the slaves of him will serve him” (Revelation 22:3b, Brown and Comfort).⁹⁹ A less common verb involving veneration, *latreuō* (λατρεύω), is employed. Thayer details that “in the N. T. [it means] to render religious service or homage, to worship,” often being the equivalent of the “Hebrew עָבַד [avad].”¹⁰⁰ The RSV/NRSV/ESV notably does render

⁹⁶ Mounce, *Revelation*, 383.

⁹⁷ Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 327.

⁹⁸ Osborne, *Revelation*, 761.

⁹⁹ Brown and Comfort, 911.

¹⁰⁰ Thayer, 372.