SBK Citing

"The Alpha and the Omega"
An Exegetical Paper on Genesis 1:1 – Revelation 22:21

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Survey

In this brief pericope, the reader is confronted with the God of history. He is the main character who intervenes on behalf of those who cry out to him, and casts judgment on those who reject him. God is the creator of all things, from the Garden of Eden to the New Heavens and New Earth. In this paper, I will argue that the God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament.

Contextual Analysis

The pericope under discussion begins at Genesis 1:1 and concludes with Revelation 22:21. The evidence for this lies in the first and last words of the pericope. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...” (NRSV used throughout, unless otherwise noted). Here, beginning refers not just to the beginning of creation, but to the beginning of the pericope. As Kidner notes, “[T]he beginning is pregnant with the end, and the whole process present to God who is First and Last.”¹ Revelation 22:21 concludes with the Hebrew loanword, “amen.” According to Chilton, “‘Amen’ typically appears at the close of commands, blessings, curses, doxologies, and prayers.”² In this case, it is evident that it not only closes a doxology, but closes the pericope.

The literary context is greatly debated, especially if one considers the Hebrew canonical order or the canon of the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this paper, the literary context includes those books which comprise the Protestant canon.³

While there is some debate regarding the literary context, the debate over the historical context rages even louder. According to Snoke, the universe is over one billion years old.⁴

¹ Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (TOTC 1; Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1967), 43.
However, Morris and Whitcomb argue that the biblical events occurred within the last 6,000 years. Although the specific parameters of the historical context remain unclear, what is clear from the biblical text is that this pericope covers the entire history of the universe, regardless of its age.

Formal Analysis and Movement

Genesis 1:1 – Revelation 22:21 belongs to the genre of Bible. The word “Bible” comes from the Greek word biblion, meaning “book, scroll, or document.” Revelation 22:19 employs this word to demonstrate that no word should be added or removed from the biblion. In other words, since the contents of Genesis 1:1 – Revelation 22:21 are in the biblion, then the genre of this pericope is that of Bible.

The pericope is introduced with God’s creation of the universe in Genesis 1. The action rises throughout the Old Testament with conflict between God and his creation, reaching a climax in the Gospels’ account of the death, burial and resurrection of God incarnate. The falling action is found in Acts and the Epistles, culminating in the dénouement of the New Creation in Revelation 22.

Detailed Analysis

The fact that the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament are one and the same is evident from a study of the word “god” within the pericope. The word “god” appears in over 4,200 verses within the pericope. In the Old Testament it occurs over 2,600 times, while in

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6 “biblion,” *BAGD*, 141.
the New Testament it occurs over 1,500 times. Clearly this word is ubiquitous in the entirety of the pericope, thus demonstrating the uniform nature of the deity.

It is also interesting to note that this God says the exact same thing in several places throughout the pericope. For example, in Jeremiah 31:31, God says, “The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.” In Hebrews 8:8, this God says the exact same thing. Again, we see in Exodus that God says, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” He repeats the exact same words in Romans 9:15. The evidence is incontrovertible. It can only be the same God, who says the exact same thing, using the exact same words, that appears throughout the pericope.

**Synthesis**

The pericope of Genesis 1:1 – Revelation 22:21 clearly demonstrates that God is consistent. He is the alpha and the omega, the first and the last. He is unchanging. The God who brought the universe into existence is the same God who will build the New Heavens and New Earth.

**Reflection**

Because God is the same throughout both testaments, it makes me want to be the same all the time. This is so profound, I cannot even express it. As Augustine once said, “O God, who are so good…” Based on the example given before us in Scripture, Christians should be both first and last. We should be both the beginning and the end. While it may seem impossible, this is the task with which we have been charged.

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Bibliography


BibleWorks, LLC. 2007.


