Evangelism in Revelation

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ABSTRACT—Revelation is an apocalyptic literature. As such it has been treated as offering only apocalyptic eschatology. In view of God's intention revealed in the text it is important to see God's desire to bring back his people. Bringing back his people to himself is done via evangelism. Although the Greek word 'euaggelion' was used only once, Revelation is full of gospel (euaggelion) and evangelistic aspects. Gleaning from the text we can safely assert that we have found six important aspects of the motif of evangelism in Revelation. (1) God initiates evangelism. (2) Jesus is the content of evangelism. (3) The church is God's appointed agency of evangelism. (4) True followers of Christ are the true witnesses, the evangelists. (5) The scope of evangelism is ever widening. It began with local churches, but it becomes global. (6) The evangelism of Revelation has a tone of urgency. We do not want to minimize the significance of the theme of conflict rather we want to bring a balance in reading this wonderful Apocalypse of Jesus Christ by emphasizing the aspects of evangelism motif.

Keywords: Evangelism, Revelation, Repentance, God, Jesus, Church, evangelist, global evangelism, urgency.
I. Introduction

The Book of Revelation is known to be a book of eschatology. It brings to the readers many scenes from various judgments beginning with the openings of seven seals, seven trumpets, unidentified seven thunders (Bauckham, 1993, p. 82), seven bowls of plagues, and ending with the judgments during the millennium and after. If we are led to focus only on the fierce judgment scenes, we will end up losing a better part of the book. We also see the conflict between the world and the kingdom of God as a prominent feature in Revelation. The attempts on the part of Satan to conquer the tribes, peoples, and nations by deception and coercion are poignantly described in the chapters of climax. If we become so engrossed with these scenes of conflict alone, we will easily be led to miss the most important aspect of God’s efforts to bring His people back to himself. I would call the efforts on the part of God as evangelism.

Revelation has two important terms for evangelism: *euaggelion* and *marturia*. The Greek word *euaggelion* means gospel, and other Greek word *marturia* means witness or testimony. The latter comes from the verb *marturo* which means “to witness”. Revelation 1:2 uses two words about witnessing from the same root *marturo*. John “testifies [emarturesen] to everything he saw—that is the word of God and the testimony [marturian] of Jesus Christ.” (Rev 1:2, TNIV)

The way John delivers the apocalyptic vision is described as witnessing. Witnessing is the means of evangelism. Revelation was written for the testimony. It is for the evangelism.

The God in the story of Revelation is a God of love, as Larry Lichtenwalter believes and mentions throughout his book (2008). Jesus in Revelation speaks to our hearts so that we may feel his love and come back to him. Jesus not only speaks directly to us, but also through His Seven Spirits as well, and He sends his angels to deliver His messages.

In the circle of Adventists Rev 14:6-12 is held as more significant than any other passages in Revelation. This passage is labeled as the Three Angels’ Messages:

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made