

# Next Steps with the Bible

*Going Deeper and Growing Stronger*

## Week 11: Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic

For my thoughts,  
are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,  
declares the Lord.

For as the heavens are  
higher than the earth,

*so are my ways higher*

than your ways and  
my thoughts than your thoughts.

*Isaiah 55:8-9*





# Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic

## 1. Review of Week 10: Prophecy

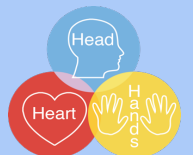
- Prophecy is *preaching* (ethics) and *promising* (consequences).
- Prophecy comes in oracles and visions.
- Prophecy is expressed poetically.
- Prophecy in Jude
  - *preaching*: Jude 4, 5-13, 19-23
  - *promising*: Jude 6, 13, 14-15, 17-18



# Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic

## 2. What is biblical apocalyptic?

- Apocalyptic concerns unveiling what is hidden, but the word is used to describe worldviews, events, and literature related to end-time catastrophes.
- **Biblical apocalyptic is visionary prophecy** that shows the *judgment* and *blessing* that come at the end of the present age and the arrival of God's kingdom on earth.
- In apocalyptic thinking judgment is the only solution for the world's problems and the persecution of God's people.







# Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic

## 2. What is biblical apocalyptic?

### ▪ Realism and Surrealism

- Most biblical books are *realistic*: they portray the events and realities of everyday life.
- Apocalyptic is *surrealistic*: it portrays an alternate reality envisioned by a Spirit-enabled prophet.
- The prophet's account of the vision necessarily uses this-worldly imagery to portray other-worldly reality. (e.g. Dan 2, 7; Rev 21-22).

# Daniel's Four World Kingdoms

Daniel 2: Statue	Daniel 7: Wild Beasts	Interpretation
Golden Head	Like a lion with wings	Nebuchadnezzar/Babylon
Silver chest & arms	Like a bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth.	Next kingdom which is inferior to Babylon
Bronze mid-section	Like a leopard with four wings and four heads	A third world kingdom
Iron Legs & iron/clay feet	Terrifying beast with iron teeth and ten horns	A strong yet divided kingdom with ten kings and a final king who persecutes God's people
Rock smashes statue and becomes a huge mountain	Thrones set up for judgment by the Ancient of days and the terrifying beast is slain.	God's kingdom crushes world kingdoms and God's saints rule forever.



## Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic

### **3. Where do we find apocalyptic in the Bible?**

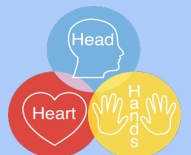
- Old Testament:
  - Isaiah 24-27; Ezekiel 38-39; Daniel 7-12, Joel 2:28-3:21; Zechariah 9-14
- New Testament:
  - Matthew 24; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Thessalonians 2; 2 Peter 3; Revelation



# Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic

## 4. How do we interpret biblical apocalyptic?

- Historical and literary context: the **ancient situation** external to these books and the internal **flow of thought**.
- Find where the vision begins and ends.
- Understand the visionary imagery.
  - *Symbols/metaphors/similes* portray real events, persons, and places.
  - Such symbols are not *blueprints* or exact representations of those realities.
  - Use your *imagination* with the text to picture the surreal, transcendent world seen by the prophet





## Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic

- **5. Case Study: the Book of Revelation**
  - Other biblical books have apocalyptic *sections*.
  - Revelation (aka **The Apocalypse**) is the only apocalyptic *book* in the Bible.



# **How do you understand the Book of Revelation?**

**The book of Revelation**

- a. addresses the situation of first century churches.**
- b. portrays the victory of Jesus through symbols.**
- c. describes key events in the history of civilization.**
- d. predicts events which will occur in the future.**
- e. All of the above are true.**

## **Major views of Revelation:**

*Preterism*

*Idealism*

*Historicism*

*Futurism*

*Eclecticism*

# Revelation 1:1-3

## ESV

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

## NIV

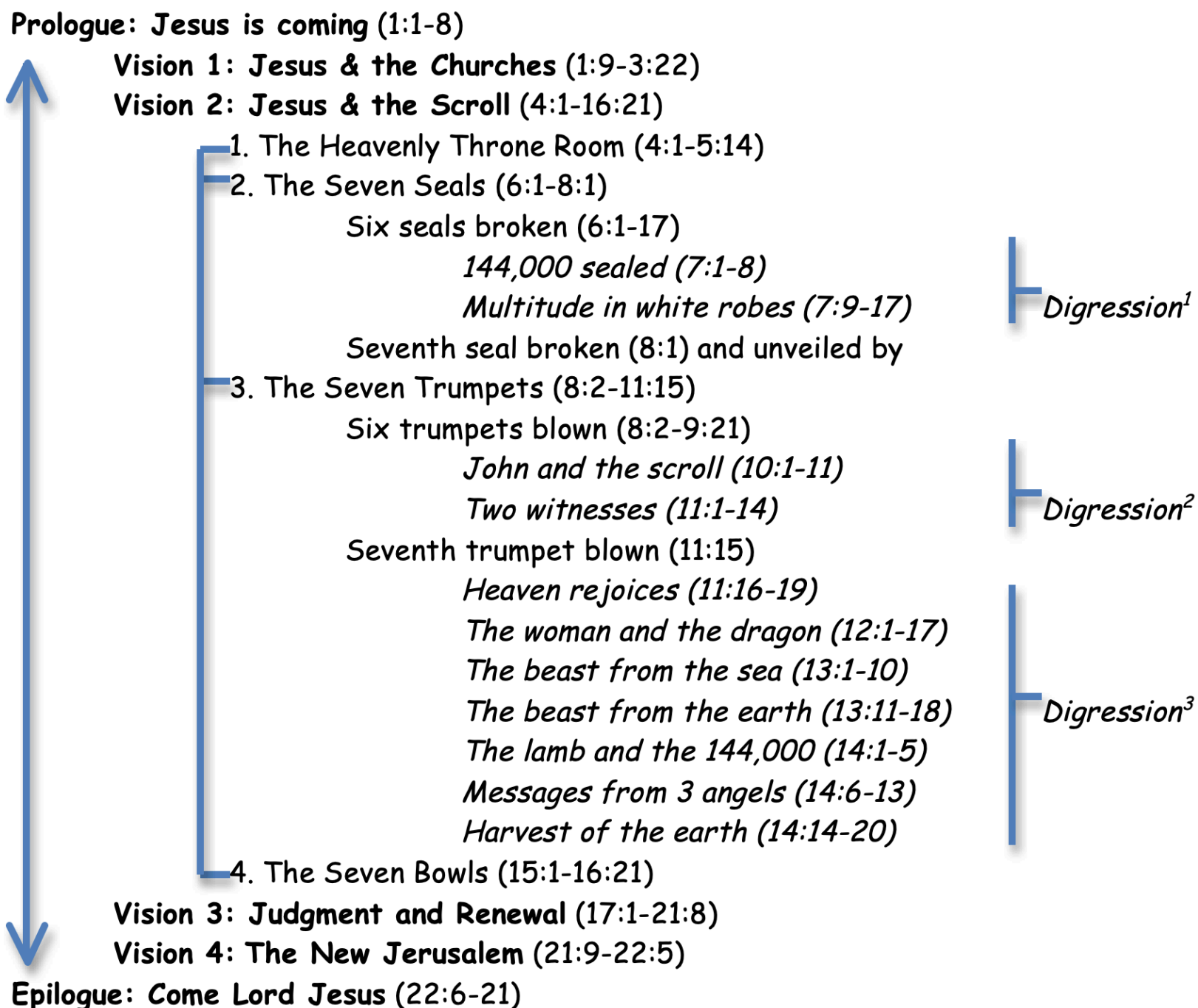
The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

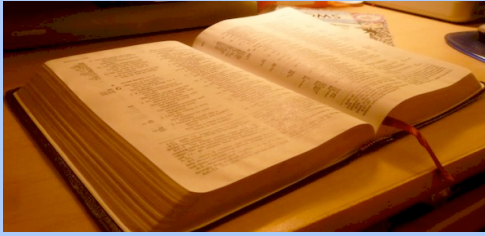
## NLT

This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place. He sent an angel to present this revelation to his servant John, who faithfully reported everything he saw. This is his report of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.

• How Revelation fits together





# Understanding Biblical Prophecy

## 6. So What? How does all this impact us?

***Information***

***Transformation***

***Action***

**Accurate knowledge**

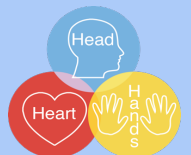


**Wise values**



**Missional Lifestyle**

- We are richly blessed to have the Bible in our language, along with the freedom and opportunity to study and teach it.
  - **Are we faithful stewards of this blessing?**
- Jude saw his church's situation in continuity with Israel's history as the ongoing one people of God.
  - **Do we read the OT like Jude did?**
- Jude speaks frankly and clearly about dangerous teaching and its judgment.
  - **Are we following Jude's example?**







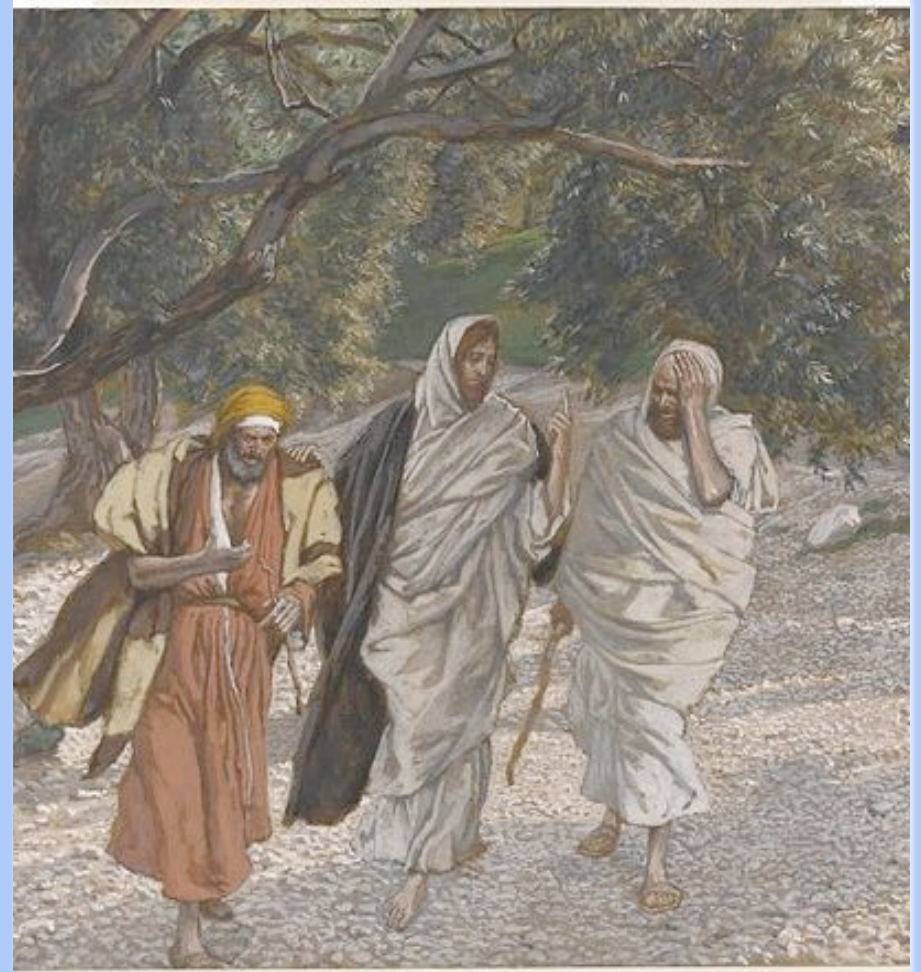
# Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic

## Luke 24

<sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, **he explained to them** what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. . . . <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, “**Were not our hearts burning within us while he . . . opened the Scriptures to us?**” . . .

<sup>44</sup> He said to them, “. . . **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me** in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

<sup>45</sup> **Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.** <sup>46</sup> He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> **You are witnesses of these things.**



James Tissot (1836-1902)