



Adult Learning Opportunity

Next Steps with the Bible: Going Deeper and Growing Stronger

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Dec 3: Understanding Biblical Apocalyptic: Visions of the End-times

1. Review of Week 10: Biblical 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

2. What is biblical apocalyptic?

- The origin of the word *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.
- Ancient apocalyptic literature portrays catastrophic judgment as the only solution to the sinfulness that pervades the earth and the persecution of God's people.
- 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).

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

4. How do we interpret biblical apocalyptic?

- Historical and literary context: the **ancient situation** external to these books and the internal **flow of thought** in these books.
- Find where the vision begins and ends (*form*).
- Understand the visionary imagery (*freedom*)
 - *Symbols/metaphors/similes* portray real events, persons, and places
 - 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

5. Case Study: the Book of Revelation

- Although other books have apocalyptic *sections*, Revelation (aka The Apocalypse) is the only apocalyptic *book* in the Bible.

How do you understand the Book of Revelation?

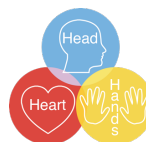
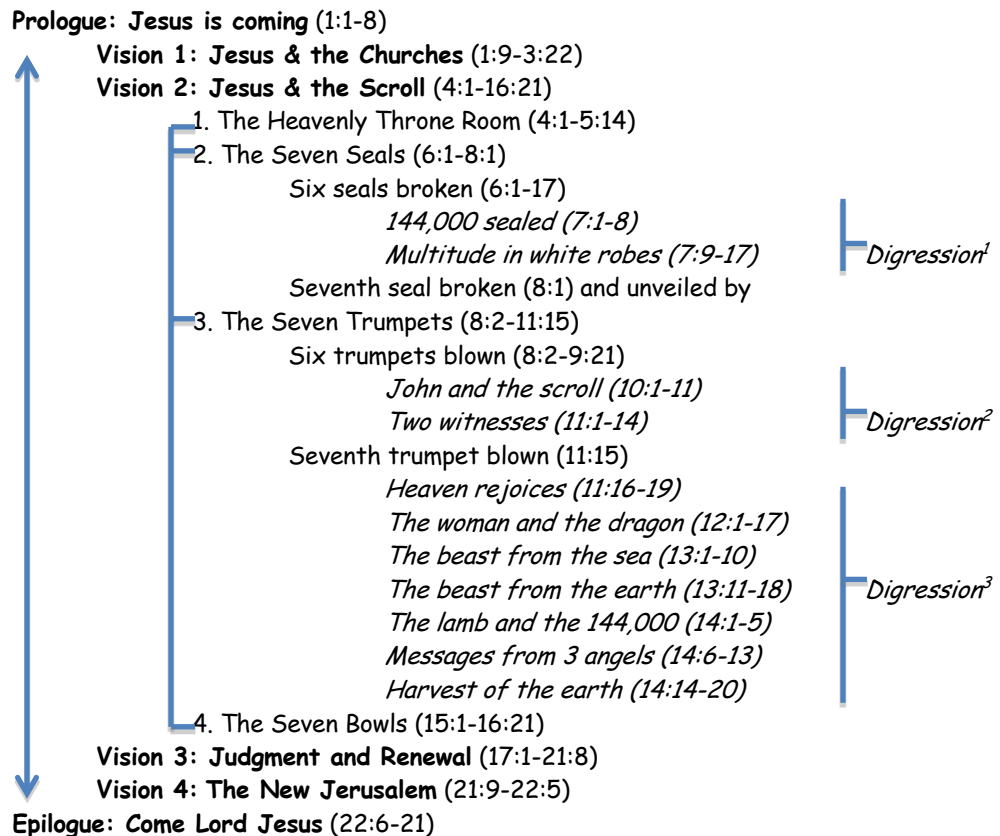
The book of Revelation

- 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

- Key features of the Book of Revelation
 - Major sections (visions) marked by "in the Spirit" (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10)
 - Transitions within visions marked by "and I saw" (e.g. 5:1, 6, 11; 6:1)
 - Repeated reminders of the "One sitting on the throne" (4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18)
 - Several series of "sevens" (churches, seals, trumpets, bowls, etc.)
- How Revelation fits together



Sanctify them through your truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)