

Apocalypse

TERMINOLOGY

The term, “apocalypse” comes from the Greek, *apocalypsis* = to uncover, disclose, reveal (Revelation). Apocalyptic is the adjective form that refers to a community, a world view and a literature.

“Eschatology” is the study of “end-time” events, which grows out of prophecy.

Apocalypse: A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework in which a revelation is mediated by a otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.

Revelation 1:1-2, Daniel 2:28-30

Apocalyptic Literature

Apocalyptic literature has elements of prophetic literature.

“Day of Yahweh”: The time when the present world would end in judgment. The wicked will be punished and the righteousness would enter an era of justice, peace and prosperity.

Apocalyptic literature has elements of wisdom literature.

Daniel

Apocalyptic literature is extreme literature, including hymns and gruesome images of bloodshed. The poet, D.H. Lawrence said, “When we read Revelation, we feel at once there are meanings behind meanings.” Even the writer, John needs the help of an angelic mediator to explain the meaning of the mystery (Revelation 17:7).

Apocalyptic Texts in the Bible: Daniel 7-12, Revelation

Apocalyptic Texts in the Apocrypha: I Enoch, 4Ezra, 2Baruch

Features of Apocalyptic Literature:

- Moral Dualism
- Heaven and Earth are separate realms that parallel and mirror each other
- Humans must endure struggle of light and darkness but God has a plan and in the end, truth will prevail
- Positive image of the coming new era
- An expectation of immanent divine intervention in the world to permanently remove evil
- God is Sovereign and in complete control

Apocalyptic Community

- In crisis / persecution for Daniel's and John's community – how much?
- Alienated from the power structures of this world
- Suffering for their religious convictions

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(Robert Wilson/OT Sociologist)

- Apocalyptic religions are a group phenomenon
- Initiation rituals to strengthen identity
- Some are highly organized and include a prophetic figure
- With the new era there is a vision for the group in that new era
- These visions and goals will occur by a supernatural timetable of events
- The group develops a plan for action so that they can live in these last days. Sometimes this plan includes special rituals
- Partial or complete separation from the world
- Because the end will be supernatural, weapons are not needed

Apocalyptic View

- The reality we see is not the only reality
- There is another, unseen realm that is more important than the one we inhabit
- Dual Consciousness

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- Linear view of history with a futuristic eschatology that anticipates an imminent and radical change to reality as we know it
- This change takes place by something/someone from a separate world
- The change will bring about a new existence
- Moral dualism is a part of the world view

The danger of misunderstanding the apocalyptic vision has always been present