

Through the Bible

OT:

9/4 Law (Gen-Deut)
9/11 History (Josh-Est)
9/18 Poetry (Job-Song)
9/25 Prophecy (Isa-Mal)
10/2 OT Narrative
10/9 OT Recap

NT:

10/16 Gospels (Matt-Acts)
10/23 Pauline Epistles (Rom-Phm)
10/30 Catholic Epistles (Heb-Jude)
11/6 Apocalyptic (Dan, Rev)
11/13 NT Narrative
11/20 NT Recap

Apocalyptic (Dan, Rev)

What is apocalyptic literature?

Apocalypses are symbolic vision narratives revealing the coming of God's kingdom in judgement on His enemies and vindication of His saints.

Is it literal or allegory?

- You sometimes hear a debate about if we should interpret Revelation literally or allegorically. It depends on what you mean by 'literal.' We don't think every vision will take place just as it is visually described.
 - **For example**, when John sees a vision of Jesus as a bloody, slain lamb with 7 horns and 7 eyes (Revelation 5:6), John nor his readers would think Jesus actually looks like that, only that the image represents Christ's sacrifice and work through the HS.
- We do however interpret the message of the visions 'literally.'
 - **In the example** of the slain lamb, we do interpret that Christ is the one to 'literally' carry out the judgement that is described. Verses considering it a spiritual allegory for the consequences of our actions.

Why is it confusing?

- Apocalyptic literature relies heavily on symbols that reference know Old Testament and 1st Century imagery.
 - If you are unfamiliar with the literary and cultural context, you are likely to miss the reference and not understand the message.
- An important strategy is to let Scripture interpret Scripture.
 - The surrounding context will usually explain what the images mean.
 - And reading the Old Testament references further expands our understanding.
- It's helpful to understand the principles of inaugurated eschatology and typology.
 - Inaugurated eschatology is the principle of "Already, not yet." Jesus Christ has already established his Kingdom in part on earth in the hearts of believers during his first coming. However, Christ's kingdom has not yet been completed in its fullness and will not be completed until the creation of the New Heaven and the New Earth. **Apocalyptic literature** often refers to experiences that have already taken place in part, but are not yet experienced in their fulness. For example, there is already consequences for sin, but not yet the fulness of God's judgment.
 - Typology is where people, nations, or events in Scripture foreshadow future people, nations, or events. For example, the passover lamb is a 'type' for Christ. **Apocalyptic literature** often uses past, present, or future 'types' to point to a greater future example. For example, Babylon's king Nebuchadnezzar is sometimes used as a 'type' for the future antichrist. Babylon and Rome are often used as 'types' for the antichrist's kingdom.
- **Apocalyptic literature** is similar to Jesus's parables, in that God calls those with "ears to hear let them hear" (Matthew 11:15).
 - Jesus said He spoke in parables so that His disciples could have a deeper understanding of the kingdom of heaven, while those who rejected Jesus couldn't understand what He was saying, because they weren't ready to hear it (Matthew 13:10-17).
 - If you are ready to hear the message of apocalyptic literature, it will make things more clear for you. If you aren't ready, you will be distracted by the imagery.

Why is it important?

- The purpose of end times prophesy is not for us to understand all the details, it is for us to gain hope and urgency.
 - Hope: for the coming Lord, to endure suffering, to grow in faith, for the promises of the future kingdom.
 - Urgency: to live everyday for Christ, devoted to preaching the Gospel, not taking one day for granted.
- God doesn't clearly give us all the details of the end times on purpose.
 - Because he doesn't want to distract us from the main point: hope and urgency.
 - So we shouldn't hold our views of the end times more firmly than they are supported in Scripture
- End times prophecy is like two sailboats passing each other in the distance on the horizon.
 - You know there are two boats, but you can't fully tell what they look like or how far away they are
 - So don't die on unclear hills, don't predict dates and figures, don't see the antichrist in everything, don't make vague connections, and don't fear. Eschatology (study of the end times) should make us confident, not fearful.

Old Testament Apocalyptic References

The Law: New Garden (Gen 1-2), battle between woman and dragon (Gen 3), kingdom of all nations (Gen 17), Lion of Judah (Gen 49), Seven bowls like plagues (Ex 7-11), 144,000 census (Num 1), 666 anti-schema (Deut 6), Armageddon location (Judges 5, 2 Kig 23).

Prophets: Isaiah: New Jerusalem, Day of the Lord, God's Throne, Message to prophets, Root of David, Christ's sword mouth, descriptions of Babylon, New Heaven and Earth. Zechariah: Four horsemen, Measure the temple, Seven lamp stands. Ezekiel: God's throne, Message to prophets, descriptions of Babylon, Symbols of rebellious nations, New garden on eden. Joel: The day of the Lord. Jeremiah: descriptions of Babylon. Zephaniah: New Jerusalem. Daniel 2, 7-12.

New Testament: End times predictions in Matt 24-25, Mk 13, Luke 21, 1 Cor 3, Heb 3, 1 Pet 1:3-12, 2 Pet 3, Jude 1:14-15.

Daniel's Apocalyptic Prophecies

- **Audience:** 605–536 BC. The Jewish exiles in Babylon, with insights into God's sovereignty over nations, aimed at Jews and Gentile rulers.
- **1 Daniel's Service**
- Daniel and his three friends are taken captive to Babylon, where they remain faithful to God by refusing to eat the king's food, and are blessed with wisdom and understanding.
 - **2 The King's dream**
 - 31-36 King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of a big image/statue: gold head, silver chest/arms, bronze belly/thighs, iron legs, iron/clay feet. Stone strikes the feet, the statue is crushed, stone becomes a mountain.
 - 37-45 Gold head = Babylon (605-539), Silver chest/arms = Medo-Persia (539-333), bronze belly/thighs = Greece (333-104), Iron legs = Rome (B.C. 64-476 A.D.), Iron/clay feet = future "Rome", Stone = God.
 - **3 The Fiery Furnace**
 - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue and are thrown into a fiery furnace, but God miraculously saves them.
 - **4 Nebuchadnezzar's Pride**
 - Nebuchadnezzar has a dream about a great tree that is cut down, symbolizing his coming madness and restoration after acknowledging God's sovereignty.
 - **5 Belshazzar's Pride**
 - King Belshazzar holds a blasphemous feast, and the writing on the wall foretells the fall of his kingdom to the Medes and Persians that very night.
 - **6 The Lion's Den**
 - Daniel is thrown into the lions' den for praying to God, but God shuts the lions' mouths, and Daniel is saved while his accusers are punished.

- **7 Daniel's Dream**
 - Daniel has a vision of four beasts representing earthly kingdoms. The “Ancient of Days” judges them with destruction and gives dominion to the Son of Man, symbolizing the eternal reign of God’s kingdom.
 - Lion = Babylon (605-539), Bear = Medo-Persia (539-333), Leopard = Greece (333-104), 4th Beast = Rome (64-476), 10 horns = 10 future kingdoms, little horn = the Antichrist (7 year tribulation, last 3.5 are terrible).
- **8 Daniel's 2nd Vision**
 - Daniel receives a vision of a ram and a goat, symbolizing future conflicts between the Medo-Persian and Greek empires, and the rise of Antiochus IV (175-164), who is a “type” for the future Antichrist.
- **9 Daniel's prayer**
 - Daniel prays for the forgiveness of Israel’s sins, ignoring the prophets, and being scattered. Daniel receives a prophecy from Gabriel about the seventy weeks, revealing God’s plan for Israel’s future redemption.
 - $(7 \times 7) + (7 \times 62) = 49 + 434 = 483$ years = Ezra/Nehemiah → Jesus’s Death/Resurrection. Pause for 2000+ years, 7 year treaty between Israel + Antichrist, 3.5 years in Antichrist breaks his treaty, after 7 years, Jesus returns.
- **10-12 Daniel's 3rd Vision**
 - 10 Daniel has a vision of a figure like Jesus, and learns that spiritual warfare is taking place behind the scenes.
 - 11 A detailed prophecy about the future conflicts, comparing Antiochus IV (175-164) and the future Antichrist.
 - 12 A detailed prophecy about the tribulation, resurrection, final judgment, and the ultimate victory in the end times.
 - **Lesson:** Live faithfully while God raises up and tears down leaders. God will ultimately destroy all evil nations and the Antichrist at His second coming when He establishes His kingdom on earth.

The Book of Revelation

Verses 1-4

Genre: Revelation of Jesus Christ: ἀποκάλυψις (apokalypsis) = to reveal, lay bare, disclose the truth

Author: Christ’s angel to the apostle John, to the 7 churches in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey)

Purpose: symbols of things which must shortly take place, the time is near = visions to prepare us, be ready

Lesson: God’s ultimate victory through Christ assures believers of eternal life and the end of evil.

Key Verse: "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying." (Revelation 21:4)

Outline:

- 1-3 The 7 churches
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 - 4-5 God’s throne room
 - 6-16 The 3x7 judgements
 - 17-18 The fall of Babylon
 - 19-20 Christ’s victory
 - 21-22 New heaven & earth
- **1-3 The 7 churches**
 - 1 John’s vision of Christ: Christ appears to John, who is instructed to write to the seven churches (represented as 7 lights or lamp stands). Vision of Jesus, the Son of Man from Daniel, the Alpha and Omega.
 - 2-3 Individual Letters: Jesus addresses each church with encouragement, correction, and promises for overcomers.
 1. Ephesus (2:1-7): They work hard, but they forsook their first love.
 2. Smyrna (2:8-11): They are suffering persecution, and should be faithful even to death.
 3. Pergamum (2:12-17): Faithful to Jesus, but some listened to false teaching.

4. Thyatira (2:18-29): A growing church listening to a false prophetess promoting sexual immorality.
5. Sardis (3:1-6): A few good members, but most of the church is spiritually dead.
6. Philadelphia (3:7-13): They refused to deny Jesus, so they should hold onto their faith.
7. Laodicea (3:14-22): Lukewarm Christians, who need to seek Jesus with everything.

• **4-5 God's throne room**

- 4 Heavenly Worship: A vision of God's throne and heavenly worship. Singing Holy, Holy, Holy.
- 5 The Worthy Lamb: Jesus, as the slain Lamb, is worthy to open the scroll of God's plan.

• **6-16 The 3x7 judgements**

- 6-8a Seven Seals: Each seal unleashes events leading to final judgment.
 1. White horse: false peace at the beginning of the tribulation
 2. Red horse: worldwide war, violence, and bloodshed
 3. Black horse: famine, economic challenges, scarce resources
 4. Pale horse: death, caused by plague, hunger, and wild animals
 5. Martyrs cry for justice: suffering of believers
 6. Cosmic disturbances: sun darkened, stars falling
 7. Silence in heaven: calm before the storm of the next set of judgements
- 8b-11 Seven Trumpets: Trumpet blasts bring warnings and call for repentance.
 1. Hail and fire: destruction of part of the earth's vegetation and environment
 2. Burning mountain thrown into the sea: affecting marine life, volcanic activity
 3. Star falls making bitter water: poisoned water
 4. Darkness: 3rd of the sun, moon, and stars go dark. Maybe power outages?
 5. Demonic locusts: insect plague, spiritual torment
 6. Destroying army: powerful nations overtaking one another
 7. God's kingdom proclaimed: the end of earthly power structures
- 12-14 Seven Signs: Pause from judgements to reveal spiritual warfare and God's sovereignty.
 1. Woman and dragon: Woman is Israel, dragon is Satan trying to destroy the child Jesus
 2. War in heaven: Michael defeats Satan, who is cast down to earth
 3. The Beast from the Sea: the Antichrist gaining political power
 4. The Beast from the Earth: a false prophet promoting the Antichrist and the "mark of the beast"
 5. The Lamb and the 144,000: the remnant of faithful Israel, Jewish believers
 6. Messages of Judgment: Angels proclaim God's judgment, warning against worshiping the beast
 7. Harvest of the Earth: God's judgment as a harvest, believers are gathered, unrepentant are judged
- 15-16 Seven Bowls: Referencing Exodus plagues, bowls of wrath pour out final judgment on the unrepentant.
 1. Painful sores: affecting anyone who worships the beast (6)
 2. Sea of blood: consequence of sin extending to creation (1)
 3. Rivers turn to blood: God's justice on those who spilled blood (1)
 4. Scorching heat from the sun: people refusing to repent from God's power (7)
 5. Darkness: over the beast's kingdom (9)
 6. Euphrates River dries up: makes way for the "kings of the east," setting up armageddon
 7. Voice declares "It is done!": Massive earthquakes and hailstorms represent God's final judgment

• **17-18 The fall of Babylon**

- 17: The fall of Babylon: (representing Rome / global system / antichrist's nation / all corruption)
 - 17:1-6: The description of the great harlot, representing false religion and immorality, who rides the beast.
 - 17:7-18: The explanation of the woman's mystery and the ultimate destruction of Babylon.
- 18: The Lament Over Babylon's Destruction
 - 18:1-8: The lament over the fall of Babylon, emphasizing the consequences of sin and rebellion against God.
 - 18:9-24: The world's mourning over Babylon's destruction, highlighting the finality of God's judgment.

- **19-20 Christ's victory**

- 19: The Marriage Supper of the Lamb
 - 19:1-10: The celebration in heaven over Babylon's fall, leading to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
 - 19:11-21: The glorious return of Christ on a white horse, executing judgment and defeating the beast and false prophet.
- 20: The Binding of Satan, the Millennial Reign, and the Final Judgment
 - 20:1-3: The binding of Satan for 1,000 years.
 - 20:4-6: The 2nd resurrection of believers, reigning with Christ during the millennium.
 - 20:7-10: Satan's release and final rebellion, resulting in his ultimate defeat and eternal punishment.
 - 20:11-15: The Great White Throne judgment, where the dead are judged according to their deeds, culminating in the second death for the unrepentant.

- **21-22 New heaven & earth**

- 21 New Heaven and New Earth: God creates a renewed, sin-free world.
 - 21:1-8: The creation of a new heaven and earth, with the New Jerusalem coming down. God dwells with His people, wiping away every tear.
- 22 Final Invitation and Conclusion: The book ends with a call to readiness for Christ's return.
 - 22:1-5: The river of life and the tree of life in the New Jerusalem, symbolizing eternal life and communion with God.
 - 22:6-21: The concluding exhortations, reaffirming the truth of the prophecy and urging readiness for Christ's return.

Eschatology: the study of the end times

- **Things Christians agree on:**

1. Literal 2nd coming of Christ
2. Final resurrection of all believers
3. Final judgment of all mankind
4. Eternal life for all believers
5. Eternal punishment for all non-believers
6. Creation of the New Heaven and New Earth
7. God's kingdom literally established on earth as it is in heaven

- **Different views on the rapture**

- Pre-tribulation: Christians 'caught up' to Christ right before the 7-year tribulation starts
- Mid-tribulation: Christians 'caught up' to Christ at the 3.5-year mark of the tribulation before the worst
- Post-tribulation: Christians 'caught up' to Christ as He is returning for His 2nd coming after the tribulation

- **Verses supporting pre-trib:**

1. Matt 24:36-42 — Jesus talks about people left behind like in the days of Noah, who escaped destruction.
2. Luke 21:36 — Jesus tells us to pray to be counted worthy to escape end times suffering.
3. John 14:1-3 — Christ is preparing a place to receive us in His Father's house.
4. 1 Thess 4:13-15 — Knowledge of the rapture is for our comfort, and the tribulation isn't comforting.
5. 1 Thess 4:16-17 — Seemingly 'caught up' before the 'day of the Lord,' not at it.
6. 1 Thess 5:1-5 — The 'day of the Lord' is a surprise, but it wouldn't if we experienced the tribulation.
7. Rev 3:10 — God will keep those who obey Him from 'the hour of trial' upon the whole world.

- **Argument against pre-trib:**

1. None of these passages specifically mention the timing of the rapture to be before the tribulation.
2. Believers being "kept from" and "escape all these things" could refer to protection during the tribulation or dying before.
3. Most the early church fathers seem to hold a post-trib view (with a few possible exceptions), and pre-trib wasn't popular until the 1800s.
4. Does Christ coming to call people up to the rapture count as a second coming?
5. When is the first resurrection (Rev 20:6)? At the rapture? Second coming? Both?

- **Different views on the millennial kingdom**

- Pre-millennial: Christ will return before His thousand-year reign and establish His kingdom on earth.
- A-millennial: the "millennium" is not a literal thousand years but represents the current reign of Christ in the hearts of believers and the church.
- Post-millennial: Christ will return after a period of peace and righteousness (the millennium), which will be established through the spread of the Gospel.

- **Support for Pre-millennialism:**

1. God's everlasting kingdom mentioned throughout the OT and NT.
2. 1,000 years specifically mentioned in Revelation 20.
3. The fulfillment of God's promised kingdom clearly hasn't happened yet.

- **Arguments against Pre-millennialism:**

1. Interpret allegorically, not a literal 1,000 years.
2. Only one verse says 1,000.
3. God's spiritual kingdom in the hearts of believers fulfill the prophesy.

- **What we believe:**

1. **First Coming of Christ:** Christ came to die, raise from the dead, and ascend into heaven. This begins the church age with the indwelling of the HS in the believers. (Gospels, Acts)
2. **Pre-Tribulation Rapture:** Believers will be taken to heaven before the seven-year tribulation begins. Dead believers will raise first. (1 Thes 4:16-17, Rev 3:10)
3. **Seven-Year Tribulation:** The tribulation consists of three and a half years of relative peace, followed by three and a half years of intense suffering and terror under the Antichrist. (Daniel 9:27, Rev 6-19)
4. **Second Coming of Christ:** Christ will return physically to earth after the tribulation, resulting in the resurrection of believers who died during the tribulation, maybe Old Testament saints, and the initial judgment of non-believers. (Rev 19:11-16, 20:4)
5. **1,000-Year Millennial Kingdom:** Christ will establish a literal thousand-year reign on earth, where believers will rule with Him over those who survive the tribulation, fulfilling promises made to Israel. (Is 11:1-9, Rev 20:1-6)
6. **Final Judgment and Resurrection:** At the end of the millennium, there will be a final judgment where all will be resurrected and judged according to their deeds. (Dan 12:2, Rev 20:11-15)
7. **New Heaven and New Earth:** God will create a new heaven and a new earth, where believers will dwell eternally in His presence. (Is 65:17, Rev 21:1)

- ***Remember**, hope and urgency. Growing confidence in our faith, not creating fear or uncertainty.