

Review from last week's practice (Doxology with Dave)

Discussion on genre

- Collins and Hellholm define apocalypse as “A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an 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 ... intended for a group in crisis with the purpose of exhortation and/or consolation by means of divine authority.”¹

- What other books in the Bible might fit into this genre?

- Coded lang. vs. mysterious prophecy
 - Gematria is an alpha-numeric code or cipher used in the Hebrew language where each letter also have a numerical value. Words, then, could be added up to equal a certain number. Some propose that in Matthew's genealogy for Jesus, the number fourteen appears as important because it is the total for the letters in the name David (dwd=daleth 4+waw 6+daleth 4=14). When we have a mystery number like 666 (or 616), some propose that using gematria this could be decoded as “Nero Caesar” (נרון קסר NRON QSR) which when used as numbers represent 50 200 6 50 100 60 200, which add to 666).

- “The tendency of much historical scholarship has been to specify the referents of apocalyptic imagery in as unambiguous a manner as possible. This enterprise has indeed contributed much to our understanding of passages like Daniel 11. Yet Paul Ricoeur has rightly protested against the tendency to identify apocalyptic symbols in too univocal a way. This tendency missed the element of mystery and indeterminacy that constitutes much of the “atmosphere” of apocalyptic literature. In short, Ricoeur suggests that we should sometimes ‘allow several concurrent identifications *play*’ and that the text may on occasion achieve its effect precisely through the element of uncertainty.”² This means that apocalyptic literature is *not* like allegory, where each element has one single referent. Instead, each element might have multiple referents and that's what makes the genre complex and mysterious.

Eschatology—The study of the last things

Cosmogony—A theory or story of the origin and development of the universe, the solar system, or the earth-moon system.

Vaticinium ex eventu (AKA Ex eventu prophecy)—(Lat. for ‘prophecy from the event’) A term referring to a prophecy written after the author already had information about that which was “foretold”. The text is written so as to

	otherworldly journeys										“historical” apocalypses				
	Apoc. Zephaniah	T. Abraham	3 Baruch	T. Levi 2-5	2 Enoch	Similitudes	Astronomical Book	1 Enoch 1-36	Apoc. Abraham	2 Baruch	4 Ezra	Jubilees	Apoc. of Weeks	Animal Apocalypse	Daniel
Cosmogony					•					•	•				
Primordial events			•			•		•	•	•	•				
Recollection of past									•	•	•				•
Ex eventu prophecy									•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Persecution						•			•		•	•		•	•
Other eschatological upheavals				•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Judgment/destruction of wicked	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Judgment/destruction of world	?				•		?	•	?	•			•		
Judgment/destruction of otherworldly beings					•	•	?	•				•	•	•	•
Cosmic transformation				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	?	•	•	•
Resurrection						•				•	•		?	•	•
Other forms of afterlife	•	•	?	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	?	?	

[This grid is adapted from *Semeia* 14, p. 28. where a more complete form may be found.]

¹ John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 5 and 41.
² Collins, 16.

appear that the prophecy had taken place before the event, when in fact it was written after the events supposedly predicted. “Daniel 11 is the best example of the apocalyptic principle of prophetic hindsight (or *vaticinium ex eventu*). The histories of the Persian Empire and Greece and the Seleucid Empire are “foretold” with detailed accuracy. By contact, the end of the rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, described in Daniel 11:40-45, is only vaguely predicted and without the benefit of historical hindsight. The transition from *ex eventu* prophecy to real predictive prophecy can be traced in Daniel 11 to this portrait of Antiochus.”³

Daniel Chapter 7

Nebuchadnezzar → Belshazzar → Darius → Cyrus

- Understanding the composition of the book of Daniel as a whole is important.
- The first half (chapters 1-6) seems to take place during the Babylonian exile (sixth century BCE) and so we may assume that it was composed during the same era. However, most scholars agree that the second half (chapters 7-12) was composed during the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. “Antiochus IV [Epiphanes] ruled the Jews from 175 to 164 BC. He is remembered as a major villain and persecutor in the Jewish traditions associated with Hanukkah including the books of Maccabees ... Rabbinical sources refer to him as **הַרְשָׁע** *harasha* (“the wicked”).”⁴

Chapter	Kings/ Ruler	Chapter
1, 2, 3, 4	Nebuchadnezzar	
5	Belshazzar &	7
	Darius the Mede	9
6	Cyrus the Persian	10

Characters: The Four Beasts from the sea, the Ancient One, son of man, Daniel, attendant, the Most High

1. Like a lion with eagles’ wings, wings plucked off, made to stand on two feet, given a human mind
 2. Like a bear, three tusks in its mouth in addition to teeth, instructed to devour many bodies
 3. Like a leopard with four wings of a bird, and four heads, dominion given to it
 4. Another beast, terrifying and strong, iron teeth and, stamping with feet, ten horns, then another little horn emerged (at which point three of the other horns were plucked up by their roots) with a human mouth and eyes on it and it spoke arrogantly.
- 7:9 “an Ancient One took his throne” Do we know who this is?
 - 7:13 “I saw one like a human being [**קַבְרֵ אֱנוֹשׁ** = **the son of man**] coming with the clouds of heaven.”
 - “The exaltation of the one like a son of man represents the triumph of the Jews... The traditional view, that the one like a son of man is the messiah, is still occasionally defended... However, it suffers from the fact that there is no clear reference to the messiah elsewhere in Daniel. The main alternative... is the view that this figure is the angelic leader of the heavenly host.”⁵ Compare with Rev 14:14, where the “one like a son of man” appears who is evidently an angel and not Christ.
 - “The suppression of proper names lends an air of mystery to the whole vision. The specific identification of the one like a son of man is not of ultimate importance. What matters is that there is a heavenly savior figure who represents the righteous community on the supernatural level.”⁶
 - Using the chart on the first page, how does chapter 7 epitomize the apocalyptic genre?
 - What are some of the similarities between chapters 2 and 7?
 - Read vv. 23-27. If we understand this refer to Antiochus (a Gentile ruler who is oppressing and slaughtering the Jewish people), how might we begin to decode the language?

This week’s practice of Centering Prayer

³ Bill Arnold, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 364.

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiochus_IV_Epiphanes

⁵ Collins, 103.

⁶ Ibid, 106.