

Grapppling with the New Testament
Session 8

End of the World

Apocalyptic
Visions
and the Book of
Revelation



Learning for
Discipleship
Programme

2023 - 2025

Session 8: Apocalyptic Visions and the Book of Revelation

Revelation, wishful thinking and the ferocious thirst for righteousness in the world

*The presentation 'Apocalyptic Expectations' will be used in this session. It will be helpful to have read through **Appendix B** (Below) in preparation for this session.*

1. What was 'Apocalyptic Literature'?



1.1 '**Apocalyptic**' means "uncovering" or "revelation". Calling a book 'apocalyptic' implies that its chief characteristic is the revelation about some secret about the future.

1.2 Only 2 books of the Bible are apocalyptic – Daniel in the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation in the New Testament. There are elements of apocalyptic thought in other books (See **Fig. 1** below)

Fig. 1

FAITH CHALLENGES 513 **Apocalyptic Continuity**

THE DEVELOPMENT OF APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE		
586–572	Ezekiel 38–39	Early vision of cosmic battle
520	Isaiah 56–66	Visionary hope for divine intervention
450's (?)	Isaiah 24–27	Cosmic images of final days
400 (?)	Zechariah 9–14	Developed images of world to come
168	Daniel	Cosmic battle, afterlife
165–100	I Enoch, Jubilees	Extensive speculation on world to come
40–1	Psalms of Solomon Assumption of Moses	Special revelations about the future from great figures of the past
50 A.D.	Mark 13	Imagery of final days of world and God's new inbreaking
66–70	Apocalypse of Moses	
70–132	Sibylline Oracles 4 Ezra Book of Revelation Apocalypse Baruch	Strong elements of secret revelations the end of the world

Lawrence Boadt 'Reading the Old Testament' page 513

Davidson, J. (1998) *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

- 1.3 As we recite the Creed in our services, we proclaim the second coming of Christ. We talk of the coming of the Kingdom of God. We know that, to some Christians, the end time is of the greatest importance in framing their understanding of mankind's purpose before God in the world.



- 1.4 But what do you make of the apocalyptic books and texts of the Bible? They have their roots firmly in the Old Testament – as far back as the time of the start of the Exile (6th Century BC). The most well-known apocalyptic text, and clearly the most influential of the Old Testament is that of the Book of Daniel. Part of this book is included in the Old Testament proper (for Anglicans, Reformed and Protestant Christians). The whole book is contained in the texts of the Old Testament used by Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians. The remaining chapters of Daniel form a part of the Apocrypha.

Preparatory Activity: getting to know Daniel

Before the session read the Book of Daniel. Come prepared to answer the following about your reactions to the book:

1. Who do you think this book might have been written for in its present form?
2. Note down any three things this book seems to want us to believe or to realise.
3. How would you wish to understand those three things within our present time and culture?

You may wish to read the whole of Daniel – including those parts held in the Apocrypha. Part of Daniel 14 is found in the first part of **Appendix C** below. You may recognise some of it.

Activity 1: the nature of Apocalyptic Literature

The purpose of this activity is to pool our present knowledge of apocalyptic and our attitude to it (if any).

1. Discuss the results of your reflections about the reading of the Book of Daniel.
2. Look again at the diagram “Apocalyptic Continuity”¹ – Fig. 1 above.
 - a. What does this diagram tell us about Apocalyptic Literature in the Bible and outside it?
 - b. What questions do we now need to ask to better understand why this form of thought arose and grew?
 - c. Look back at Daniel and also at the other biblical references (including Mark and Revelation). Agree common aspects of
 - i. Their view of the future
 - ii. Their language
 - iii. Their view of mankind
 - iv. Their view of the world in general.

-
- 1.5 Apocalyptic literature evolved and developed from long before the time of Christ well into the 2nd Century (Judaism) and beyond (Christianity). It underpins some aspects of the Gnostic and other heresies which challenged the early Church. Apocalyptic views were especially strong in first century (BCE & CE) Judaism in Palestine. Particular examples are found in the texts from Qumran – The “Dead Sea Scrolls”



The discovery of the Scrolls - 1947

- 1.6 One key issue for the primitive Church was the belief in the Second Coming of Christ. It was strongly believed that Jesus would return and herald in the final establishment of the Kingdom of God.

¹ Taken from “Reading the Old Testament, An Introduction” by Lawrence Boadt. © 1984, Paulist Press. ISBN 0 8091 2631 1 page 513

For them the Jesus of whose earthly life the tradition spoke was the same person whom they now knew as Lord and Son of God, and whom they believed to be sitting at God's right hand in glory, governing the universe on his behalf, and soon to come to earth again to judge and wind up the universe, and usher in a totally new world-order

From "Saint Mark" by Prof. D.E. Nineham.(c) 1963.
Published by Penguin Books

The early Christians believed this would happen in their lifetime. It did not...!

It was in the Book of Daniel that the first explicit teaching about a divine promise that the just person will rise after death to a life of happiness with God ([see Daniel 12:2](#)) – it became a regular part of the faith of the Pharisees at the time of Jesus.

Also in the Book of Daniel is projected a coming Kingdom of God that will be brought about by a heavenly yet human figure, the Son of Man ([see Daniel 7](#)). It is not quite the same as the older idea of a Messiah, an anointed king like the kings of old, which was found in Isaiah 7-11, Ezekiel 33-48 and Zechariah. But this Son of Man is clearly a Messianic figure of salvation who will rule over Israel. Jesus himself used this term to describe his mission, and the early Church understood it to mean that Jesus was the eschatological saviour whose victory and the fulfilment of his mission would be known only after his own death and resurrection.

From "Reading the Old Testament" by Lawrence Boadt.
© 1984, Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle,
and published by the Paulist Press.

2. The Book of Revelation

- 1.1 Apocalyptic beliefs had a consistent and profound impact on the teachings of Judaism in the time of Christ and before. As a result they also had an impact on the early Church and caused these ideas to be integrated into and remain a part of Christian belief. The interrelationship between Old Testament, later Jewish and early Christian texts has been noted already ([Fig. 1](#)).
- 1.2 [2 Thessalonians](#) spells out Paul's understanding of the end of time – for which all are to wait. The Book of Revelation is the one, complete, apocalyptic book to have made it into the final canon of Christian Scripture. Whatever your views, apocalyptic has a major and ongoing importance for Judaism and for the Church.

Activity 2: Reading about Revelation

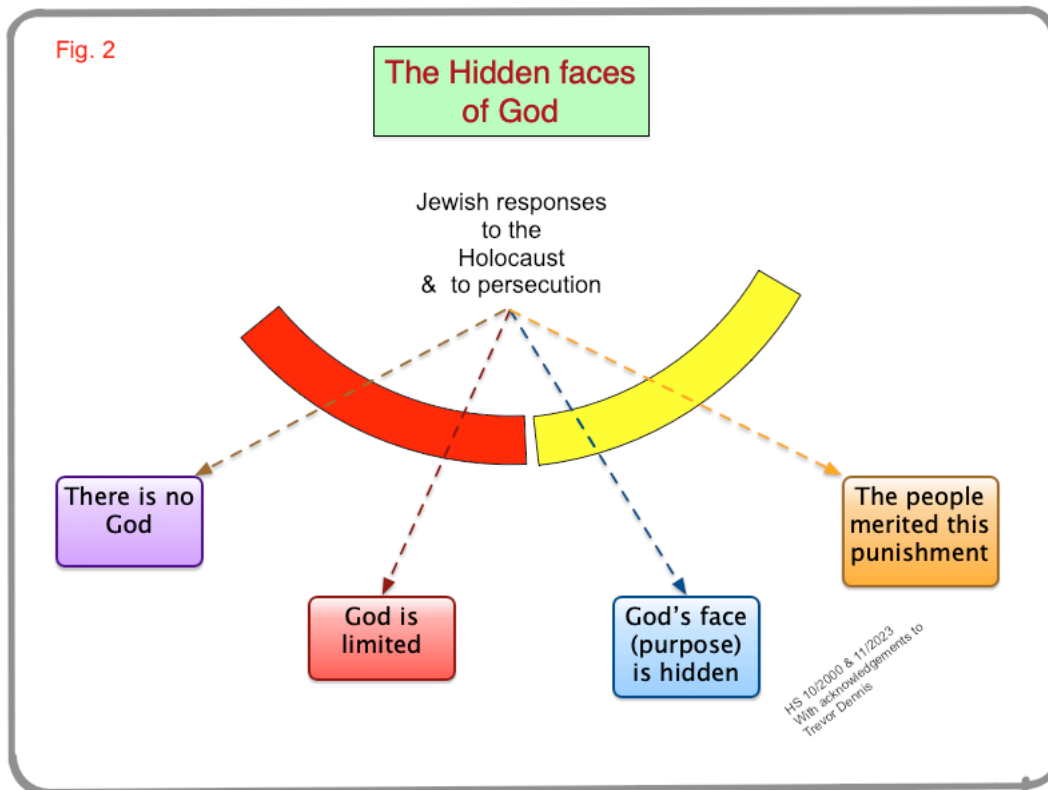
Before the session it would help to read through [Appendix B](#) ‘*The End of the Word or What?*’ In this I have set out how this book is composed and possible dating. Equally important is the historical context especially the experiences of persecution of the Church in the first century CE.

Activity 3: Responding in times of persecution

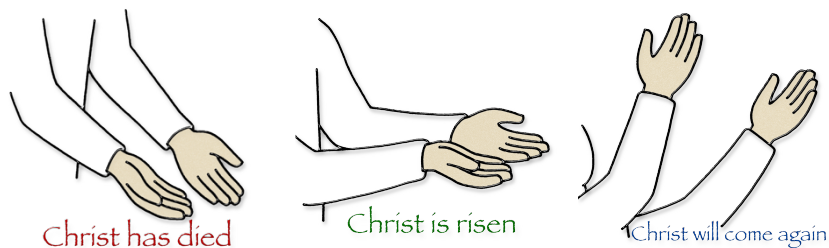
- Discuss ways in which Christians (and other religious groups) respond to persecution in our times
 - Jews and the Holocaust? (see diagram below ([Fig. 2](#)) and the notes above it)
 - Christians during Apartheid in South Africa?
 - Christians in the Sudan – especially before the creation of South Sudan in 2011?
 - Other?

For the Jewish people faced with (for example) the facts of the Holocaust in the 20th Century, the problem arises of how to understand God when he seems obliterated by such events;

How we react in times of crisis is not too dissimilar. We will be tested; we shall have our faith shaken, we shall have to endure loss and pain. And from the earliest times, when the same facts were being faced, the Hebrew and Jewish people have asked why is the evil? Why do the innocent suffer when the evil seem to prosper? Where is God when the faithful are swept aside? What does it mean to human? Such questioning and protest has been written into the liturgy of the Reform and Liberal Jews. This rarely appears in the Christian tradition.



- ‘Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again’ – will he?



Activity 4: Lament as a response to tragedy

- Write about one experience or event which has made you want to question your faith, calling or purpose. It could be something on a grand scale or something more personal. Your writing could be in the form of a lament, prose, other poetry or descriptive argument.
- In turn members of the Group are invited to read aloud their written piece.
- *The group listens without comment or discussion.*
- Anyone who feels unable to read out what they have written should feel able to “pass”.

An example of a contemporary “lament” may be found in Appendix E

Appendix A: Future Events described in 2 Thessalonians

I Thessalonians 4:13-17² -

Now we don't want you, my brothers, to be in any doubt about those who "fall asleep" in death, or to grieve over them like men who have no hope. After all, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again from death, then we can believe that God will just as surely bring with Jesus all who are "asleep" in him. Here we have a definite message from the Lord. It is that those who are still living when he comes will not in any way precede those who have previously fallen asleep. One word of command, one shout from the archangel, one blast from the trumpet of God and the Lord himself will come down from Heaven! Those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then we who are still living on the earth will be swept up with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And after that we shall be with him for ever.

2 Thessalonians 2 verses 1-12

The coming of the Lord and its prelude

¹ About the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, [^{1 Th 2:19d}] brothers and sisters, and our being gathered to him, ² we beg you not to be too easily upset in mind or thrown into confusion by any manifestation of the Spirit or any statement or any letter claiming to come from us, to the effect that the Day of the Lord is already here. ³ Do not let anyone deceive you in any way. It cannot happen until the Great Revolt has come and the Man of Wickedness has first appeared, the Son of Perdition, [^{Is 14:13}] ⁴ the Enemy, who raises himself above every so-called god or object of worship to enthrone himself in God's sanctuary, and flaunts the claim that he is God. ⁵ Do you not remember my telling you about this when I was still with you? ⁶ And you know, too, what is holding him back till he should appear at his appointed time. ⁷ The mystery of wickedness is already at work, but let him who is restraining it once be removed, [^{Is 11:4}] ⁸ and the Wicked One will be revealed, whom the Lord will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming.

⁹ The coming of the Wicked One is to be marked by the working of Satan in all kinds of signs and wonders and false miracles, ¹⁰ and every wicked deception for those who are perishing because they would not accept the love of the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ And therefore God sends on them a power of delusion so that they believe what is false, ¹² so that those who do not believe the truth but take their pleasure in wickedness may all be condemned.³

² In this case, taken from the J.B. Philips translation

³ Revised New Jerusalem Bible Translation

Appendix B: The End of the World or What? The Book of Revelation.

1. Introduction

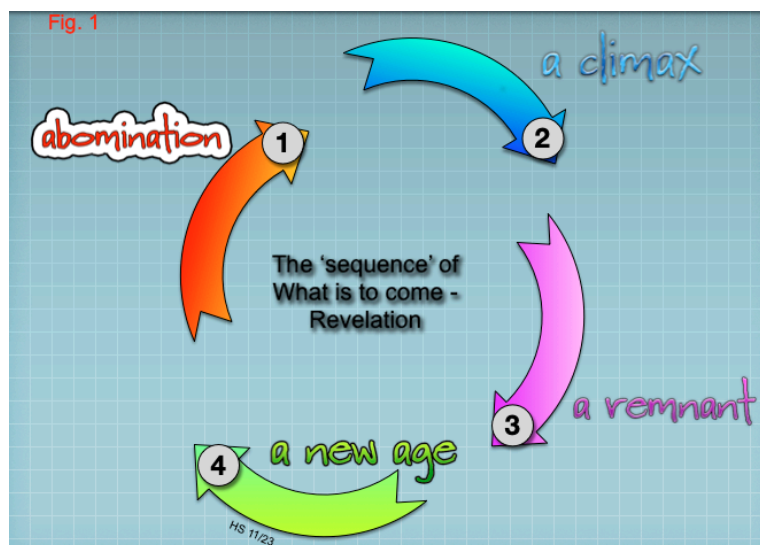
Revelation can be thought of as the most extraordinary book of the New Testament. It stands alone – a completely different genre amid the Gospels and epistles of the rest.

This book continues to raise questions about

- The nature of the Biblical texts we read and their authority (this we have discussed in session 1 and will return in the final session)
- How we are abusing or gratuitously reinterpret this book far too often.
- The mythological construct of the age of the Early Church, and apocalyptic literature which was relatively widespread.
- The authorship of Revelation – was there really a ‘John’ to whom this book was ‘revealed’ in a vision?
- The ways in which we may want to look at Revelation – how can this book, which is in the Canon of Scripture, be responded to and understood today?

2. The Book Itself

The book of Revelation appears linear – sequential - but scholars would regard it more appropriate to see it as repeating in different ways that which it wishes to disclose.



Some of the most powerful language in Revelation has its roots in e.g., Ezekiel and Daniel and its imagery is reflected in other inter-testamental books as well as in the New Testament. In particular see;

- Matthew 24 (**see extract** – in main resource for this session)
- Thessalonians 2 (**See extracts – Appendix A**)

Others have taken this book in different ways – responding directly to it; letting the text ‘take’ them (remember Coleridge’s expression here – see Session 1 resource) and also, equally, bringing themselves to the text.

3. Context – authorship, dating, location, situation

Those who have had the chance to look at modern study of the Bible and its texts, know that “critical” approaches to the Bible have asked questions about the settings and purposes of the texts, where they were written for whom and why.

Critical study of the Bible also asks questions (less relevant here) about the actions of the subsequent editors on the texts as we receive them

We are also interested in why these texts were included in the New Testament when others were not (including some gospels, epistles and apocalyptic texts). What is the authority of the Book of Revelation? How have people responded to and understood this text in the past and how may we respond to it and understand it today?

In our study programme we have excluded any form of crude literalism – word for word adherence as if it was an exact prediction of what was, is and is to come....

- *144,000*
- *666*
- *An abomination etc....*

We must not descend into some ‘Da Vinci Code-type’ conspiracy / code / mystery as if revealed only to some today and calling us to abandon life, sit on a mountain, disconnect from the society of which we are a part and wait for the final desolation...

4. What we know about the Book of Revelation

As with most books of the Bible, we know less than we do not know about the specific origins of this book!

This book claims authorship by a John who is a prophet and visionary. This was NOT the John whose name is attributed to the Gospel of John. Nor is he the author of the letters of John. We can tell this by analysing the language, style and theological stance of the different books concerned. In fact, nowhere does the author claim to be the Gospel writer or author of the Letters of John. Nor does he claim to have been one of the Twelve Apostles.

This John, living on the Island of Patmos addresses the book to Churches on the mainland (as if on the Isle of Wight and writing to the 7 counties of southern England perhaps?)

This John is a Jewish Christian – he knows his Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), quotes extensively from Daniel and uses imagery from the last chapters of Ezekiel to shape his vision of the new Temple and New Jerusalem. This John seems to have faced much opposition.

The dating of the Book of Revelation is problematic – as with several books of the New Testament.

- Possibly c95 CE – during a period of severe if localised persecution under the emperor Domitian.
- Possibly c68 CE after the persecutions under the Emperor Nero – although this theory is less widely accepted.

In both cases these localised episodes of persecution of the Church were severe. Not surprisingly Rome is termed “the beast”

Revelation 13:1⁴

“Then I saw a beast emerge from the sea: it had ten horns and seven heads, and on the horns ten diadems, and on its heads blasphemous names.”

(This vision draws on imagery found in Daniel 7 – please refer to the whole of Revelation chapters 12 and 13 to read more of the powerful imagery the author uses.)

Rome is seen as the instrument of the forces of evil and oppression – in the earthly battlefield between those forces and those of good. The vision of Revelation is of ultimate and spiritual victory!

5. Responding to the Book of Revelation

A personal response to, rather than a mechanical reading of, the book will draw us towards a grasp of that to which the book is pointing. Here are some proposed, basic parameters for this;

- We all have permission to question and challenge the Bible texts – just look at some of the shaking of fists at God that goes on in the Psalms, Lamentations and certain prophetic books.
- We need to be willing to let the text affect us: touch us and transform us.
- We need to see the book as poetic, symbolic and imaginative in the sense that it is language which discloses spiritual realities and insights to those that “have eyes to see or ears to hear”.
- And we should be prepared to dare to leap forward to take a risk in attempting to grasp these insights and respond.

⁴ Revised New Jerusalem Bible translation

“Apocalyptic” literature (literally from the Greek for “uncovering”. The name ‘Revelation’ is from the Latin equivalent) – has the sense of “lifting the veil”. Such books are about the “end times” and of what is soon to come. Their roots go back most noticeably in the Bible to the Book of Daniel.

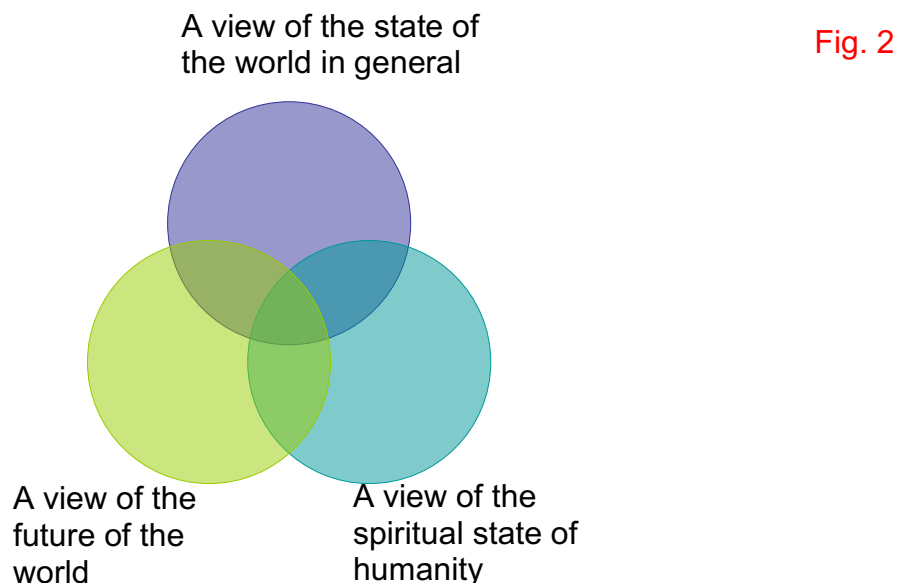
In that period of Greek rule of Palestine⁵, it was;

- A period of horrific persecution
- With little hope of release or an end of this situation in anyone’s lifetime

6. Visions of the Future; Daniel and Revelation

Daniel portrayed in powerful imagery a future promise. In this arises a great mythological construct – a world view which re-orientates the Jewish people to a focus on what is to come away from the focus on being the people of God here and now where fulfilment is found.

This evolving world-view encompassed;



In Revelation, owing much to the imagery of Daniel and as developed since then, we are hit in the emotional face with

- A picture of corruption
- Pictures of the merits of the churches
- The destruction to come
- The hope for a new Jerusalem and a new Temple both of which are spiritual.

We find a development in apocalyptic in other texts (referred to on the main resource above and in the Presentation for this session)

⁵ 2nd century BCE

Apocalyptic texts appear strongly in some of the Qumran texts – the Dead Sea Scrolls - an example from which is found in [Appendix C](#) of this session’s resource. The scrolls date from the century before the time of Christ and demonstrate further the continuity and development of apocalyptic views since the time of the Book of Daniel.

The period of the Maccabees (2nd Century BCE) ironically saw the triumph of the Jews against the tyranny of the Hellenising Antiochus Epiphanes IV and a period of about 100 years of independence before being absorbed into the Roman world. Nonetheless apocalyptic thought had taken root.

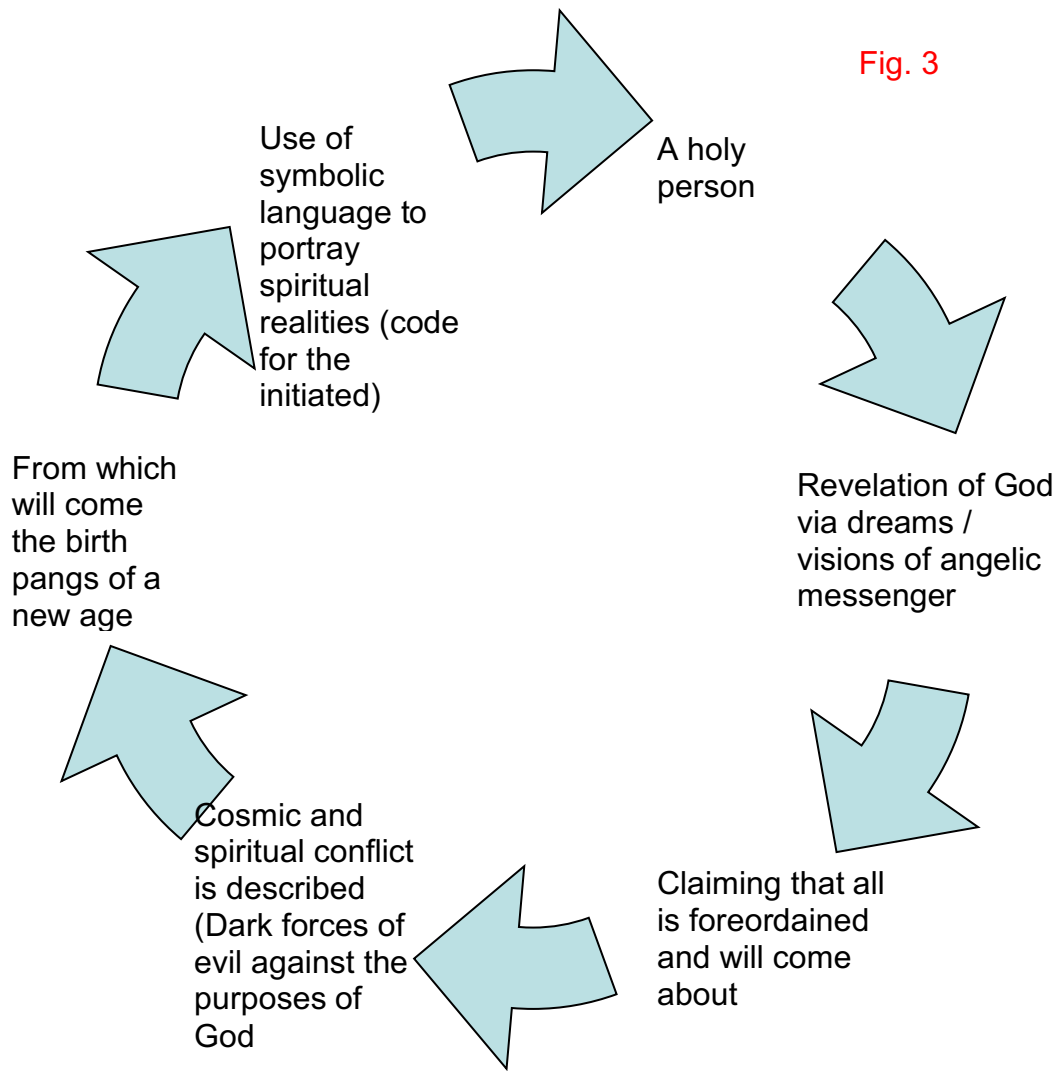
Revelation was one of several such texts. Somehow it made it into the canon of the New Testament. It portrays the “hidden things of God” It portrays them in a series of inter-related visions which are not best seen as sequential. Rather the author presents each as a reassertion and repeat of the vision of ***the abomination and of the coming of the new age***. The overall effect is thus cumulative and kaleidoscopic - more akin to music (or even certain types of film!) than to logical discourse. The book was intended to be read aloud so that its hearers could experience its message in all its awesomeness.

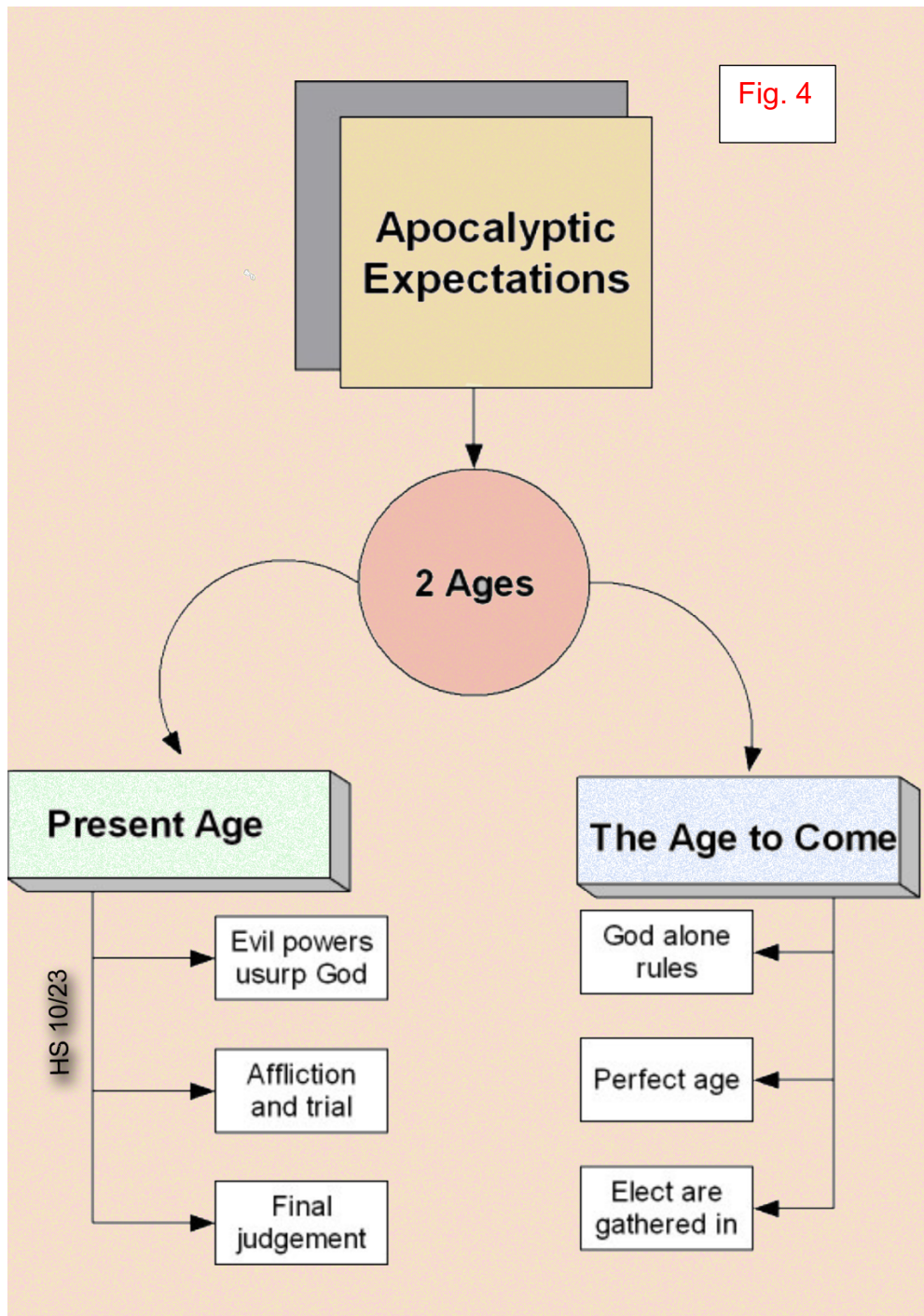
In this way, those of the Church undergoing persecution in the second half of the first century AD were being encouraged and strengthened. It is not surprising that a book such as Revelation (it might have been another....) was included in the canon of the New Testament. Persecutions of the Church, whilst not universal or universally or evenly applied, continued in the Roman Empire right up to the time of the Emperor Constantine (reigned 306 – 337 CE) and the lifting of all restrictions on the Church.

There has been a lot of conjecture about codes and hidden significances in the Book of Revelation which, as we have seen, leads to misuse of texts, taking things out of contexts and with little real understanding of the significance of imagery for the author and his hearers.

The Book of Revelation was written by a visionary, [Fig 3](#) below shows the major elements in this vision.

Fig. 3





Through its visions of heaven, the Book of Revelation promises;

- Victory in Christ who is the Lamb of God, the beginning and end of all things (Alpha and Omega)
- There will be a new age – a new Jerusalem and a new temple which are spiritual rather than physical.

(See Fig. 4 above)

We have seen the common mythological view of the Messiah, the instrument of God, as the one who will bring about the new order when the dead will rise and follow him into the new city. For the Book of Revelation, Jesus is that Messiah and the new Temple has no stones. Here is a difference from the Jewish understanding.

7. Interpreting the Book of Revelation now

a. In general

For Anglicans and many others there is no requirement for literalism. Non-literal interpretations of and understandings of the Bible go back at least as far as the time of Origen in north Africa in the 2nd Century. He was busy countering Gnostic heresies which plagued the early churches.

We return to the concept of “disclosure language” as is also used in poetry and dramatic prose. We must be prepared to treat this text with integrity, with responsibility and with reason. It is something that is unambiguously;

- Symbolic
- Affecting
- Emotional
- Grabbing

Just as any great works of art, music, literature, poetry, drama or dance.

For example;

“The music’s very powerful....people’s reactions to opera the first time they see it is very dramatic. People love or they hate it. If they love it they will always love it. If they don’t, they may learn to appreciate it but it will never become a part of their soul.”

(Edward to his new found protégée, Vivienne, in the film ‘Pretty Woman’ © Buena Vista Entertainment)

b. Interpreting Revelation: some variants

There have been several ways of interpreting the Book of Revelation in the past.

- **Historic** – trying to relate the symbolism to recorded events in history and extrapolating from this the predictions to do with the end of the world.
- **Fulfilment now** – relating the book to things of the book’s own period or our own, and seeing them fulfilled (e.g. Fall of Rome is paralleled with the fall of Babylon etc. Pope as the anti-Christ in Protestant Reformation rhetoric etc)
- **Fulfilment to come** – believing the book literally sets out what will happen in a descriptive way. Usually such views include an understanding that we are living in the last age before the great destruction.

- **Idealist** – which rejects any actual correlations in the book with events in objective history past or present. In this view the book contains allegories of spiritual meanings which lie behind the text. In one sense this sanitises the text and may over-reduce (if that is a term) the impact of the book.

c. The reality of today

But our challenge is to close the gap between the book's imagery and our reality as Christians, acknowledging that the Book of Revelation in our Scriptures – it has an ascribed authority borne of the 2,000 years of Christian experience.

What then can be its impact – what does this book disclose to us and do to us? How can you and I today interpret it..

Simon Woodman's book "The Book of Revelation" (SCM Core text ISBN 978 0 334 04104 7, © Simon Woodman and published by SCM Press) identifies ways in which asking our own questions of the text have given rise to

- a. Feminist readings (page 33)
- b. Liberationist readings (page 34 para 2) and is an important book for Christians in Latin America, the original home of Liberation Theology.
- c. Post-colonial readings – emancipationist – the idea of the resurrection of the marginalised (page 35 paras 4 and 5)

Walter Breuggemann, an American Biblical scholar and theologian, talks of "Imaginative submission" to the book. Allowing the book to be alternative and subversive, bringing our world to the text of revelation and creatively engaging with them. This can result in a critique of our modern empires and structures of power and domination.

d. And me?

So can I bring an interpretation or means of responding to Revelation evoked by my reading of its text? Perhaps.....

- Faith in the promise of the future – the possibility and confidence (more than a hope and aspiration) in life with God beyond any bounds and forms of death now or later.
- Confidence in the rightness of the struggle to create the Kingdom
- That that Kingdom is brought about by the heavenly / human figure of Christ.

N. T. Wright (the much-respected Evangelical theologian) writes of "redemption for the whole created order", rather than personal salvation, is what the vision and reality of God's Kingdom are all about.

Perhaps we can conclude with the concept of Ubuntu made popular by Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela?

Ubuntu

"I am because we are" - or we are all connected, we cannot be ourselves without community, health and faith are always lived out among others, an individual's well being is caught up in the well being of others

Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes the concept more clearly:

"It is about the essence of being human; it is part of the gift that Africa is going to give to the world. It embraces hospitality, caring about others; being willing to go that extra mile for the sake of another. We believe that a person is a person through other persons; that my humanity is caught up and bound up in yours. When I dehumanise you, I inexorably dehumanise myself. The solidarity human being is a contradiction in terms, and therefore you seek to work for the common good because your humanity comes into its own in community, in belonging."

Harold Stephens
February 2009 – November 2023

Appendix C: Two Examples of Apocalyptic Writings

Example One – From the Qum’ran Scrolls (Dead Sea Scrolls – 1st Century BCE)

O [K]ing, wrath is coming to the world, and your years... is your vision and all of it is coming to this world... great [signs] a tribulation will come upon the land... a great massacre in the provinces... a prince of nations... the king of Assyria and [E]gypt... he will be great on earth... will make and all will serve... he will be called/he will call himself [gr]and... and by his name he will be designated/designate himself.

The Son of God he will be proclaimed/proclaim himself, and the Son of the Most High they will call him. But like the meteors/sparks of the vision, so will be their kingdom. They will reign for only a few years on earth, and they will trample all. People will trample people, and one province another province... until the people of God will arise and all will rest from the sword. Their kingdom will be an eternal kingdom, and their paths will be righteous. They will jud[ge] the earth justly, and all will make peace. The sword will cease from the earth, and all the provinces will pay homage to them. The Great God will be their helper. He Himself will wage war for them. He will give peoples into their hands, and all of them He will cast before them. Their dominion will be an eternal dominion, and all the boundaries of...⁶

Example 2: From Daniel 14 (Bel and the Dragon)

Inroduction to Daniel: ⁷

The book of Daniel was written during the struggle of the Jews to maintain their religion against the attempts of the Syrian king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BC), to stamp it out. It is an early example of apocalyptic writing, which became very popular in Judaism at this time. Such a writing is intended to encourage those undergoing persecution by reassuring them of the unlimited power of God in heaven and on earth, and of divine protection on those who remain faithful. Persecution will not last for ever, and those who persevere will be richly rewarded with God’s love and favour.

Daniel 14 verses 1-9

¹ When King Astyages was taken to his ancestors, Cyrus the Persian succeeded him. ² Daniel was very close to the king who respected him more than any of his other friends. ³ The Babylonians had an idol called Bel, to which twelve bushels of the finest flour, forty sheep and six measures of wine were offered every day. ⁴ The king venerated this idol and used to go and worship it every day. Daniel, however, worshipped his own God. ⁵ The king asked Daniel, ‘Why do you not worship Bel?’ He replied, ‘I do not worship idols made by human hands. I worship the living God

⁶ From Scroll 4Q 246 as found in “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Jewish Origins of Christianity” by Carsten Peter Thiede © 2000 and published by Lion. ISBN 0 7459 5050 7

⁷ Wansborough, Henry. The Revised New Jerusalem Bible: Study Edition. Darton, Longman & Todd LTD.

who made heaven and earth and who is lord over all living creatures.’⁶ The king said, ‘Do you not believe, then, that Bel is a living god? Can you not see how much he eats and drinks every day?’⁷ Daniel laughed and said, ‘Your Majesty, do not be taken in; he is clay inside and bronze outside and has never eaten or drunk anything.’⁸ This made the king angry; he summoned his priests and said, ‘Tell me who eats all this food, or die. But if you prove to me that Bel really eats it, I will have Daniel put to death for blaspheming him.’⁹ Daniel said to the king, ‘Let it be as you say.’⁸

.....

Appendix C: Some Recommended further reading

The Book of Revelation by Simon Woodman (Published by SCM Press ISBN 978 0 334 04104 7)

The Books of the New Testament by Ian Boxall (Published by SCM Press ISBN 978 0 334 04047 7)

How to Read the New Testament by Etienne Charpentier (Published by SCM press ISBN 0 334 02056 5)

Book of Common Worship Services and Payer for the Church of England (from which Psalm 23 is quoted) (Published by Church House Publishing ISBN 0 7151 2000 X)

Jesus in the Book of Revelation: The Alpha and the Omega by Margaret Guise and unit 7 of the New Testament module for the Bishops’ Certificate 2005 -2007 published by the Diocese of Salisbury.

The Complete Bible Handbook, edited by John Bowker. See especially pages 444-445, 468-469 and 470-471 (Published by Dorling Kindersley. ISBN 07513 111 2X)

Reading the Old Testament by Laurence Boadt especially p513 (Published by Paulist Press. ISBN 0 0891 2631 1)

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Jewish Origins of Christianity by Carsten Peter Thiede © 2000 (published by Lion. ISBN 0 7459 5050 7)



⁸ Revised New Jerusalem Bible translation, *ibid.*

Appendix E: 'Spitting'⁹

A contemporary lament.

Spitting is fun from the top of the block
the foam spreads to a
pleasing blob.
Sometimes I hit my target poor woman.

*Wherein lies your heart O
Lord?
the arid wasteland of
tower block; of
apathy; of
alienation?*

Kicking is fun ... the football against the wall
again and again.
Alone or, yesterday,
with Jimmy.
And the old bag yells
"shut up", and we
raise two fingers and
yell "eff off"
silly old bag.



*Wherein lies your Spirit O Lord?
The becalmed estates.
The motionless lives.
The stillness of empty
becoming; of
fleeting amusement amid
endless meaninglessness.
Soul-lessness.
Life-lessness.*

Smoking is fun fags
or weed if you can pay for it.
Dreams and calm.
Time passed.
Good feelings.
Sitting.
Waiting but not waiting.
the Police don't know.....
..... don't care.
No one cares.
Smoking is fun.

(cont'd)

⁹ Author: anonymous

*Wherein lies your truth, O Lord?
Speak to the soul with
hope where there is none; with
life where there is despair; with
dignity where there is abuse, depression, anger
....*

Spitting is fun !