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# Apocalypse

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This article is about the general concept of Apocalypse. For specific Apocalypses, see [Apocalypse \(disambiguation\)](#).

 The examples and perspective in this article **may not represent a [worldwide view](#) of the subject**. Please [improve this article](#) and discuss the issue on the [talk page](#). *(December 2011)*



Apocalypse depicted in [Christian Orthodox](#) traditional [fresco](#) scenes in [Osogovo Monastery](#), [Republic of Macedonia](#)



St. John at Patmos: the receiving of an apocalyptic vision

<p>Part of a series on</p> <p><b><a href="#">Eschatology</a></b></p> <p><a href="#">Buddhist eschatology</a></p> <p><a href="#">Maitreya</a></p> <p><a href="#">Mappō</a></p> <p><a href="#">Three Ages</a></p> <p><a href="#">Christian eschatology</a></p> <p><b>Biblical texts</b></p> <p><a href="#">Book of Revelation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Book of Daniel</a></p> <p><a href="#">Olivet discourse</a></p> <p><a href="#">Sheep and Goats</a></p> <p><b>Major figures</b></p> <p><a href="#">Jesus</a></p> <p><a href="#">Two Witnesses</a></p> <p><a href="#">Four Horsemen</a></p> <p><a href="#">Antichrist</a></p> <p><b>Different views</b></p> <p><a href="#">Preterism</a></p> <p><a href="#">Idealism</a></p> <p><a href="#">Historicism</a></p> <p><a href="#">Futurism</a></p> <p><b>Millennial differences</b></p> <p><a href="#">Premillennialism</a></p> <p><a href="#">Amillennialism</a></p> <p><a href="#">Postmillennialism</a></p> <p><b>Other events</b></p> <p><a href="#">Chronology of Revelation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Rapture</a></p> <p><a href="#">Seven Seals</a></p> <p><a href="#">Jesus' Second Coming</a></p> <p><a href="#">Last Judgment</a></p> <p><a href="#">Hindu eschatology</a></p> <p><a href="#">Kalki</a></p> <p><a href="#">Kali Yuga</a></p> <p><a href="#">Shiva</a></p>
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An **apocalypse** (**Ancient Greek**: *ἀποκάλυψις* *apocalypsis*, from *ἀπό* and *καλύπτω* meaning 'un-covering'), translated literally from Greek, is a **disclosure of knowledge, hidden from humanity in an era dominated by falsehood and misconception, i.e., a lifting of the veil or revelation**, although this sense did not enter English until the 14th century.<sup>[1]</sup> In religious contexts it is usually a disclosure of something hidden. In the **Revelation of John** (Greek *Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου*, Apocalypsis Ioannou), the last book of the **New Testament**, the revelation which John receives is that of the ultimate victory of good over evil and the end of the present age, and that is the primary meaning of the term, one that dates to 1175.<sup>[1]</sup> Today, it is commonly used in reference to any prophetic revelation or so-called **End Time** scenario, or to the **end of the world** in general.

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## [\[edit\]](#) Biblical features

### [\[edit\]](#) Dreams

In the context of Biblical understanding, the revelation of a meaningful future may be made through a dream, as was the experience of the Jewish prophet **Daniel**,<sup>[2]</sup> which is recorded in the book with his name, or through a **vision**, as was granted in the Christian **Revelation of John**.

In Biblical accounts of revelations the manner of the revelation and its reception is generally described. According to the **Book of Daniel**, after a long period of **fasting**,<sup>[3]</sup> Daniel is standing by a river when a heavenly being appears to him, and the revelation follows (**Daniel** 10:2ff). John, in the **New Testament Revelation of John** (1:9ff), has a similar experience, told in similar words. Compare also the first chapter of the *Greek Apocalypse of Baruch*; and the *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, vi.1ff, xiii.1ff, lv.1-3. Or, as the prophet lies upon his bed, distressed for the future of his people, he falls into a sort of trance, and in "the visions of his head" is shown the future. This is the case in **Daniel** 7:1ff; **2 Esdras** 3:1-3; and in the Book of Enoch, i.2 and following. As to the description of the effect of the vision upon the seer, see **Daniel** 8:27; **Enoch**, lx.3; **2 Esdras** 5:14.

### [\[edit\]](#) Angels

The messengers of the revelation are usually described also. In the Bible at least four types or ranks of angels are mentioned: the **Archangels**, **Angels**, **Cherubim**<sup>[4][5][6][7][8][9][10]</sup> and the **Seraphim**.<sup>[11]</sup><sup>[*dubious* – *discuss*]</sup> In the Bible God may give a revelation or instructions through the medium of these heavenly messengers; they act as the seer's guide. God may himself give a revelation, as is shown in the **Revelation of John** through the person of **Jesus Christ**. The book of **Genesis** speaks of the "angel" bringing forth the revelation.

### [\[edit\]](#) Future

#### Islamic eschatology

##### Good

[Dhul-Qarnayn](#)

[Muhammad](#)

[Imam Mahdī](#)

[Jesus the Messiah \(Second Coming\)](#)

[Beast of the Last Days](#)

##### Evil

[Khawarij](#)

[False Messiah](#)

[Gog and Magog](#)

[Dhul Suwayqatayn](#)

##### Culmination

[Resurrection & Judgement](#)

#### Jewish eschatology

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#### Inter-religious

[End times](#)

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[Last Judgment](#)

[Resurrection of the Dead](#)

[Gog and Magog](#)

[Messianic Age](#)

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The Biblical prophets' revelations show God's justice as taking place in the future or as imminent now. The genre of revelation aims to show God's way of dealing with humankind and His ultimate purposes, and its writers often reveal the meaning of present events in connection with the ending of the present age. In the book of Daniel the revelation is described as "that which shall come to pass in the later days" (Daniel 2:28;<sup>[12]</sup> compare verse 29); similarly Daniel 10:14, "to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the later days";<sup>[13]</sup> compare [Enoch](#), i.1, 2; x.2ff. So too in the [Revelation of John](#) 1:1 (compare the [Septuagint](#) translation of Daniel 2:28ff), "Revelation ... that which must shortly come to pass."



[Viktor Vasnetsov](#), the [Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse](#)

Detailed future history seems not to be the main focus of Biblical revelation, but may form a setting for the revelation of God's meaning, in which a panorama of successive events passes from the known to the unknown. Thus in the eleventh chapter of Daniel it appears that detailed history of the Greek empire in the East from the conquest of [Alexander](#) to the latter part of the reign of [Antiochus Epiphanes](#) (verses 3-39), all presented in the form of a prediction, continues with a description (verses 40-45) of events which had not yet taken place but were expected by the writer: the wars which should result in the death of Antiochus and the fall of his kingdom. (Some modern scholars therefore date the composition of the book to about 167 BCE, when Antiochus Epiphanes sacked [Jerusalem](#) and desecrated the [Holy Places](#).) This serves as the introduction to the [eschatological](#) predictions in the twelfth chapter.

Similarly, in the dream recounted in 2 [Esdras](#) 11 and 12, the eagle, seemingly representing the [Roman Empire](#), is followed by the lion, representing the promised [Messiah](#), who is to deliver the chosen people and establish an everlasting kingdom. A transition from history to prediction may be seen in xii.28, where the expected end of [Domitian](#)'s reign – and with it the end of the world – seems foretold. Another example of the same kind is *Sibyllines* verses, iii.608-623. Compare also *Assumptio Mosis*, vii-ix. But in nearly all religious writings classed as apocalypses or revelations the eschatological element is prominent. Speculation regarding the [age to come](#) and the hope for the chosen people more than anything else occasioned the rise and influenced the development of [apocalyptic literature](#).

## [\[edit\]](#) Symbolism



The [Seven trumpets](#).

[Symbolism](#) is a frequent characteristic of apocalyptic writing. One instance of this occurs where [gematria](#) is employed, either for obscuring the writer's meaning or enhancing it; as a number of ancient cultures used letters also as numbers (*i.e.*, the Romans with their use of "[Roman numerals](#)"). Thus the symbolic name "*Taxo*," "*Assumptio Mosis*", ix. 1; the "[Number of the Beast](#)" (616 / 666), in the [Book of Revelation](#) 13:18;<sup>[14]</sup> the number 888 (Ἰησῶς), *Sibyllines*, i.326-330.

Similar is the frequent prophecy of the length of time through which the events predicted must be fulfilled. Thus, the "time, times, and a half," Daniel 12:7<sup>[15]</sup> which has been taken to be 3½ years in length by Dispensationalists; the "*fifty-eight*

*times*" of Enoch, xc.5, "*Assumptio Mosis*", x.11; the announcement of a certain number of "weeks" or days, which starting point in Daniel 9:24, 25 is "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build [Jerusalem](#) unto the [Messiah](#) the Prince shall be seven weeks",<sup>[16]</sup> a mention of 1290 days after the covenant/sacrifice is broken (Daniel 12:11),<sup>[17]</sup> 12; Enoch xciii.3-10; 2 Esdras 14:11, 12; *Apocalypse of Baruch* xxvi-xxviii; Revelation 11:3, which mentions "two witnesses" with supernatural power,<sup>[18]</sup> 12:6;<sup>[19]</sup> compare *Assumptio Mosis*, vii.1. Symbolic language is also used to describe persons, things or events; thus, the "horns" of Daniel 7 and 8;<sup>[20]</sup> Revelation 17<sup>[21]</sup> and following; the "heads" and "wings" of 2 [Esdras](#) xi and following; the seven seals of Revelation 6;<sup>[22]</sup> trumpets, Revelation 8;<sup>[23]</sup> "vials of the wrath of God" or "bowl..." judgments, Revelation 16;<sup>[24]</sup> the dragon, Revelation 12:3-17,<sup>[25]</sup> Revelation 20:1-3;<sup>[26]</sup> the eagle, *Assumptio Mosis*, x.8; and so on.

As examples of more elaborate prophecies and allegories, aside from those in Daniel Chapters 7 and 8; and 2 Esdras Chapters 11 and 12, already referred to, may be mentioned: the vision of the bulls and the sheep, [Enoch](#) lxxxv and following; the forest, the vine, the fountain, and the cedar, *Apocalypse of Baruch* xxxvi and following; the bright and the black waters, *ibid.* liii and following; the willow and its branches, [Hermas](#), "Similitudines," viii.

## [[edit](#)] End of the age



[Russian Orthodox icon](#)  
*Apocalypse*



"Apocalyptic I" by contemporary Mexican painter [Mauricio García Vega](#).

In the [Revelation of John](#), John writes about the "revelation" of [Jesus Christ](#) as [Messiah](#), and about present tribulations leading to the ending of this age and the coming of God's Kingdom. Hence the term 'apocalypse' has come to be used, very loosely, for the [end of the world](#).

In the Hebrew [Old Testament](#) some pictures of the end of the age were images of the judgment of the wicked and the glorification of those who were given [righteousness](#) before God. In the [Book of Job](#) and in some [Psalms](#) the dead are described as being in [Sheol](#), awaiting the final judgment. The wicked will then be consigned to eternal trolling in the fires of [Gehinnom](#), or the Lake of Fire mentioned in the [Revelation of John](#).<sup>[24][27][28][29][30]</sup>

In his [New Testament](#) letters the [Apostle Paul](#) also has written about the judgment of the wicked and the glorification of those who belong to Christ or Messiah. In letters to the [Corinthians](#) and the [Thessalonians](#) Paul expounds further the destiny of the righteous. He speaks of the simultaneous [resurrection](#) and [rapture](#) of those who are in Christ (or Messiah).


Some Christians had a [Millennial](#) expectation of glorification of the righteous, from the time when they emerged from [Judaism](#) and spread out into the world in the first century. The poetic and prophetic literature of the [Hebrew Bible](#), particularly in [Isaiah](#), were rich in millennial imagery, and [New Testament](#) writers after [Pentecost](#) carried on with this theme. During his imprisonment by the Romans on the Island of [Patmos](#), [John](#) in the [Revelation of John](#), chapter 20, receives a vision of a thousand-year reign of Christ/Messiah upon the earth.


Some Christian movements in the 18th and 19th centuries were characterized by a rise of [Millennialism](#). All Christian apocalyptic eschatology has been concerned with the two themes referred to through the Bible as "this age" and "the age coming". [Evangelical](#) Christians have been in the forefront popularizing the biblical prophecy of a major confrontation between good and evil at the end of this age, a coming Millennium to follow, and a final confrontation whereby the wicked are judged, the righteous are rewarded and the beginning of Eternity is viewed.


Some evangelical Christians have taught a form of millennialism known as [Dispensationalism](#), which arose in the 19th century. Dispensationalists see separate destinies for the [Christian Church](#) and [Israel](#). Their concept of a pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church has become better known, thanks in part to the [Left Behind](#) series of books and films. Dispensationalists find in Biblical prophecy predictions of future events: periods of the Church, for example, shown through the letters to the seven churches in the [Revelation of John](#); the throne of God in heaven and his glory; specific judgments that will occur on the earth; the final form of [Gentile](#) power; God' re-dealing with Israel<sup>[31]</sup> based upon [covenants](#) mentioned in the Hebrew [Old Testament](#); the [second coming](#) proper; a one-thousand year reign of Messiah; a last test of mankind's sinful nature under ideal conditions by the loosing of [Satan](#), with a judgment of fire coming down from Heaven that follows; the [Great White Throne](#) judgment, and the re-creation of the current heavens and the earth as a "New Heaven and New Earth"<sup>[32][33][34]</sup> ushering in the beginning of Eternity. A differing interpretation is found in the [Post Tribulation Rapture](#).

One of the most extensive modern works on the meaning of the [Revelation of John](#) was written by [Emanuel Swedenborg](#) called the *Apocalypse Revealed*, first published in two volumes in [Amsterdam](#) in 1766. Another book, utilizing the literal method of interpretation, was *The Revelation Record* by [Henry M. Morris](#) (1983).<sup>[35]</sup>

## [edit] See also

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- [Apocalypse Series \(Kanso\)](#)

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**Doomsday**

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