

APOCALYPSE OF JOHN

Session 1: Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature

INTRODUCTION

A. First three words in the *Book of Revelation* or *Apocalypse of John*: *Apocalypsis Iesou Christou*

Apocalypsis = *apo* + *kalyptra*

B. The importance of apocalyptic literature for understanding the Apocalypse of John:

WHAT IS APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE?

A. Apocalyptic is a _____ of literature characterized by BOTH a particular kind of _____ and a particular _____.

B. Apocalyptic literature was very popular in _____ circles from the _____ century B.C. through the _____ century A.D.

WHERE DO WE FIND APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE?

A. Inside the Protestant Christian Bible:

1. Old Testament: _____

2. New Testament: _____

B. Outside the Bible:

1. The Old Testament _____ (2 Esdras [= 4 Ezra])

2. The Old Testament _____ (1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, 3 Baruch, 4 Ezra [= 2 Esdras], Apocalypse of Abraham, Apocalypse of Zephaniah, parts of Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, parts of the Sibylline Oracles, and others)

3. The New Testament _____ (The Shepherd of Hermas, 5 Ezra, Apocalypse of Peter, and others)

HOW SHOULD WE INTERPRET APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE?

A. Key Question: What did these _____ mean to the _____?

B. Historical Resources for studying the Apocalypse of John:

1. Hebrew Old Testament
2. Septuagint (LXX)
3. Ancient Near Eastern Texts (ANET)
4. Apocrypha
5. Pseudepigrapha
(Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.
2 Vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1985.)
6. Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)
7. New Testament
8. Flavius Josephus
9. Rabbinical Literature

10. Classical Greek and Latin Literature
(*The Loeb Classical Library*)

11. Early Christian Fathers

WHAT ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF APOCALYPTIC STYLE?

A. Visions or Revelations:

B. Pseudonymity:

C. Esoteric:

D. Vivid Symbolism:

E. Symbolic Numbers:

2 =
(see Deuteronomy 19:15)

3 =
(see Isaiah 6:3)

4 =
(see Isaiah 11:12; Jeremiah 49:36; Ezekiel 7:2)

5 =

6 =

7 =
(see Genesis 1-2)

8 =

10 =

12 =

“A time, times, and a half time” = $1 + 2 + \frac{1}{2} = 3\frac{1}{2} = 3\frac{1}{2}$ days/years = 42 months = 1280 days
(see Daniel 7:25)

Multiples of numbers =

F. Can we harmonize the *Apocalypse of John* with other biblical writings?