



Week of June 4 Reading Apocalyptic Literature¹

Overview:

This sermon series will focus on how we got the Bible, why we can trust it, and what's most important as we study, interpret, and apply what we read. While the sermon series will be topical in nature, our weekly discussion and reflection guides will each center around a genre of scripture. As you learn about each genre, we'll provide sample texts that illustrate some of the uniquenesses about that genre. We hope this study helps you go deeper in your bible study skills and provides helpful context and application for the broader topics in the sermons.

Group Objectives:

Relationships and Life Transformation are the primary purpose of community groups

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- To reflect on the lessons in Apocalyptic literature in the Bible and how it can guide our living today.

DNA statement(s) tie-in:

We are all for Jesus: Jesus saves us from our past, remakes us to be like him, heals our broken places, and is coming back as our king.

We bring the best news ever to the least-reached people: It is our privilege to take the gospel around the world. We focus on the hardest places in the world where all the odds are stacked against us.

Conversation Starters:

- Do you read fantasy or science fiction literature? If so, what do you like about it?
- What emotion or reaction does reading Biblical Apocalyptic literature invoke in you?
- What stood out to you from this week's sermon?

Listening to God

- Where did you see God at work last week? How were you able to join him?

Learning about God's word: Apocalyptic Literature

Apocalyptic literature is the most confusing genre to understand. Several Old Testament books include some (Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah) but the best known is the book of Revelation. The term

¹ This discussion guide was written by Karl Pagenkemper, Jackie O'Dell and edited by Rachel Vaughn.

“apocalypse” refers to an unveiling of something for public display, and Revelation serves as an unveiling both about and from Jesus Christ. God unveils his plans for human history that ultimately center around Jesus.

Apocalyptic literature was much more common in the biblical era and generally pointed toward economic and political systems well-known to the original audience. The imagery can be dense and confusing to us for that reason. This requires care as we read such passages in modern contexts. In Revelation in particular, the author is less concerned with a detailed chronological future and more interested in making this certainty clear: God is in control of history and the church. Revelation calls God’s people to be a testimony to the world around us as we resist the lure of power and exploitation.

Learning from God’s Word: Bible Study Discussion

Matthew 24 and 25 are known as the Olivet Discourse, the fifth and last discourses found in the Gospel of Matthew.

- Read Matthew 24:1 – 51.
- Jesus’s prophesy on the destruction of the temple prompted the disciples to ask about the end of the age. What is the first caution that Jesus gives them? Is this still important in our day and why?
- Jesus describes other signs of his return. (See also Mark 13:4 – 13). Do we see any of these in our age, or in history?
- How will we know it is the true Christ returning? See also 1 Thessalonians 4:16 – 17; Revelation 1:7, 11:12.
- In verses 36 – 44, Jesus describes what was happening in Noah’s day before the flood. In verses 42 – 44, Jesus teaches about a thief. Verses 45 – 51 describe faithful and unfaithful servants. (See also Matthew 25). What are the overarching themes of these verses? What action or response is expected and advised to us as believers?

Leaning into Obedience:

- How should people respond to the warnings in Matthew 24? What is God calling you to do today to prepare for his return?
- How is God calling us to lean into and live out his message of truth, hope, and certainty in a chaotic world?

Prayer Prompts:

- Invite members of the group to share requests.
- Pray for specific ways you want to develop an intentional watchfulness as we wait expectantly for Christ’s return.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer.

For further study:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/apocalyptic-literature/>

<https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/apocalyptic-literature>

[CCC Message Series. Daniel Part II Dreams and Visions of the Future.](#)

[CCC Message Series. Revelation, Parts I - IV](#)