



APOCALYPTIC

We often think of apocalyptic literature as consisting of predictions about the end of the world. While it does give us a glimpse of things to come, apocalyptic literature is really intended to reveal truth, and it does so by using signs, symbols, pictures, and dramatic imagery. When reading apocalyptic literature, we need to guard against (1) overly analyzing the pictures being displayed and (2) losing sight of the big idea behind the picture. To put it another way, apocalyptic literature engages our limited imaginations to teach us eternal realities in order to help us persevere to the end.

Before you get started, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand, believe, and obey his Word. Bible study, after all, is intended to help us see more clearly and savor more intensely our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Revelation 4:1-11

After this I looked, and there in heaven was an open door. The first voice that I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit, and there was a throne in heaven and someone was seated on it. 3 The one seated there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian stone. A rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald surrounded the throne. 4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones sat twenty-four elders dressed in white clothes, with golden crowns on their heads. 5 Flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder came from the throne. Seven fiery torches were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. 6 Something like a sea of glass, similar to crystal, was also before the throne. Four living creatures covered with eyes in front and in back were around the throne on each side. 7 The first living creature was like a lion; the second living creature was like an ox; the third living creature had a face like a man; and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. 8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings; they were covered with eyes around and inside. Day and night they never stop, saying,

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God, the Almighty,
who was, who is, and who is to come.

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the one seated on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before the one seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne and say,

11 Our Lord and God,
you are worthy to receive
glory and honor and power,
because you have created all things,
and by your will
they exist and were created.

COMA QUESTIONS FOR REVELATION 4:1-11

Work your way through each section of COMA, allowing the questions to guide your journey through the text.

Context

- Are there any clues about the historical circumstances the literature is addressing?
- Are other bits of the Bible mentioned or hinted at in the passage? What part do these 'memories' play in the text?

Observation

- What images are used in the passage? What effect do they have?
- What emotions does the passage arouse (e.g. fear, expectation, awe)?
- How does the passage seek to reveal what God is like? Where in this passage might we find hope for men and women?
- Is there a crisis in the passage? What is the tension/conflict about, and how does it relate to readers?

Meaning

- Are there specific instructions/commands given to the reader? Does this passage mention any consequences for not following God's commands?
- Does the text have a sense of expectation about something happening in the future? What is to be expected and when? How should this motivate action in the present?
- Does the passage point to Jesus? Is the gospel foreshadowed or looked back upon in some way?

Application

- How is your situation similar to or different from those being addressed?
- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
- How does this passage lead you to trust God and his promises in Jesus?
- How does this passage call on you to change the way you live?

*The COMA study method and questions are produced by Matthias Media and Holy Trinity Church. They have been taken from ***One-to-One Bible Reading*** by David Helm. For more one-to-one Bible reading resources, or to purchase the book, please visit www.matthiasmedia.com.