



The Apocalyptic Jesus

THE RETURN OF JESUS IN PAUL. THE BOOK OF REVELATION AND THE NATURE OF APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE. VISION OF THE JOHN THE SEER. THE LION AND THE LAMB. SAVING HIS PEOPLE—THE DEFEAT OF SATAN AND A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:28; Revelation 1; 19–22; D&C 84:96–102, 88:87–116, 133

“Worthy Is the Lamb,” Handel’s *Messiah*



Francisco de Zurbarán, “Agnus Dei”

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,
and hath redeemed us to God by his blood,
to receive power, and riches, and wisdom,
and strength, and honour, and glory, and
blessing.

Blessing and honour, glory and power,
be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne,
and unto the Lamb,
for ever and ever. Amen.

(Revelation 5:12-14)



“Beautiful Zion, Built Above” (hymn no. 44)

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands . . . Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:9, 15–17)

1. Beautiful Zion, built above;
Beautiful city that I love;
Beautiful gates of pearly white;
Beautiful temple—God its light;
He who was slain on Calvary
Opens those pearly gates for me.

(Chorus)
Zion, Zion, lovely Zion;
Beautiful Zion;
Zion, city of our God!

2. Beautiful heav’n, where all is light;
Beautiful angels clothed in white;
Beautiful strains that never tire;
Beautiful harps thru all the choir;
There shall I join the chorus sweet,
Worshiping at the Savior’s feet.

3. Beautiful crowns on ev’ry brow;
Beautiful palms the conq’rors show;
Beautiful robes the ransomed wear;
Beautiful all who enter there;
Thither I press with eager feet;
There shall my rest be long and sweet.

Third Exegetical Exercise

- Due the last day of class
- The usual 4-5 paragraph format
- Pick any passage from the Passion or Resurrection Narratives of the gospels or a passage that we have read from Acts, Paul, Hebrews, or Revelation

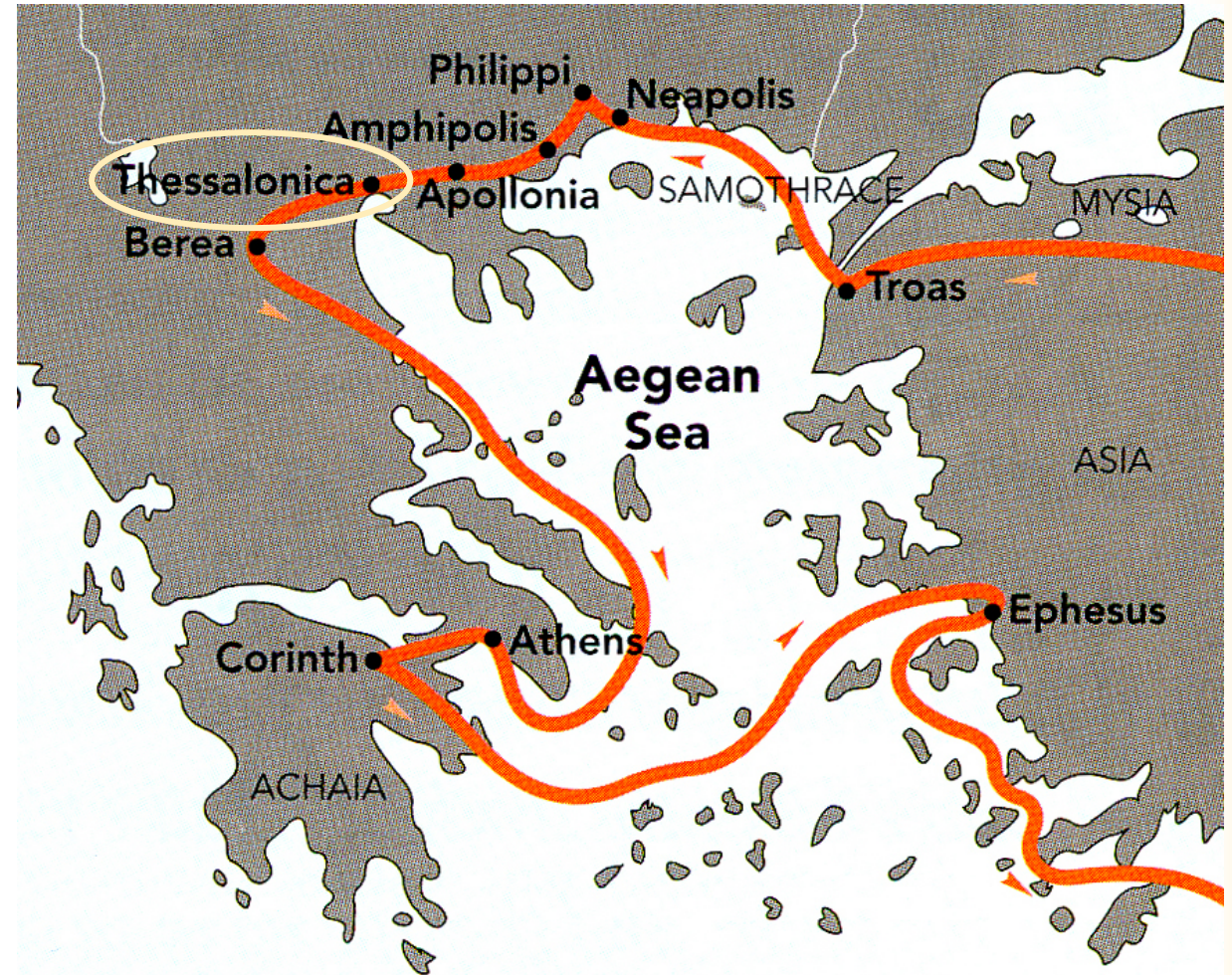
The Return of Jesus in Paul



EARLY IN HIS CAREER, PAUL EXPECTED JESUS TO RETURN SOON, COMING
IN GLORY TO DESTROY THE WICKED AND SAVE HIS SAINTS

Paul and the Thessalonians

- Paul spent “three sabbaths” in **Thessalonica** during the “**Second**” Missionary Journey of AD 49–52
 - A few Jews, “devout” men (God-fearers), and prominent women are among the converts mentioned by Acts 17:4
 - Paul and Silas fled to Berea before the church could be established (or taught) further
 - He was not able to teach them extensively, but they knew that when Jesus returned, they would be saved in Christ
- Paul wrote the church while headquartered at Corinth about A.D. 50 or 51
 - Learned that some saints at Thessalonica were worried because some of their number had died since Paul was there. ***What would happen to them when Jesus returned?***



“Caught Up to Meet Him . . .”

What specifics did Paul teach about the Second Coming?

- **Do not sorrow over saints that have died**

- But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, ***that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, ***even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.***” (4:13-14)

- **The dead in Christ rise first**

- “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that ***we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: ***and the dead in Christ shall rise first***” (4:15-16)
- “shall not prevent” actually means **“precede”** or **“come before”** (*phthasōmen*)

- **Those in Christ will rise to meet him**

- ***“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”*** (4:17)
- Apostolically mandated funeral counsel! “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (4:18)

The “Rapture?”

- “. . . Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. . .” (4:17)
 - In Latin “caught up” is rendered with the verb *rapio/raptus*, from which comes the popular Evangelical Protestant term “the Rapture”
 - *The publication in 1861 of the 1830 vision of a Scottish-Irish girl named Margaret MacDonald popularized the idea of a “Pre-tribulation Rapture,” meaning that an invisible appearance of Jesus would be accompanied by the “rapture” of true Christians before the trials that precede and accompany the visible Second Coming*
- Exposition: “[At the Second Coming] *the saints that are upon the earth, who are alive, shall be quickened and be caught up to meet him.* And *they who have slept in their graves shall come forth, for their graves shall be opened; and they also shall be caught up to meet him* in the midst of the pillar of heaven — They are Christ’s, the first fruits, they who shall descend with him first.” (D&C 88:95–98)
 - **The doctrine of the resurrection of the righteous dead and the transformation of the living who will inherit celestial glory, then, is sound, but *Latter-day Saints differ with some other groups on the timing and the mechanics***

“As a Thief in the Night . . .”

- Paul’s continued teaching on the second coming, however, relayed Jesus’ own teaching about **the uncertainty of the timing of the Second Coming**
 - “that day and that hour knoweth no man . . .” (Mark 13:32; Matt 24:26)
 - “For yourselves know perfectly that *the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*” (1 Thess 5:2; **a dominical saying**, perhaps in reference to Matt 24:43?)
- The early Christians expected the Lord to return soon, as did Paul, but **he reminded them that they did not know exactly when**
 - “While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ **destruction will come on them suddenly**, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.” (1 Thess 5:3 NIV)
 - *Pax et Securitas* was an element of imperial propaganda frequently found on coins; Cf. “All is well in Zion!” (2 Nephi 28:21)
 - “But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation [anticipates Eph 6:11-18]. **For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.**” (1 Thess 5:8-10)

The Risen and Glorified Lord in the Book of Revelation



Overview of Revelation

- **Attributed Author: “John” the seer (1:1, 4, 9), a Jewish-Christian prophet**
 - Revelation assumes that its seer, John, is well-enough known and authoritative enough that he does not need to use a title (cf. James)
 - **Early patristic evidence his identity as the apostle John, son of Zebedee and brother of James**
 - Earliest fathers—Justin Martyr (d. A.D. 165), Irenaeus (c. A.D. 180), Clement of Alexandria (d. A.D. 215), and Tertullian (d. A.D. 220)—all agree that the seer was John, son of Zebedee
 - Another source, Eusebius, and much modern scholarship tries to question the traditional identification
 - *Latter-day revelation, however, confirms the identification (1 Nephi 14:18-27; Ether 4:16; D&C 7; D&C 77:1-15; D&C 88:141)*
- **Date:** Either late in the reign of **Nero (c. A.D. 64–68)** or in the later phases of the reign of **Domitian (c. A.D. 92–96)**
- **To: “Seven Churches” in Asia Minor (1:4; 2:1-3:22; 22:16)**
- **From: Island of Patmos**
 - John has been “exiled” to this penal colony by the Romans, but probably by local officials rather than by the emperor, who would probably have had not idea who he was
 - Perhaps put in final form in the Roman Province of Asia (possibly the city of Ephesus itself)
- **Literary Genre: an “apocalypse” (1:1; 4:1, see next slide), with an epistolary frame (letter-like introduction and conclusion, 1:4; 22:21)**

Genre

See web pages of Prof. Felix Just, S.J. - Loyola Marymount University

- In popular terminology, an “apocalypse” is a catastrophic event (e.g., nuclear holocaust).
- In biblical terminology, an “apocalypse” is not an event, but **a “revelation” that is recorded in written form**
 - it is a piece of **crisis literature** that “reveals” truths about the past, present, and/or future in highly symbolic terms
 - the revelation often comes in dreams or visions, and usually **needs to be interpreted with the help of an angel or other divine intermediary**
 - it is usually **intended to provide hope and encouragement** for people in the midst of severe trials and tribulations
- Detailed Definition
 - “‘Apocalypse’ is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient . . . intended to **interpret the present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future**, and to **influence both the understanding and the behavior** of the audience by means of divine authority.” (SBL’s “Apocalypse Group”; published in J. J. Collins, *Semeia* 14 [1979], 9)
- Purposes
 - **To encourage Christians to preserve faith in the midst of trials and tribulations** (cf. 13:10b; 14:12)
 - **To reveal the full glory and majesty of Christ**

Structure of Revelation

- Prologue (1:1–3)
- Letter to the Seven Churches (1:4–3:22)
 - John's Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)
- First Revelatory Experience (4:1–11:19, a heavenly ascent, history viewed from an eternal perspective)
 - Vision of the Heavenly Court: God and the Lamb (4:1b–11)
 - The Seven-Sealed Scroll (5:1–11:19)
 - The Scroll and the Lamb (5:1–14)
- Second Revelatory Experience (12:1–22:5, a series of portents seen from an earthly vantage point)
 - The Woman, Child, and Dragon (12:1–17)
 - The Demonic Trinity: Dragon and Two Beasts (13:1–18)
 - The Lamb and His Servants (14:1–20)
 - Seven Plagues and Seven Bowls (15:1–16:21)
 - Judgment on Babylon, the Great Harlot (17:1–19:10)
 - Victory of Christ (19:11–20:15)
 - New Heaven and New Earth (21:1–22:5)
- The Letter Resumes: Epilogue and Blessing (22:6–21)

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Prologue (1:1–3)

- “The **Revelation of Jesus Christ**, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants **things which must shortly come to pass**; and he sent and **signified it by his angel unto his servant John**: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.” (1:1–2)
 - **Revelation**, from the Greek **apokalypsis**, means “unveiling” or “uncovering”
 - Book of Revelation (sing.), not revelations!
 - **Of Jesus Christ** can be either subjective (possessive) or objective: **Christ’s revelation to John** or **the revealing or “unveiling” of Jesus Christ in his glory to John**
 - **The major theme of the book is the revelation or unveiling of Jesus Christ in his power and glory** (in the Gospel he saves—mercy; in Revelation he punishes—judgment)
 - **Signified it by his angel unto his servant John**: typical apocalyptic feature (cf. 1 Nephi 11)
- **Compare the apocalyptic Jesus with the eschatological Son of Man figure**

Christ Unveiled in Glory

John's Inaugural Vision (1:9–20, apocalyptic vision)



- “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, ***‘I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last . . .’*** And in the midst of the seven lampstands [I saw] One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, ***‘Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death . . .’***” (1:10–18 NKJV)
 - Alpha and Omega: the beginning and the end *and everything in between*
 - Portrayed as a glorified, divine high priest in a heavenly temple!

Vision of the Heavenly Court (4:1b–11)

- **The Seer's Call** (4:1, akin to a call story; cf. Isaiah 6, 1 Nephi 1:5-15)
- **The Heavenly Worship** (4:2–11, apocalyptic vision)
 - The Throne (4:2–3)
 - **The 24 Elders**
 - Old and New Israel?
 - “We are to understand that these elders whom John saw, were elders who had been faithful in the work of the ministry and were dead; who belonged to the seven churches, and were then in the paradise of God.” (D&C 77:5)
 - **7 Spirits (“perfect” or complete number)**
 - **Sea of Glass**
 - “Q. What is the sea of glass spoken of by John, 4th chapter, and 6th verse of the Revelation? A. It is the earth, in its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state.” (D&C 77:1)
 - 4 Heavenly Beasts (4:4–8a; cf. Ezek. 1:5–28 and D&C 77:2-4)
 - **Song of the Beasts: Trisagion or “Thrice Holy”**
 - “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” (4:8b; cf. Isaiah 6:2–3)
 - **Elders' Song of Praise** (4:9–11)

The Scroll and the Lamb (5:1-14)



- **The Search (5:1-5)**
 - “And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne **a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.** And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? . . . behold, ***the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.***” (5:1-5)
 - a book written within and on the backside, 7 seals presenting “dispensations” → **history of the earth!**
 - *The Lamb of God of the Gospel of John become a Lion, moving from Savior role to Judge/Punisher*
- **The Lamb Takes the Scroll (5:6-7)**
 - “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain . . .”
- **We choose—a merciful Savior (the Lamb) or the just Judge (the Lion)!**
- **Song of the 4 Beasts and 24 Elders (5:8-10); Song of the Angels (5:11-12); Song of all Creatures in Heaven and Earth (5:13-14)**

Christ's Victory

- After the fall of “Babylon,” John again sees the heavenly throne and the worship there. **At the voice of an angel, he falls before an angel, thinking that it is Christ**
 - “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: *for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*” (19:10)
- This testimony includes **a vision of Jesus revealed in victory**
 - “*His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns*; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And *he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood*: and his name is called **The Word of God.**” (19:12–13)
 - “And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And *out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword*, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and *he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.* **And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS . . .**” (19:14–16)
- **The Final Defeat of Satan (20:7–10)**
- **The Dead Are Judged (20:11–15)**

A New Heaven and a New Earth



- **John's Vision of the New Creation (21:1–8)**

- “And **I saw a new heaven and a new earth**: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw **the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband**. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. **And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain**: for the former things are passed away.” (21:1–4)

- This is *after* the Millennium

- **The New Jerusalem (21:9–22:7)**

- “Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, **the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God . . .**” (21:9-10)
 - A 1,500 miles-per-side cube!
 - **No temple because the New Earth and Heavenly City are a temple—i.e., the Celestial Kingdom!**
 - “And he shewed me **a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb**. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was **there the tree of life . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations**. And there shall be no more curse: but **the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it . . .**” (22:2–3)