



Core Seminars—How to Study the Bible Class 7: Gospels, Epistles, Prophetic & Apocalyptic Literature

B. Interpreting Apocalyptic Literature

- Understand background
 - Looking and longing
- Understand genre
 - Multiple genres
 - “Unveil”
 - Symbolic language
- Understand purpose
 - To help churches face persecution
- Understand structure
 - Severn visions
 - Hearing turns to seeing

5 And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” 6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

- There is some debate

How To Study the Bible Remaining Schedule

- Genre III: Gospels/Epistles & Prophetic/Apocalyptic Literature
- II. Section III: Interpretive Tools
- Purpose and Context
 - Structure and Parallels
 - Linking Words
 - Repetition
 - Using Commentaries & Other Resource
 - Studying Difficult Passages and Familiar Passages

spraul@gmail.com

“When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” (Col. 3.4)

I. The Gospels (and Acts)

- Genre
- Chronology
- Harmony
- Distinctives

1. Matthew

Central Concerns

- How Jesus fulfills the Messianic prophecies given to Israel
- Israel’s rejection of Jesus as the Messiah

2. Mark

Action and authority

3. Luke

- the sovereignty of God (God's will)
- joy at the arrival of the Messiah
- Christ's role as prophet
- Miracles that validate Jesus' claims

4. John

- concerned with showing Christ's divinity
- responses to Jesus range from rejection to openness

5. Acts

The story of the Gospel penetrating the Roman Empire, despite stiff opposition, through the boldness of witnesses drawing on God's Spirit.

Speeches: Missionary and Defense

II. Epistles

A. Structured in three parts:

- Opening
- Body
- Closing

B. Studying Epistles:

- We often only have one side of the conversation
- Balancing original audience and modern audience

III. Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature:

A. Interpreting the Prophets:

- Prophets **forth-tell** and **foretell**
 - Salvation / Judgment

Numerous literary forms:

Allegories (Isa. 5:1-7)

Proverbs (Ez. 18:2)

Lamentations (Amos 5:1-2)

Prayers (Habakuk 3)

Narratives (Isa. 36-39)

Writing style diverse:

Jeremiah's lamentations (8:18-9:1)

Ezekiel's shocking statements (20:21-26)

Habakuk's questioning (1:12-17)

Amos' sarcasm and irony (3:12)

- Often multiple levels of fulfillment

1. Discern the immediate **context** –structure and flow
2. Discern the kind of **oracle** employed (judgment, salvation, or something else).
3. Study the balance between **forth-telling** and foretelling
4. Determine what **kind of language** is being used (Poetic? Disputation? Narrative?) Literary forms are often crucial in determining the author's meaning and intent.
5. Place these texts in their overall **place in redemptive-history**. In doing this, be careful not to make wrong associations between Israel and your nation or church.
6. **Try not to impose your theological system** on the text (whether dispensational, covenantal, etc.).
7. Be alert for certain **reoccurring and sweeping themes**, especially those that bear on the relationships between the testaments (e.g. eschatology, temple, marriage and spiritual adultery, new birth).
8. Consider **how the New Testament authors employ your passage**, or at least your book.