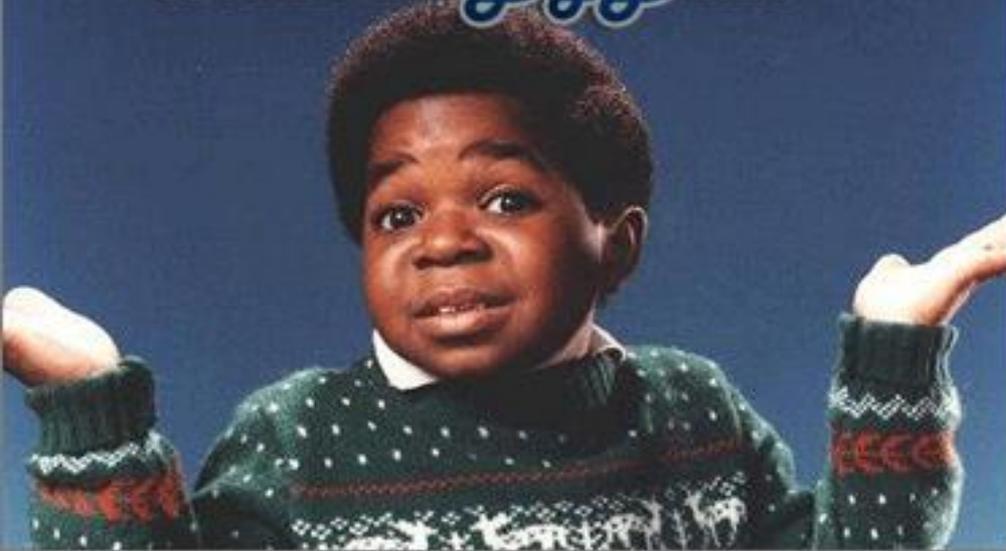


"John's Revelation: Observing The Difference Between Apocalyptic and the Prophetic Genre."



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What's the Big Deal?



There are “gaps” in Scripture that must be addressed when we approach Biblical interpretation. They are as follows:

Supernatural “gap”

Chronological “gap”

Linguistic “gap”

Cultural “gap”

Geographical “gap”

Literary “gap”

These “gaps” are important for us to understand if we desire greater clarity when wanting to understand sacred Scripture. Our understanding (or lack thereof) in any of these categories could lead us to misinterpret the message that God, through the human authors, were attempting to communicate to us.



Literary Gap

There are many genres found in the Scriptures.

* Historical narrative (Gen-Exo)

Law books (Deut.-Lev.)

Poetry/prose (Psalms, Song of Solomon)

Epistles (letters) (Rom-Jude)

Prophetic (Maj/min. proph.)

OR

Apocalyptic (Dan/Rev./Ezek.)



Defining Terms

Prophetic genre has within it a message or discourse which comes from divine inspiration from God (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:20), and declared the purposes of God for Israel, the Gentiles (in the OT), and the church (c.f., 1 Cor. 14:3) (in the NT). These messages come in the form of judgment, reproof or rebuking, comforting the afflicted, or the revealing of things hidden that were not previously disclosed.

Some Characteristics of Prophecy

- It comes by divine inspiration from God.
- It is declarative revealing the very purpose of God to the audience He is addressing.
- These prophetic messages can either reprove, admonish, or comfort.
- It involves revealing the hidden things that were not known previously.



Defining Terms

Apocalyptic genre is defined as the foretelling of future events that are supernatural and cataclysmic in nature. This genre is mostly focused concerning the end of the world.

[Apocalyptic] is “a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework in which the revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation and spatial, insofar as it involves another supernatural world.”

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Some Qualities of Apocalyptic Genre

It is revelatory.

It is a foretelling of the future.

It is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human receiver.

It is end of the world focused.

It is disclosing a transcendent reality.

It involves “eschatological” salvation



The Origins of Apocalyptic Literature



Karl Immanuel Nitzsch

Was a German Lutheran theologian

He was educated at the Schulpforta and Wittenberg. He became a PD in Germany (1810).

He became an asst. preacher of Castle Church (1811).

Was called to chair theology to the University of Bonn and in 1847 became the professor of theology in the University of Berlin.

Karl Immanuel Nitzsch was the *first* person to use the term “Apocalypse” as a literary genre.



Characteristics of Apocalyptic Literature



1. Apocalypses are usually pseudonyms

2. Apocalypses are usually written from a context of oppression, persecution, and despair.

3. A divine intermediary usually appears in Apocalypses to explain visions or reveal secret knowledge.

4. Sharp dualism: Contrast between present age dominated by evil and coming age of change.

5. Pessimism about the possibility for future change. A radical divine intervention is made.

6. High level of symbolism in Apocalyptic genre.

7. Apocalypses are deterministic, portraying an inescapable future, God's fixed events on the calendar.

8. Events are contemporary to the author. They are often revealed as if they were prophesied long ago. What is happening in the author's day is merely a fulfillment of what was revealed centuries before.

Similarities Between The Genres

They are both filled with symbolism

There is much persecution, oppression,
and despair

Divine intermediaries that appear to
explain situations.

A deterministic outlook that is fixed.



Differences Between The Genres

We know the (human) author (non pseudonym)

There is no sharp dualism in Revelation

There is not a “backwards” perspective

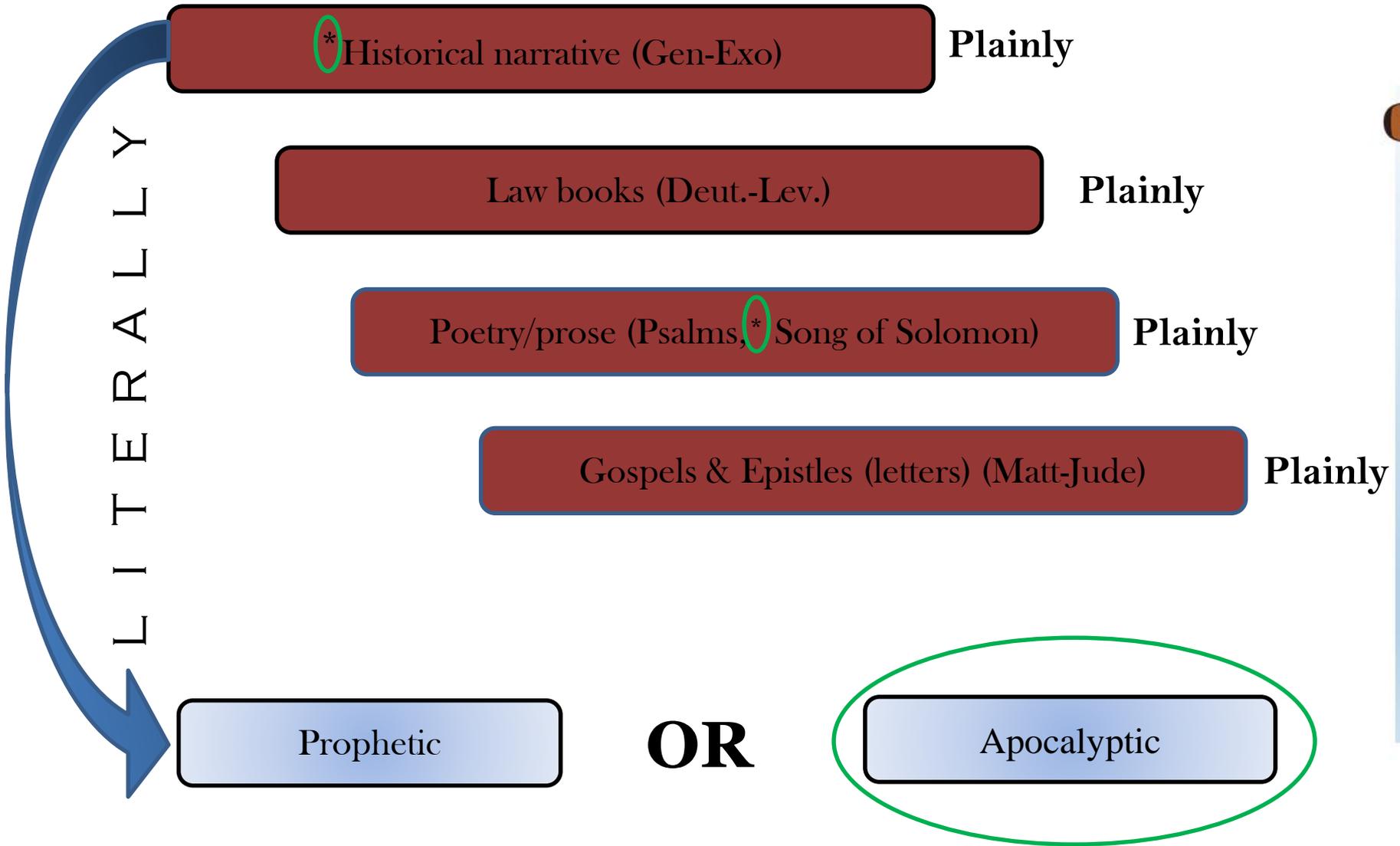


Question

How should read Revelation?



Books of Scripture



HISTORICAL

- There are many things in Revelation that are obscure, however Revelation is an extension of the history revealed in the Old Testament (Concerning Israel and the Nations).

LITERAL

- There are many symbols in Revelation that seem curious. However they are associated with the images (and their respective associations) found in the Old Testament (concerning Israel and the Nations) (2 Pet 1:20).

GRAMMATICAL

- Even though it is very difficult to explain the book of Revelation. We must examine how the words are placed together in the particular sentence.

Note: We must examine the book of Revelation's history, grammar, and literal *consistently*. To divert from this and use another (i.e., allegorical, theological, etc.) method when we come across difficult passages is to break from the grammar, history and literal explanation of the text.



Let us examine the Text (In Greek)!

αποκαλυψις ιησου χριστου ην εδωκεν αυτω ο θεος δειξαι
τοις δουλοις αυτου α δει γενεσθαι εν ταχει και εσημανεν
αποστειλας δια του αγγελου αυτου τω δουλω αυτου ιωαννη
2 ος εμαρτυρησεν τον λογον του θεου και την μαρτυριαν
ιησου χριστου οσα ειδεν 3 μακαριος ο αναγνωσκων και οι
ακουοντες **τους λογους της προφητειας** τηρουντες τα
εν αυτη γεγραμμενα ο γας καιρος εγγυς

“Revelation of Jesus Christ”: John is telling
the reader *who* unveils (or reveals) this.

“The words of *the* prophecy”: This
tells us the genre of the book itself
(notice the definite article)!



“τους λογους της προφητειας”

This phrase (or a similar one like it)
is found four times in regards to this book

"And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds **the words of the prophecy** of this book."

Rev. 22:7 NASB (The words of Jesus)

And he said to me, "Do not seal up **the words of the prophecy** of this book..."

Rev. 22:10 NASB (the words of the angel)

I testify to everyone who hears **the words of the prophecy** of this book:...

Rev. 22:18 NASB (the words of John)

“των λογων του βιβλιου της προφητειας”

...and if anyone takes away from **the words of the book of this prophecy**, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

Rev. 22:19 NASB (the words of John)



Let us examine the Text



19 "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things."

"The things you have seen" (Rev. 1:1-20)

"The things which are" (Rev. chaps. 2-4)

"The things that will take place After these things" (Rev. chaps. 4-22:1-17)