

# Apocalyptic Letters E4 Final

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## **The Jewish Apocalyptic Imagination**

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## The Jewish Apocalyptic Imagination

Jon: Hey, this is Jon at the BibleProject. Today, Tim and I, continue our conversation on how to read apocalyptic literature in the Bible. These are passages in the Bible where people describe their dreams and visions. And just like our own dreams and visions can be confusing, so are biblical one.

Tim: So, much of these apocalypses are full of imagery because they begin with people's dreams. And we all know what it's like to not understand our dreams. So there's an element to apocalyptic moments or books in the Bible where it feels like you're lost in a fog of imagery. Just like you often feel in your dreams. And that's on purpose because this is dream literature.

Jon: Now, our dreams and visions are easy to write off. Maybe we're just randomly processing our lives, maybe they're important, maybe they're not. But apocalyptic literature, is it a dream journal that we should ignore? They are moments when God is using their altered state of consciousness to show them His perspective on the world. When it happens, it often happens in the same way.

Tim: They all of a sudden are standing in between heaven and earth in the divine throne room, and they are receiving messages. They come in symbols. He's just going see an army of 144,000. He's going to see stars and dragons. It's like he's watching a movie screen with all of these images, but it's always in this heavenly temple.

Jon: Today, we're going to open the book of the Revelation of Jesus. It's the last book of the Bible. We're going to read about John's vision, and we're going to ask ourselves some questions.

Tim: Why are biblical apocalypses the way that they are? Well, what are they designed to do? And what's the reality that they're dealing with? They are texts that recount moments where somebody encountered heaven and earth in same spot, and that gave them a revelation about what's happening in their lives or in history. And then they're going to recount them to us so that we too can have the same experience by means of reading this account.

Jon: Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

Let's continue our conversation on how to read apocalyptic literature. There's parts in the Bible where someone is experiencing the universe as it really is. It's being uncovered for them by God. And then we have these parts of the Bible in the Prophets in the last book of the Bible, Revelation, which is written to describe these experiences. And they're often very graphic and intense, and full of very imaginative symbols that makes you kind of just wonder, like, "What do I do with these?"

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Tim: Yeah, exactly.

Jon: Stars falling from the sky or locusts coming. Like, is this actually going to happen? Is this representing something?

Tim: Sure.

Jon: But there's a lot of the same kind of imagery being repeated and it feels like ripped off of. So what you wanted to walk us through was where this imagery comes from.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. You have to first handle the issue of the word. It doesn't mean the cataclysmic destruction of the world, even though that's what it means in English. It means an uncovering and unveiling. The biblical apocalypses are moments that happen to people when they're in altered states of consciousness, dreams or visions. And that helps us understand why so much of these apocalypses are full of imagery, fantastic imagery, because they begin with people's dreams.

We all know what it's like to not understand our dreams. So there's an element to apocalyptic moments or books in the Bible where it feels like you're lost in a fog of imagery. Just like you often feel in your dreams. And that's on purpose. Because this is dream literature, you could say. It comes out of people's dreams. That's kind of the first step.

Within the biblical story, these dream or vision moments are moments of clarity, of revelation, where people see heaven on earth as one and they see reality in history in their lives in light of God's purposes and things as they really are. That's the first flow of thought. I think we can do all of that in about 45 seconds, really, but I would like us to think about starting the video with the meaning of the word, what apocalypse means, dreams or visions, and then we'll do this step, why these particular kinds of dreams and visions have all this repeated imagery.

Before we dive into where the imagery comes from, maybe we should actually just open the Revelation and scan it for a few moments and kind of get the flow of things here. So let's just go to chapter 1.

[00:05:30]

Tim: All right. Opening sentence of the last book of the Bible: "The revelation—which is the Greek word apocalypse—the apocalypse of Jesus, the Messiah that God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. And so he, Jesus, sent and communicated by means of his messenger—or, in Greek, *aggelos*. It gets translated as angel usually here—to this bondservant John." There's a chain here. This is apocalypse. We call it the revelation of John. Actually, the opening line says it's the

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revelation from Jesus. But then it says, "The revelation that God the Father gave Jesus." Isn't that interesting.

Jon: Huh.

Tim: So it's opening a chain of revelation here. From God to Jesus, from Jesus to a messenger, and then from that messenger to a guy named John, who's on island of Patmos. "John testified to the Word of God, to the testimony of Jesus Messiah, to everything that he saw." It's an apocalypse.

Jon: A vision.

Tim: So it's going to be about the things that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads and hears the words of this propheteia." It's called an apocalypse, but now this book is also being called a prophecy, which means a word of God through a human that brings a divine perspective on usually current events or history. So you read and hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things that are written in it. "For this isn't for the distant future. The time is near. It's for this moment," John says.

And what follows are "John to the seven churches..." It starts reading like a letter. "Grace and peace to you." There's actually three literary genres coming together, two of which we've already covered in the How to Read the Bible series. Isn't that interesting?

Jon: Yeah. The prophetic literature...

Tim: The channel for the divine word to God's people.

Jon: And we've already mentioned how the prophets have these visions, and then write about them. So the apocalypse is within that genre already. But then this one also has letters.

Tim: So, it's a prophetic book about this prophets apocalypse that he communicates by means of a letter

Jon: Right.

Tim: Go down to verse 9.

Jon: "I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven

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churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

Tim: Let's pause. This interesting. Where's John?

Jon: The Island of Patmos.

Tim: Where else is he?

Jon: In the spirit?

Tim: Yeah. Welcome to apocalyptic vocabulary here. Where do these experiences take place? This is so interesting. He's saying like, "I'm located somewhere. Most likely people interpret I was on an island because of the Word of God and testimony." Most likely it means he's been, and the tradition is that he was exiled there. He was in prison there. It was a prison island.

Jon: Like Alcatraz.

Tim: Yeah. Or perhaps not. People debate these things. His body, so to speak, is on an island. But then in verse 10, he says, "But I was in the spirit." That's interesting.

Jon: So he's not talking about "I was experiencing peace, patience, joy, kindness, goodness." He's talking about encountering the heavens, God's space.

Tim: Correct. He got this vocabulary from and he stands in the tradition of Israel's prophets, specifically here for this vocabulary, the prophet Ezekiel, who was sitting by a river, or more likely a like a canal, irrigation canal in Babylon. And he talks about how the spirit took him. Or here in Ezekiel 3:14, "The spirit lifted me up and took me away." All of a sudden, he's in the divine throne room seeing the God mobile. So to say that you're in the spirit is a signal to the reader of 'Oh, I'm about...

Jon: Having an apocalypse.

Tim: Yes, yeah. Or we might say he's in an altered state of consciousness. That's when these moments often happen. Like for Daniel, it's he's been fasting and praying. Often these apocalypses happen accompanied by physical deprivation that results in altered state of consciousness. Isn't that interesting?

Jon: It is interesting. It makes sense in the sense of what we've been talking about, which is our normal state of consciousness is tempting to

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constantly create a narrative about ourselves in the world that we understand and can help us just get through the day.

Tim: Yeah. And when you're warm and filled, you kind of like, "I'm cool with how things are."

Jon: So you get past that. There's all sorts of ways. Poets use just imaginative language and, you know, you can tell someone's story, but another way to get past that is to alter your state of consciousness. And that happens in dreams, but it happens to people when they fast.

Tim: Usually, fasting and prayer are the means of entering into an altered state of consciousness. When you're awake, we would call it a trance or a vision.

Jon: I was once told or maybe heard a hypnotist say that just closing your eyes puts you in a different state of consciousness.

Tim: Fascinating.

Jon: Slightly. Just closing your eyes and you're in a new state of consciousness.

Tim: Okay. That's John. He was on this island, doesn't say why, but he was actually in the spirit, which means he is experiencing heaven and earth together.

Jon: We should say it's not a different state of consciousness in itself, but more particularly one that's aligning with God.

Tim: Correct. In other words, being in this altered state of consciousness makes him aware of the fact that heaven and earth are one even in the place where he's sitting. It's almost like you'd say becoming aware of a fifth dimension or something.

Jon: Where do you get that in here?

Tim: Oh, I'm just saying, if you follow the hyperlinks back to these other stories where people have...In fact, here. I was just looking at this one the other day. In 1 Chronicles 21, the Hebrew Bible says...This sounds random right now. But it's the story about David. David, instead of trusting God, he wants to know how many soldiers he has so he counts soldiers and trust in how many soldiers he has. Everyone's telling him, "Don't do that. Trust God," and he's like, "No, I'm going to count the soldiers in a census."

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The whole story is a test. It's a test for David, and he fails the test. So God brings three choices for how David and his people will experience the consequences. It's a whole thing we don't have time to get into. But what he does is the consequences are just so terrible that he goes looking to offer a sacrifice to say that he's sorry to God. He goes to this high place in old Jerusalem to what's called the threshing floor of a guy named Ornan. It says in verse 16, "David lifted up his eyes and he saw..." Now normally in a narrative, you know, that's just you look around and you see.

But what he sees is the angel of Yahweh standing in the middle of earth and heaven over Jerusalem, holding a sword. Now what he's seeing is an equivalent of the cherubim and the sword posted at the entry into the garden of Eden in Genesis 3:24. But this phrase is telling us that he's having a vision. "He lifted up his eyes and he saw something standing in the middle of heaven and earth at the same time.

Jon: Seeing the gateway.

Tim: Yeah. All of a sudden, this hilltop becomes a portal between heaven and earth. That's what Ezekiel sees. And I think that's what John is signaling here. John's tapping into a long tradition of visionary, heaven and earth portals through altered states of consciousness. In verse 12—I just want to go on just read this real quick because we'll get into the imagery here—"I turned around to see this voice..." Which remember, the voice was a voice but it sounds like a trumpet, which that's copy and paste from what the people experience on Mount Sinai. They hear God's voice as the voice of a thundering trumpet from the sky. Verse 12, Revelation 1, "Then I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me, and when I turned around, I saw the menorah." That's usually is in the holy place.

Jon: Seven gold lampstands.

Tim: Seven gold lampstands. All of a sudden, he's in the holy place of the temple.

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: "And then, in the middle of the lampstand, I saw a son of Adam clothed in a robe down to his feet, a golden sash across his chest." He's dressed like a priest. All of a sudden, he's transported into some kind of temple in the holy place, where only priests belong, and he sees the human dressed like a priest. But not your average priest. "His head and his hair were white like wool, like snow, and his eyes were like flames of fire, his feet like burnished bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice sounded like many waters. In his right hand he had seven stars. Out of his mouth

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came a two-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its strength. I saw him and I fell at his feet like I was dead."

Jon: Now, it sounds like we're in some really trippy dream.

Tim: Totally. Because we are. He's in now some kind of heavenly temple encountering a son of Adam, who's about to tell us that he's Jesus—the risen Jesus. Because it goes on to say, "Don't be afraid." I don't know why I think that's funny.

Jon: There's a sword coming out of his mouth?

Tim: Exactly Yeah. "I am the first and the last, the living one. I was dead, now I'm alive. I have the keys of death." It's the risen Jesus. So why is he having a dream about going to a heavenly temple encountering a priest? Why is Jesus dressed like a priest in the temple? Why is he described as a Son of Adam, Son of Man? Think of Daniel chapter 7 where the Son of Man appears on the clouds to go up to the divine throne. But then look, this is fascinating, if you go to Daniel 7...this is good homework assignment for our listeners. Go to Daniel 7 and you'll see that there's a Son of Man exalted up after being in the realm of the beasts, trampled by the beast. He's vindicated up to sit on the divine throne beside a figure called Ancient of Days. And Ancient of Days has hair like wool.

Jon: That's right.

Tim: The Ancient of Days is the one that shining like a light bulb. So what John has done is taken the Son of Man and the Ancient of Days...

Jon: Turned them into one character.

Tim: And turned them into one character. It's an excellent example of his expression of the divine identity of Jesus. Anyhow. Every one of these images, like every single one is hyperlinked to an apocalyptic story in the Hebrew Bible. Every single one. Whether Daniel 7 or Ezekiel or scenes from the book of Isaiah. So we're getting a feel here John had a dream or a vision on an island called Patmos. And he clearly intends to recount for this dream.

However, as he writes down the literary representation of that dream. He's helping us understand its meaning by connecting things that he saw to actual literary hyperlinks to dreams and visions from the Hebrew Bible. We're back to that meditation literature thing, where he's not just giving us like a transcript of his dream, he's giving us an already interpreted version of his experience. As he writes it down, he's helping us to understand it by following the hyperlinks. Does that make any sense?



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Jon: It is making sense. I guess the question that arises is, to what degree is he doing that? I mean, on one end of the spectrum, it's, "I had some really strange experience, and if I explained it to you the way I experienced it, it's just going to seem ridiculous. But as I've processed it, and I read the scriptures, I realized, oh, the best way to explain it is in the same language. And so I'm doing a big re-interpretive move of what I actually experienced to line it up with this tradition of prophets and how they described the throne room." That's one end of the spectrum.

The other end of the spectrum is, when you encounter God and His throne room, you see what other people have seen.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Hair like white wool, and...this is what he saw, and it just happens to be the way other people described it. You can describe white hair in a number of different ways. But he's like, "The tradition is to say it like this so that people understand that I'm talking about the same kind of thing."

Tim: Actually, you just subscribed it helpfully. It's like two ends of a spectrum for how to explain what's happening here. One is, it's this transcript, just describing what he saw. And because what he's seeing is the same divine reality that all the other prophets see, it's going to look and sound the same. The other end of the spectrum is he had just crazy dreams like you and I do, and he's interpreted them by means of scriptural imagery because he's a Bible nerd.

I think a third position would be to say, go back to our conversation of how our brains are pre-interpreting all reality for us already. And so if you are someone like John, who clearly, as you go throughout the book, he is a master of the Hebrew Bible in Hebrew and Greek. He knows it in both languages. He'll use wordplays in Hebrew or Greek sometimes. So his mind is already saturated in the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: I see. Those are already the neural pathways that exist.

Tim: Exactly. So when someone like that has a visionary experience, he's going to encounter the things that he knows what you encounter. And I'm not saying therefore what he saw isn't real. It's more of an in-between of saying, a scripturally saturated human mind will have certain kinds of dreams. But what I also want to draw attention to—and this is the work of the scholar Richard Bauckham on the Book of Revelations. He's written a fat book and a little book.

Jon: Reading Revelation Responsibly?

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Tim: Oh no, no different scholar, though that's also awesome. That's by Michael Gorman. Bauckham wrote a little book called "The Theology of the Book of Revelation." He ponders the same issue. What he thinks the evidence of the book speaks towards is a scripturally, saturated mind having dreams and visions, but that John sat and crafted those accounts into a really well-designed book. The patterns of the number seven, the literary design, the number of times that certain words occur, certain densities shows all the work that he worked on this thing for years, as the literary work of communication, but that was rooted in real experiences that he had. So that's one thing that's interesting.

Then what I want to ask is why the temple, why a priest? Let's keep going with just some of the imagery. Go to chapter 4.

[00:21:35]

Tim: After the letters, he says, "I looked..." More visionary language. "I looked, a door in the skies opened. And I heard a voice that I heard back then like the sound of a trumpet saying, 'Come up here and I'll show you what will take place after these things.' And so immediately I was in the spirit." It's almost like Star Trek. You know, when people get beamed up?

Jon: Beaming up?

Tim: Yeah. And the heavens open.

Jon: There's the gateway.

Tim: It's the gateway. He goes up in the spirit. And look, a throne...

Jon: He's in the throne room again.

Tim: ...in the heavens, and one sitting like the throne. And he describes that one just like Daniel and just like Ezekiel describe the one on the throne of Esau in the Old Testament. And there's all of these figures around the throne. Twenty little thrones with elders. And then there's lightning. And then verse 6, a sea of glass, which is exactly what the elders on top of Mount Sinai saw.

Jon: The rakiya?

Tim: Yeah. And living creatures, right? This is what Isaiah and Ezekiel saw. And all these hybrid animals. So what's happening here? He's being transported...

Jon: To the heavenly throne room.

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Tim: ...to the heavenly temple. Heavenly throne room. Because the temple is the throne room. This is true of all of these apocalypses. What people see and experience is the open heaven. and they all of a sudden are standing in between heaven and earth in the divine throne room, and they go are receiving messages. The common symbols, all these symbolic dreams. He's going to see an army of hundred and 44,000. He's going to see stars, and dragons. It's like he's watching a movie screen with all of these images, but it's always in this heavenly temple space. And the rest of the book of Revelation flows out of this. He's standing up in this throne room seeing all of these images.

Jon: It's where he's located the whole time?

Tim: Or he'll be back down, and then he'll be in the spirit again and see something in the skies. And what usually is there is some kind of angel who becomes like tour guide. And this goes back to the Old Testament. When Zechariah has his dreams and visions, there's an angel explaining it all to him. For me, the question is, why this? Why is this the thing? Why a temple? Why heaven and earth? Why angelic priests explaining everything? Where does all this come from?

It's all rooted in, once again, Genesis 1, 2, and 3. And it's all rooted in the biblical cosmology of the three-tiered universe. And it's all wrapped up in the image of God, the meaning of the image of God, and how humans are called to be the bridge of heaven on earth, where God's wisdom flows, through His images, out into creation. So that's where we're all going. But I just wanted to set up. I think, in the video, we could be like, "Here's something interesting. Whenever people have these apocalypses, they always see the same things. What's this all about?"

And then kind of like we did with the books of Solomon in this series, how to read the Bible, how we traced through how the wisdom literature and the ideas in it are rooted in the biblical story that then helps you understand how to read the books, I think we could do something similar here, where we could quickly recap, in a minute or two, the biblical story that would explain why these people end up in this place having the same types of dreams and experiences. Again, I think this helps set up why the Jewish apocalyptic is what it is, which helps you know how to read it in a more informed way.

Jon: And it helps you understand what it means?

Jon: Yeah, part of knowing what something means is knowing why it is the way that it is. If you get a cookbook, cookbooks are designed a certain way. There's usually an opening description of the dish, then the list...

Jon: Nice photo.

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Tim: Nice photo. Yeah, totally. That you can never quite recreate in your own picture. There's list of ingredients, and then step by step instructions, and then maybe a little concluding paragraph. Why is that? Well, because the nature of the thing is it's a book designed to help you get the raw ingredients and turn them into this. That determines what the presentation of the literature is. Same thing with here. Why are biblical apocalypse is the way that they are? Well, what are they designed to do? And what's the reality that they're dealing with? And so now we're to what we just talked about.

They are texts that recount moments where somebody encountered heaven on earth in the same spot, and that gave them a revelation about what's happening in their lives or in history. And then they're going to recount that to us so that we too can have the same experience by means of reading this account, right? That's what John told us.

Jon: So you're saying, what are they meant to do?

Tim: Yeah, what are they meant to do?

Jon: And to you, by digging into why are they in temples, why is their priests, those questions, and then going back to Genesis 1 and 2, we're going to see what these are trying to do?

Tim: Yeah. The reason the apocalypses are this is because they're rooted in the vision of human identity and the purpose of humans in God's world. Because humans are meant to be the human image of God, partnering with God in heaven on earth place where heaven on earth are one. Humans are exiled from that ideal because of their rebellion. And so when people in the Bible are returning to these moments, returning to a place where heaven on earth are one and they see a human there who looks like a priest and who looks like God, and who is God giving them wisdom for how to go back down to earth and live in light of the true nature of reality, not in light of how they see things, but in light of...

Jon: How things really are.

Tim: ...how things really are, that's what apocalypses are. They're meant to give the reader a window into what's really happening in light of the story of Jesus. And it's rooted all in how the story of the Bible opens in the Garden of Eden and with the image of God. This is my first time working through all these ideas. So there may be a better way to explain them that I'm not doing very well right now.

Jon: No, that makes sense. We've been talking for years now and we've talked a lot about Genesis 1 and 2. We've talked about the temple. We have a whole video on it, the image of God, and a whole podcast series video.

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Tim: Heaven and earth series.

Jon: Heaven and earth together. We haven't done anything on like priesthood, but I think we will.

Tim: We will, yeah.

Jon: But all these ideas then are then fueling this literature is apocalyptic literature because it's trying to put you back into that biblical framework of human identity, what does it mean for heaven and earth to be one? So it's all about that.

Tim: Yeah. These prophets and priests who returned to Eden in these dreams and visions and they meet a glowing figure there who gives them wisdom about what's really happening in the world, why are they all about this? What's going on here? Once again, it all starts in Genesis 1 through 3.

Jon: Do you want to go back and talk about Genesis 1 through 3? I feel like...

Tim: Yeah. Not in detail. I think a great next step for our conversation would be just to tell that story very quickly because I would love to do it in the video. To say humans are the image of God, we've mostly talked about the royal representation. There's a whole other layer of it that humans are the idle statues of God in the Eden place where heaven and earth are one. They're the bridge of heaven and earth. They are the way that God's wisdom and rule gets exercised in the earthly realm. When humans rebel, they forfeit that ideal calling and go out of the heaven on earth place...

Jon: In exile.

Tim: ...in exile out into the land of mortality and death. But God's not going to let that be the end. He's going on a mission to restore the life of Eden to creation, and to make heaven and earth one. And so all of these dreams and visions culminating in Revelation happen when people are in difficult circumstances, or Israel, God's purpose is seem like they've gone off the track, and so God appoints...He tells Abraham. Abraham has many apocalypses. Moses has apocalypses. The whole temple structure is one big visual apocalypse telling you about God's purpose to restore humanity to the heaven on earth place. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, they all have these.

Jon: Because for humans to be truly imaging God in creation is living in the temple.

Tim: Correct. That's right. The ideal cosmos for the biblical authors is the place where heaven and earth are the same.

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Jon: And that is the temple?

Tim: And that is what the temple recalls and symbolizes. That's why it's all full of Eden imagery. It's a restored Eden. The plot resolution of the Bible is what we need is a humanity restored to its calling to live at that heaven on earth intersection, to be God's image, to rule with His wisdom and love over heaven and earth place. That's what was forfeited. And so throughout the whole story of the Bible, God's on a mission to get to that ideal. And what the prophets people who have these dreams are seeing is that reality. But we're blind to it because we're in exile. And so the apocalypses are these words of challenge and encouragement.

Jon: What they end up saying is a lot of crazy stuff. They see a lot of violence and...

Tim: Sometimes that's what they see. But not always.

Jon: This is really helpful. It's this moment of clarity back to our true calling and identity. And having that, then we could go and make it so in our world.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. An apocalypse is designed to help you go back to your life, but with a bigger perspective, a bigger story of reminding you that there's a whole realm of reality in my life that it's hard for me to see. But it's really true. And so I now live as if God's kingdom is here on earth so it is in heaven. It's what the Lord's Prayer is. The Lord's Prayer is a prayer for an apocalypse. "May your kingdom come, May your will be done here on earth as in heaven." May your will and your kingdom be apocalypsed right here in our midst. Then the rest of the Lord's Prayer is arming me to go help bring it about through faith and forgiveness, and endurance. Apocalypse now.

Jon: Now, when I think of the Revelation, we read in chapters 1 and here in chapter 4, this idea of being in the temple, seeing the Son of Man, the whole thing. But you go on to read it, and it's these trumpets and these seals and these bowls. That's where I want to go then is like, well, then why all this imagery? Why is it so intense? Why is there so much violence?

Tim: Yeah, that's right. First, the reason why I'm highlighting the temple, it's because that's the narrative setting of the book where all the visions take place. They're either dreams where he's in the spirit in that place, and from that place, he gets true clarity where he can see the true nature of everything. But then what he sees are visions that are themselves packed with symbols. And what he sees, all of the creatures and angels and battles, there the clarity comes by following the hyperlinks to the Hebrew Bible.

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And in that sense, it's like a photo mosaic made up of a picture of someone's face. Jimi Hendrix with his face made up of a thousand pictures of...

Jon: Him rockin' out.

Tim: ...of him rockin' out. And so, the shape of Jimi Hendrix's nose in a photo mosaic is maybe made up of all of his concerts in Europe or something like that. And so what you need to do a zoom in and think about each one of those photos individually, but then back up and see they've all been arranged—the metaphor only works partly—into a nose. In a similar way, every one of these dreams and visions that John sees in the heavenly temple is packed with little mini snippets from all over the Hebrew Bible, and in light of the story of Jesus and His resurrection. And what you get is the book of Revelation.

I think it's impossible. You can read the book without knowing anything about the Bible and you'll get the basic idea.

Jon: Really?

Tim: I think so. There's a great conflict going on. The risen Jesus is the King of the world, and He's going to bring justice on human evil and bring about a new creation. That's Jimi Hendrix's face. But if you really want to understand the nuance of what he's doing, you got to zoom in and start looking at the end of these little portraits.

Jon: Is this is a famous photo mosaic of Jimi Hendrix, how we're you using this example?

Tim: Yeah, I saw it recently.

Jon: Okay. Just so people know what were talking about.

Tim: Yeah, totally.

[00:35:24]

Tim: Would it help to just real quick kind of walk through these block moments of these apocalypses which start in Genesis 1, 2, and 3 and do some stuff on image of God, and then walk through some old testament dreams and show how all of this is connected in a storyline?

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Then once we do that, how the gospels are apocalypses come into a cool focus. There'll be some stories and things in the Gospel of Mark that really pop in a cool way. But all that's a storyline that helps us make

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sense of what apocalypse are. Then the last step is, in light of all of that, what are some helpful steps for how you can go read apocalyptic literature with greater skill.

Jon: Cool. And then when we do the steps, are we going to read some of seals or the trumpets?

Tim: Sure, yeah. We could like look at a text and follow the hyperlinks to see how it works.

Jon: Sounds great.

Tim: Totally.

Jon: Thanks for listening to this episode of the BibleProject podcast. Next week, we continue our conversation on apocalyptic literature by tying it into another important theme. One that we've talked a lot about on this podcast—the idea that humans are the image of God.

Tim: Another way to say that humans are the image of God is to say that humans are a walking, talking, acting apocalypse of the creator God, of God's purpose, will, power, creativity, love in the world.

Jon: If you'd like to submit a question about apocalyptic literature in the Bible, we'd love to hear from you. We're collecting questions right now. You can send it to [info@bibleproject.com](mailto:info@bibleproject.com). What you can do is record yourself asking your question, try to keep it to around 30 seconds or less, and let us know your name and where you're from. Again, email it to [info@bibleproject.com](mailto:info@bibleproject.com).

Today's show was produced by Dan Gummel, and our theme music is from the band Tents. BibleProject is a crowdfunded nonprofit in Portland, Oregon. We want you to experience the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. And everything we create to do that is free. It's on our website, [bibleproject.com](http://bibleproject.com), and it's free because of the generous support of lots of people like you. So thank you for being a part of this with us.

Man: Hey, this is Chaz [SP] right from United States Virgin Islands.

Woman: Hi, my name is Macio. I'm from Lacombe, Alberta, Canada. We believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus.

Man: We're a crowdfunded project by people like me. Find free video, study notes, podcasts, and more resources at [bibleproject.com](http://bibleproject.com).