

Apocalyptic, Prophetic and Epistolary Literature and the Book of Revelation

C.F.D.Moule "Apocalypse is the anticipatory raising of the curtain, to display the final scene, is a way of conveying pictorially and in symbols the conviction of the ultimate triumph of God."

Visions couples with political hysteria

Deep despair - everything is not going to work out
(except by divine intervention at the end)

Looks to a cataclysmic end

Earthly Kingdom patterned after Davidic Messiah

Repetition of Symbolism indicates borrowing by apocalyptists.
A definite convention is established in imagery.

Trying to describe something too big for words.

Written to be taken subjectively, convey feelings, emotions

Revelation as Prophecy, Apocalyptic and Epistle

John's revelation is unique in that he alone is able to combine the qualities of each of the major writing modes of his time. His work is neither strictly prophetic, purely apocalyptic or definitively epistolary. Here alone do we see such a masterful blend which conveys God's ongoing purpose in history couched in tones of eschatological fervor with clear moral and ethical teaching to a personal audience of involved readers.

Prophetic characteristics

Clear Authorship

Called a prophecy 1:3; 22:7,10,18,19

Call for repentance

Ethical Teaching

Optimistic/Pessimistic balance, realism

Dominance of Lamb (Messiah)

Pictures a church triumphant in this world

Apocalyptic characteristics

Written in symbolism

Prevalence of Numerology

Anticipation and expectation of new Kingdom/order

Hearers suffering and oppressed

Political rather than moral crisis

Pictures a church triumphant in the next world

Epistolary characteristics

Personally addressed

Demonstrates keen knowledge and interest of author in readers situation as it relates to moral character

Highly directive to present circumstances with clear admonition

Assumption of highly informed and involved readership

Association of writer's personal ministry to readers