

The Apocalypse

The Greek word Apocalypse... means an uncovering, or laying open to view; a disclosure. This idea has been, through Latin ecclesiastical literature, transferred into our language by the word Revelation. Both these words have become common in theological literature, but in English usage the term revelation has acquired a wider meaning, and is employed to denote the entire body of religious truth as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, while the word Apocalypse is confined more particularly to the last book of the New Testament canon, and to a number of pseudepigraphical works of a similar literary character.

In the language of the New Testament, however, the word apocalypse denotes a divine revelation of something that was before unknown to men. The salvation introduced by the coming of Jesus Christ is spoken of as a light destined to serve as an apocalypse to the nations of the earth (Luke ii, 32). The Gospel itself is said (in Rom. xvi, 25, 26) to be an apocalypse of the mystery of redemption through Christ, which was kept in silence from eternity until preached by Jesus and his apostles.

Paul declared that he received his gospel, not from man, but through an apocalypse of Jesus Christ (Gal. i, 12); and many years later, acting in conformity with an apocalypse, he went up to Jerusalem and laid before the brethren a statement of the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles (Gal. ii, 2). He claimed also to have been favored with visions and a superabundance of apocalypses (2 Cor. xii, 1, 7). But in a manner to be more particularly observed is the heavenly manifestation of Jesus Christ himself, in his execution of judgment on the wicked and awarding glory to the righteous, called "the apocalypse of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. i, 7; 2 Thess. i, 7; 1 Peter i, 7, 13; iv, 13).

It is called in Rom. ii, 5, an "apocalypse of the righteous judgment of God." In special harmony with this idea the one prophetic book of the New Testament is entitled the "Apocalypse of Jesus Christ."

(Biblical Apocalypics: A Study of the Most Notable Revelations of God and of Christ in the Canonical Scriptures by Milton S Terry, New York: Eaton & Mains, e-book, 1898, 11; Text and paragraph structure modified)