



# APOCALYPTIC THOUGHT

*In the Scriptures*

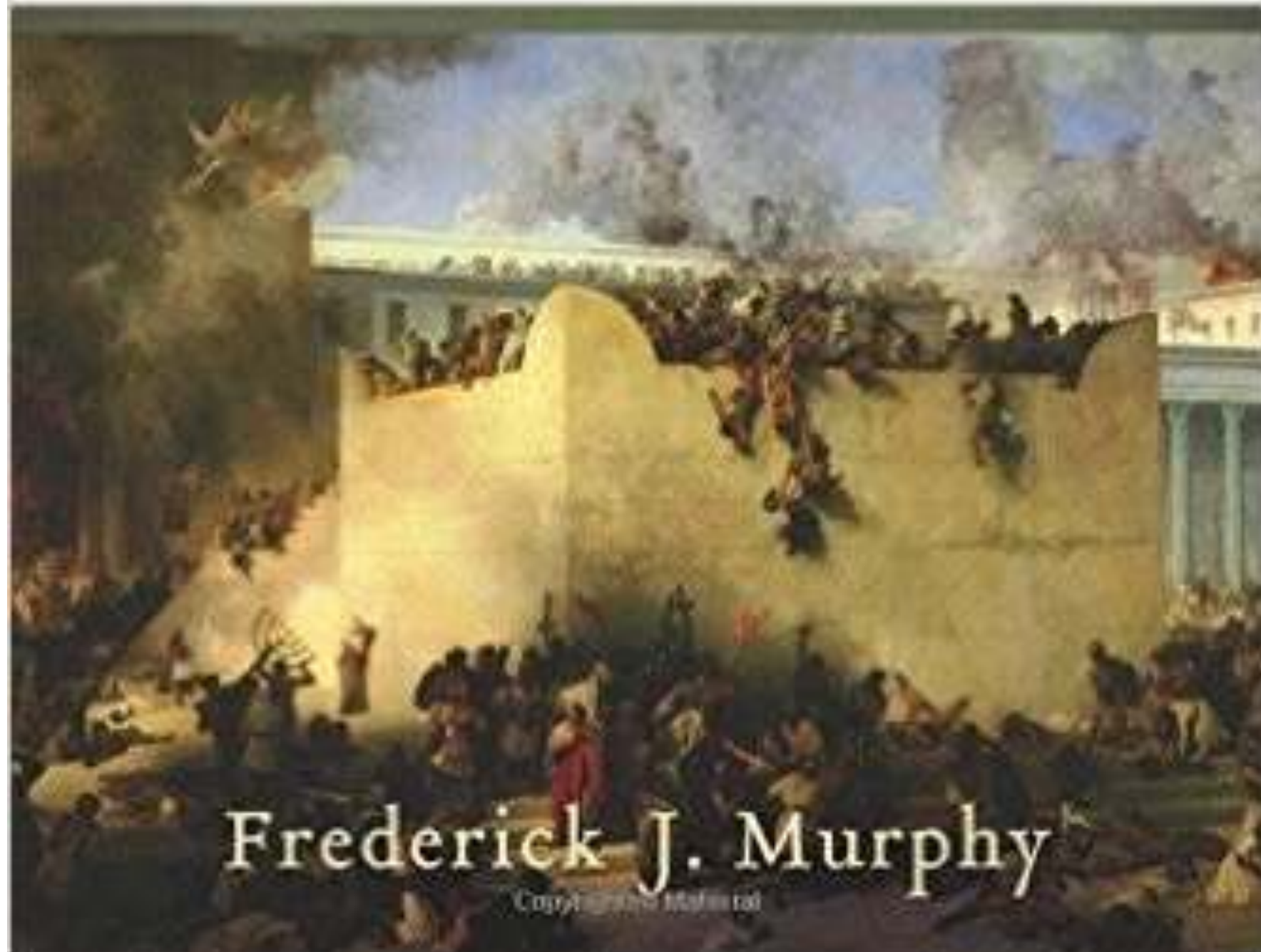


**VERIFY WHAT I SAY...**

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A COMPREHENSIVE INTRODUCTION

Apocalypticism  
IN THE  
Bible and Its World



Frederick J. Murphy

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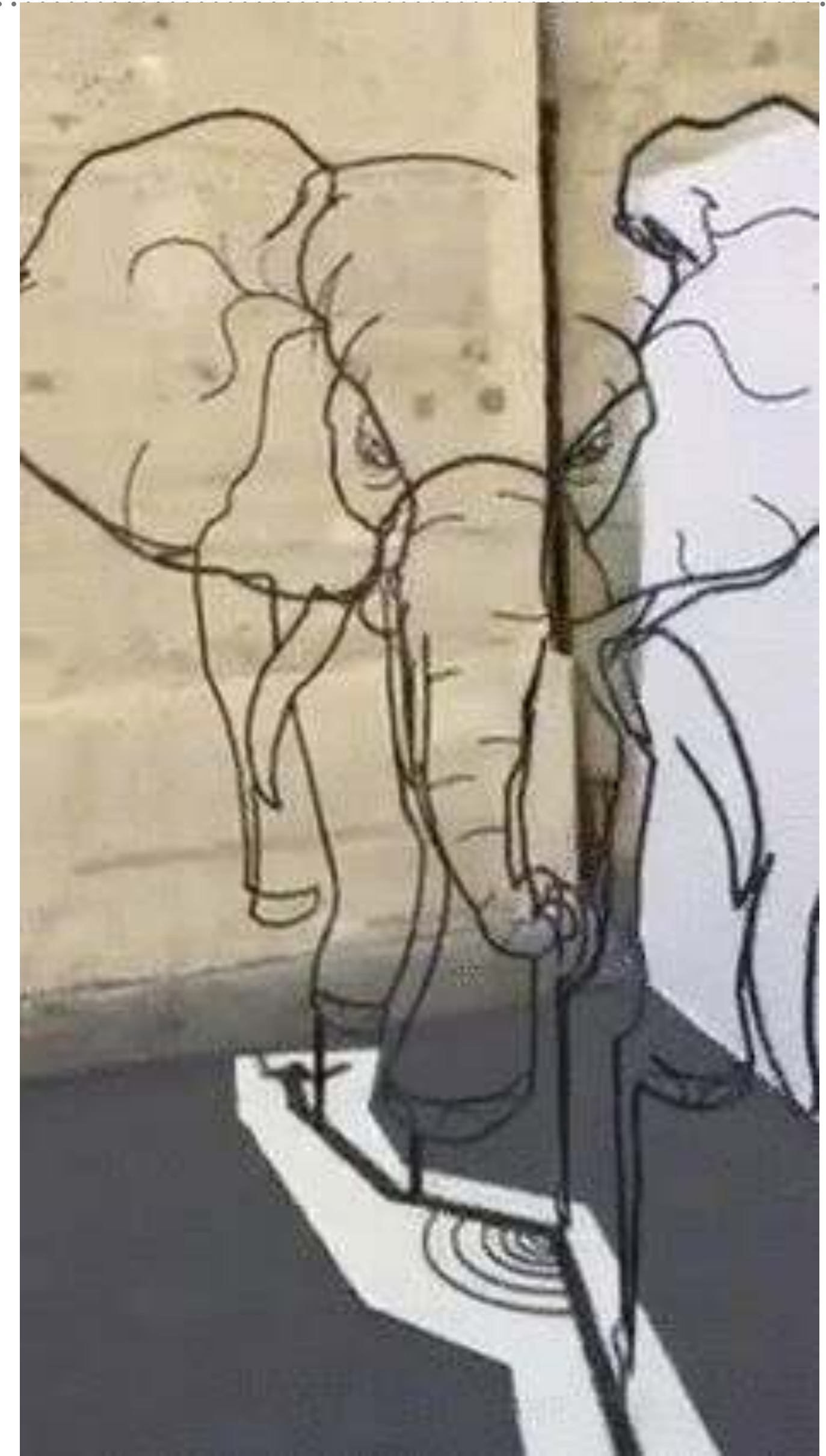
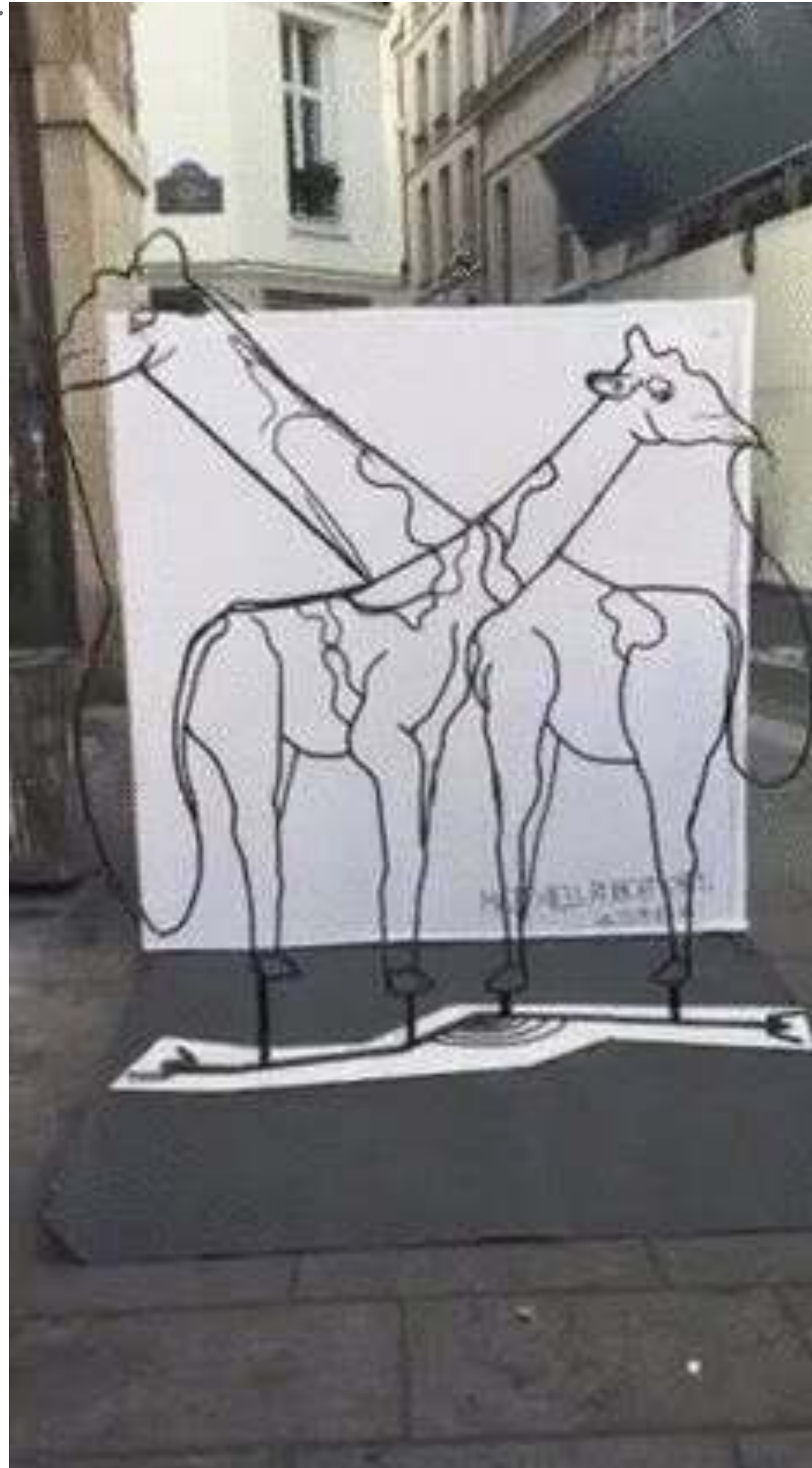
*Poetics and  
Interpretation  
of Biblical  
Narrative*

Adele Berlin





# LITERARY PERSPECTIVE









# LITERARY PERSPECTIVE



*Babylonian Lamassu*





## LITERARY PERSPECTIVE

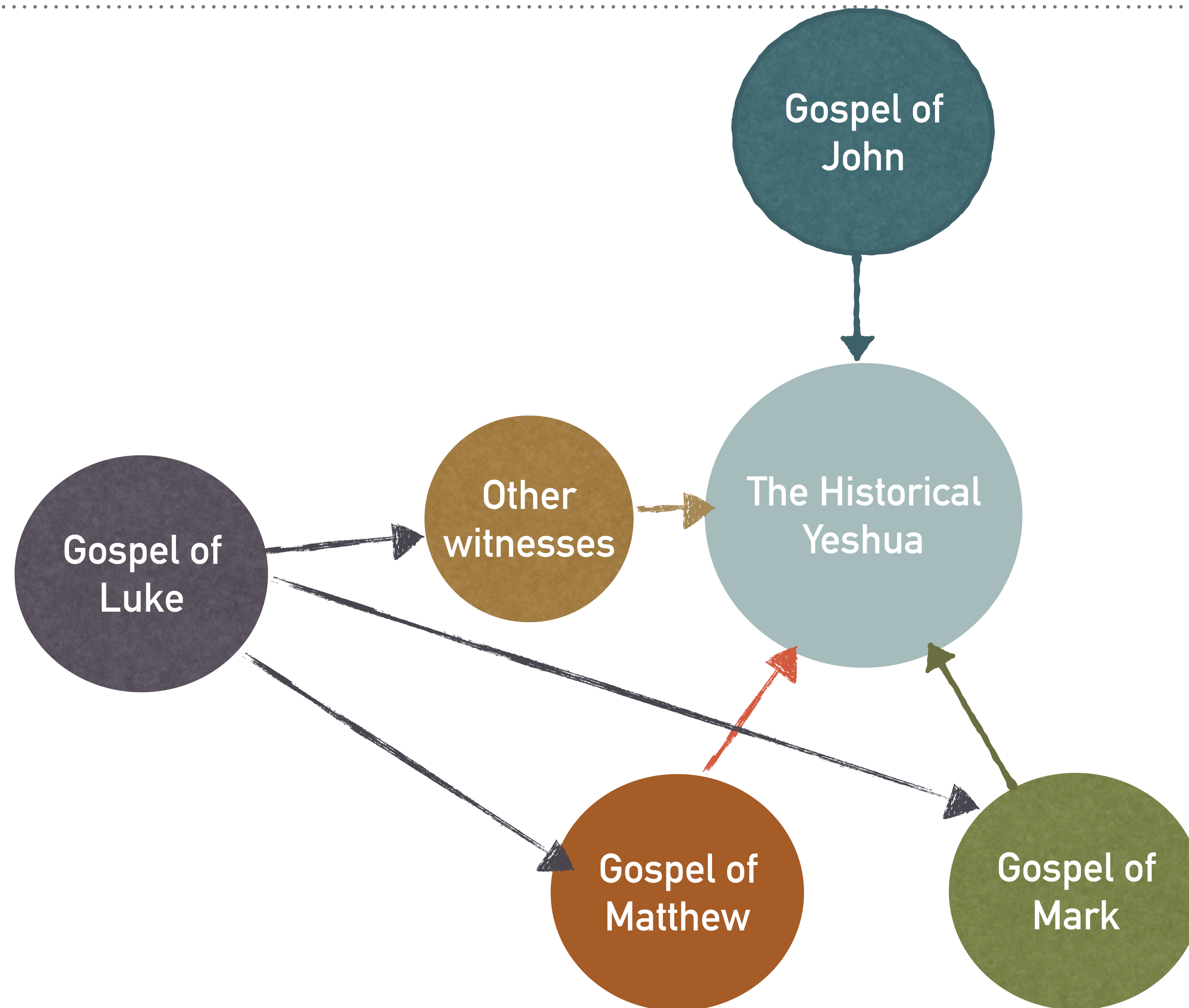
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How many legs  
does the  
Babylonian  
Lamassu have?

# LITERARY PERSPECTIVE OF THE GOSPELS

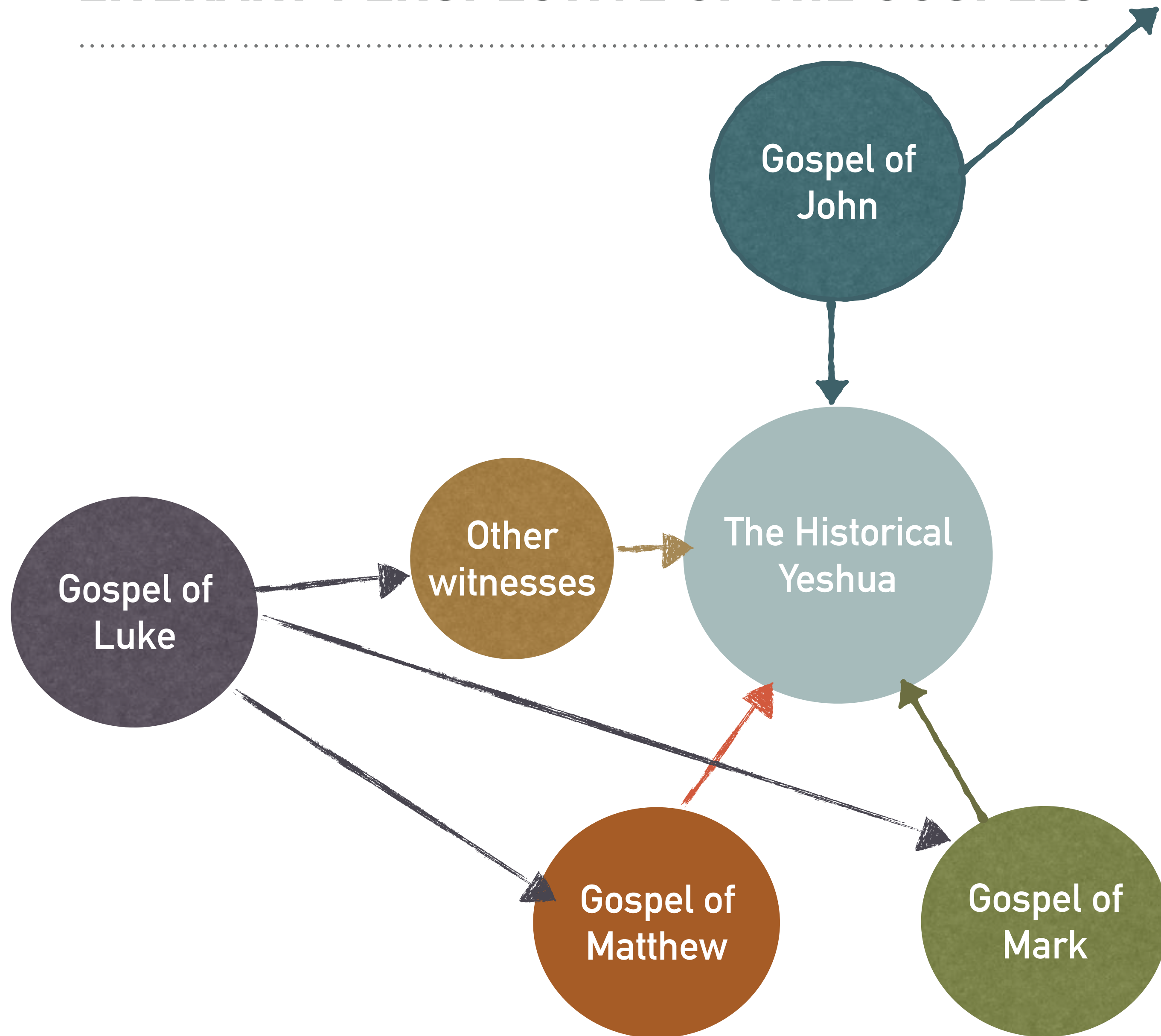
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# LITERARY PERSPECTIVE OF THE GOSPELS

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- No genealogy in John
- No description of Yeshua's baptism
- No record of the Temptation
- No account of His transfiguration
- No appointing of the apostles
- Yeshua is not recorded as praying
- No "coming of the Son of Man"
- Never addressed as the Son of David
- The word "repent" is not found in John!
- The word "forgive" is not found in John!
- No parables are found in John
- No mention of demons in John
- No account of the ascension in John





What is "Apocalyptic"?



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What is "Apocalyptic"?



**Not the Finnish  
Cello Metal band  
'Apocalyptica'**



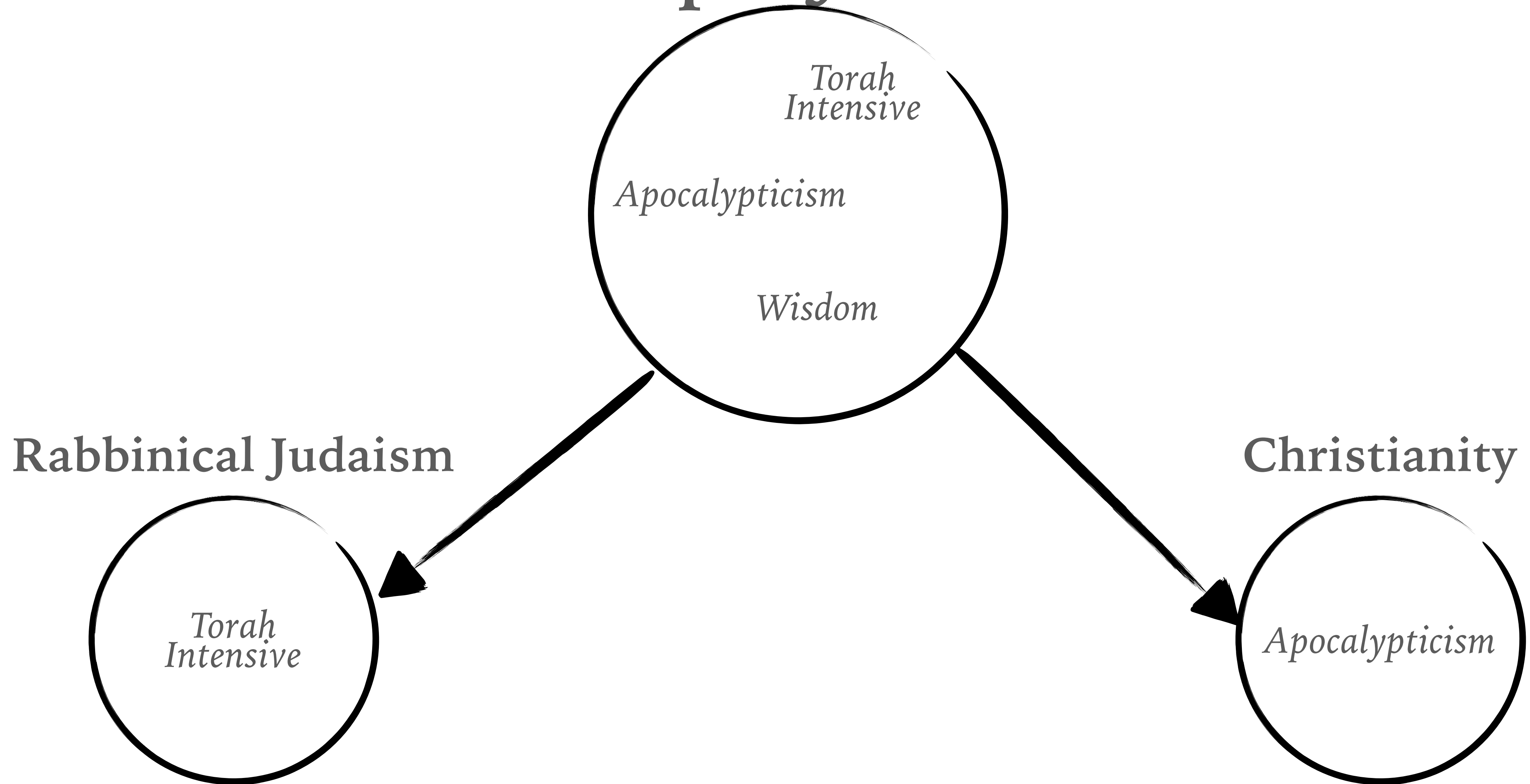
“ “ What is "Apocalyptic"?

Revelation 1:1

*A revelation of Yeshua Messiah, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place.*



# 2nd Temple Judeanisms





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None of these are necessarily "right" or "wrong," they are simply different perspectives from which to view matters of faith and history.

*-Ryan White*



# ASPECTS OF ANCIENT RELIGION DIFFERENT FROM MODERN

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- Polytheism instead of monotheism
- Present life instead of afterlife
- Cultic acts rather than doctrine
- Church and state together instead of separate
- Tolerance instead of intolerance



# ASPECTS OF MODERN RELIGION NOT FOUND IN GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

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- **Religious Organization and Hierarchy:** No centralized control; no one spoke for the whole religion.
- **Doctrinal Statements:** No creeds which everyone had to subscribe to.
- **Ethical Commitments:** Found in Judeanisms but not in Greco-Roman religions.
- **Sacred Written Authorities:** Canonization was still in process in Yeshua's day.
- **Beliefs about the Afterlife:** Through most of the Hebrew bible, there is simply mention of a shadowy existence called *Sheol* cut off from living humans and God. In the Greco-Roman world, most did not believe in afterlife on earth.
- **Separation of Church and State:** Religion and society were intertwined.
- **Exclusive Commitments:** Greco-Roman religions did not require this.



# WHAT IS “APOCALYPSE”

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“A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which 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. (Collins 1998)”

“[Apocalypses are] intended to interpret the present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority. (Yarbro Collins 1986, 7)”



## WHAT IS “APOCALYPSE”

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“They [both types of apocalypses—historical and cosmological] are presented as **supernatural revelations**, mediated by an angel or some heavenly being, and they invariably **focus on the final end of life and history**. This final end usually entails the **transformation of this world** (the new creation of the book of Revelation) but it also involves the **judgment** of the individual dead and their **assignment to eternal bliss or damnation**. (Collins 1997, 3) (updated definition)”



# APOCALYPTIC THOUGHT PLACES HEAVY EMPHASIS UPON

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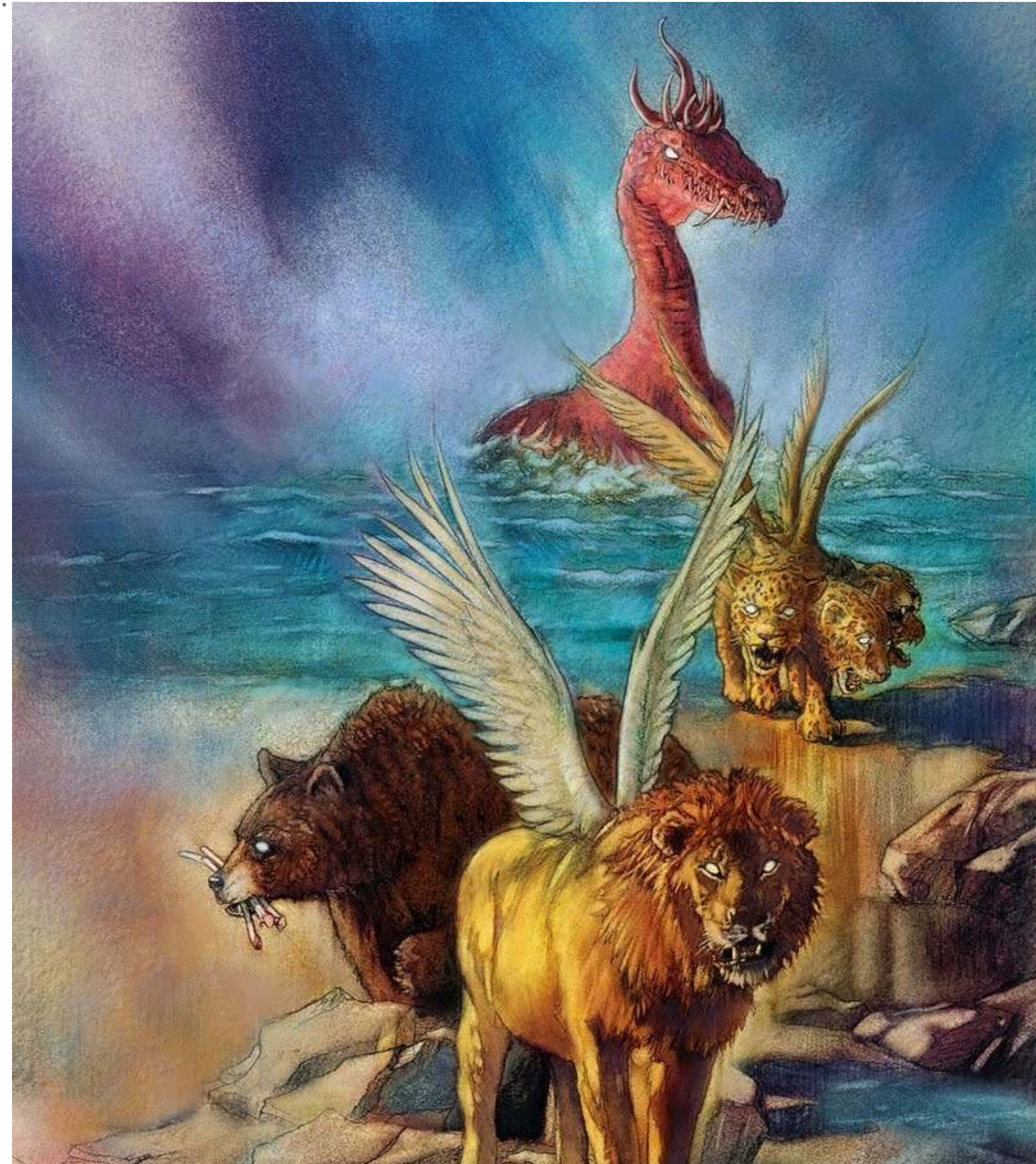
- The other-worldly ("heavenly") realm through visions and events
- Angels and demons
- Post-mortem rewards and punishments (resurrection and eternal judgment)
- Dualism
- The decay of the current world order
- The immediacy of the end of the current order
- A final battle between good and evil (usually with a Messianic figure)
- The "new" order which will be a return to an idealized past (Eden, Davidic kingdom, etc)
- "Determined History" (repentance cannot change the coming judgment of the world)



# CHARACTERISTICS – OTHERWORLDLY

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- Often feature seer visions of the heavenly realm. There are two main types:
  - *Heavenly journey* with greater interest in cosmological knowledge.
  - *Review of history* with a focus on cosmic forces behind history and its goal.
- Existence of and interaction with an **unseen world/realm** which affects and determines the visible world. Unseen world only accessible through revelation.
- Daniel's visions, Ezekiel's vision, John's visions, etc.





# UNDERSTANDING THE “HEAVENLY” REALM

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- The story in **2 Kings 6:15-19** in which Elisha and his servant are surrounded by the Syrian army. The servant says, ‘Alas, master, what shall we do?’ Elisha tells him not to be afraid and prays, ‘Lord, open the young man's eyes.’ The Lord opens his eyes and he sees the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. **What had happened was a sudden unveiling of a dimension of reality that was there all along, but normally unseen.** God does not exist in a totally separate reality from ours. Rather his immediate presence, as distinct from his mediated presence, which is what we normally experience, exists in a normally unseen dimension of our reality.
- Murphy, Fredrick. *Apocalypticism in the Bible and Its World*,

## WHY SHIFT PERSPECTIVE?

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“It has been generally assumed that apocalypticism arises from the experience of alienation, or in times of crisis (these crises may be of many kinds)...Apocalypticism can provide support in the face of persecution (Daniel), reassurance in the face of culture shock (*The Book of Watchers*) or social powerlessness (the *Similitudes of Enoch*), reorientation in the face of national trauma (*2 Baruch*, *3 Baruch*), consolation for the fate of humanity (*4 Ezra*).

Collins, John, “Apocalypses and Apocalypticism: Early Jewish Apocalypticism,” *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, 1:287.



# CHARACTERISTICS - ANGELS AND DEMONS - WHAT ARE "DEMONS"?

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- Demons are very rarely mentioned in the Hebrew Bible (OT).
- Described as either the false gods of the pagans
  - LXX Deut 32:17 - "All the gods of the nations are demons" (cf. 1 Cor 10:20-21)
- Or described as an "evil spirit" under God's command
  - Judges 9:23, 1 Samuel 16:14-23, 18:10, 19:9.
    - For "evil spirit" as a demon, see Acts 19:12-16 (cf. Luke 7:21, 8:2)
  - The Destroyer in Exodus 12
  - Isaiah 45:6-7
- Even Satan is rarely mentioned in the Hebrew Bible compared to the frequency in the Apostolic Writings (NT)

## CHARACTERISTICS – ANGELS AND DEMONS – WHAT ARE “DEMONS”?

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The term ‘demon’ is the rendering of the cognate Greek words δαίμων and its substantivized neuter adjective δαιμόνιον; post-classical Latin borrowed the words in the forms daemon and daemonium. **The original meaning of the term δαίμων from the time of Homer onward was ‘divinity’, denoting either an individual god or goddess (of →Aphrodite in Il. 3.420), or the Deity as an unspecified unity (Od. 3.27 “the Deity will put it in your mind”). Δεισιδαιμονία means ‘reverence for the Divinity’, or simply ‘religion’ (Acts 25:19; cf. 17:22)...the word could designate one’s ‘fate’ or ‘destiny’, or the spirit controlling one’s fate, one’s ‘genius’.** Commonly the word designated the **class of lesser divinities** arranged below the Olympian gods, the daimones. Hesiod describes them as the souls of those who lived in the Golden Age, who now invisibly watch over human affairs (Erga 122–124)

G. J. Riley, “Demon,” *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 235.



# CHARACTERISTICS – ANGELS AND DEMONS

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- In Greek culture (from where the word “demon” is borrowed), demons:
  - Were the class of lower divine beings ‘between gods and mortals’ who mediated between the human and divine spheres (Plato, *Symposium*, 202e)
  - Initially could be described as either good or evil
  - Were blamed for human problems, and thus became associated with misfortune and evil
- To be possessed by a demon (δαιμονίζομαι) meant to be under the power of a god/*daimon*, which was often a blessing, producing prophetic utterance or heroic behavior; it could also be a curse - to be insane, raving, or having bodily infirmity.
- Every occurrence in the world of the ancients had a spiritual as well as physical cause, determined by the gods. To enforce divine Law, to regulate the balance of blessing and curse in the human realm, and to ensure human mortality, the gods employed, among other means, the *daimones* (cf. Hesiod, *Erga* 252–255)

# CHARACTERISTICS - ANGELS AND DEMONS

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- In contrast to the gods of the upper world, these spirits were often not in human form
  - Satan, the ruler of the demons, is called the Serpent and Dragon
  - Yeshua gave his believers authority to tread on snakes and scorpions (Luke 10:19), referring to demons.
  - Revelation 16:13, 3 demons described like frogs.
- Believed to be the souls of the dead who were unjustly killed, the wicked dead (cf. Josephus, *Wars*, 7.185) or the heroic deceased.



# CHARACTERISTICS – ANGELS AND DEMONS

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- Yeshua cast out demons by a word of command, not a set formula of words.
  - Yeshua gave his disciples authority to cast out demons in his name (i.e. his authority, not pronunciation, see Acts 19:11-20)
  - No ritual formula, waving of hand, drinking of potion, etc. was ever used or commanded by Yeshua. These type of actions are only found in pagan religion
- “The point of exorcism in the ministry of [Yeshua] and the early Church was not only the relief of suffering, but the clash of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Devil.”
  - G. J. Riley, “Demon,” *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 239.

**I indeed come now *as captain of the host of YHWH*  
Joshua 5:14**



**And there was war in heaven, Michael and  
his angels waging war with the dragon  
Revelation 12:7**

## COMMANDER OF THE HEAVENLY HOST

- For YHWH Himself to fight Satan would imply that Satan had power that could rival YHWH's
- Thus, God's agent leads the heavenly armies to fight Satan and his minions (cf. Dan 10:21).
- God's agent is often the archangel Michael or some other heavenly figure. This is also where the idea of a messiah develops
- God's agent is the one who enacts the prophecies which speak of YHWH acting (cf. 11QMelchizedek and Zechariah 14:3-4).



# CHARACTERISTICS – POSTMORTEM REWARDS AND PUNISHMENT

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- *Focus* upon the eschatological vindication of the righteous
- Resurrection
- Daniel 12:1-3
- Matthew 25:31-46
- Revelation 20:11-15
- Judaism vs. Christianity

# CHARACTERISTICS - DUALISM

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- The righteous who have *knowledge/truth* and the wicked who do not.
  - There is no middle group
  - Greek vs. Hebrew thought OR apocalyptic vs. non-apocalyptic thought?
- Qumran: Sons of Light vs. Sons of Darkness
  - Luke 16:8, John 12:36, \*1 Thess 5:5
- Isaiah 6:9-10
  - cf. Mark 4:9-12



# CHARACTERISTICS – DECAY OF CURRENT WORLD ORDER

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- Due to the crisis nature of the writing, there is often heavy emphasis on the current poor conditions of reality.
  - Current **political**, economic, social, and religious systems are perverted
  - There is a hope for past “golden age”
    - Restoration of the 12 tribes = Yeshua’s 12 disciples (faithful remnant theology)
    - Restoration of the Temple
    - Restoration of Eden
    - No more sickness, disease, death, etc.
- Romans 8:18-23



# CHARACTERISTICS – IMMEDIACY OF THE END OF THE CURRENT WORLD ORDER

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End of the present order; radical change; transformation; abundant suffering before the end.



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# CHARACTERISTICS – FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL

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- “Spiritual” battles which lead up to the final battle, often feature Messianic figure.
  - “Heavenly” battles mirror “earthly” battles
- Yeshua healing and casting out demons
  - Mark 5:6-13 - “Legion”
- Mark 4:36-41
  - Ba’al Epics
- **Combat myth** - God in battle
  - When powerful emperors attack Israel, the reality is that they are attacking heaven. This is more than just figurative, cosmic forces are at war when the Selucids or Romans attack Jews or Christian
  - Portrayal of the enemy as a monster

# GOSPELS AS APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

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“Gospel,” *euangelion*, had political connotations, particularly when used in propaganda of leaders who touted their reigns as legitimate and as “good news” for the world.

“It seemed good to the Greeks of Asia, in the opinion of the high priest Apollonius of Menophilus Azanitus: “Since Providence, which has ordered all things and is deeply interested in our life, has set in most perfect order by giving us Augustus, whom she filled with virtue that he might benefit humankind, sending him as a savior [*sōtēr*], both for us and for our descendants, that he might end war and arrange all things, and since he, Caesar, by his appearance [*epiphanein*] (excelled even our anticipations), surpassing all previous benefactors, and not even leaving to posterity any hope of surpassing what he has done, and since the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the good tidings for the world that came by reason of him [*ēr xen de tō kosmō tōn di’ auton euangeliōn hē genethlios hēmera tou theou*],” which Asia resolved in Smyrna. (The Priene inscription)”



# CHARACTERISTICS – DETERMINED HISTORY

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- While the prophet's message was “repent in order to avoid punishment and destruction”, apocalyptic literature gives no such option. There will be an end, there will be a final battle, and there will be suffering.
- But, apocalypses give hope of YHWH's divine sovereignty to remain faithful to him and to resist the wicked empire even if it means suffering and death.



Ancient apocalyptic texts do not, for the most part, quote the biblical materials. They use them as paint from a pallet or as bricks with which to build, to use two different metaphors.

*-Fredrick Murphy*

*Apocalypticism in the Bible and its World*



# RECURRENCE OF APOCALYPTIC PROPHECY

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## Matthew 24:15-16

“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand) then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

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