

BCRE29 The End of the World: The Johannine Writings

Semester: B

ECTS Credits: 5

Duration: 11 weeks

Contact Hours: 22

Quota: None

Prerequisite subjects: None

The book of Revelation depicts a series of apocalyptic, end time judgments that lead to cosmic catastrophe followed by a new heaven and new earth. The author of the Apocalypse, John at Patmos, is not alone in believing that there is more than just this world—there is another world. As such, the book of Revelation is participating in a worldview in which reflection upon another world and otherworldly beings are dominant themes. Expectations of the end are not only thought about in terms of time (i.e. a linear progression from past, to present, to future), but also space (e.g. the world above and below; material vs. spiritual). To better understand the Apocalypse of John this class sets it among: (1) other early Christian writings and especially the Gospel of John; (2) ancient Jewish apocalyptic thought; and (3) the so-called early Christian “Gnostic” writings.

Learning Outcomes: On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Assess end-times motifs found in the book of Revelation alongside those found in other ancient apocalypses.

Compare and contrast, at an intermediate level, the character of the gospel of John with that of John’s Apocalypse.

Dialogue on what possible motivating factors, whether political and/or religious, that may have influenced the end time orientation of the Johannine writings.

Assess the polarities found in early Christian “Gnostic” writings and those found in the gospel of John.

Evaluate patterns of thought in ancient apocalypticism that are also found in contemporary millennialism.

Indicative Reading:

Barr, D.L. (ed.), *Reading the Book of Revelation* (Resources for Biblical Studies 44; Atlanta: SBL, 2003).

Brown, R.E. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves, and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

Neyrey, J.H., *The Gospel of John* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay

Name of lecturer

Professor Benjamin Wold