

Common features of apocalyptic literature

- Pseudonymical: attributed to famous figure from earlier books of bible (e.g. Psalms, written in 67 or so BCE) attributed to Solomon. Use Babylon when they mean Greece or Rome.
- Credibility and authenticity: reason for not being discovered before is a “seal” which makes text secret until events are at hand.
- Prophecy is of events leading up to the present (specific) then allegorical and symbolic (present) then vague and literary (future). Scholars can usually date the writing from when things get vague
- allegory (Philo) reading past events with present symbols. Lots of stuff from Hebrew bible (Jezebel, Balaam, Daniel, Greek gods)—Warrior Messiah figure combines Orion, a Greek mythological hero turned into a constellation, with Daniel’s Ancient of Days. See below for information about Orion.
- animal symbols—deliberately obscure. Mesopotamian Dragon of Chaos is defeated by Michael (Israel).
- Dualism—God and Satan, Good and Evil.
- Apocalyptic examples: Ezra, Daniel, Psalms, Ezekiel, Enoch.

Organization of Revelation:

- Prologue: author’s self-identification and authority 1:1-20
- Jesus’s letters to seven churches of Asia Minor 2:1-3:22
- Visions from heaven: seven seals, scroll, seven trumpets 4:1-11:19
- Signs in heaven: visions of woman (Isis/ Israel /Church (according to Roman Catholics), dragon, beast, lamb, plagues 12:1-16:21. Cosmic spiritual battle between Lamb and Dragon has counterpoint in earthly battle of Armageddon. Lamb is Christ (symbol borrowed from John’s Gospel). Dragon is identified as Satan (see Enoch). Satan’s throne is Pergamum (near Turkey), site of the emperor cult.
- Great whore Rome 17:1-18:24. Whore gives her jewelry to the Lamb’s virgin bride, Jerusalem.
- Visions of the *eschaton* (Greek for “the last thing”): the warrior messiah, defeat of evil 19:1-20:15. 1000 year reign on earth by Jesus, accompanied by Christian martyrs. Ends with resurrection of dead, who are then judged and either punished eternally (this is new) or resurrected (144,000 Jews and scores of Gentiles).
- visions of new heaven and new earth 21:1-22:5. God descends to earth to dwell with us, rather than us going up to heaven. New “trees of life” restore us to full health.
- Epilogue: authenticity of author’s visions (22:6-21). End time immanent; John is not instructed to “seal” his scrolls. John curses anyone who tampers with the ms.

Author and situation:

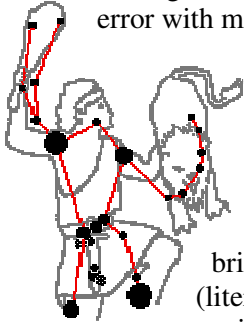
- probably John of Patmos, itinerant prophet in exile on Patmos (western Turkey).
- Composed approx. 95-96 during time of Emperor Domitian, brother of general Titus who destroyed the Jerusalem temple. Domitian enforced observance of Emperor Cult
- Native of Palestine who spoke Greek as a second language. Definitely a Jew.
- Waiting for imminent return of Christ. Suffered from great persecutions; concerned with heresies and corruptions in the church.
- 666: references to current problems—emperor cult (maybe Nero in Aramaic, but alternate texts say 616 which refers to Caligula. Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic languages all represent numbers with letters.)
- Borrowings from Hebrew Bible—over 500 allusions to Prophets, Kings, Daniel, Psalms, etc.

There are two different versions of the Orion myth, depending on the identity of his parents. The first of these identifies the sea-god Neptune as Orion's father and the great huntress Queen Euryale of the Amazons as his mother. Orion inherited her talent, and became the greatest hunter in the world. Unfortunately for him, with his immense strength came an immense ego, and he boasted that he could best any animal on earth. In response to his vanity, a single small scorpion stung him and killed him.

Another version of the Orion myth states that he had no mother but was a gift to a pious peasant from Jupiter, Neptune, and Mercury. "Orion supposedly was able to walk on water and had greater strength and stature than any other mortal. A skilled blacksmith, he fabricated a subterranean palace for Vulcan. He also walled in the

coasts of Sicily against the encroaching sea and built a temple to the gods there" (Magee, 48). Orion fell in love with Merope, daughter of Oenopion and princess of Chios. Her father the king, however, would not consent to give Orion his daughter's hand in marriage--even after the hunter rid their island of wild beasts. In anger, Orion attempted to gain possession of the maiden by violence. Her father, incensed at this conduct, having made Orion drunk, deprived him of his sight and cast him out on the seashore. The blinded hero followed the sound of a Cyclops' hammer till he reached Lemnos, and came to the forge of Vulcan, who, taking pity on him, gave him Kedalion, one of his men, to be his guide to the abode of the sun. Placing Kedalion on his shoulders, Orion proceeded to the east, and there meeting the sun-god, was restored to sight by his beam.

After this he dwelt as a hunter with Diana, with whom he was a favourite, and it is even said she was about to marry him. Her brother [Apollo] was highly displeased and chid her [she was, after all, a virgin huntress], but to no purpose. One day, observing Orion wading through the ocean with his head just above the water, Apollo pointed it out to his sister and maintained that she could not hit that black thing on the sea. The archer-goddess discharged a shaft with fatal aim. The waves rolled the body of Orion to the land, and bewailing her fatal error with many tears, Diana placed him among the stars (Bulfinch's Mythology, 191-192).



It is also stated in some versions that Apollo, worried for Diana's chastity, sent a scorpion to kill Orion.

Orion is visible in the northern hemisphere in the south during the winter. He is generally shown as a hunter attacking a bull with an upraised club, and is easily recognizable by his bright belt of three stars. In addition, his shoulder is marked by the red supergiant Betelgeuse (literally "armpit of the central one" in Arabic), and his left leg is marked by the blue-white supergiant Rigel. According to the versions of the myth which have him killed by Scorpius, the two were placed on the opposite sides of the sky from each other so that they are never visible at the same time.

From the northern hemisphere, the three bright stars (Alnitak, Alnilam and Mintaka) in a straight line that form Orion's Belt are easily visible on the southern horizon in winter evenings. The bright star that forms Orion's left shoulder is Betelgeuse. The name of this star means "The Armpit of the Central One" in Arabic, which shows that like many other constellations, Orion was recognized across many cultures.

Hanging down from Orion's belt is his sword that is made up of three fainter stars. The central "star" of the sword is actually not a star at all, but the Great Orion Nebula, one of the regions most studied by astronomers in the whole sky. Nearby is the Horsehead Nebula (IC 434), which is a swirl of dark dust in front of a bright nebula.

Facts about Orion:

- He was the Sun-god of both the Egyptians and Phoenicians.
- The ancient Arabians called Orion Al Jauzah, loosely meaning "the Middle Figure of the Heavens," and Al Babadur, "the Strong One."
- The Jews called him Gibbor, or "the Giant." They also considered him as Nimrod, who was strapped to the great sky dome for rebelling against Yahweh.
- The Hindus once called him Praja-pati, meaning "the Stag." The stag was said to be chasing his own daughter, Aldebaran, but was killed by an arrow shot by Sirius. The arrow can be seen sticking into the stag as Orion's belt stars.
- In ancient China, Orion formed part of a larger constellation recognized as the White Tiger