



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

01 December 2024

## WORD OF THE WEEK

### Apocalypse \ə-ˈpā-kə-ˈlips\

Alternative name for the Book of Revelation, the final book of the New Testament, that describes the end times in symbolic and allegorical language. **Apocalyptic** literature is concerned primarily with the fulfillment of history and God's purposes and often involves a human intermediary receiving hidden visionary knowledge of future events.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-apocalypse>

### CONTEXT

Since the content of the **apocalypse** is usually the "last things," it is customary also to use the adjective "**apocalyptic**" to refer to end-time events or figures.

—Daniel Harrington, S.J.

**Apocalypse** is the eye of the needle, through which we pass into a different world.

—Novelist George Zebrowski

### WHY IT MATTERS

We profess in our Creed a belief in "all things visible and invisible." In **apocalyptic** understanding, "the neat division between the present age (evil) and the age to come" is broken down, says Brendan Byrne, S.J. in *Words of Faith*. Through God's intervention in Christ, believers enjoy a taste of Kingdom come. Our liturgical worship, particularly the celebration of the Eucharist, is designed to help us step into this timeless divine realm where love is all.

From the *New American Bible* introduction to the Book of Revelation: "The Book of Revelation had its origin in a time of crisis, but it remains valid and meaningful for Christians of all time. In the face of apparently insuperable evil, either from within or from without, all Christians are called to trust in Jesus' promise, 'Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age' (Matthew 28:20)."

### RELATED WORDS

Revelation | Visions | Eschatology | Last Things

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### What is Advent's relation to the Apocalypse?

For many of us, Advent is our happy place, a season of joy and warm feeling. Yet December can be a dark time of long nights and end-of-year regrets. Advent was conceived in the cultural context of winter solstice, when the sun's return was anticipated and celebrated. Before electricity, longing for the light was bigger than we can imagine. This longing dovetailed with a church season celebrating the return of Christ our Light. "Return" is the operative word. Just as the sun swings back around at solstice, Christians anticipate Christ will come again. Most of us aren't thinking about the Second Coming when we set up the crèche. Yet the two are deeply paired. The Incarnation is the shattering belief that God entered time as one of us, dissolving history as usual. Incarnation opens a door, just as Resurrection opens another. Scripture with **apocalyptic** themes awakens us to the game-changing reality of our faith. This is why the start of Advent includes **Apocalypse**. It really is the end of the world as we know it!

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-apocalypse>

## REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (DECEMBER 1)

### It will work out in the end

**Apocalyptic** literature in the Bible has sparked trepidation over what may happen to our fragile planet and fragile selves. However, the early Advent imagery of the heavens and Earth passing away is not intended to scare us but rather to encourage and assure us that "when these signs begin to happen," whether inconsolable grief at a personal loss or some cataclysm that shakes the whole planet, our redemption is secure.

READINGS: Jeremiah 33:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2; Luke 21:25-28, 34-36 (3 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/120124.cfm>). "Your redemption is at hand."

### FAITH IN ACTION

Your place in the hands of God cannot be shaken. Let this knowledge strengthen your resolve to grow in love for God and others.