

Reading Around Mark 13

1 Genres which lie behind this chapter in the Bible include the farewell speeches of patriarchs and heroes, most of which are concerned with prophecies:

Gen 49:2-27	Jacob
Dt 32	Moses
1Ch 28	David

We might like, *en passant*, to note that Jesus (Jn 14 - 17) and Paul (Ac 20:17-36) do something similar in the NT.

2 Apocalypse occurs in many significant biblical places. In the OT the clearest parallel to Mark 13 is Daniel 7 - 12; in the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, 1 Enoch 37 - 71, and 4 Ezra 13.

3 Messianism, specifically demanding the return of the Davidic king:

Haggai (*passim*);
Zechariah 3, 6

4 The vision of the restored Temple at the heart of a restored Jerusalem

Ezek 40 - 48

A contrasting position, Trito-Isaiah (66:1-2) questions the possibility of a fit house for God made by human hands. This “transcendentalizing” of the rebuilding of the Temple is typical of the apocalyptic: what has been interpreted in earthly terms is now envisaged only in heavenly ones: in this way the disappointing nature of earthly reality is replaced by a transcendent hope for the future. The obvious place for us to meditate on this is the language of Jesus about “the Temple that was his body” in Jn 2. For the present, God is not inactive: but the fulfilment that is future will demand divine intervention (Is 63:19 - 64:11).

An Essay

Having read all you can find about Apocalypse in the OT (you might start with the NJBC, section 19) see what you can put together about this:

“Did Jesus of Nazareth see his ministry in apocalyptic terms?”

The question isn't easy, because you have to cope with the possibility that his followers imposed an apocalyptic overcoat on him, particularly in the time of the composition of the Gospels, just before and after the devastating fall of Jerusalem (AD 70). A suggestion might be to read through the oldest Christian scriptures we have - 1 & 2 Thessalonians - which considerably predate the Gospels, and which are considerably influenced by apocalyptic thought. Note the difference in tone between the two letters.