

**Beyond Passivism and Sheer Optimism:
Apocalyptic Hope in Daniel 12:1-13**
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Abstract

This article explores the theological notion of hope articulated in Daniel 12:1-13 within the context of Jewish apocalyptic literature during the persecution under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Moving beyond interpretations that reduce apocalyptic hope to either passive resignation or naïve optimism, the study argues that Daniel 12 presents an active, resilient, and transformative vision of hope grounded in divine sovereignty and historical engagement. Employing a theological and literary analysis informed by contemporary apocalyptic scholarship, particularly the work of Anthea Portier-Young, the article examines how Daniel reimagines present suffering through an apocalyptic horizon that affirms the certainty and the divine justice, the ethical demand for perseverance, and the promise of resurrection. The vision of hope in Daniel 12 sustains nonviolent resistance, moral integrity, and communal fidelity amid extreme oppression, while simultaneously pointing beyond history toward eschatological vindication. By highlighting the narrative, ethical, and transcendental dimensions of apocalyptic hope, this study contributes to the development of an apocalyptic theology of hope that remains relevant for communities confronting violence, injustice, and despair in both ancient and contemporary contexts.

Introduction

This paper seeks to articulate key features of an apocalyptic theological notion of hope through an analysis of Daniel 12. Scholars widely agree that one of the fundamental purposes of apocalyptic literature is to enable readers to interpret present events in light of the apocalyptic vision or imagination it offers and thereby “lay the basis for whatever course of action it exhorts.” In *Apocalypse Against Empire*, Anthea Portier-Young highlights the “theology of resistance” embedded within apocalyptic writings. The resistant apocalyptic imagination enabled Jewish communities undergoing severe and violent persecution to resist the homogenizing and traumatizing ideological campaign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. While not claiming to be exhaustive, this study adopts a theological method and interpretative

framework similar to that employed by Portier-Young, emphasizing the centrality of hope within apocalyptic literature through a close reading of Daniel 12:1-13. The worldview articulated in this biblical text may be described as an “imagination grounded in hope,” that is, a mode of perceiving present reality from the perspective of assured hope. Although Portier-Young acknowledges the significance of hope in shaping a resistant vision, this study builds upon her insights by offering a focused exploration of hope as a theological construct in Daniel 12:1-13. In doing so, it aims to contribute to articulating an apocalyptic theological understanding of hope.