Apocalyptic is:

(1) A genre of revelatory literature...
(2) With a narrative framework...
(3) In which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient
(4) Disclosing a transcendent reality which is both
(5) TEMPORAL (insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation)

And

(6) SPATIAL (insofar as it involves another, supernatural world

BOTH APOCALYPTIC AND PROPHECY:
- Claim to deliver divine messages to human recipients
- Address an audience about their current situation and offer hope
- Presume that an unseen world has impact on the seen world
- Look forward to an ideal age when things will be worked out
- Contain significant teaching material, and
- Contain large amounts of pseudopigraphic material
How Maimuni Conquered His Adversary
or Imagination Kills

A favorite Arabic catchword runs: "Today you are going to get something to drink, you Kammun!" However, the Kammun (Arabic for the caraway plant) is never watered; the meaning, therefore, is: You will never get anything. The following story is a midrash based upon this catchword, a form of story which is very popular with the Yemenites.

Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, apart from his splendid gifts as teacher of the Law and master of philosophy, was also an outstanding doctor. His reputation in this science was so great that the Sultan of Egypt made him his personal physician. Many doctors begrudged him this high position, and with all their might sought to remove him from his exalted place. One doctor among them, named Kammun, which means "caraway," had the best prospect, having many influential friends at court. These were soon aware that the Sultan was dependent on Rabbi Moshe and placed unbounded confidence in him. They suggested that he should take Kammun as a second personal physician, in order that the care of the royal health might not be left to the wisdom of a single man and especially not to a Jew. "Two personal physicians are no use," asserted the Sultan, "but since you tell me so much about Kammun I will put both of them to the test, and whoever proves himself the greater master of his profession shall be my personal physician." Soon afterwards, the Sultan summoned the two of them and when they had come before him, he said, turning to Kammun as he did so: "They have told me that you are an even greater physician than Maimuni; but I do not want to rely on the statements of others, but to make trial of your ability for myself. I will set you a task whose accomplishment will give me a clear proof of the superiority of the victor. You shall each try to poison the other, and whoever succeeds in remaining alive through wisely chosen antidotes shall be my personal physician."

When Kammun heard these words he was delighted, because he was in fact a notorious poisoner, and many highly placed persons had been put out of the way through his medicines without the cause ever becoming known. But Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon was deeply grieved, for he was now in the terrible position of either committing murder or being killed. Soon Kammun, experienced in such matters, had found means to get poison mixed with the food which Rabbi Moshe ate. But Rabbi Moshe knew how to render each poison harmless by an antidote; and everyone was astonished each day when he appeared at court to find him still alive.
and in blooming health. But what did Rabbi Moshe do in order to free himself from Kammun? Nothing whatsoever. He would not have the blood of another on his hands, in spite of the sage who had said: If any man goes about to kill you, forestall him by killing him.

Only, when he saw Kammun, as he daily did at court, he said to him in passing, "Today you will get the poison to drink, Kammun; today you are going to get something to drink!" Kammun carefully analyzed all the food and drink that he took, but could discover no trace of poison in them. The people at court constantly asked him, "What has Maimuni given you today?" He was ashamed to show his ignorance, and said each time, "He put this and that in my food, and I have taken this and that as antidote." Now, as he could not discover the nature of the poison in question, he feared that it was a creeping, slow-working substance, and soon refrained from eating any food at all. The only thing he took was some milk, from a cow that was milked before his eyes. He became paler and weaker day by day, while Maimuni, with his health intact, went about his business.

One day, while holding a half-empty jar of milk in his hand, he encountered Maimuni in one of the anterooms of the Sultan's palace. Maimuni immediately said to him, "Now you are drinking it, Kammun!" This frightened him to death, for he could think nothing else than that he had taken the deadly poison. He scarcely had the strength to place the jar on the table; then he fell to the ground and passed away.

The news of it spread like wind through the town, and soon all the doctors and alchemists gathered together to investigate the drink with which Maimuni had done the renowned poisoner to death. But Maimuni had a suckling child brought in and, in front of all, gave it the rest of the milk, and behold, nothing in the slightest happened to the child! There was no end to their astonishment, and everyone was convinced that Maimuni had overcome his enemy by sorcery. But Maimuni answered, "There is no sorcery in Jacob, and no black art in Israel, but there is a little proverb that even the galley slave on the ship knows, and with this counsel I mastered my adversary." Thereupon he told them the whole story, and so all came to know that Kammun died of nothing but unfounded fears, as the proverb says: "Imagination kills." The Sultan was greatly pleased at the wisdom of his personal physician and rewarded him royally, saying, "Now I know that you are truly a great doctor, because you heal not only the body but the soul as well."
CONNECTIONS:

Ludwig Rosenthal – 1895

(A) BANQUET AND ATTENDEES

Esther 1:3 3 in the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for all his officials and ministers. The army of Persia and Media and the nobles and governors of the provinces were present,

Genesis 40:20 20 On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants, and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants.

Daniel 5:1 NRS Daniel 5:1 King Belshazzar made a great festival for a thousand of his lords, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand.

(B) IMPLORING “Day after Day”

Genesis 39:10 10 And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not consent to lie beside her or to be with her.

Esther 3:4 4 When they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's words would avail; for he had told them that he was a Jew.

(C) It Please the King...

Esther 1:21 21 This advice pleased the king and the officials, and the king did as Memucan proposed;

Genesis 41:37 37 The proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants.

Daniel 6:1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred twenty satraps, stationed throughout the whole kingdom,

(C) THE SIGNET RING

Genesis 41:42 Removing his signet ring from his hand, Pharaoh put it on Joseph's hand; he arrayed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck.

NRS Esther 3:10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

NRS Esther 8:2 Then the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. So Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

(D) CATCH PHRASES:

NRS Genesis 43:14 "...for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

NRS Esther 4:16 "...; and if I perish, I perish."
(E) IN WHOM IS THE SPIRIT:

NRS Genesis 41:38 Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find anyone else like this--one in whom is the spirit of God?"

NRS Daniel 5:11 There is a man in your kingdom who is endowed with a spirit of the holy gods...

NRS Daniel 5:14 I have heard of you that a spirit of the gods is in you...

(F) ORGANIZING THE KINGDOM:

NRS Esther 2:3 And let the king appoint commissioners in all the provinces of his kingdom...

NRS Genesis 41:34 Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land...

MOTIF ANALYSIS

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FOLKTALE MOTIF #922 (Aarne and Thompson)

(1) Low status person called before high status person to solve a problem. Sometimes a threat of punishment

(2) Person of High Status poses problem nobody can solve

(3) Lower status person solves the problem / answers the question

(4) Lower status person rewarded

BUT WE MUST ADD:

(a) Interaction with foreign populations

(b) Low status of Jewish Hero

(c) THREAT from members of foreign population

TOBIT’s EXILIC ADVICE

Tobit 4:3-19 3 Then he called his son Tobias, and when he came to him he said, “My son, when I die, give me a proper burial. Honor your mother and do not abandon her all the days of her life. Do whatever pleases her, and do not grieve her in anything. 4 Remember her, my son, because she faced many dangers for you while you were in her womb. And when she dies, bury her beside me in the same grave. 5 “Revere the Lord all your days, my son, and refuse to sin or to transgress his commandments. Live uprightly all the days of your life, and do not walk in the ways of wrongdoing; 6 for those who act in accordance with truth will prosper in all their activities. To all those who practice righteousness 7 give alms from your possessions, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it. Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. 8 If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion; if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. 9 So you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity.” 10 For almsgiving delivers from death and keeps you from going into the Darkness. 11 Indeed, almsgiving, for all who practice it, is an excellent offering in the presence of the Most High. 12 “Beware, my son, of every kind of fornication. First of all, marry a woman from among the descendants of your ancestors; do not marry a foreign woman, who is not of your father’s tribe; for we are the descendants of the prophets. Remember, my son, that Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our ancestors of old, all took wives from among their kindred. They were blessed in their children, and their posterity will inherit the land. 13 So now, my son, love your kindred, and in your heart do not disdain your kindred, the sons and daughters of your people, by refusing to take a wife for yourself from among them. For in pride there is ruin and great confusion. And in idleness there is loss and dire poverty, because idleness is the mother of famine.” 14 “Do not keep over until the next day the wages of those who work for you, but pay them at once. If you serve God you will receive payment. Watch yourself, my son, in everything you do, and discipline yourself in all your conduct. 15 And what you hate, do not do to anyone. Do not drink wine to excess or let drunkenness go with you on your way. 16 Give some of your food to the hungry, and some of your clothing to the naked. Give all your surplus as alms, and do not let your eye begrudge your giving of alms. 17 Place your bread on the grave of the righteous, but give none to sinners. 18 Seek advice from every wise person and do not despise any useful counsel. 19 At all times bless the Lord God, and ask him that your ways may be made straight and that all your paths and plans may prosper. For none of the nations has understanding, but the Lord himself will give them good counsel; but if he chooses otherwise, he casts down to deepest Hades. So now, my child, remember these commandments, and do not let them be erased from your heart.
Roger Abrahams – Black "hero tales"

OPERATIVE VALUES – success through means that hearers can succeed with

INOPERATIVE VALUES – superman, less confidence in ability

SELF DESTRUCTION – Self destructive hero, or clowning ineffectiveness