



WE SURVIVED THE END OF THE WORLD

DISCUSSION GUIDE

APOCALYPSE: THE MYSTERY AND MIRACLE OF SURVIVAL

“Apocalypse is both event and vision.” p. 18

1. How does Charleston define and use “apocalypse” in this book?
2. What do you see as apocalypses that we are facing? Do you have your own personal apocalypse that you are facing?
3. How does apocalypse relate to revelation? What roles do prophets serve in relation to apocalypse?

GANIODAIIO: A PLAIN PATHWAY BEFORE ME

“Then suddenly Ganiodaiio opened his eyes and began to speak. What he had to say changed Haudenosaunee history.” p. 25

4. What were the four evil words that Ganiodaiio said upset the Creator and were destroying the nation? What practice did he counsel in order for his people to pursue personal accountability?
5. How did the Good Way help preserve Haudenosaunee culture? How did Ganiodaiio encourage his people to resist assimilation?
6. How does Charleston explore the influences of Christianity and white settlers in Ganiodaiio’s visions?
7. How did Ganiodaiio’s visions and work push for individual accountability? How did this influence Haudenosaunee’s communal culture and their survival against apocalypse as a whole?
8. How might we apply this message to “[turn our] cultural vision upside down” (p. 42) in response to the apocalypses we face today? How might we move from a culture of rugged individualism to one of community?

TENSKWATAWA: THE HOUSE OF THE STRANGER

“Native people should hold all things in common and share whatever they had with one another. Generosity was to be a cornerstone of the new faith as it restored ancient values and traditions.” p. 62

9. What similarities or differences do you see between Ganiodaiio’s visions and Tenskwatawa?
10. Why do you think Tenskwatawa’s visions and teachings were so readily accepted by the Shawnee?
11. How did Tenskwatawa’s unifying spiritual vision aid his brother Tecumseh? How did the creation of Prophetstown aid in resisting white settlers’ campaign to divide and conquer Native nations?
12. “Tenskwatawa demonstrated the resilience of his apocalyptic vision by showing his followers a very spiritual lesson: the city on the hill can be on any hill you choose” (p. 76). To resist our impulse toward individual survival, Charleston encourages us to build our own Prophetstown. What might that look like in your community? Can you think of any examples of a Prophetstown where you live?

SMOHALLA: IF THE LAND HAS ANYTHING TO SAY

“White people saw nature as resources to be extracted and used. Native people saw nature as a personal relationship, a trust to be maintained.” p. 95

13. What do you make of the differences between Smohalla and the Dreamer religion’s view of relationship with the land, in juxtaposition to the white settlers’ view (one grounded in farming, land parcels, etc.)?
14. The Washani creed and much of Native American spirituality asserts belief that the earth, the people, and God are in a covenant with one another. However, our secular conversations about climate change leave out the role of the earth in this covenant. How might we envision giving the earth a “voice at the table” as we try to fight climate change?
15. Smohalla’s work and the Dreamer religion relied on dreams as visions of purpose and divine creed. What blocks us today from dreaming in this way? How do modern pressures interfere with our ability to dream, to imagine?
16. Charleston argues that love is the answer to climate change, that we must remember our connection to the earth to inspire us to action. Can you remember a time in nature when its beauty took your breath away? Reflecting on this moment, what does it make you feel now?

WOVOKA: TO GO BEYOND WHAT WE THINK IS POSSIBLE

“His message was simple, and it was the classic reply of apocalyptic revelation. One day things will change. They will get better. In fact, divine intervention will do what people are not able to do for themselves. They will be rescued. Their lands will be restored, their families reunited, their traditions revitalized.” p. 127

17. Charleston explores how fear created both the Ghost Dance and the US government’s reaction to it. Are there similar reactions to fear in our society and culture today?
18. Can you think of a movement today that has been misunderstood, weaponized, or feared in the same way the Ghost Dance was? Where do you think this fear comes from? What would be its antidote?
19. Charleston makes a case for reconciliation between Native America and white settlers by facing the uncomfortable history and reality of the American Apocalypse. What are some efforts you can commit to or that you have seen in action that could aid this reconciliation?

THE HOPI: MIGRATING THROUGH SPACE AND TIME

“The Hopi are the memory keepers for humanity, the line of our unbroken continuity with the creation, the story of our long migration through space and time. Therefore, the Hopi prophetic tradition is not a doomsday depiction of future cataclysms but a projection of profound hope into the future.” p. 144

20. What are some of the universal questions that the Hopi prophetic tradition asks?
21. How does the Hopi tradition of curiosity, of asking questions, also connect with the idea of physical migration?
22. What was the fatal flaw in human beings that the Hopi believe led to the end of the Second World and the beginning of the ice age?

PROPHETS: WE ARE THE AXIS POINTS OF THE APOCALYPSE

“We are an anxious generation. We want a new way to both understand apocalypse and navigate our way through it.” p. 167

23. What do you make of Charleston’s point that we are the “axis points” of the apocalypse? Do you find this message disheartening or hopeful?
24. The four prophets in this book had moments of awakening before they became agents of change. Have you had a similar moment in your journey? Can you think of an example of a moment when a modern prophet “woke up”?

EPILOGUE: YOU ARE A PROPHET BECAUSE YOU ARE AWAKE

“The endurance of Native America comes from sources within every culture. It is the hope of all humanity.” p. 196

25. Charleston asks us to become prophets in our own time. What would your apocalyptic vision be?