

Revelation

Authorship: The apostle John wrote Revelation, his last letter, while he was held prisoner on the Isle of Patmos, 35 miles off the coast of Asia Minor.

Date: Tradition tells us that John was exiled to Patmos under the reign of the Rome Emperor Domitian around AD 94.

Unique Features: The book of Revelation is comprised of three different genres; apocalypse, prophecy and letter.

Revelation as an Apocalypse: Revelation is primarily an apocalypse. It is only one - though a very special one, to be sure - dozens of apocalypses that were known to Jews and Christians from about 200 BC to AD 200.

Revelation as a Prophecy: Revelation is a book of prophecy concerning the things which will take place.

Revelation as a Letter: Revelation is a pastoral letter addressed to churches located in Asia Minor.

Historical Situation: These were perilous times for believers. They were crucified, burned alive, thrown to lions, and forced to kill one another as gladiators. And signs of corruption were beginning to appear within the church as well. It is into this decaying and wicked age that John is called to write this letter of God's ultimate victory.

Purpose: The book of Revelation encourages Christians to stand firm amid persecution; warns them against turning away from Jesus; and calls them to be faithful. The book gives a loud and clear warning to unbelievers about the judgment of God on sin, but it also contains severe exhortations to God's people to "shape up."

Key Passage: "Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen!" (Revelation 1:7).

Outline:

- I. **Introductory Vision (1:1-20)**
- II. **Letters to the Seven Asian Churches (2:1-3:22)**
- III. **Vision of God on His Throne (4:1-5:14)**
- IV. **Opening the Seals on Destiny's Scroll (6:1-17)**
- V. **Interlude before the Seventh Seal (7:1-17)**
- VI. **The Seventh Seal and the Seven Trumpets (8:1-9:21)**
- VII. **Interlude and the Seventh Trumpet (10:1-11:19)**
- VIII. **The Cosmic Conflict of Good and Evil (12:1-13:1a)**
- IX. **The Beast, the Believers, and the Judgment of Earth (13:1b-14:20)**
- X. **The Seven Last Bowls of the Wrath of God (15:1-16:21)**
- XI. **The Fall of Rome Predicted (17:1-18:24)**
- XII. **The Return of Christ in Glory (19:1-21)**
- XIII. **The Millennial Reign of Christ (20:1-15)**
- XIV. **The Eternal New Order (21:1-22:6)**
- XV. **The Promise of Jesus' Return (22:7-21)**

Sources:

Elwell, Walter A. and Robert W. Yarbrough. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998).

Jensen, Irving L. *Simply Understanding the Bible*. (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1990).

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