

The Apocalypse [revelation] of Jesus Christ

1. Author – “...His servant John...” [1:1]

- Strong evidence from mid-2nd century that this is John, one of the 12 apostles of Jesus.

2. Date and place – 90-95 A.D., “...on the island that is called Patmos...” [1:9]

- Patmos was an island used by Roman authorities as “a place of exile” – and John indicates that he is there “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
- Most scholars seem to favor a date near the end of Domitian’s reign – an emperor that “stressed his deity”, demanding that he be addressed as “dominus et deus” – “Lord and God.”.

3. Destination – “...to the seven churches which are in Asia...” [1:4]

- These churches were probably very personal to John after serving in the area for years.
- Of course, it seems the HS’s intent to give this “revelation” to the church in history as well.

4. Purpose – to encourage believers in Christ to persevere in the midst of severe persecution.

- John’s message comes in the form of a revelation [apocalypse] or vision from Jesus Christ.
- The vision details a supernatural fight between good and evil, a cosmic Satan and the Lord Jesus Christ, with their respective lieutenants and armies.
- The vision encourages the church with [at least] a big picture perspective on the cosmic battle.
 - *God is in control – the righteous are not abandoned – forces are at work behind the scene!*
 - *Jesus Christ, the crucified, resurrected and returning One – is the answer to evil in history!*
 - *And we know the glorious, victorious end of the story!*

5. Historic views of the interpretation of the Apocalypse

- Preterist – 1st century persecution [only] and deliverance by Jesus Christ.
- Historical – Symbolic overview of persecution in church history.
- Idealist – Symbolic of the constant struggle between good and evil.
- Futurist – Everything in the Apocalypse [after the historic 7 churches] is about future events.
- Synthetic – John’s vision gives us a picture of the struggle between good and evil in history – with application at any time in history – but which will be ultimately fulfilled in the future.

6. Perspective for interpreting the Apocalypse

- Apocalyptic literature, by nature, intends to be cryptic and symbolic – you must dig!
- The more one knows the Old Testament, the more one will understand Revelation.
- One does not need to understand all of Revelation...to apply truth from Revelation!

7. Suggested outline

I. 1:1-20 – Prologue: a vision of the glorified Jesus.

II. 2:1-3-22 – Messages to the 7 historic churches of Asia Minor.

III. 4:1-5:14 – A vision of eternity

IV. 6:1-16:21 – The judgments of the last days

V. 17:1-22:9 – The triumph of God

VI. 22:10-21 – Epilogue: Reward from Jesus Christ Himself for those who are faithful and true