

The Book of Revelation

Authorship: Revelation was written by a Christian prophet named John. The many references to the Old Testament in Revelation suggest the author was of Jewish origin. The Gospel of John and the Letters of John most likely had different authors than Revelation.

Date: Revelation was probably written in the late first century C.E. toward the end of the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian (81-96 CE).

Context: Revelation addresses seven churches in Asia (modern day Turkey) at a time when some persecution of Christians already occurred, and the author anticipated widespread, systemic persecution in the near future.

Genre: Revelation is a pastoral letter of encouragement to the churches intended to be read aloud during worship. It is an apocalypse, a literary form in which the author relates revelatory visions about the future or the heavenly world.

Outline

Letter opening **1:1-8**

Part One: God speaks to the Church in the City **1:9-3:22**

Here God/Christ imparts to John messages for the seven churches of Asia. The location is the actual cities in Asia. The time is churches' present day, about 96 C.E.

- A. Transcendent Christ 1:9-20
- B. Seven Messages 2:1-3:22

Part Two: God Judges the "Great City" **4:1-18:24**

The location is now "Babylon," a veiled reference to the Roman Empire, the "rebellious world seen in transcendent perspective." The time is the immediate future of John's audience.

- A. Transcendent God/Christ 4:1—5:14
- B. Seven Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls of God's Judgment
 - Opening of Seven Seals 6:1-8:1
 - Sounding the Seven Trumpets 8:2-11:19
 - Expose of the Powers of Evil 12:1-14:20
 - The Seven Last Plagues 15:1-16:21
 - Fall of Babylon 17:1-18:24

Part Three: God Redeems the "Holy City" **19:1-22:20a**

The location is the New Jerusalem, the redeemed world seen in transcendent perspective. The time is the ultimate future.

- A. Transcendent God 19:1-10
- B. Seven Scenes of God's Ultimate Triumph
 - Return of Christ 19:11-16
 - Last Battle 19:17-21
 - Binding of Satan 20:1-3
 - Thousand-Year Reign 20:4-6
 - Defeat of Gog and Magog 20:7-10
 - The Last Judgment 20:11-15
 - The New Jerusalem 21:1-22:5
 - The Vision Ends 22:6-20a

Letter closing **22:20b-21**