



Singular, one “Revelation” (1:1)

It has historically been a playground for theological eccentrics – history of the interpretation of Revelation: its symbols have been interpreted to mean different historical figures in each generation – so confusing that Martin Luther thought it should be removed from the canon – the Orthodox Church accepts it as holy Scripture, but they do not read or preach from it in worship

Author: John, the son of Zebedee (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8) – out of the 913 words used in the text, 416 are common to John’s Gospel

Recipient: 7 churches of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) – arranged the way John would have traveled the road if he had been hand delivering it – circular road: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea – Characteristics:

1. Each letter is addressed to the church’s “angel” – angels are heavenly messengers which can be assigned to nations (Dan. 10:1; 12:1), children (Matt. 18:10) and churches
2. There are insightful reference to Jesus (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14)
3. The pattern of the letters are, commendation first and then correction – exceptions: Smyrna received only commendation, Laodicea only correction
4. Each letter says something interesting about the City’s historical circumstance: 2:8 “dead and came to life,” refers to the fact that the city had been destroyed in battle, was uninhabited, and became re-inhabited; 2:18 “feet like fine brass,” refers to the fact that the City’s main industry was the manufacture of burnished brass; 3:14 “lukewarm,” refers to the fact that the city got its water via an aqueduct from the hot springs in Hieropolis, and by the time it traveled the miles between the cities it was lukewarm
5. Jesus knew the “works” of each church (2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15) – later in the book people are judged by their “works” (20:13)
6. The churches are assaulted internally (2:14 “doctrine of Balaam;” 2:15 “doctrine of Nicolaitans;” 2:20 “Jezebel”) and externally (2:9; 3:9 “synagogue of Satan;” 2:13 “Satan’s throne”)
7. The churches are urged to be “overcomers” (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21)
8. “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; Mk. 4:9)

Parallels between Genesis and Revelation:

Genesis

Earth created (1:1)

Night (1:4)

Sun and moon (1:16)

First rest (2:2)

River in garden (2:10)

Servants appointed (2:15)

Revelation

Earth passing away (21:1)

No night (21:25)

No need for either (21:23)

Final rest (14:13)

River in New Jerusalem (22:1)

Servants serving (22:3)

Death (2:17)
 Marriage, first Adam (2:18-25)
 God hides face (3:8, 24)
 Curse (3:16-24)
 Pain (3:16)
 Tears (3:16)
 Tree removed (3:22-24)
 Driven from garden (3:23)
 Jerusalem (14:18)

No death (21:4)
 Marriage, second Adam (21:7)
 God's face seen (22:4)
 No curse (22:3)
 No pain (21:4)
 No tears (21:4)
 Tree in heaven (2:7; 22:2, 14)
 Welcomed into heaven (22:14)
 New Jerusalem (21:2)

Dates: 95-96 AD from Patmos (1:9) – last book in the NT canon

Occasions: John was exiled by Emperor Domitian to the Isle of Patmos – 50 miles long, rocky island, off coast of Ephesus – probably exiled for refusing to practice emperor worship – penalty was usually death

Themes:

1. God is in control of the cosmos
2. Evil is rampant
3. Christians are called to remain faithful in spite of difficulties
4. Those who are faithful will be victorious through Christ
5. History will end in a manner worthy of God

Style: Oriental book, not Western

1. Time – two ways of understanding time
 - A. Monochronic: Western, time is a succession of events – linear – it is about calendars
 - B. Polychronic: Oriental, time is about multiple events which may be happening at the same time in history – nonlinear – not about calendars – i.e., traveling in the third world – the Book of the Revelation is polychromic not monochromic – it should not be interpreted as a series of linear events which will unfold in chapter 1-22 order

2. Images – Kaleidoscope of image swirling all around

A. Seals, Trumpets, Bowls
 Seals 1234567

Trumpets 1234567

Bowls 1234567

Seals 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Trumpets 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Bowls 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

B. Redeemed Order vs. Rebellious Order

Redeemed Order

Rebellious Order

New Jerusalem

Fallen Babylon

Lamb

Beast

God

Satan

True Prophet

False Prophet

Seal of God

Mark of Beast

Heaven

Hell

1:1-20 Introduction

1:1-3 Prologue

1:4-8 Greeting to the 7 churches

1:9-20 Vision of Jesus in heaven – John was in Patmos, in the Spirit on the Lord's day (1:10) – saw a vision of Jesus (1:13-16, READ) – “don't be afraid” (1:17)

2:1-3:32 Letters to the 7 churches of Asia Minor

Key verses:

2:7 “To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God”
 (Gen. 3:23-24)

2:10 “Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life”

3:20 “Behold I stand at the door and knock...”

4:1-5:14 Picture of worship in heaven

4:1 “Come up here” – the only rapture in Revelation

Images: Throne (4:3), 24 elders representing the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles of the New Israel (4:4), Sea of glass like crystal (4:6), the 4 living creatures (4:7-8), the Lamb (5:6)

Words of Worship (4:8, 11; 5:9-10, 12 READ)

5:8 Prayers of the saints, accumulated in bowls, means of worship in heaven (8:3-4)

6:1-8:5 Opening of the 7 Seals by the Lamb (5:2, 9-10, 12)

Roman law said that a will or other important document had to be witnessed by 7 people, each had to sign the seal – seal was closed in Daniel 12:4

4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse

6:2 white horse, pride

6:3-4 red horse, war (caused by pride)

6:5-6 black horse, famine (follows war)

6:7-8 pale horse, sickness and pestilence (follows famine)

6:10 Martyrs want to know, “How long, O Lord, Holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

8:6-11:19 Sounding of the 7 trumpets; parallel to plagues of Egypt

The purpose of the trumpets is to warn the wicked of the coming judgment

11:15 “The Kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever” – on coronation chair in Westminster Abby

12:1-14:20 Showing of 7 Pageants (Personages)

Woman (Virgin Mary), Dragon (persecutes the woman), child (Jesus), Michael (fights the dragon), Beast from the Sea, Beast from the Earth, Lamb – cosmic struggle

Satan: deceiver (12:9), and accusers (12:10)

How to overcome Satan: “They overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (12:11)

13:8 “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” – God has always been the kind of deity who would sacrifice himself for us

“Beast of the Sea” (13:1-10) – worldwide political leaders that arise out of the sea of humanity: Alexander, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler, etc. – monsters

“Beast of the Land” (13:11-18) – worldwide spiritual leaders that arise out from humanity – “mark of the beast” on right hand and forehead (13:16) – number “666” (13:18)

14:1, 3 There are 144,000 true believers who have the Lord’s name on their forehead instead of the mark of the beast – numbers are not literal: 12 X 12 X 1000 – we are included in the 144,000

14:13 “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... that they may rest from their labors and their works follow them” – you take something with you! – “works” are all the moments you have been truly alive in Christ

15:1-16:27 Pouring of the 7 Bowls of Wrath; parallel to plagues of Egypt

16:15 “I am coming as a thief”

17:1-19:16 The Fall of Babylon (Rome) and the Return of Christ

17:1-19:5 Description and destruction of Babylon

19:6-10 The marriage supper of the Lamb

19:11-16 The descent of Christ

19:17-22:5 Seven visions of the End

19:17-21 War between the beast and the armies of the Kings of the earth vs. Christ and his army – the beast, the false prophet, and those who received the mark of the beast are thrown into the lake of fire

20:1-6 Satan bound for 1000 years

20:7-10 Satan is released for 1000 years

20:11-14 Last judgment – “This is your life” – judged by “works” (20:12, 13)

21:1-8 New heaven and new earth – everything we hate about this world is not there – READ

21:9-27 New Jerusalem – No Temple, the Lord and the Lamb are the Temple (21:22) – no sun or moon
for the Lamb is the light (21:23, 25)

22:1-5 River of Life and the Tree of Life for the healing of the nations (22:1-2)

22:6-21 Last words

22:18-19 Warning about adding or taking away words

22:6, 12, 17, 20 “Come quickly” .. “Come” ... “Even so, come, Lord Jesus”