

The Revelation to John

1.1-8: Prologue and Doxology

Apokalupsis = 'to take the cover off', an uncovering

Author: John from Patmos

John the apostle and Gospel writer or St. John the Divine?

Written from Patmos, a island 6x10 miles located 40 miles southwest of Ephesus in Aegean Sea

Audience: Seven churches in Asia Minor (Revelation 2-3); each a center of communication, inter-connected with the others

Date: unclear, but most likely in late reign of Domitian, 85-96 A.D.

4 Views:

1. Preterist: the events describe 1C Rome. The purpose of *Revelation* was to encourage 1C believers.
2. Historicist: *Revelation* is a panoramic view of history from the 1C to the Parousia, or return of Christ
3. Symbolic: *Revelation* portrays the continual conflict between God and the Devil, good and bad, darkness and light, sin and redemption throughout all of human history. The purpose of the book is to encourage the Church in every era to persevere.
4. Futuristic: From chapter 4 forward, *Revelation* describes an as yet unrealized future, the end time. It describes especially events surrounding the Parousia.

Controversy

The Greeting: Revelation 1.1-3

1 Revelation = *Apokalupsis* = an uncovering

'Of Jesus Christ' – the message/vision comes from Christ Jesus and is about Christ

'Shortly/swiftly take place'? In what way is this true? (Luke 18.8; Romans 16.20; 1 Peter 4.7)

'By his *angelos* to John' – 67 times; 'messenger'

- a. Angels are members of YHWH's court, there to serve Him (Job 1.6; Isaiah 6.2-3)
- b. They worship at the heavenly throne (Rev. 4.8f; 5.9-11; 7.11; 11.16; 19.4)
- c. Mediate revelation and interpret visions (Rev. 1.1; 10.1-10; 14.6-11; 17.7-18)

2 'bore witness': 'the fearless public proclamation of divine realities in word and life' (Osborne)

Whose message is John revealing?

3 *makarios* – blessed; Matthew 5, Luke 6; First of seven beatitudes in Revelation

'he who reads and . . . ' – a message meant to be heard in community

What does this tell us about the early Church?

1C temple practice: seven readers on the Sabbath

'those who hear and keep' – the Revelation demands a response from us

Urgency

4 – 8: Greeting and Doxology

4 to seven churches in Asia (Roman province in w. Asia Minor) from seven spirits and Christ

- Perhaps seven angels, or perhaps seven emphasizes the perfect work of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11.2); also Rev. 3.1; 5.6

Grace and peace from 'one who is, was, and is coming' – a la YHWH (Exodus 3.14-15)

5 Christ is:

- a. Witness: *martys* (Rev. 3.14; David as a 'lasting witness' - Psalm 89.37; Isaiah 55.4)
- 'Firstborn from the dead': *Messia* called 'firstborn (Psalm 89.27 – 'I will make him the firstborn, the highest of earthly kings')
- b. *Archon*: 'the ruler/prince of temporal rulers' – only used of Christ here in NT

(He) Loves us – *agaponti* (present tense)

(He) 'Has released us from our sins by His blood'

- *hamartia* – 'every departure from the way of righteousness'
- Leviticus 16 – Yom Kippur
- Jesus offered the 'perfect sacrifice' (*hilasterion*) for sin (Romans 3.25; 1 John 2.2; Hebrews 9.11-14)

6 Church is 'a royal house (*basileian*), priests to God and Father'

- Israel as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19.5-6; also 1 Peter 2.9)

Glory – *doxa*, honor; Used in Rev. 17 times, and in John 18 times

7 Zechariah 12.10 and Daniel 7.13, a testimony

Heavenly clouds of glory, associated with the Divine Presence (Exodus 13.21; Acts 1.9)

What/why the lament?

8 God speaks (again in 21.3-8)

Alpha and Omega – first and last letters in Greek alphabet; Revelation 21.6 adds 'the beginning and the end'

God is: a. *Kyrios* (Lord), and *ho pantokrator* (the Almighty)