

# The Revelation to John

## Introduction

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

Matthew 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21; Daniel

**Author:** John from Patmos

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

- Ascribed to John the apostle and Gospel writer since 2C (Justin, Melito of Sardis, Irenaeus of Smyrna)
- BUT, opposed by Dionysius of Alexandria, especially due to stylistic differences
- Very different vocabulary and style of writing. However, 'Because a man writes in Hebraic Greek, it does not inevitably follow that this is the only Greek he is capable of writing' (GB Caird)
- In what way does the fact that John does describes or more fully identify himself argue for apostolic authorship? Argue against it?

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.

**Genre:** Apocalypse, prophecy, and epistle (1.1-4). An apocalypse is a literary genre, first appearing in the 2C B.C., professing to be heavenly mysteries revealed by an angel or another spiritual being.

### 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.

## Outline (courtesy of L. Morris)

- I. Prologue (1.1-20)
  - introduction, greeting, and vision
- II. Message to Seven Churches (2.1-3.22)
  - seven churches in seven cities in Asia Minor (modern Turkey)
- III. Vision of Heaven (4.1-5.14)
  - a vision of God on a heavenly throne receiving worship
- IV. Seven Seals (6.1-8.5)
  - scrolls are opened one at a time, revealing the judgment, wrath, and sovereignty of God
- V. Seven Trumpets (8.6-11.19)
  - as angels blow a trumpet, a series of seven disasters befall the earth
- VI. Seven Signs (12.1-14.20)
  - significant signs unfold in a series of visions
- VII. Seven Bowls (15.1-16.21)
  - seven angels with seven final plagues, described with the imagery of bowls that the angels pour out on the earth
- VIII. Almighty God's Triumph (17.1-20.15)
  - the sovereign triumph of God is described and celebrated, the wicked are judged and the righteous are rewarded
- IX. New Heaven and New Earth (21.1-22.5)
  - God resides with His people in glory
- X. Epilogue (22.6-21)

## Canonicity

## Controversy

### The Greeting: Revelation 1.1-3

Revelation = *Apokalupsis* = an uncovering

'Of Jesus Christ' – the message/vision comes from Christ Jesus

Why?

Shortly?

'By his *aggelos* to John'

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

'and keep' – the Revelation demands a response from us

Urgency