

Revelation

AUTHOR

Who: John the Apostle

When: AD 60 or 90

Where: Island of Patmos



INTRODUCTION

Revelation is a series of visions that give the reader a glimpse behind the scenes concerning the realities of this world. There are a lot of interpretations of this book that have led to confusing and fruitless prophecies about the future that only detract from the meaning of the book. Ultimately it is a book about God's triumph over evil and the difficulties that Christians encounter when faithfully following Jesus, even when that leads to conflict with the demands of the world and with those in authority.



THEMES

Revelation was written during a time of persecution under the Roman Emperors. John writes to encourage the faithful to remain steadfast in the face of opposition. There is a contrast between Babylon the Prostitute and the Bride of Christ. The number 7 appears repeatedly and many vivid characters make an appearance representing the events and people of John's day.



THE 7 CHURCHES

John gives us an eternal view of the world. Believers join in worship with the host of heaven and recognise that the price paid for following Christ is always worth it in the end. Revelation offers comfort to the suffering church, warns others of the coming suffering and proclaims judgement for those who compromise or have become complacent. Only those who follow Christ have the promise of eternal life.



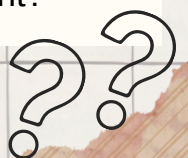
APPLICATION

Reading Revelation in its original setting helps us to get to grips with the main themes of the book. It recycles many OT images and understanding what these mean is the key to unlocking the message of the book for Christians today. It is a message of hope, of the future that awaits the believer, of the coming of Christ and of the judgement of those whose names are not found in the Book of Life. It is a vindication for the faithful martyrs. It provides hope, comfort and a call to faithful endurance for Christians facing persecution, apathy, or compromise in any era.



QUESTIONS

- 1 How is Jesus described in the first chapter (Rev 1:9-16)?
See Daniel 7:9 & 13, 10:6, Ezek 1:28 & 43:2.
- 2 What is John telling his readers about who Jesus is?
- 3 How might Rev 1:18 provide comfort for the suffering church?
- 4 Why was John on Patmos (v9) and how is this significant?



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FAIL

PROPHETIC VOICES

Many have tried to understand and interpret Revelation and have been far from impressive in their theories. These range from the 300s up until the present day.



THEORIES AND PROPHECIES

St Martin of Tours believed the Antichrist had already been born and was living as a boy leading to the belief that the end of the world would be around or just after 397 AD.

The year 1000 was a popular year for failed prophecies as was 1184, 1186, 1229, 1345, 1385 and so on.

Thomas Muntzer took part in the German Peasants Revolt in 1524 believing it would bring about the final judgement. Instead 6000 peasants died and Muntzer was executed.

Baptist leader Thomas Helwys believed he was experiencing the last “great tribulation” as he underwent persecution, along with his followers, from King James I.

Major US newspapers on December 31, 1899 carried full paid adverts that Jesus was about to return.

Over 4 million copies of the book, “88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Be in 1988” caused widespread anticipation and anxiety. It was reprinted with the new date of 1989.

Other predictions popped up around the year 2000 and South African pastor Joshua Mhlakela prophesied the Rapture would occur in 2025 leading to the #RaptureTok on TikTok with videos amassing millions of views.

STILL GOING STRONG?

The Millerites were followers of 19th-century American preacher William Miller, who predicted the Second Coming of Jesus and that the end of the world would occur around 1843–1844. Today this group are known as Seventh Day Adventists.

Another group predicted the return of Christ in 1878, 1881, 1914, 1918, 1925 and again in 1975. Today this organisation call themselves Jehovah’s Witnesses. They have now stopped predicting the end of the world.