

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR: THE APOSTLE JOHN

External Evidence

1. Irenaeus (120-200) quotes every chapter of the book.
2. Tertullian (160-222) likewise, quotes almost every chapter and states that the Apostle John was the author.
3. Hippolytus (170-236) quotes extensively from chapters 17 & 18, also attributing the book to John.
4. Clement of Alexandria (155-220) and Origen (186-253) both agree, with both confirming the Apostle was on the Isle of Patmos Rev 1:9.
Eusebius (260-340) dates John's return from the Isle as immediately following the death of Domitian, which occurred in AD 96.
5. Irenaeus stated that John lived in Ephesus after returning from Patmos until the reign of Trajan (98-117).
6. His authorship was never questioned until the 3rd century AD.

Internal Evidence

Rev 1:1, 4, 9: 22:8

Time of the Writing

Taking the above historical references as true, John would have written the book in AD96 or 97. The death of Domitian by assassination occurred in AD96 and the Apostle was said to be released from his exile shortly after this.

Circumstances of the Writing

While on the Isle of Patmos, John received his visions and was told to write them in a book and send these writings to seven specific churches. Rev 1:9-11

Outline of the Book – How It is Laid Out

Prologue – Rev 1:1-8

I	The things which John saw	Rev 1:9-20
II	The things which are Seven letters to the seven churches	Rev 2:1-3:22
III	The things which shall take place after these things	Rev 4:1-22:5
	A. The Tribulation Period	Rev 4:1-19:21
	B. The Millennium	Rev 20:1-15
	C. The Eternal State	Rev 21:1 – 22:5

Epilogue – Rev 22:6-21

How We Will Handle The Text

We will not

- treat the text as a record of the conflicts of the early church with Judaism and paganism ending with a contemporary triumph of the Church.
- nor will we treat it as a description of persecution; that was experienced by the first century Christians.

We will

handle the text as futuristic at the time of John's writing and chapters 4:1 – end, as still futuristic in our day.

We will also treat the book by interpreting it literally, even while recognizing the frequent symbolism used, hence handling these symbols and their interpretation as being fulfilled in a normal way.

For example:

1. The various judgments of God are actually poured out on the earth as described in the seals, trumpets, and bowls.
2. Chapter 13 is a prophecy of the future world empire with 2 humans heading up both the political and religious institution, they being described as two beasts.
3. The harlot of chapter 17 is a real operating apostate church which will reach its apex during the literal 7 year (84 months of 30 days each, 2520 days) tribulation period.
4. All the events described (Rev 4:1-ff) relate to the climax of human history. Rev 2:1 – 3:22 describe both the conditions of seven literal churches which existed in John's day and are prophetic of the church age which began at the day of Pentecost and is about to end with the Rapture.