

REVELATION

ORDER IN NEW TESTAMENT

27

NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

22

TYPE

PROPHECY



OVERVIEW

This epistle was written by John the Apostle after his exile to the Island of Patmos. His epistle is divided into two parts: the first addressed the Seven Churches of Asia and events at the time it was written, and the second part prophesied of future days and the end of the world. Almost exclusively prophecy, Revelation mirrors Old Testament prophets such as Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel in intriguing ways. While seemingly radical and highly symbolic, the book can be relevant and welcome by believers of the millennium.



WRITTEN
90-95 AD



TIME PERIOD COVERED
All Eras in the Age of Grace



AUTHOR
Jesus Christ through the Apostle John

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
INTRODUCTION	LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES	SEVEN SEALS, TRUMPETS, BOWLS (JUDGMENTS)	THE PROPHETS AND THE BEASTS	GOD'S WRATH COMPLETED	BABYLON, THE BEAST, THE SMALLER BEAST	ALL THINGS MADE NEW
REVELATION 1	REVELATION 2-3	REVELATION 4-11	REVELATION 11-13	REVELATION 14-16	REVELATION 17-19	REVELATION 20-22
John details how he received his vision from an angel of the Lord and gives a description of Jesus Christ. He ascribes his message to the church as having been delivered from Jesus himself.	John gives seven churches in Asia Minor correction and commendation, promising exaltation for those that overcome.	John sees a book sealed with seven seals and seven judgments where only the Lamb is found worthy to open the judgment scrolls. John sees two prophets who die, are resurrected, and ascend into heaven.	John sees a woman with child threatened by a dragon, and describes a beast with 10 horns and 7 heads rising from the sea. Another beast is numbered as 666.	John sees the redemption of 144,000, angels preaching the gospel, the fall of Babylon, and the harvest of the earth. Those with the mark of the beast are compared to grapes in a vineyard. John describes seven plagues, seven bowls, and seven angels.	John prophesies of the Saints' removal from Babylon and its subsequent ruin. John describes the rejoicing the heaven that will happen. There is rampant debate among Bible scholars concerning the location of this mention of Babylon and the method of its destruction.	John reveals that Satan will be bound for a thousand years followed by a resurrection of the dead. He then prophesies that Satan will be released and a last battle will occur. In the end, God will cast Judgment on the dead. John then describes a new heaven and earth and God drying all tears. He testifies of the truthfulness of his vision.

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS CHRONOLOGICALLY

All dates are approximate A.D.

- 45-50 Matthew [possibly later, before Temple destruction 70]** - Gospel emphasizing Jesus' Messianic Kingship with focus on Jews as audience
- James [possibly later, 62]** - Real Christian faith is shown by good works
- 48-49 Galatians [or 55-57]** - Flee from legalism
- 50-70 Mark [65 or possibly earliest Gospel]** - Gospel thought to be Peter's teachings/sermons with focus on Jesus' deeds as Servant for Gentile (Roman) audience
- 51/52 1 Thessalonians** - Jesus will return to gather His followers
2 Thessalonians - Work until Jesus returns.
- 55/56 1 Corinthians** - Tackling sin problems
2 Corinthians - Paul defends his ministry
- 56/57 Romans** - Sinners are saved by faith in Jesus
- 58-65 Luke [60]** - Gospel emphasizing Jesus' humanity, universally for all (perhaps with focus on Greek audience)
- 60-62 Ephesians** - Christians are all members of the Body
Colossians - Jesus is supreme
Philemon - Implores mercy for a runaway slave Christian convert
Philippians - Joyful thank you letter to a beloved church
- 63 Acts** - Book of History of early Christians & Paul's missionary journeys
- 1 Timothy** - How ministers should conduct themselves and churches
- Titus** - Instructions for Christian leaders
- 66-67 2 Timothy** - Final words to a beloved minister
- 67 Hebrews** - Jesus is greater than the Old Testament system
- 67/68 1 Peter** - Suffering for the sake of Christ is noble
2 Peter - Beware of false teachers within the church.
- 75 Jude** - Beware of heretical teachers and dangerous doctrines
- 85-92 John** - Gospel emphasizing Jesus' deity, universal audience
- John's Letters**
1 John - Jesus was a real man just as He is real God
2 John - Beware false teachers who deny's Jesus' physical life on earth
3 John - Church leaders must be humble, not proud
- 95 Revelation** - Book of Prophecy - Jesus returns, Christians win, God judges & rewards

MAJOR POSITIONS ON THE MILLENNIUM

Brett Kays

Amongst Christians worldwide, amillennialism is the majority view. In American evangelicalism, dispensational premillennialism holds the popular edge, while postmillennialism is a small minority. Futurists believe the events of Revelation are yet to happen, while Idealists believe that they have been, are, & will be happening.

FUTURISTS

HISTORIC PREMILLENNIALISM

Jesus returns before a literal 1,000 year earthly kingdom

Goes back to the earliest centuries of Christianity (mid-2nd century, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus)

Thrived when Christians were persecuted minority under Roman rule

Some later church councils & theologians (Council of Ephesus in 431) indirectly criticized its literalism.

Gradually fell out of favor, comeback in mid 17th century, but generally replaced by Dispensationalism

Old Testament prophecies point to the Church Age & the Millennium

- 1 Christ's 1st Coming
- 2 Period of 7-year Tribulation for Church (Antichrist assaults Church, final battle of Armageddon)
- 3 Christ's visible return (destroys Antichrist, Satan bound in abyss, 1st resurrection & rapture of saints who rule with Him, 1st judgment, national Israel saved)
- 4 Millennium on earth (Christ rules from Jerusalem, literal 1,000 years, rod of iron over rebellious)
- 5 Satan loosed for a period to deceive & stir rebellion (battle of God & Magog)
- 6 Satan destroyed, 2nd resurrection of wicked, 2nd judgment, eternal states

1	2.	3.	4	5	6
Church Age	Trib	Millennium		Eternal States	>>>

DISPENSATIONAL PREMILLENNIALISM

"Dispensational" means they see God working through different eras with different game plans

Began in 1830s with Darby & the Plymouth Brethren movement in Britain & Ireland.

Through Dispensationalism, Premillennialism came to dominance among many Protestants & Evangelicals, especially Baptist, Pentecostal, & non-denominational

Popularized by Scofield Reference Bible in 1909

Old Testament prophecies point to the Millennium

- 1 Christ's 1st coming to re-establish Jewish kingdom
- 2 Church established as alternate after rejection of Jesus by Jews (critics would say this means Jesus failed, & so Church was "Plan B"--"parentheses" or a "pause" until Jesus returned)
- 3 "Secret" Rapture (Christ's 2nd coming #1, 1st resurrection & rapture of saints, 1st judgment)
- 4 7-year period (Christian saints in heaven, Antichrist, 3 ½ year pact with Israel, 3 ½ year Tribulation, battle of Armageddon, Antichrist defeated)
Some say Jesus returns before Tribulation (Pre-Trib); some say in middle of it (Mid-Trib); some say at end (Post-Trib)
- 5 Christ's visible return (2nd coming #2, Satan bound, 2nd resurrection of Tribulation saints & OT saints, 2nd judgment, national Israel saved & restored)
- 6 Millennium on earth (Christ rules Israel from Jerusalem, literal 1,000 years, rod of iron over rebellious)
- 7 Satan loosed for a period to deceive & stir rebellion (battle of God & Magog)
- 8 Satan destroyed, 3rd resurrection of wicked, 3rd judgment

Critics would point out those who try to match up symbolic language with modern people or events aren't consistent in their interpretations--taking some parts literally & other parts figuratively--& are always wrong.

1 2	3 4 5	6	7 8
Church Age	Trib	Millennium	Eternal States >>>

POSTMILLENNIALISM

Jesus returns after a (literal or symbolic) 1,000 year earthly kingdom

First clear & influential expressions appearing around 1640s–1670s. Current view began in early to mid-17th century,

Was once popular in more optimistic times in the 1800s, but now a rare view

Optimistic view, man becomes good, 2nd Coming not imminent

How do you tell when the millennium begins? Has it already begun?

- 1 Christ's 1st Coming
- 2 Church initiates the millennium by winning the world with the gospel (Satan bound, evil curtailed)
Christ reigns spiritually from heaven in the hearts of man during a golden age of cultural transformation
(1,000 years may be symbolic)
- 3 Satan is loosed for a period to deceive & stir rebellion
- 4 Christ's 2nd Coming, visible return (Satan destroyed, resurrection & rapture, judgment, eternal states)

1	2	3	4
Church Age	/ Millennium / Trib	Eternal States >>>	

IDEALISTS

AMILLENNIALISM

Not a literal millennium, but a spiritual reign of Christ during the Church age

Goes back to the earliest centuries of Christianity, gains traction with Augustine in 4th century

When Christianity was legalized in Roman Empire, became dominant view with no major earthly persecution

View of Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed & others

Old Testament prophecies point to the Church Age & Eternal States

- 1 Christ's 1st coming, Satan bound (power curtailed so gospel can run free) during long Church age, though obviously still active (loosed to deceive & stir rebellion). Millennium - a symbolic long or full "quality" of time (Christ already reigns over spiritual kingdom, Church), Tribulation - a short "quality" of time" (in one sense, suffering adversity, but in another sense, reigning with Christ during a millennial Kingdom)
- 2 Or Satan may be loosed for a short period just before the end.
- 3 Christ's visible return, Satan destroyed, resurrection, judgment, eternal states

1		2? 3
Church Age = Millennium + Trib		Eternal States >>>

CYCLICAL STRUCTURE OF REVELATION

Not chronological; instead, series of symbolic parallel descriptions of Christian history,

Revelation seems to be divided into 5 main sections—each with its own focus & purpose.

Seems to be references over & over to same end-time events, 2nd coming, satanic enemies, judgment & eternal states, presenting similar things in different ways. Details may be different, but point is always that God is in charge,

Jesus is true King, & we win!

1. Chapters 4-7 – The Seven Seals
6:2—First coming of Christ. 6:4ff.—“Who’s in charge here?” 6:12-17—Judgment Day. 7:16-17—Final Heaven.
2. Chapters 8-11 – The Seven Trumpets. Throughout: “Who’s in charge here?”
11:7-10—Loosing of Satan. 11:11-14—Church’s Victory. 11:15-18—Second Coming; Judgment Day.
3. Chapters 12-14 – The Dragon and the Beast
12—First coming of Christ. 13—“Who’s in charge here?” 14:6-20—Judgment & wrath on wicked.
4. Chapters 15-19:6 – The Bowls and Babylon Chs. 15-18—Loosing of Satan, and “Who’s in charge here?”
5. Chapters 19:7-22 – The Heavenly Kingdom.
19:7-9—Final Heaven. 19:11-21—Eternal Hell. 20:1-6—First coming of Christ; binding of Satan; Church era.
20:7-10—Loosing of Satan; 2nd coming. 20:11-15—Judgment Day. 21-22—Final Heaven.
Everything describing the very end of history