

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

I. REVELATION = APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

- A. Revelation (from the Greek *apokalypsis*: “revelation”)
- B. Apocalyptic Literature (developed about 200 BC; quite well known in the 1st Century World of Jews/Christians)
- Eschatological (from Gk *eschaton*): Related to “Last Things”
 - *Messianism*: deliverer will establish kingdom; lead to better future
 - *Apocalypticism*: God Intervenes in History on the side of Faithful Minority; Sudden, Cataclysmic Events
 - *Millennialism*: those now suffering will rule over the oppressors in a future period
 - Highly Symbolic (conveys cosmic struggle)
 - Highly Dualistic (good vs. evil; angels vs. demons)
 - World Controlled by Evil Forces/Successive Empires (bad and getting worse); God Intervenes

II. THE BOOK

- A. Theme and Purpose: the eschatological triumph of Christ over anti-Christian forces of the world for the encouragement of persecuted Christians
- B. Date
1. Some Hints in the Book Point to the Reign of Nero (54-68): First Persecutor of Christianity
 2. According to Early Church Writers: During the reign of Domitian (81-96)
 - a. Domitian Required Emperor Worship; First Widespread Persecution of Christianity
 - b. Many Saw Domitian as a Reincarnation of Nero (Nero[n] Caesar in Hebrew letters= 616 [666])

III. BASIC OUTLINE

- A. Introduction and Preparatory Vision (1)
- B. Letters to the Seven Churches (2-3)
- C. Vision of the Tribulation and Final Battle (4-20)
- D. The New Jerusalem (21-22)

IV. APPROACHES TO REVELATION

Name	Basic Approach	Implications for Details
Idealist	Revelation is Symbolic of the Struggle of Good vs. Evil Only	No Actual Events are Depicted
Preterist	Revelation is Symbolic of the Persecution by Ancient Rome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Amillennial</i> • Letters to 7 Churches are relevant in 1st century 	Actual Events of the 1 st (-3 rd) Centurie(s) are Depicted; Rome is Depicted as the “Antichristian” Nation with the Power of Satan
Historicist	Revelation is Symbolic of Church History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 years ago: <i>Postmillennial</i> • Now: predominantly <i>Amillennial</i> • Letters to 7 Churches = Distinct Periods of Church History 	Actual Events are Depicted; they range from the 1 st Cent to “the end”
Futurist	Rev is Symbolic of the End Times Only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally <i>Premillennial</i> • Letters to 7 Churches divorced from the rest of Revelation 	Actual Events Yet to Come are Depicted; the general order is: TRIBULATION⇒PAROUSIA⇒MILLENNIUM