

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

● 1. *Who wrote the Book of Revelation?*

1.1. Internal Evidence

1.1.1. There is some internal, direct evidence to consider.

A. How does the author of the Book of Revelation identify himself in Rev 1:4, 9 and Rev 22:8?

B. Who was the author of the Book of Revelation, according to the introduction (Rev 1:1), probably added by a later redactor?

C. How is the author of the Book of Revelation identified in Rev 22:9? Does this help in further identifying the author?

On the assumption that all references to them in the Book of Revelation refer to the same group, “the prophets” with whom the author is identified are recipients of revelation. They are also known as “servants” (1:1; 10:7; 11:18; 22:6).

1.1.2. There is also some internal, indirect evidence to consider.

A. What does the fact that the author of the Book of Revelation, writing to the seven churches in Asia, merely identified himself as “John” imply about the author?

B. What does the fact that the author of the Book of Revelation expected the seven churches to accept his writing as genuine prophecy imply about the author?

C. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria (247-65), correctly observed that there were significant differences between the Gospel of John and the letters, on the one hand, and the Book of Revelation, on the other, too many, in his opinion, to allow for the attribution of Johannine authorship to the latter. The following are the differences noticed by Dionysius (as found in Eusebius, *H.E.* 7.25):

1. In the Book of Revelation, the author identifies himself as John, whereas in the Gospel of John and the Johannine letters there is no such self-identification: “For the evangelist nowhere adds his name, nor yet proclaims himself, throughout either the Gospel or the Epistle....But he who wrote the Apocalypse at the very beginning puts himself forward.” Moreover, the John who wrote the Book of Revelation did not identify himself as the one whom Jesus loved, the one who leaned back on Jesus’ breast, or as an eyewitness and hearer of the Lord, as one would expect John the apostle to have done. (Dionysius speculated that the author could have been John Mark.)

2. The theological conceptions of the Gospel of John and the letters on the one hand and the Book of Revelation, on the other, are very different: “In other words, it is obvious that those who observe their character throughout will see at a glance that the Gospel and Letter have one and the same complexion. But the Apocalypse is utterly different from, and foreign to, these writings; it has no connection, no affinity, in any way with them; it scarcely, so to speak, has even a syllable in common with them.” What he presumably means is that the theological content of the two differ significantly.

3. The literary quality of the Gospel of John and the Johannine letters is different from that of the Book of Revelation. As Dionysius explains, “For the former are not only written in flawless Greek, but also show the greatest literary skill in their diction, their reasonings, and the constructions in which they are expressed. There is a complete absence of any barbarous word, or solec-

ism, or any vulgarism whatever....But I will not deny that the other writer had seen revelations and received knowledge and prophecy; nevertheless I observe that his style and that his use of the Greek language is not accurate, but that he employs barbarous idioms, in some places committing downright solecisms.” The Book of Revelation was not composed according to the conventions of standard literary Greek, but is characterized by a peculiar Greek style that has a Semitic flavor to it, which Dionysius found uncultured and offensive. For example, the author of the Book of Revelation often does not use the proper case of a noun after a preposition, uses participles irregularly, constructs broken sentences, uses unnecessary pronouns, confuses genders, number and cases and creates some peculiar constructions. It is clearly different from the gospel and letters. Since each of Dionysius’ observations is accurate, we must ask, as he did, whether John the apostle, the son of Zebedee, could have written the Gospel of John, the Johannine letters and the Book of Revelation. Do you think that he could have done so? If so, how can the literary differences between these texts be explained?

4. There are significant linguistic differences between the Gospel of John and the Johannine letters on the one hand and the Book of Revelation on the other. These differences are of different types, and so many would be unexpected if these texts shared a common authorship. Some examples include (R = Book of Revelation; J = Gospel of John and Johannine letters):

- In J mê with the participle is used 11x and the genitive absolute occurs frequently, whereas in R neither is used;
- In J the attraction of the relative occurs (i.e. the relative pronoun is assimilated to the case of its antecedent even though grammatically it should take another case) (4:14; 7:39; 15:20; 17:5, 11-12; 1 Jn 3:24) but this never occurs in R;
- In R axios (“worthy”) is followed by the infinitive, but in J by the conjunction hina (“in order that”);
- In the form of first person singular genitive pronoun is mou or emou (“my”), in J the form emos occurs 36x;
- In R the noun pistis (“faith”) occurs 4x and the adjective pistos (“faithful”) 8x, but J has never uses pistis and only uses pistos once. J does, however, use the verb pisteuo nearly 100x, but this is absent in R;
- In R the verb kaleô (“to call”) is used (1.9; 11.8; 12.9; 16.6), but in J the verb legô (“to say”) serves the same purpose (4.5, 25; 11.16; see 1.38; 5.2; 9.11; 11.54; 19.13, 17; 20.24; 21.2);
- In R the verb katoikeô occurs often, but in J the synonymous verb is menô;
- In R the noun ous (“ear”) occurs 8x, whereas in J the word for ear is ôtion (18:26);

- In R the construction ouk...eti (“not..still”) occurs 14x, whereas in J the adverb ouketi occurs 12x and serves the same purpose;
- To introduce an illustration in R, hôs (“as”) is used (2:27) but J uses kathôs (“according as”) (see 13.15; 15.12.; 17.23);
- In R oun occurs 6x and always in an illative sense, as a particle of logical inference, but in J is used in narrative for the purpose of historical transition, occurring 195x;
- R uses the preposition achri (“until”) occurs 11x, but J uses the equivalent preposition heôs;
- J has the construction men...de (“on the one hand...on the other hand”) 6x (or more), but it does not occur at all in R;
- The noun arnion (“sheep”) occurs 29x in R, but in J the equivalent term is amnos, occurring 2x;
- In R autos is used as an emphatic pronoun (3.20; 14.10; 19.12), whereas in J ekeinos is used, while autos is used as an unemphatic pronoun;
- In R the prepositional phrases en mesô and ana meson (“in the middle”) occurs, but not mesos, which does occur in J (1:26);
- In R idou (“behold”) occurs 26x, but ide in J;
- R uses Ioudaios in 2:9 and 3:9 for “Jew” in a neutral sense, but in J the equivalent term is Israêlîtês (1:47) and Ioudaios has a negative sense;
- In R the word dôrean means “freely” (21:6; 22:17), whereas in J it means “without cause” (5:25);
- J uses the form Ierosoluma for the city of Jerusalem, whereas R uses Ierousalêm;
- In R ethnos or ethnê occurs 23x, meaning “gentiles” or “all nations,” but occurs 5x in J with the meaning of “the Jewish people”;
- In J the noun kosmos is used with a negative connotation, but in R it simply has the meaning of “created world” (11:15; 13:8; 17:8).

D. In spite of numerous and obvious differences between them, the Gospel of John and the Johannine letters have certain commonalities with the Book of Revelation that suggest some type of connection between the two.

1. In both Christ is called “word” (logos) (Rev 19:13; John 1:1) and “lamb,” although different Greek words for “lamb” are used (arnion in Rev 5:6, 8, 11, 12, 12; 6:1, 7, 9, 16; 7:9, 10, 14, 17; 8:1; 12:11; 13:8, 11; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7, 9; 21:9; amnos in John 1:29, 36)

2. In both the metaphor of a shepherd is used of Christ (Rev 7:17 / John 10:1-18; 21:16-17).

3. Both contain a symbolic use of manna (Rev 2:17 / John 6:31-32), and use the positive imagery of spring or water (Rev 7:17; 21:6; 22:17 / John 4:10-11, 14; 7:38).

4. Both agree in quoting Zech 12:10 in a form different from LXX: exekentêsan (“pierced”) (Rev 1:7 / John 19:37).

5. Both share certain phrases and words not found elsewhere in the New Testament or occurring disproportionately less frequently:

- “You (sing.) are not able to tolerate” (ou dunê bastasai) (Rev 2:2) / “you (pl.) are not able to tolerate” (ou dunasthe bastazein) (John 16:2);
- “The one who has a share” (ho echôn meros) (Rev 20:6) / “you have a share” (echeis meros) (John 13:8);
- “Let the one who is thirsty come” (ho dipsôn erchesthō) (Rev 22:17) / “if anyone is thirsty let him come to me” (ean tis dipsa erchesthō pros me) (John 7:37);
- “To speak with” (lalein meta) (Rev 1:12; 10:8; 17:1; 21:9, 15 / John 4:27; 9:37; 14:30);
- “Face” (opsis) (Rev 1:16 / John 11:44);
- “To keep the word / the words” (têrein ton logon / tous logous) (Rev 3:8, 10 / John 8:51-55; 14:23, 24; 15:20; 17:6; 1 John 2:5)
- “Its name is” (onoma autō) (Rev 6:8 / John 1:6; 3:1);
- “A little time” (chronon mikron or mikron chronon) (Rev 6:11; 20:3 / John 7:33; 12:35);
- “To encircle” (kukleuō) (Rev 20:9 / John 10:24);
- “Purple” (porphuros) (Rev 17:4; 18:16 / John 19:2, 5);
- “To dwell” (skênoun) (Rev 7:15; 12:12; 13:6; 21:3 / John 1:14);
- “Palm” (phoinix) (Rev 7:9 / John 12:13);
- “To do (a) sign/s” (poiein (to) semeion/a) (Rev 13:13, 14; 15:1; 16:14; 19:20 / John 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14, 30; 7:31; 9:16; 10:41; 11:47; 12:18, 37; 20:30);
- “To keep the commandments” (têrein ta entolas) (Rev 14:12 / John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 2:3, 4; 3:22, 24; 5:3);
- “In Hebrew” (hebraisti) (Rev 9:11; 16:16 / John 5:2; 19:13, 17, 20; 20:16);
- “Witness” (marturia) (Rev 1:2, 9; 6:9; 11:7; 12:11, 17; 19:10; 20:4 / John 1:7, 19; 3:11, 32, 33; 5:31, 32, 34, 36; 8:13, 14, 17; 19:35; 21:24; 1 John 5:9, 10, 11; 3 John 12);
- “To seize” (piazein) (Rev 19:20; John 7:30, 32, 44; 8:20; 10:39; 11:57; 21:3, 10);
- “To slay” (sphazein) (Rev 5:6, 9, 12; 6:4, 9; 13:3, 8; 18:24 / 1 John 3:12).

1.2. External Evidence

A man named John wrote the Book of Revelation. There is some doubt, as Dionysius noted, whether this John could be the apostle John, the son of Zebedee. Unfortunately, the external evidence concerning the identity of this John is ambiguous.

1.2.1. Some in early church, and especially the western church, identified the John of the Book of Revelation with John the apostle, the son of Zebedee.

A. In the Apostolic Fathers, there are probable traces of the influence of the Book of Revelation, thereby indicating its authority in the church in the second half of the first century and the first half of the second century: Herm. *Vis.* 1.1.3 and Rev 17:3; Herm. *Vis.* 2.2.7; 4.2.5.; 4.3.6. and Rev 3:10 (“the hour that is about to come”); 7:14 (“the great tribulation”); *Barn.* 7:9 and Rev 1:7, 9; 21:3 and Rev 22:10, 12). This is consistent with belief in Johannine authorship.

B. In the second century the Book of Revelation was also cited as authoritative. Papias accepts the authority of the Book of Revelation and comments on the book (*H.E.* 3.39), as does Melito,

bishop of Sardis (*H.E.* 4.26.2). Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, also quoted from the book in a treatise composed against Hermogenes (*H.E.* 4.24).

C. Justin Martyr, who resided in Ephesus for a time, clearly identified the author of the Book of Revelation with the apostle: “And further there was a man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem” (*Dial.* 81) (see *H.E.* 4.18). Justin used the book to support his view of a restored Jerusalem (Rev 20:4-5).

D. Irenaeus attributed the Book of Revelation to “John the disciple of the Lord,” by which he meant John, the son of Zebedee (*Adv. Haer.* 4. 20.11; see 3.11.1; 4.20.2; 5.35.2).

E. The Book of Revelation is found in the Muratorian Canon: “We receive only the apocalypses of John and Peter.” The John referred to is no doubt John the apostle, the son of Zebedee

F. There are other early Christian writers from the western church who hold that the Book of Revelation was written by John the apostle. These include Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* 3.14, 24), Clement of Alexandria (*Paed.* 2.119; *Quis div.* 42; *Strom.* 6.106, 107) and Origen (*In Johann.* 1.14 [see *H.E.* 6.25.9]; 5.3). “What are we to say of him who leaned on Jesus’ breast, namely, John, who left one Gospel, though confessing that he could make so many that the world would not contain them? But he wrote also the Apocalypse, being commanded to be silent and not to write the voices of the seven thunders”).

Taken alone, how compelling are these external testimonies to an acceptance of the Johannine authorship of the Book of Revelation?

1.2.2. Others in the early church, however, had some doubts about the Johannine authorship and canonicity and the of the Book of Revelation. This is especially true of the eastern church. (As a result its status as canonical in the eastern church was weakened for some time afterwards, but was eventually accepted as canonical.)

A. Marcion was the first called to call into question the Johannine authorship and canonicity of the Book of Revelation, but his view was hardly typical of the early church (Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 3.14; 4.5). According to Epiphanius, the peripheral group known as the Alogi (so-called because they rejected the Logos teaching in the Gospel of John) rejected both the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation, attributing them to the heretic Cerinthus (*Haer.* 51). Gaius of Rome also seems to have rejected the Johannine authorship Book of Revelation as in a work directed against Proclus the Montanist, because of its teaching about the Kingdom of Christ on earth; he likewise attributed it to Cerinthus (*H.E.* 3.28.1-2). More significantly, Eusebius quotes from a work by Dionysius of Alexandria, bishop of Alexandria, to the effect that that some of his prede-

cessors rejected the Johannine authorship of the Book of Revelation and generally disparaged the book: “Some indeed of those before our time rejected and altogether impugned the book, examining it chapter by chapter and declaring it to be unintelligible and illogical, and its title false. For they say that it is not John’s, no, nor yet an apocalypse (i.e., an unveiling), since it is veiled by its heavy, thick curtain of its unintelligibility, and that the author of the book was not only not one of the apostles, nor even one of the saints or those belonging to the Church, but Cerinthus, the same who created the sect called ‘Cerinthian’ after him, since he desired to affix to his own forgery a name worthy of credit” (*H.E.* 7.25.1-2). (We should note that, according to Dionysius, Cerinthus believed in an earthly kingdom of Christ replete with all manner of materialistic pleasures. This made him odious to most of his theological contemporaries, who likely were influenced by Greek anti-materialism.) Dionysius himself was also skeptical about the Johannine authorship of the Book of Revelation.

B. Eusebius wrote that in his day (early 4th century) in the eastern church the status of the Book of Revelation was in dispute; he personally rejected it as spurious, which obviously meant that he did not believe that John the apostle wrote it: “And as to the Revelation there have been many advocates of either opinion up to the present....Among the books that are not genuine must be reckoned....the Revelation of John, if this view prevails.” (*H.E.* 3.24.18; 3.25.4).

How does the evidence from Eusebius and Dionysius concerning the disputed status of the Book of Revelation compare with the evidence from Justin, Irenaeus and other early church fathers of its Johannine origin? How do you account for the two very different estimations of the Book of Revelation and its author by people who were from roughly the same time period?

1.2.4. As a possible explanation for the false attribution of the Book of Revelation to John the apostle, Eusebius suggested that another man named John also residing in Ephesus actually wrote the Book of Revelation, and, because he had the same name and lived in the same city as the apostle John, the latter was erroneously credited with the composition of the former’s work. Eusebius rested his argument on two pieces of evidence.

A. Papias mentioned two Johns, one of whom was associated with the apostles (although he is also called an elder), while the other was called John the elder (although he was called a disciple of the Lord). In Eusebius’ day, there were two tombs in Ephesus, both identified as John’s. In Eusebius’ estimation, this pointed to the conclusion that there were two men in Ephesus by the

name of John, the apostle and the elder (see also Dionysius who knew the tradition of there being two tombs in Ephesus said to be John’s and who reckoned with the possibility that there were two men by that name [H.E. 7.25.15-16]). Eusebius concluded, “This calls for attention: for it is probable that the second (unless anyone prefer the former) saw the revelation which passes under the name John” (H.E. 3.39.6). What do you think about Eusebius’ hypothesis?

1.3. What do you conclude about the authorship of the Book of Revelation?

2. For whom was the Book of Revelation written?

2.1. What does Rev 1:4 indicate about the intended readers of the Book of Revelation?

2.2. Based on the seven letters included in Rev 2:1-3:22, which seven churches in Asia did the author intend to read his work?

● 3. When was the Book of Revelation written?

3.1. Internal Evidence

There is no internal, direct evidence for dating the composition of the Book of Revelation. The use of much of the Book of Revelation as internal, indirect evidence is problematic, because whether some passages should count as internal indirect evidence for the date of composition depends on how the Book of Revelation is interpreted.

3.1.1. Based on Rev 1:9, 2:13; 3:10, what were the churches to whom the Letter to the Hebrews was written undergoing at the time of its composition and what may this imply about the time of composition of the Book of Revelation?

(On the assumption of a preterist approach [see below for an explanation of this term] to the interpretation of the Book of Revelation, the persecution referred to in Rev 6:9; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4 would also provide evidence that the seven Asiatic churches were undergoing intense persecution when the book was written. But this is not so on the other interpretive approaches.)

3.1.2. If one adopts a preterist approach to the interpretation of the Book of Revelation, certain passages may be taken as providing clues for dating the composition of the Book of Revelation.

A. Rev 17:9-10: The reference to the seven hills and seven kings has been interpreted as the succession of Roman emperors. According to Rev 17:10 five emperors (kings) have fallen, while the sixth reigns. The sixth emperor, counting from Julius Caesar, is Nero; counting from Augustus, however, the sixth emperor is Galba (68).

B. Rev 13:8: The mark of the beast, 666, is the sum of the numerical values of the Hebrew letters used in the transliteration of “Neron Ceasar.” (In Hebrew, letters are used as numbers.)

C. Rev 13:4, 15-16; 14:9-11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4: That the beast demands worship and is worshipped by human beings fits with Domitian’s demand to be worshipped as “lord and god.”

3.2. External Evidence

Early Christian writers dated the composition of the Book of Revelation differently. Many put it during the reign of the emperor Domitian (81-96). Irenaeus, the earliest and most reliable of these, dated the Book of Revelation “towards the end of the reign of Domitian” (*Adv. Haer.* 5.30.3) (see also Victorinus, *Apoc.* 10.11; Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.18, 20; Clement of Alexandria, *Quis div.* 42; Origen, *Matt.* 16.6; Jerome, *De vir. ill.* 9) There is, however, some external evidence for

dating it to Nero’s reign (54-68) (Syriac versions of the Book of Revelation). There is evidence that Christians were persecuted during the reigns of Nero and Domitian (Domitian: *H.E.* 3.17-20; *H.E.* 4.27.9 [Melito of Sardis]; Nero: Tacitus *Ann.* 15.44; *1 Clem.* 6.1; Tertullian, *Apol.* 5.3; Sulpicius Severus, *Chronic.* 2.29.3); but how extensive these persecutions were and whether they extended to Asia is uncertain. (The composition of the Book of Revelation is also dated from Claudius’ reign (41-54) and Trajan’s (98-117), but these are generally recognized as too early and late.) What do you make of this diversity of opinion?

3.3. Taking all the evidence into consideration, when do you date the composition of the Book of Revelation?

4. Where was the Book of Revelation written?

4.1. What does Rev 1:9 indicate about where the revelation of the contents of letters to the seven churches was received?

4.2. What does Rev 4:1-2 imply about the place where John was when he was summoned in the spirit into heaven in order to receive a revelation about the future?

4.3. Eusebius quotes a Christian tradition that upon Nerva's accession as emperor in 96, after Domitian's fifteen-year reign, the apostle John's sentence of banishment to the island of Patmos was annulled and he went to live in Ephesus (*H.E.* 3.20.5-9). If this tradition is true and the apostle John, i.e., John the son of Zebedee, wrote the Book of Revelation, then the work could have been completed and have made its first appearance in Ephesus.

● 5. *What is the Book of Revelation?*

5.1. Outline of the Book of Revelation

A. 1:1-3: This represents the preface to the text, written likely by a later redactor.

B. 1:4-8: This is the introduction of the seven letters to the seven churches, including a salutation, benediction and description of Christ as coming again.

C. 1:9-3:22: This section of Book of Revelation contains the seven letters from the risen Christ to the seven churches revealed to John on the island of Patmos.

1. 1:9-20: John describes how during his exile to Patmos he received the command to write the seven letters through a vision of seven stars and seven lamps.

2. 2:1-7: Christ commends the church at Ephesus for its works, toil, patience and its resistance to false apostles, but criticizes it for having left its first love.

3. 2:8-11: Christ prepares the church in Smyrna for future persecution.

4. 2:12-17: Christ commends the church in Pergamum for not denying its faith in him, but criticizes it for its tolerance of those within its midst for hold to the teaching of Balaam and that of the Nicolaitans. Christ commands the church to repent.

5. 2:18-29: Christ commends the church in Thyatira, but criticizes it for the presence of a prophetess who is described as being like Jezebel.

6. 3:1-6: Christ condemns the church in Sardis as dead, and commands it to revive itself.

7. 3:7-13: Christ commends the church in Philadelphia for having observed his commands and not denying his name. Because of this, Christ promises to keep the church from the time of testing to come upon the whole world.

8. 3:14-22: Christ criticizes the church in Laodicea for being lukewarm.

D. 4:1-22:6: This section contains a revelation given to John of what will happen in the future. This revelation is highly symbolic and consequently difficult to understand (see, for example, the reaction of Dionysius' predecessors). Scholars classify what is found from 4:1 onwards as apocalyptic literature: a genre of Jewish literature that symbolically describes future historical events leading to the end of disobedient human history and to the beginning of obedient human history, sometimes called the kingdom of God.

1. 4:1-5:14: John has a vision of twenty-four elders worshipping the one who sits on the throne, who holds in his hand a scroll with seven seals which only the lamb is worthy to open.

2. 6:1-8:1: The lamb opens each seal of the scroll in turn, following which is a corresponding effect. With the opening of the first seal comes a white horse with a rider, who carries a bow, is given a crown and sets out to conquer. After the second seal is opened, a red horse brings war to the world. The breaking of the third seal sees the emergence of black horse bringing famine to the world. When the fourth seal is broken, a pale horse arises, bringing death. The breaking of the fifth seal reveals that under the altar there are those who have been slain, who cry out for vengeance. After the sixth seal is broken, the sun turns black, the moon turns red, stars fall to earth, the sky recedes as scroll and mountains and islands are removed. This is the beginning of the judgment of God. Reference is made to the 144,000 sealed from the tribes of Israel and the great multitude wearing white robes before the throne and in front of the lamb who were taken out of the great tribulation. With the opening of the seventh seal there is silence for an hour.

3. 8:2-11:19: Seven angels blow seven trumpets; after each trumpet blast certain consequences follow. With the first trumpet comes hail and fire mixed with blood destroying a third of the trees. After the second trumpet something like mountain is thrown into the sea turning a third of it into blood and destroying life therein. When the third trumpet is sounded a star called bitterness falls to earth destroying a third of the rivers and springs. The fourth trumpet blast sees a third of the sun, moon and stars struck, turning them dark. When the fifth trumpet is sounded, a star falls to earth and opens an abyss, allowing locusts to come out to afflict the world. After the sixth trumpet the four angels bound at the river Euphrates are released to kill a third of all humanity. Then an angel comes with a little scroll, which was eaten by John; John was told to measure the temple and it is said that the temple will be trampled on for forty-two months. It is said that there will be two witnesses who will testify but, who when finished, will be destroyed by the beast. After three and a half days, they will be raised to life again. Finally, with the seventh trumpet begins the reign of Christ. The twenty-four elders are on their thrones worshipping God, and the temple in heaven was laid open and with the temple the ark of God.

4. 12:1-13:1: A pregnant woman, robed with the sun, under her feet the moon and on her head a crown of twelve stars, is pursued by a red dragon with seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns

on its heads. Its tail sweeps a third of the stars to the earth. The woman gives birth to a son who is taken to God's throne; the woman flees to the desert where she was taken care of for 1,260 days. There is a war in heaven against Michael and the dragon and his angels, who lose and are hurled to earth where they lead the world astray. The dragon attacks the woman on earth, but does not overcome her; she is protected in the desert for a time, times and half a time. The dragon makes war against her offspring instead.

5. 13:1-18: A beast comes out of the sea with ten horns and seven heads; men worship the dragon who gives authority to the beast. On one of the beast's head there appears to be a mortal wound. The whole world goes after the beast and worships the dragon because of the beast and even worships the beast. The beast is given the right to reign for forty-two months, speaks blasphemy against God and wages war against the saints. Another beast arises and wields the authority of the first beast. It works great miracles and deludes the world. It even causes an idol of the first beast, who was wounded and yet lives, to speak. It puts the mark 666 on all the inhabitants of the world, in order they be allowed to buy and sell.

6. 14:1-20: The 144,000 appear with the Lamb. Three angels appear: the first proclaims good news to the world; the second announces that Babylon has fallen; the third says that the worshippers of the beast who bear his mark are under God's wrath. The one like a son of man harvests the earth; an angel harvests the earth a second time, which is compared to grapes thrown into the winepress of God's wrath.

7. 15:1-16:21: Seven angels pour out the wrath of God from seven bowls of judgment; each bowl represents a different type of affliction on humanity. With the pouring out of the first bowl sores appear on all who worshipped the beast. After the pouring out of the second bowl, the sea turns to blood and everything in the sea dies. When the third bowl is poured out, rivers and springs become blood. The fourth bowl sees the sun becoming hotter. When the fifth bowl is poured out on his throne the kingdom of the beast was plunged into darkness. After the pouring out of the sixth bowl, the Euphrates dries up to prepare for the coming of the kings of the east; demons gather kings for a final battle at Armageddon. With the pouring out of the seventh bowl, a loud voice proclaimed, "It is done," followed by lightning, thunder and earthquakes; Babylon collapses, and huge hailstones fall from the sky.

8. 17:1-18: The great prostitute rides the beast and is identified with the city that rules over all; the seven heads are interpreted as seven hills and as seven kings; five kings have passed, the sixth is, the seven is coming. The beast is an eighth king who once was and now is; the ten horns are ten kings who will reign along with the beast.

9. 18:1-19:10: The fall of Babylon is described. The city is completely destroyed, and heaven rejoices over its destruction. A small voice from the throne commands all to worship God, and what sounded like a great crowd responds by worshipping God, exulting that the wedding day of the lamb has come.

10. 19:11-20:6: There appeared a rider on the white horse whose name is faithful and true and the word of God, who executes judgment with the army of heaven. The beast is destroyed and the

false prophet is captured and thrown into the lake of fire; the kings of the earth are destroyed by the sword that comes from the mouth of the rider on the white horse. Satan is imprisoned for a thousand years, after which he is to be set free for a little while. The first resurrection takes place before the millenium; after it, the second resurrection takes place. Christ will reign for a thousand years.

11. 20:7-15: After a thousand years, Satan is released and musters the armies of Gog and Magog to do battle against God’s people and the city that he loves. These aggressors, however, are destroyed. The devil is thrown into the lake of fire. Afterwards, the dead are raised and judged before the one sitting on the great white throne. All whose names are not written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire.

12. 21:1-27: A new heaven and new earth are created and the new Jerusalem descends from heaven; the twelve foundation stones of the city walls have the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb written upon them. The city is described as made of precious materials, and it is said that there is no temple in the city, for its temple is the God and the lamb.

13. 22:1-5: In the city is the river of the water of life and on either side of the river the tree of life.

5.2. There are three main interpretive approaches to Rev 4:1-22:5, each beginning from three different assumptions about what the symbolism intends.

5.2.1. The preterist approach assumes that John is only describing events contemporary with himself.

5.2.2. The historical approach assumes that what is described is events from the beginning of the church to the end of history.

5.2.3. The futurist approach assumes that what John symbolizes is wholly in the future, the events that will take place just prior to the end of disobedient human history and the beginning of obedient human history.

5.3. Which of these interpretive approaches to the Book of Revelation do you think is the correct one?

● 6. Why was the Book of Revelation written?

From its contents, what do you conclude to be John's purposes in writing the Book of Revelation, or more accurately, God's purposes in revealing it to John?
