

# THE BOOK OF REVELATION

## WEEK 2: INTRODUCTION

### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK<sup>1</sup>

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- Most of this is found in Walvoord's commentary or even in the beginning of the book in your study Bible.
- If you don't have either, here is some basic, but vital information about this letter.

#### **Author and Date**

Four times the author identifies himself as John (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). Early tradition unanimously identified him as John the apostle, author of the fourth gospel and three epistles. For example, important second century witnesses to the Apostle John's authorship include Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. Many of the book's original readers were still alive during the lifetimes of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus—both of whom held to apostolic authorship.

Revelation was written in the last decade of the first century (ca. A.D. 94–96), near the end of Emperor Domitian's reign (A.D. 81–96). Although some date it during Nero's reign (A.D. 54–68), their arguments are unconvincing and conflict with the view of the early church. Writing in the second century, Irenaeus declared that Revelation had been written toward the end of Domitian's reign. Later writers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Victorinus (who wrote one of the earliest commentaries on Revelation), Eusebius, and Jerome affirm the Domitian date.

#### **Background and Setting**

When he was arrested, John was in Ephesus, ministering to the church there and in the surrounding cities. Seeking to strengthen those congregations, he could no longer minister to them in person and, following the divine command (1:11), John addressed Revelation to them (1:4). The churches had begun to feel the effects of persecution; at least one man—probably a pastor—had already been martyred (2:13), and John himself had been exiled. The Roman authorities had banished him to the island of Patmos because of his faithful preaching of the gospel (1:9). While on Patmos, John received a series of visions that laid out the future history of the world.

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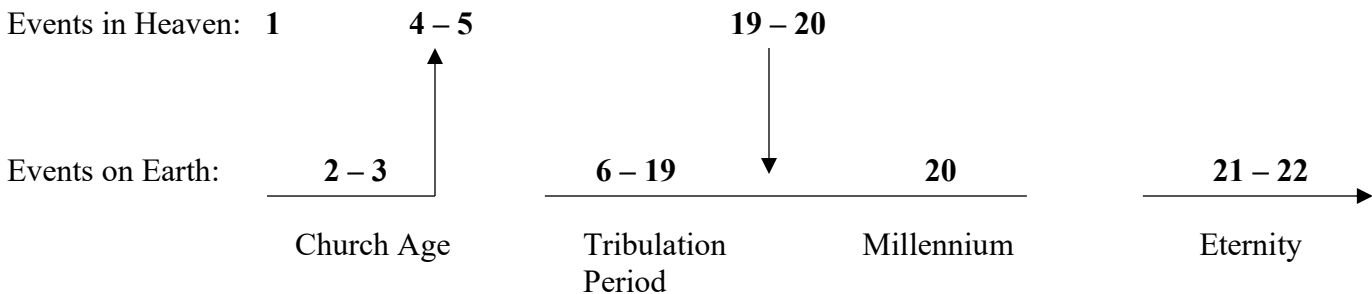
<sup>1</sup> Must of this information taken directly from John MacArthur's *Bible Introduction – Revelation*  
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## Outline<sup>2</sup>

1. The Things which You Have Seen (1:1–20)
  - A. The Prologue (1:1–8)
  - B. The Vision of the Glorified Christ (1:9–18)
  - C. The Apostle’s Commission to Write (1:19, 20)
2. The Things which Are (2:1–3:22)
  - A. The Letter to the Church at Ephesus (2:1–7)
  - B. The Letter to the Church at Smyrna (2:8–11)
  - C. The Letter to the Church at Pergamos (2:12–17)
  - D. The Letter to the Church at Thyatira (2:18–29)
  - E. The Letter to the Church at Sardis (3:1–6)
  - F. The Letter to the Church at Philadelphia (3:7–13)
  - G. The Letter to the Church at Laodicea (3:14–22)
3. The Things which Will Take Place after This (4:1–22:21)
  - A. Worship in Heaven (4:1–5:14)
  - B. The Great Tribulation (6:1–18:24)
  - C. The Return of the King (19:1–21)
  - D. The Millennium (20:1–10)
  - E. The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11–15)
  - F. The Eternal State (21:1–22:21)

## OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/macarthur\\_john/bible-introductions/revelation-intro.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/macarthur_john/bible-introductions/revelation-intro.cfm)

<sup>3</sup> Chart from *He Will Reign Forever*, by Michael Vlach, 507-508.