

New Testament Overview – J. Carl Laney

FACTS ON REVELATION

Author

The author of Revelation calls himself "John" (1:1,4,9, 22:8). The only John who would have been so clearly known to the seven churches of Asia would have been John _____. There are many similarities between the Fourth Gospel and Revelation which serve to confirm Johannine authorship. Early church tradition confirms this viewpoint.

Readers

The book is addressed to seven churches of _____ (1:4) which were leading centers of the province and connected by major travel routes.

Date of Writing

Irenaeus writes that Revelation was recorded "at the close of the reign of _____ [A.D. 81-96]" (Against Heresies V.xxx.3). The weight of historical evidence points to a date toward the end of the reign of Domitian, around A.D. 95-96.

Historical Setting

The Revelation was received by John while he was in exile on the island of _____ late in the reign of Domitian. Patmos was a small, rocky island in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Asia Minor, about 35 miles SW of Miletus. The island, measuring only six by ten miles, served as a place of banishment in Roman times. It may have been John's refusal to submit to the imperial decree of emperor worship that led to his exile. Persecution of believers is reflected in the message of Revelation (1:9, 2:10,13, 6:9).

Purpose

The book of Revelation was written to encourage believers under the shadow of Roman persecution by showing them the ultimate victory of Christ over His enemies and to warn the churches of the dangers of spiritual lethargy and apostasy. The book brings OT prophecy and promises to _____ and presents the glorious _____ directing the churches, judging the world, and ruling His kingdom.

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Theme The glory, judgment, and triumph of Christ (19:10).

Outline

- I. THE THINGS SEEN 1
- II. THE THINGS WHICH ARE 2-3
- III. THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE 4-22

Interpretive Viewpoints There is some debate as to how Revelation should be interpreted.

1. Preterist [ie. "past time"] Viewpoint

According to the Preterist viewpoint, the symbolism of Revelation relates only to the conditions of the Roman Empire in the first century. Exponents deny any futuristic element in the book. The chief problem: Revelation 4:1, "... I will show you what must take place after these things."

2. Idealist Viewpoint

According to the idealist viewpoint, Revelation represents the enduring struggle between good and evil, between Christianity and paganism. Events and characters in Revelation are interpreted spiritually to reveal the promise of ultimate victory and triumph of righteousness. The chief problem: Spiritualizing the text leaves no concrete meaning.

3. Historicist Viewpoint

Revelation is a symbolic presentation of the entire history of the church from the first century to the end time. This viewpoint is generally held by A-mills and Post-mills. The chief problem: Subjectivity in identifying historical fulfillments.

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4. Futurist Viewpoint

Revelation 1-3 is historical, but chapters 4-22 record events in the prophetic future. The persecutions experienced by the early church provide the historical context for the Revelation.

Support:

1. Correlates with other prophetic works.
2. Recognizes a future for Israel
3. Recognizes that some events in Revelation have not taken place yet.

THE THINGS SEEN 1

Introduction 1:1-3

The source and subject 1a

The nature of the revelation 1b “Communicated by signs”

Value of the Revelation 3

Salutation 1:4-8

Dedication 5b-6

Theme 7-8 Not prophecy, but the coming of Christ--in glory, judgment and triumph!

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THE VISION OF CHRIST 1:9-20

The Circumstances of the Vision 1:9-11

The exiled apostle 9

Instruction to John 10-11

The Content of the Vision 1:12-16

Position of Christ 12-13a

Picture of Christ 13b-16

Consequences of the Vision 1:17-20

Encouragement 17-18

Exhortation 19

Basis for the outline of the book!

“Things seen” = vision of chapter 1

“Things which are” = state of the churches 2-3

“Things which shall take place” = prophecy 4-24

Interpretation 20

Seven stars = angels 20a

Guardian angels of the churches

Messengers of the churches (Lk. 9:52)

Seven lampstands = churches 20b

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THE THINGS WHICH ARE 2-3

The churches addressed were historical churches in John's day

To Ephesus 2:1-7

Ephesus was located near the Aegean Sea on the west coast of what is now Turkey. It was the capital of the Roman province of Asia and the residence of John before and after his exile on Patmos. Ephesus was an important commercial city with a port on the Cayster River. It was also known for the famous temple of Artemis.

Smyrna 2:8-11

Smyrna (modern Izmir) is located about 35 miles N. of Ephesus. It was a port city and trade center. Smyrna also had schools of science and medicine. Smyrna was the center of the imperial cult and boasted temples dedicated to Tiberias, Zeus and Cybele. The believers at Smyrna are commended for their spiritual wealth in spite of physical poverty (2:9).

Pergamum 2:12-17

Pergamum is located 50 miles north of Smyrna, about 15 miles inland from the sea. Pergamum had a fine library and was the place where parchment was first used. The city was a religious center with temples dedicated to Zeus, Athena, Dionysus and Asclerius (healing). Little wonder the city is referred to in v. 13 as the place "where Satan's throne is."

Thyatira 2:18-29

Thyatira was an important manufacturing center located about 40 miles S.E. of Pergamum. It was especially noted for its well organized trade guilds. The meetings of the guilds were bound up with acts of pagan worship and immorality. The dye industry and garment making were also important to the city's commerce.

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Sardis 3:1-6

Sardis was situated just 30 miles S.E. of Thyatira. It was one of the oldest and most important cities in Asia. The city was wealthy in early times, in part because of the gold found in a stream that flowed through the city. The chief industry of the city was the making and dying of woolen garments. Sardis was noted for its immorality which was practiced in the worship of Cybele, whose temple was located there.

Philadelphia 3:7-13

Philadelphia was a wealthy trade center located 28 miles S.E. of Sardis in Asia's wine producing district. Philadelphia was called "little Athens" because of its magnificent public buildings and temples. Dionysus, the god of wine, was the chief deity of the city.

Laodicea 3:14-22

Laodicea was located in the Lycus Valley on an important crossroad 45 miles S.E. of Philadelphia and about 90 miles east of Ephesus. Besides being a prosperous banking and commercial center, Laodicea was a manufacturing center for clothing made from the glossy black wool of sheep raised in the area. Laodicea had no local water supply and had to pipe water from a hot spring some distance away. It arrived in the city lukewarm.

If Christ were to send a message to your church today, what might it say?

THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE 4-22

The Divine Judge 4-5

A throne of God in heaven 4

The invitation to the throne 1

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The revelation of the throne 2-5

God on the throne 2-3

Attendants to the throne 4

Worship before the throne 6-11

Four living creatures 6-8

Ezekiel saw four “living creatures” which were identified as cherubim (Ezek. 10:15).

Twenty-four elders 9-11

The Book with Seven Seals 5

Description of the book 1

Problem with the book 2-5

Search for the opener 3-4

Savior-Judge 5

Recipient of the book 6-14

Scroll received 6-7

Lamb worshiped 8-14

THE SEVEN SEALS 6:1-8:1

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THE SEVEN TRUMPETS 8:2-11:19

THE SEVEN BOWLS 15-16

7th Bowl 16:17-21 “It is done!”

THE JUDGMENTS ON BABYLON 17-18

THE SECOND COMING 19

Rejoicing in Heaven 19:1-6

God the Father is praised because of . . .

The harlot's destruction 1-2

God's rule despite opposition by the beast 5-6

Marriage of the Lamb 19:7-10

Who is the bride who has made herself ready?

The following verses will help you find the answer:

Israel	Isa. 49:18, 61:10, 62:5, Jer. 2:32, Hos. 2:19-20
Church	Eph. 5:22-33

Marriage Supper 9

The “marriage supper” refers to the kingdom age.

Response of John 10

What does verse 10 reveal about a proper perspective on prophecy?

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The Coming of the King 19:11-16

Revelation of the King 11-13

The army of the King 14

The authority of the king 15-16

THE MILLENNIUM AND FINAL JUDGMENT 20

There are three basic interpretations of the thousand years (Millennium):

Postmillennial:	Christ returns after the church establishes the kingdom.
Amillennial:	The kingdom is taking place now; no future for Israel.
Premillennial:	Christ returns and establishes His 1000 year kingdom on earth. This view takes seriously the six references to “1000 years.”

Binding of Satan 20:1-3

The Kingdom of the Son 20:4-6

The reign of Christ 4

Who will be on earth during the Kingdom?

Resurrected OT saints Dan. 12:2,13

Resurrected Tribulation saints Rev. 20:4

Resurrected Church saints 2 Tim. 2:12

Redeemed Jewish & Gentile survivors of the Tribulation
Zech. 12:10-13:1, Matt. 25:1-30,31-46

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THE ETERNAL STATE 21:1-22:5

The Descent of the City 21:1-8

The purging of the heavens and earth is the final event of the Day of the Lord (Isa. 65:17, 66:22, 2 Pet. 3:10).

The Description of the City 21:9-22

What indications are there within the text (21:9-22:3) which suggest that the New Jerusalem is a literal city?

Genesis begins with a curse because of sin.

Revelation concludes with the removal of the effect of sin and an end to the curse. In summary, this is God's plan for the ages--to reverse the curse (22:3).