

## Background and Differing Perspectives of Revelation

### Who was the human recipient/writer of the book?

<sup>NIV</sup> **Revelation 1:1** “The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant \_\_\_\_\_, <sup>2</sup> who testifies to everything he saw-- that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev. 1:1-2 NIV)

**Option 1:** The apostle John, one of the Twelve disciples of Jesus.

\_\_\_\_\_, Church Father in Lyon, France (c. 180), was under the tutelage of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who in turn was a disciple of the Apostle John. Irenaeus writes that John lived and died in Ephesus, and was imprisoned on the Island of Patmos under the Emperor \_\_\_\_\_.

Justin Martyr (d. 165), Clement of Alexandria (d. 215), and Tertullian (d. 220) all believed that John was the writer of the four \_\_\_\_\_, the three \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Option 2:** John the \_\_\_\_\_ (c. 2<sup>nd</sup> century)

Dyonesius of Alexander (c. mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century) and Eusebius, (First recognized Christian historian, c. 300's), did not believe that the Apostle John wrote the letter but another “John” cited in the extinct works of Papias.

### Why is it important?

1. Apostolic \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ of timing, since John died in the late AD 90's.

3. Correct \_\_\_\_\_ of chapters 8-22. Past, Present, or Future?

### When was it written?

1. It was written during a time of \_\_\_\_\_ and trial for some of the recipients.
2. It was written to \_\_\_\_\_ believers that, even if they should be called to suffer, or even die, for their faith, yet their vindication and the punishment of their enemies would be certain and not far off.
3. Because of the supposed \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the persecution, it was believed to be under one of the imperial persecutions.
4. The only two imperial persecutions with this apparent magnitude and scope were under:

\_\_\_\_\_ (AD 54 – 68) – This was the popular opinion of most scholars up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

\_\_\_\_\_ (AD 81 – 96).

Problem: There is no historical \_\_\_\_\_ of any large-scale persecution outside of Rome, but only local skirmishes led by Jews. However, under authorship, Irenaeus does state that John was imprisoned on Patmos during the reign of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Why does it matter?

Some think it matters because if you take an earlier date, (pre-fall of Jerusalem), the prophetic sections of chpts. 8-22 are not applicable to a \_\_\_\_\_ fulfillment. The Fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) under Rome was what was spoken of and therefore, is historical and \_\_\_\_\_. However, as we have discussed with prophetic \_\_\_\_\_, an event can have both an immediate, mediate, and long-range fulfillment. Therefore, it can fit multiple positions.

## The Four Approaches or Perspectives of Revelation:

### Historicist Approach –

Adherents: \_\_\_\_\_, John Calvin, Zwingli, John Knox, Sir Isaac Newton, John Foxe, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, C. H. Spurgeon, etc...

The Historical Approach portrays Revelation as a \_\_\_\_\_ at church history from the apostolic times to the present. The problem is that chapters 6-19 seem to be fulfilled in a short time period and not hundreds of years.

They see the seals as the persecution of the early church, the bowls as the defeat of the Roman Empire, and the trumpets as the invasion of the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Modified: Historical-Prophetical Approach** - This approach is very similar to the Historical Approach but focuses solely on the 7 \_\_\_\_\_.

For example:

The Church at Ephesus represents the Apostolic Church.

The Church at Smyrna represents the persecuted \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

The Church at Pergamum represents the nationalized church of Constantine.

The Church at Thyatira represents the Dark or \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

The Church at Sardis represents the Church of the \_\_\_\_\_.

The Church at Philadelphia represents the Great Missionary Sending Church.

The Church of Laodicea represents the \_\_\_\_\_ Church of Modern Day.

**Problem:** It's totally \_\_\_\_\_ and predominantly focuses on the Western Church without noting most events taking place in the East.

Seventh Day Adventists still hold to this view.

Of note: This approach is consistently \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_, Anti-Papacy, and sees the pope as the Anti-Christ.

### **Preterist Approach – (Partial and Full)**

Adherents: R.C. Sproul, Kenneth Gentry

The word, "praeter" is Latin for "\_\_\_\_\_."

The Preterist View sees everything in Revelation as happening in the past, prior to A.D. 70 and the destruction of \_\_\_\_\_ or up until the conversion of Constantine and the legalization of Christianity.

It recognizes that John was writing to \_\_\_\_\_ people, at a \_\_\_\_\_ time, under \_\_\_\_\_ persecution (Full). Partial preterists hold to this view but also believe that certain elements are yet to be fulfilled (Second Coming of Christ)

It is tied closely with a post-millennial view, i.e. that Jesus will not return until after the 1000-year period of \_\_\_\_\_, which the Church will usher into existence.

### **Problem:**

It is a book about what is to come, including the return of Christ and a time of restoration.

Although the Church did come into a place of peace and legality, it quickly spiraled down under internal \_\_\_\_\_ and external subjugation, e.g. Moslem, Turkish, and Mongol invasions.

## **Idealist or Spiritualist Approach –**

Adherents – B. B. Warfield, Reformed Churches

The Idealist Approach takes a universal approach and views the Book of Revelation as simply a \_\_\_\_\_ between good and evil. Its objective is to convey spiritual truths and is unrelated to actual events.

This viewed is generally tied to “Amillennialism,” i.e. no millennium.

**Problem:** It was written to a historical group of people in a historical context with prophetic utterances connected to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ events.

## **Futurist Approach –**

Adherents: Most Baptists, Pentecostal, Independents, Evangelicals.

The Futurist Approach holds that chapters 4-22 are future events prophesied to \_\_\_\_\_ happen.

It is closely tied to Premillennialism, i.e. that Jesus will come back before the 1000-year period of restoration and will set up his \_\_\_\_\_ kingdom.

**Problem:** It is often found to be too literal in its interpretation or reading facts into the text that are not there. It also assumes a time \_\_\_\_\_ that is unsubstantiated in the text itself.