

Revelation

Who, When, Where

Written by Yohannes (John). Yohannes was one of Yeshua's closest disciples. And the disciple whom Yeshua loved. He was a fisherman with his brother James (Yaakov) and Yeshua nicknamed them "The Sons of Thunder". As far as we know John lived longer than all the other disciples and died as an old man on the island of Patmos around 100AD.

It is usually accepted that Revelation was written around 100AD, towards the end of Yohannes' (John) life, after he was exiled to the island of Patmos.

Some argument for an earlier date is because in AD60, or thereabouts, a large earthquake destroyed the three cities of Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. But Laodicea was rebuilt some years later and was populated again around 100AD.

John says he was on the island of Patmos. And although it was revealed to Yohannes, and it includes letters to seven specific churches, Yohannes wrote it down for anyone who would read it.

Summary

Revelation is basically one big vision. But what does it all mean?

Some bits, like the "number of the beast", 666, are famous. And the beast which comes up from the abyss. But what are they really about?

Before You Read

So, if you have read the whole Bible up to here then you should already have a pretty good idea about how the world will end. You have read of the Day of Yahweh in Zechariah, and about the Rapture in Corinthians and Thessalonians.

Revelation is a difficult book to understand and some people think it is an allegory of church life, while others think it is a more literal vision of the end times.

As you read through form your own opinion. Ask God to show you.

Key Verses

Revelation 1:8

"I'm the A and the Z", says the lord [Yahweh] God, "The one who is, and the who was, and who is coming, the Almighty."

Some translations leave it as Greek Alpha and Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet). Yahweh is saying that he is the beginning and the end.

What does that mean to you? How does that affect your view of God?

Revelation 3:20

Look! I'm standing at the door and knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I'll come in to them, and I'll dine with them, and they themselves with me.

This verse is very often misquoted. Yeshua is NOT standing outside the heart of a non-Christian knocking to get in. He is standing outside a church, trying to get in.

How about your church, would he get in? Would he like it? Would people recognise him?

Revelation 12:9

The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

So in Yohannes' vision this seems to be something which will happen in the future. Yet in Luke 10:8 Yeshua said, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning." Will he fall a second time? Has Yeshua already seen the future? How does that fit together with Yeshua also saying, in John 8:58, "Before Abraham was born, I am".

Does Yeshua exist outside of time?

Revelation 13:18

Let the one who has a mind calculate the number of the beast, for it's the number of a person, and his number is CXS (666).

The Greek has the letters χξϞ (CSX) which stand for 666 just like the Roman numerals DCLXVI do. Maybe there is more to it than that? What do you think it means? Many people have put forward their opinion, I think we won't know until afterwards and then we will all think it was obvious. Until then we will probably all just be wrong.

Revelation 21:1

And I saw a new sky, and a new earth, for the first sky and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer.

Some translations say "heaven". But the Greek and Hebrew words for "heaven" were both also used for "sky", so whenever you see one you should consider the other.

God will one day replace this planet we live on. And we will live on it as resurrected Christians. No more sin. No more suffering. Eternal, beautiful life as it was meant to be. So often I hear Christians talking like they will live in heaven forever floating on clouds and playing harps as they sing to God. That is not what the Bible teaches us. (Thankfully).

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

What the heck was that about?

There are two main interpretations, one which says this is a literal prophecy just like all the others in the Bible, and the other says it's all one huge allegory which gives us insight into the Christian life.

In chapter 1 the messenger tells Yohannes, "Write what you have seen, what is, what is about to be."

There is a clue. It is about things which are now, and things which will be. The letters to the churches seem to be letters to seven existing churches in the Province of Asia (modern Turkey), but they also seem to fit seven phases the mainstream church has gone through over the centuries.

After that Yohannes is taken up to heaven. Some people see that as a picture of the rapture, the sudden taking away to heaven of the church.

After that comes the judgement of God.

One of the keys to understanding Revelation seems to be Daniel's vision of the 70x7s in Daniel 9. Do you remember that after 69x7s the anointed was going to be cut off with nothing? And then there was one more 7.

Now, if we look 7 years after Yeshua died we do not see the end of all things. So what's going on there?

Yeshua was sent to ... Israel. Even the apostles started out only going to Jews wherever they went. Until they realised that the Holy Spirit was also including non-Jews in their mission.

The big picture seems to be that if Israel had accepted Yeshua then only Jews would have been saved. But because they rejected him salvation also came to the Gentiles (non-Jews). Of course you can see in the Old Testament that this was always going to happen.

So then we have the "Time of the Gentiles", the church age. Which interrupts Daniel's 70x7s. Once the church is finished and has been taken away, the last 7 years of Daniel's prophecy will be completed and all things will come to an end.

Could this be what is happening in Revelation? Could Yohannes being taken to heaven be representative of the end of the church age and the beginning of that 7 year period? The Great Tribulation.

Daniel talked of a time, times and half a time... 3 1/2 years, 1260 days. Someone would renew a covenant, and set up an abomination on the temple. It could all fit couldn't it...