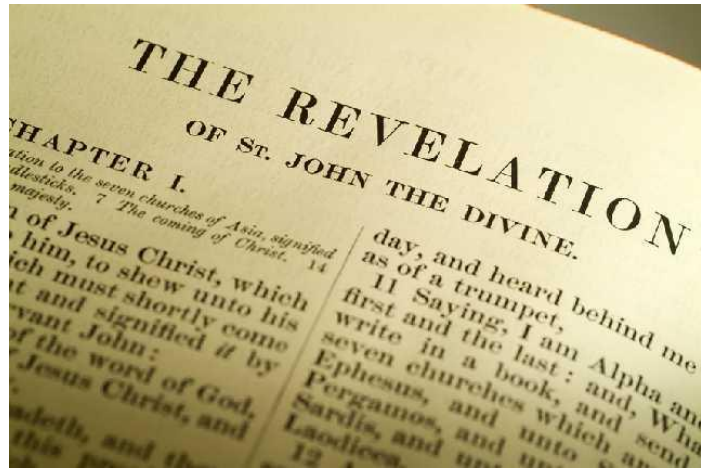


INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

St. John, Son of Zebedee wrote this apocalyptic book in c. 68-100 AD, to relate a vision he had while exiled on the Isle of Patmos. This book must be read in the context of apocalyptic literature, especially Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah. Revelation predicts cataclysmic events using complicated symbolic language.



This book contains an account of visions in symbolic and allegorical language borrowed extensively from the Old Testament, especially Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Daniel. Whether or not these visions were real experiences of the author or simply literary conventions employed by him is an open question.

The book is in letter format and is intended to be read aloud in the Christian liturgy (cf. 1:3). Revelation begins with a short explanation (1:1-8), an introductory vision of Jesus (1:9-20) and letters to seven churches (2:1-3:22). John relates a detailed vision of worship in heaven (4-5). Then he presents three series God's judgments on the earth: the seven seals (6:1-8:5), the seven trumpets (8:6-11:19) and the seven bowls (15-16). John has a vision of a woman clothed with the sun (12), which the church has traditionally understood as Mary. We also find a description of the "Whore of Babylon" and her fall (17-19). Finally, Jesus returns and the wedding feast of the Lamb occurs with a new heaven, new earth and new Jerusalem (19-22). Though the book is very complex, there are a few keys to interpret its symbols. First, John is writing at a time of persecution, evident from the letters (cf. 2:13), so he wants to warn and encourage Christians. Second, he is writing in the context of the Roman empire to a religious movement the government considers subversive. He uses code language in case the book falls into the wrong hands and many of the symbols relate directly to the Roman government (e.g. 17:10). Third, John is very conscious of the Old Testament background. The living creatures in Rev 4 are very similar to those in Ezekiel 1:5-14. The descriptions of the beast in Rev 13:1-10 match the vision in Dan 7. The fourth beast in Dan 7 was traditionally interpreted in early Judaism as the Roman Empire.

Fourth, Jerusalem was conquered and destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Some interpreters find predictions of this event in Revelation. Others find reflections on the event. Whether Revelation was written before or after 70 AD, much of its content relates to the overthrow

of Jerusalem. Fifth, John expects the fulfillment of his visions soon (1:1, 1:3, 2:16, etc.). His expectation of quick fulfillment indicates that the majority of Revelation's predictions were fulfilled in the first century. Sixth, the cataclysmic imagery in Revelation-earthquakes, wars, lightning, etc.-must be understood in light of the Old Testament. Many Old Testament passages use similar language (Isa 13:10, 14:12; Ezekiel 32; Joel 2) to describe God's judgment against wicked nations, not necessarily the end of history.

Revelation presents a God-centered vision of the world. He reigns as king from his throne (4:2) and nothing takes place outside of his governance. The book's imaginative illustration of the Christian worldview places the truth of God above all else. While acknowledging the tragic yet heroic deaths of first century martyrs, Revelation adopts the perspective of oppressed people struggling against human systems of power. These systems, though strong, will all succumb to God's judgment and be brought low under his universal kingship. Revelation calls Christians not to hide until the end of the world, but to proclaim the victory of God's kingdom, which is coming. Just as Jesus was a faithful witness (1:5, martyr in Greek), all Christians are called to hold fast to the testimony of Jesus (12:17, 19:10, 20:4) even unto death. Revelation's expansive vision is inspiring, yet difficult to comprehend.

The principal divisions of the Book of Revelation are the following:

- Prologue (1:1–3)
- Letters to the Churches of Asia (1:4–3:22)
- God and the Lamb in Heaven (4:1–5:14)
- The Seven Seals, Trumpets, and Plagues, with Interludes (6:1–16:21)
- The Punishment of Babylon and the Destruction of Pagan Nations (17:1–20:15)
- The New Creation (21:1–22:5)
- Epilogue (22:6–21)

Sources: Catholic News Agency
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

MAP OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES



<http://www.bible-history.com/maps/Map-7-Churches-of-Revelation-Asia.jpg>

BOOK OF REVELATION COMPARED TO EZEKIEL AND DANIEL

THE VISION	EZEKIEL	REVELATION
1. The throne vision	Chapter 1	Chapter 4
2. The book being opened	Chapters 2-3	Chapter 5
3. The four plagues	Chapter 5	Chapter 6:1-8
4. Those slain under the altar	Chapter 6	Chapter 6:9-11
5. The wrath of God	Chapter 7	Chapter 6:12-17
6. The seal on the Saint's foreheads	Chapter 9	Chapter 7
7. The coals from the altar	Chapter 10	Chapter 8
8. The 1/3 destruction	Chapter 5:1-4 & 12	Chapter 8:6-12
9. No more delay	Chapter 12	Chapter 10:1-7
10. The eating of the book	Chapter 2	Chapter 10:8-11
11. Prophecy against the Nations	Chapters 25-32	Chapter 10:11
12. The measuring of the Temple	Chapters 40-43	Chapter 11:1-2
13. Comparing Jerusalem to Sodom	Chapter 16	Chapter 11:8
14. The cup of wrath	Chapter 23	Chapter 14
15. The vine of the land	Chapter 15	Chapter 14:18-20
16. The great harlot	Chapters 16, 23	Chapters 17-18
17. The lament sung over the city	Chapter 27	Chapter 18
18. The scavenger's feast	Chapter 39	Chapter 19
19. The first resurrection	Chapter 37	Chapter 20:4-6
20. The Battle of Gog and Magog	Chapter 38-39	Chapter 20:7-9
21. The New Jerusalem	Chapters 40-48	Chapter 21
22. The River of Life	Chapter 47	Chapter 22

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THE VISION	DANIEL	REVELATION
1. Three and a half time period (a time, times and ½ a time)	Chapter 12:7	Chapter 11:9, 11
2. The ten horns	Chapter 7:8	Chapters 12:3;13:1;17:3,8
3. The Leopard, the Bear, and the Lion	Chapter 7:4-6	Chapter 13:2
4. The Beast mouthing boasting and blasphemies	Chapter 7:8,11	Chapter 13:5
5. The war against the Saints	Chapter 7:21	Chapter 13:7
6. The worship of the Beast's statue	Chapter 3:5-7, 15	Chapter 13:15
7. The Son of Man coming on the Glory-Cloud	Chapter 7:13	Chapter 1:7; 14:14

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Celebration of the Mass Introductory Rites	Reference Verses in Revelation	John's Vision in Revelation
Sunday Worship	1:10	John's visions of heavenly worship on the Lord's day (Sunday)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processional (presiding priest in liturgical garment), assisting ministers 	1:12-13 1:6; 4:4; 4:9-10; 5:6, 8-9, 14	Christ our High Priest in liturgical garment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance Antiphon 	4:8-11; 5:9-14; 7:10-12	Antiphonal chant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priest reverences the altar, which represents the meeting place between man and God, by kissing the altar and with incense, if a High or Solemn Mass. He wears the appropriate vestments. Liturgical music and singing Celibate clergy Sanctuary/Tabernacle and presider's chair Baptismal candle, Eucharistic candle, altar candles Congregation of the priesthood of believers/ the Church	6:9; 8:3-5; 9:13; 11:1; 14:18; 16:7 1:8; 4:2-3, 9; 5:1-13; 7:9-17; 19:4-9; 22:3-5 5:8; 8:3-5 1:12-13; 6:2, 11; 7:9, 14; 15:5-6; 19:8, 13-14 4:2-3; 5:9, 11-12; 14:2-4; 15:3 14:4-5 11:19; 14:15; 15:5 3:2; 4:2-10; 5:1-13; 6:16; 7:9-17; 8:3; 12:5; 14:3-5; 16:17; 19:4-5; 20:4, 11; 21:3, 5; 22:1; 22:3; 1:13; 2:5; 4:5 1:6; 19:7-9; 20:6	Altar Worship in the presence of God Incense Liturgical vestments in the heavenly Sanctuary Liturgical music and singing Consecrated celibacy, Sanctuary/Tabernacle Throne in the Sanctuary Lampstands, (menorah) Priesthood of the Faithful

Celebration of the Mass Introductory Rites	Reference Verses in Revelation	John's Vision in Revelation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign of the Cross and Greeting 	7:3; 14:1; 22:4	Sign of the Cross (mark of the Lamb)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rite of Blessing 	1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14	Blessing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Penitential Rite 	Chapters 2 and 3	Penitence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gloria • Opening Prayer 	15:3-4 4:11	Gloria Opening Prayer
<p>Reading from the Word of God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Reading: Old Testament • Responsorial Psalms • 2nd Reading: New Testament 	5:1-8; 10:8; 20:12 2:1 3:22 1:7 (ref. Dan 7:13; Zc 12:10, 14 12:1-2, 6, 13-14 12:5 12:13-17	Book or Scroll Messages from Christ Ref. Christ in O.T. Prominence of the Woman: The Virgin Mary, daughter of David & Old Covenant; Mary the Mother of Christ, and Mother of the Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alleluia and Gospel 	19:1, 3, 4, 6 1:7 (Jn 19:34, 37)	Alleluia Gospel reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intercessions 	5:8; 6:9-10; 8:3-4	Intercession of angels and saints
The Eucharistic Host	2:17	The Hidden Manna
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the Gifts (the wine in chalices and the bread in bowls) 	15:7; Chapter 16 (in Rev. = judgments; in Mass = to become gifts of grace)	Bowls; chalices

Celebration of the Mass Introductory Rites	Reference Verses in Revelation	John's Vision in Revelation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eucharistic Prayer & intro. dialogue = command "Lift up your hearts" 	11:12	Heavenly command: <i>I heard a loud voice from heaven say to them, 'Come up here'</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acclamation <i>Holy, Holy, Holy</i> (worshippers kneel after the Sanctus) 	4:8 4:9-10	Heavenly congregation sings: <i>Holy, Holy, Holy</i> , and worshippers kneel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Great Amen Communion Rite 	19:4; 22:21 5:1, 5-6	Great Amen Sacrificed Lamb in the Sanctuary
<i>Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world</i>	5:6; entire book	Lamb of God
<i>This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his table</i>	19:9; Chapter 19 (all)	Marriage Supper of the Lamb
Silent Contemplation	8:1	Silent Contemplation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concluding Rites/ final blessing <p>The Mass of the Catholic Church is celebrated around the world throughout every generation</p>	22:7 7:9-17	Final Blessing Worldwide worship Catholic (Greek: <i>katholikos</i>) means Universal
<p>See Catechism of the Catholic Church references #s 1090; 1137-1139; 2642. Michal Hunt, Copyright © 2002 Agape Bible Study. Permissions All Rights Reserved.</p>		

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