

## The Book of the Revelation (Introduction)

1. Opening: note the singular – Revelation nor “revelations”
  - a. Greek: apocalypsis, to uncover what is hidden but is at hand
    - i. Douay-Reim says “Apolalypse”
  - b. Who wrote this: John the Apostle, an unknown author of the Epistles of John, and/or Gospel of John, the John School. Grammar and syntax suggests one author. “John of Patmos” identifies himself as a prophet
  - c. One of the last books accepted into NT canon and rejected by a few of the Fathers. Over 300 manuscripts and fragments
  - d. The World in AD 96
    - i. The Roman World
    - ii. Civil War: ends in BE 30
    - iii. Class society
    - iv. Turba vulga (“the ugly mob”)
2. What this is – and is not.
  - a. It is Apocalyptic: a genre Jewish writing; while this is the only full book of it, there are other examples, eg Ezekiel, Daniel, Mark 13
  - b. Apocalypses are usually pseudonymous – written as if by an ancient figure such as Enoch or Abraham.
  - c. Apocalypses are usually written from a context of oppression, persecution and despair. Many scholars use the phrase ‘resistance literature’ to describe them.
  - d. A heavenly intermediary usually appears in Apocalypses to interpret visions or reveal secret knowledge.
  - e. Apocalypses contain a sharp dualism, a contrast between the present age dominated by evil, and a coming age of change.
  - f. Apocalypses tend to be pessimistic about the possibility for positive change during the present age. What is needed is a radical divine intervention to overthrow God’s enemies and set things right.
  - g. Apocalypses are usually filled with symbolism.
  - h. Apocalypses tend to be deterministic, portraying an inescapable future, set in stone by God’s fixed calendar of events.
  - i. In apocalypses, events that are contemporary to the author are often portrayed as if they were prophesied long ago, so that what is happening in the author’s day is merely a fulfilment of what was revealed centuries before
  - j.
3. Prophetic literature

- a. An OT form of literature. Hebrew: nevim, 8-5<sup>th</sup> century BC
  - b. A statement directly from God to a prophet on the politics of a specific time: Isaiah 6, Amos 8 – but this is not always cut in stone as we see in Jonah
  - c. The visual sight and the reality beneath it
4. What it is not: a statement on the future, ie what is going to happen as in a future history, like an accurate science fiction film. Rather it is what will happen in every age
5. The Second Great Awakening: the birth of modern revivalism  
 An evangelical revival named after an earlier one in Colonies  
 Revolutions of 1848, Civil War: 1861-5, Darwin 1859, Smith 1844  
 The Birth of Modern “Fundamentalism”  
 A strong reassertion of Biblical theology
6. Cyrus Schofield: 1843-1921
- a. Confederate soldier, lawyer and politician, became alcoholic, and pastor: deeply influenced by Dispensational Premillinarism
    - i. Published study Bible in 1909, ff. by two world wars – and too many he seemed to be prophetic. He also wanted to date everything (eg Usshars 4004 BC creation)
    - ii. Notes on the bottom of the page
    - iii. The Chart: a convenient map of the future in seven ages. This is a modern belief without warrant in RC history or theology
    - iv. This stuff has blinded many to the deeper messages and constricted study of the book (eg. Hal Lindsey, Late Great Planet Earth)

## Book of Revelation (ch. 1)

1. The Frame vv. 1-3 compare with 22:18 ff
  - a. It is a revelation (apocalypse)
    - i. "What must happen soon"
    - ii. Note the reading aloud: that's how they read
    - iii. To hear and to heed
  - b. 2 The Churches in Asia
    - i. It's a Roman province, "Asia Minor" or western modern Turkey  
This was considered part of Greece (Hellas) in antiquity.
2. "Seven Churches" John loves 7 – a number of completeness. This probably goes back to the Indo Europeans
3. "Kings and priests for our God"
  - i. We note the different meanings of the word "priest" Royal priesthood as in "prophet priest and king" (baptism)
4. The Vision of Christ
  - a. Patmos: 13.5 sq miles of sand and rocks of the Dodecanese Peninsula, among 150 islands, 26 inhabited off the coast of Asia Minor, pop today 3000. It is incorrectly called a "Roman Penal Colony"  
Tradition says John went there with the BVM. People were sent to islands to avoid spread of bad ideas. Ref. Julia
  - b. V. 7: an early hymn (?) Note imminent return
  - c. V. 8 : alpha and omega, A-Z
  - d. "Lord's Day" ie Sunday (cf Adventism)
  - e. We note the period: the Domitian persecution (ref. Flavius Clemens)
  - f. 14 hair white as wool: an in ancient of days" (Daniel 7:9) ie God "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire."
  - g. Right hand: the hand of blessing (v. 17)
  - h. Fell down as dead: note the OT references, eg Manoah
  - i. "netherworld" Hades (hell)
  - j. "seven stars" universal rule, ref. emperors
  - k. Lamps (oil with wicks) they are the light of their territory (lux mundi)  
the church is the lamp holding the oil, the wick is the light
  - l. "angels of the churches." Angels, leaders, : "angeloi" messengers
  - m. This is followed by the messages to the seven cities