

INTRODUCTION (Revelation 1:1)

I. Background

- A. AUTHOR identifies himself as “JOHN” (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8)
 - 1. Probably not “JOHN the ELDER” from Ephesus (Papias)
 - 2. Probably not JOHN MARK (Dionysius of Alexandria)
 - 3. Probably JOHN the APOSTLE (Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, etc.)
- B. OCCASION of writing was from the PENAL COLONY of Patmos (1:9)
 - 1. Exiled for “WORD of God and the TESTIMONY of Jesus”
 - 2. Released after the DEATH of Domitian in AD 96 (Eusebius)
 - 3. Lived in EPHESUS until the reign of TRAJAN (Irenaeus)
- C. DATE of writing *circa* AD 95 or 96

II. Inspiration and Canonicity

- A. Claims to be DIRECT REVELATION from God (1:1-3, 10-11, 19; 22:19-20)
- B. Widely CIRCULATED and ACCEPTED by mid-SECOND Century
 - 1. Mentioned by many EARLY WRITERS
 - 2. Tertullian quotes 18 of 22 chapters as “SCRIPTURE”
- C. Met with OBJECTIONS during the THIRD Century from Alexandrians who rejected doctrine of the MILLENNIUM
- D. Considered “NON-APOSTOLIC” by Luther, Zwingli, and Erasmus
- E. DEFENDED by CALVIN and later Reformers

F. Study assumes inspiration and canonicity are BEYOND DOUBT

III. Interpretation

A. Allegorical, or NON-LITERAL (Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustin, etc.)

1. Interprets as SYMBOLIC of the CONFLICT between CHRISTIANITY and EVIL
2. Intended to reinterpret Christ's MILLENNIAL reign on EARTH

B. Preterist (Jesuit named Alcasar)

1. Interprets as symbolic HISTORY, not PROPHECY
2. Considers all symbols as HIDING the real meaning from ROMAN PERSECUTORS
3. Says chs 20-22 depict CURRENT TRIUMPH of the church

C. Historical (Catholic scholar, Joachim)

1. Interprets as symbolic PROPHECY of CHURCH history
2. Interpreters see history's CLIMAX as CONTEMPORARY

*D. Futurist (Contemporary conservatives, usually PRE-MILLENNIAL)

1. Interprets chs 1-3 as HISTORIC, 1st century
2. Interprets chs 4-22 as STILL FUTURE
 - a. Chs 4-18 as the SEVEN YEARS just preceding CHRIST'S RETURN, with emphasis on final 3 ½ YEARS
 - b. Ch 19 as describing Christ's RETURN to EARTH
 - c. Ch 20 as describing the MILLENNIAL KINGDOM
 - d. Chs 21-22 as either MILLENNIAL or AFTER
3. Recognizes SYMBOLISM, but allows for LITERALISM