

Doctrine of Eschatology

Dating of Revelation

1. It is important to date the book of the Revelation because of its bearing on the events spoken of by Christ in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.
2. The opening verse states that the events shown to John were to shortly come to pass.
 - *Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.*
3. Traditionally, the book of the Revelation is dated c. AD 90-95 during the reign of Domitian (October 24, 51– September 18, 96). Domitian reigned as the Roman emperor from September 14, 81 to September 18, 96.
4. An alternative dating of Revelation is to date the book prior to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Such a date would make the material relevant to John's generation.
5. There is external evidence for an early date of the Revelation, and there is internal evidence.
6. The external evidence for the Revelation can be noted.
 - The Church Father, Irenaeus (c. 130 – AD 202), in his work, *Against Heresy* (Book Five), is often used to establish a late date for the Revelation. Said, Irenaeus, "We will not incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist. For if it was necessary that his name should be distinctively revealed, in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time hence, but almost in our day, toward the end of the Domitian's reign." Based on this statement, a late date for the Revelation has been perpetuated through the centuries.

However, this cryptic statement may simply refer to the fact that John himself was seen during the days of Diocletian, not that the apostle's vision was seen at that time. In other words, John could have had his vision prior to AD 70, but lived on to the time of Diocletian.

Irenaeus makes reference to "ancient" copies of the *Revelation*. This would not be prudent language if the vision were recent.

- Another Church Father, Clement of Alexandria (AD 150 – 215), stated that all apostolic revelation ceased during the reign of Nero. All the books of the prior were written prior to the year AD 68.

7. The internal evidence for the Revelation can be noted.

- The time frame passages of the Revelation have a short time span.

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Revelation 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Revelation 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Revelation 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Revelation 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

- So much of the language of the symbols of the Revelation is about the Temple. If the Temple had been destroyed, surely that would have been mentioned. Revelation presents the Temple as still standing. This is an argument from silence, but it is pregnant in meaning.
- The Beast of Revelation 13 was well known to be Nero.
- In Revelation 17 there is an internal explanation of the text.

The city of Rome, the City on the Seven Hills, is in view.

The seven kings (emperors) indicate the Revelation is written during the reign of the 6th king.

Revelation 17:10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

Julius Caesar
Augustus
Tiberius
Caligula
Claudius
Nero (the 6th king)
Galba (along with Otho, and Vitellius) ruled for “a short space”
Vespasian

Special Note.

While it is true the Romans did not call their rulers “kings” but emperors, the Jews did call Roman official kings. *John 19:15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priest answered, We have no king but Caesar.*