

*Revelation* was likely the last book of the New Testament to be written, and was placed last in the New Testament. It was probably written in the 80s or 90s AD by the Apostle John while he was exiled on the Island of Patmos.

The apocalyptic imagery in *Revelation* makes the book difficult to understand and open to a wide variety of interpretations. Some believe the book describes events of John's time, others believe it describes portions of the history of the Roman empire, while others believe it describes events that still have yet to occur. Many others think it describes portions of those three times along with other events, while others think it is entirely symbolic or allegorical.

The book opens as the revelation of Jesus is communicated to John, who is instructed to write down all he hears and sees. A brief description of Jesus is given. All of this happens in Chapter One.

Chapters Two and Three describe messages from Jesus to seven churches in the province of Asia. These messages include greetings, compliments, warnings, punishments, and rewards.

Chapters Four, Twenty-One and Twenty-two describe what the book calls the first and second heavens, while chapters Five through Twenty include the events of the times of tribulation and the final judgements. The language of these chapters is quite dramatic and colorful.

Thousands of books and millions of sermons delivered since *Revelation* was written prove one thing: there are seemingly endless ways of interpreting this dynamic book, especially when other prophetic books of the Bible are brought into the matter. However, rather than throwing up your hands in frustration, take comfort that the author of Revelation encourages you to read aloud and take to heart this special message from Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Revelation 1:3, 22:7, 22:18-19