

## REVELATION (BOOK)

### Introduction

Revelation, which comes at the very end of the biblical canon, combines three distinctive literary types to form a most remarkable book. As its opening sentences reveal it is, at the same time, an ‘apocalypse’ or ‘revelation’, a ‘prophecy’ and a ‘letter’. The first of these terms has now become a technical term for a body of literature, mainly Jewish, which developed in the two centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ, although the style is probably best exemplified in the much earlier book of Daniel. These apocalyptic writings were viewed as revealing heavenly secrets, normally inaccessible to human beings, sometimes focusing on God’s judgment of the wicked and his deliverance of the righteous. As a prophecy Revelation claims to be a message from God which invites a response of trust and obedience from John’s contemporaries. Finally, the book is presented in the form of a letter, sent from John to those churches ‘in the province of Asia’ for whom he had a special concern. The distinctive nature of the book of Revelation must always be borne in mind when reading it, especially as John develops a number of significant theological themes by utilizing OT scripture, Jewish interpretative traditions on the OT and early Christian tradition.

### Suffering and Victory

As in John’s Gospel, so in John’s Revelation, the death and defeat of Christ is, in reality, his victory over Satan (see *e.g.* 5:5–6). The Lamb’s followers are to recapitulate the model of his ironic victory in their own lives; by means of *enduring* through *tribulation* they reign in the invisible kingdom of the Messiah (see 1:6, 9). They exercise kingship in the midst of their suffering just as Christ did from the cross; Christians are called to be conquerors by emulating in their own lives the archetypal messianic triumph of Jesus. Though the Christian’s outer body is vulnerable to persecution and suffering, God has promised to protect the regenerated inner spirit of true saints (see 11:1–7). And at the end of the sojourn of Christ’s body (the church) on earth, its presence, like his, will be completely removed, and then it will be resurrected (see 11:7–12 and *cf.* 20:11–22:5).

Conversely, the church’s opponents defeat themselves spiritually when they persecute God’s people in the same manner as Satan (see Spiritual powers) was defeated at the cross, though it appeared that he had won a physical victory over Christ (*\*cf.* Col. 2:14–15). Acts of oppression against the saints, when not repented of, lay an increasing foundation for the oppressors’ final judgment, and even become expressions of a judgment of hardening by God upon permanently recalcitrant people.

The main goal of the argument of John’s Revelation is to exhort God’s people to remain faithful to the calling of following the Lamb’s paradoxical example and not to compromise, in order that they may inherit final salvation. The major theological theme of the book is that God receives glory, as a result of accomplishing full salvation and final judgment (see 1:6; 4:11; 5:11–13; 19:1, 5, 7; *cf.* 11:17). Even the notion of Christ and the church reigning ironically in the midst of their suffering and the idea of unbelieving persecutors experiencing spiritual defeat in the midst of their physical victories demonstrate the wisdom of God, and point accordingly to his glory (see 5:12 for the link between the slain Lamb, wisdom and divine glory, which is not found in the hymns of praise at the end of ch. 4).

Revelation 4–5 form the introduction to the remainder of the book’s visions up to 22:5; this introduction overshadows everything in 6:1–22:5. Therefore a clear understanding of the main point of Revelation 4–5 is essential; God and Christ are *glorified* because Christ’s resurrection demonstrates that they are sovereign over creation to judge and to redeem. The focus of this primary point in chapters 4–5 is upon the glory of God and the Lamb. The clear deduction from these two chapters is

that the Lamb is in the same divine position as God, a point reiterated throughout the remainder of the book, and intimated earlier (*\*cf.* e.g. 1:13–14).

## **The Theological Significance of the Image**

### **Of the Throne**

The vision of Revelation 4–5 portrays a heavenly world in which God and the Lamb’s throne are the centre and everything else is configured in a series of outer circles around the throne apparently in the following order: 1. a rainbow aura; 2. the ‘living creatures’ who guard the throne; 3. the twenty-four elders sitting on twenty-four thrones in a second outer circle; 4. all other creatures in the universe. Seventeen of the thirty-four references in the book to God’s ‘throne’ occur in chapters 4–5, a fact which underlines the centrality of God’s sovereignty (see Providence) for which he is given glory climactically in 4:9–11 and 5:12–13.

All the following visions flow out of this introductory vision and are to be seen as the historical consequences of divine sovereignty. For example, the visions of the seals and trumpets, the unnumbered visions (chs. 12–14) and the visions of the bowls (together with the appended visions of chs. 17–19) show the results in past, present and future history of divine sovereignty in its redemption and judgment.

Therefore God and Christ are in ultimate control of all the woes of both believers and unbelievers. Their absolute sovereignty over such unpleasant events poses a theological problem: how can the righteousness, goodness and holiness of Christ and God be maintained if they are so directly linked, as the ultimate cause, to *all* the judgments, and to their associated demonic agents who actually carry out many of the destructive judgments under ultimate divine supervision?

Some commentators do not think that there is a theological problem, since they do not view Christ and God as the ultimate cause of the judgments. Some scholars use theological presuppositions about God’s holiness and love in order to deny the direct link, and consequently assert that Christ only ‘permits’ or ‘tolerates’ such characters as the four horsemen to execute their woes (*\*e.g.* G. B. Caird, *Revelation*, pp. 81–83). However, not only does Revelation see the divine throne as ultimately behind the trials of believers and woes of unbelievers, but the major OT passages formative for the visions of the seals, trumpets and bowls, without exception, portray God as the ultimate cause of the ordeals (so Zech. 6:1–8; Ezek. 14:21; Lev. 26:18–28 and their use in 6:2–8).

The answer to the theological difficulty lies in the ultimate purpose of the woes being that of refining the faith of believers and punishing unbelievers. For example, the four horsemen’s woes of 6:1–8 are an effect of Christ’s death and resurrection (chs. 4–5). He transformed the suffering of the cross into a triumph, gained sovereignty over the powers of evil who crucified him (*\*cf.* Rev. 1:18; Col. 2:15), and subsequently uses them to achieve his purposes of refining his people and punishing those recalcitrant in their wickedness.

As at the end of chapters 4 and 5, so also towards the end of the visionary segment in Revelation 19:7–8, the author affirms that saints are to glorify God. This glorification occurs at the conclusion of history *because* of the consummation of the marriage of the Lamb with his bride, who will be perfectly adorned for the occasion; focus on the adorned bride is intended to lead the saints to glorify God. This notion of divine glory is central also to Revelation 21:1–22:5, since the new Jerusalem (God’s people) can be defined only in relation to its luminescent reflection of God’s glory. Indeed, the central feature of the city is God and the Lamb who shine as a lamp upon the city (*\*cf.* 21:22–23; 22:5), so that the more complete definition of the new Jerusalem includes God’s people in full fellowship with God and Christ, the former reflecting the glory of the latter.

## **The New Creation as the Goal of Redemption and History**

The portrayal of the new covenant, new temple, new Israel and new Jerusalem affirms the future fulfilment of the main prophetic themes of the OT and NT, which all find their ultimate climax in the new creation. The new creation itself is the most overarching of these themes, of which the other four are but facets (see W. J. Dumbrell, *The End of the Beginning*). John's repeated allusions to the OT historical form of these five concepts expresses a typological interpretation of history which views OT institutions and other realities as prophetic foreshadowings of escalated and equivalent NT realities: e.g. Genesis 1 creation, the Exodus as fulfilment of the divine covenant and as new creation, the tabernacle, Solomonic temple, old Jerusalem, etc. These typological and prophetic themes suggest a belief in God as the sovereign designer of all history, which is planned to result in his glory. All five of the central biblical ideas of new covenant, new temple, new Israel, new Jerusalem and new creation are metaphorical ideas which refer to the same reality, God's intimate, glorious presence with his people.

These same five themes together culminate in 21:1–22:5 and form the climax and major goal of the entire book up to Revelation 22:5. In particular, the central notion of God's glorious presence is introduced in Revelation 4–5 and developed throughout the book, and finally culminates in the last visions of Revelation 21:1–22:5. These concluding visions of Revelation, however, do not express the main point of the whole book. 21:1–22:5 is placed at the conclusion of John's work to underline John's ultimate purpose in writing: to encourage and admonish Christians to remain faithful. This is why the book concludes with a non-visionary, auditory epilogue of repeated promises, exhortations and affirmations of Christ's imminent coming, and warnings to the saints in 22:6–21. The vision of the future, perfected people of God in unending fellowship with his glorious presence is intended to encourage and motivate them to persevere through temptations (see Testing) to compromise. The prospect of final victory should provide impetus to win partial victory now by not compromising.

The main reason that the bride is contrasted with the prostitute in 17:1–22:5 is to encourage and admonish the faltering churches, troubled by compromise with the whore, to stop compromising and reflect in greater measure the features of their coming, consummated excellence in anticipation of it. This point is suggested by the antithetical correspondence between the imperfections of the churches in chapters 2–3 and the perfections found in 21:1–22:5.

Furthermore, an exegetical analysis of 21:1–22:5 reveals that a number of the OT prophecies which are viewed as reaching fulfilment at the conclusion of history are viewed elsewhere in the NT as having already begun to be fulfilled in Christ and the church: e.g. new creation, new temple, apostles as a foundation of the temple, new Jerusalem, the promise of God's tabernacling presence in 21:3, and the kingship of the saints. Even elsewhere in Revelation it is apparent that these prophecies have already begun to be fulfilled in the latter part of the 1st century: e.g. new creation (3:14), new temple (\*cf. lampstands of 1:12–13, 20, exalted saints in the heavenly temple in 6:9–11), and kingship (1:5b–6, 9, 13; 2:27; 3:21; 5:10). New creation, as the broad redemptive-historical theme, subsumes the promissory ideas of new temple, new covenant, new Israel and new Jerusalem.

### *The new temple*

The paradisaical city-temple of Revelation 21:1–22:5 encompasses the entirety of the newly created earth: 1. Isaiah 54:2–3, together with several Jewish references, supports the notion of a new Jerusalem or end-time temple greater than the former Jerusalem and temple. 2. John says in Revelation 21:1 that he saw 'a new heaven and new earth', and then in 21:2 and 21:9–22:5 he, in fact, sees only a paradisaical city-temple. It is possible that he first saw the whole heavens and earth in 21:1 and then subsequently the city-temple which is part of that new cosmos. It is, however, more likely that the 'new heaven and new earth' of 21:1 is defined by and equated with the paradisaical city-temple of 21:2 and 21:9–22:5. The allusion to Isaiah 65:17 in Revelation 21:1 supports this view.

The rationale for the world-encompassing nature of the paradisaical temple lies in the ancient notion that the OT temple was a microcosmic model of the entire heaven and earth. Josephus and Philo

discuss various ways in which the tabernacle or temple or parts of it symbolically reflect the cosmos (Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 2:71–145; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 3:123, 179–187; in *Jewish Wars* 4:324 priests are referred to as leading the ‘cosmic worship’ [*tēs kosmikēs threskeias*]). While it is true that Philo and Josephus had different interpretations of the symbolism, it is probable that they both testify to a general cosmological understanding of the temple held in mainstream contemporary Jewish thought (see also M. G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, pp. 41–47, and V. S. Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*, pp. 13–35, who make many of the same and similar observations about the temple and the priestly garments as do Philo and Josephus). Ancient Near Eastern literature also reflects the notion that temples of the gods were microcosmic models of heavenly temples or of the universe.

This cosmic understanding of the temple implicitly suggested that its purpose was to point to a future time when it would encompass the whole world (much like an architect’s model of a newly planned building is but a small replica of what is to be built on a much larger scale). Since the OT temple was the localized dwelling of God’s presence on earth, the temple’s correspondence with the cosmos pointed to the eschatological goal of God’s presence tabernacling throughout the earth, an eschatological goal which Revelation 21:1–22:5 appears to describe (\*cf. 21:3).

Revelation 22:1–5 suggests that the author is aware of an earlier cultic interpretation of Eden. The Garden of Eden was the archetypal temple in which the first human worshipped God. Israel’s temple was the place where the priest experienced God’s unique presence, and Eden was the place where Adam walked and talked with God. Genesis 2:15 says that God placed Adam in the Garden ‘to cultivate (work) it and keep it’. The two Hebrew words for ‘cultivate and keep’ are usually translated ‘serve and guard’ elsewhere in the OT, often in association with priestly service in the tabernacle/temple. The writer of Genesis 2 possibly suggests that Adam was the archetypal priest who served in and guarded God’s first temple. When Adam failed to guard the temple by sinning and letting in an unclean serpent to defile the sanctuary, Adam lost his priestly role and the two cherubim took over the responsibility of ‘guarding’ the Garden temple: God ‘stationed the cherubim ... to guard the way to the tree of life’ (so Gen. 3:24). Probably their role was recalled in Israel’s later temple in the two cherubim stationed on either side of the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies. The ‘tree of life’ itself was probably the model for the lampstand placed directly outside the Holy of Holies. That the Garden of Eden was the first temple is also suggested by the fact that Israel’s later temple had wooden carvings which gave it a garden-like atmosphere (1 Kgs. 6:18, 29, 32, 35; 7:18–20). The entrance to Eden was from the east (Gen. 3:24), which was also the direction from which one entered the tabernacle and later temples of Israel.

According to Genesis 1:28, not only was Adam to ‘guard’ this sanctuary, but he was also to subdue the earth. It seems that he was to extend the geographical boundaries of the Garden until Eden extended throughout and covered the whole earth. What Adam failed to do, Revelation pictures Christ as finally having done. The Edenic imagery beginning in Revelation 22:1 shows that the building of the temple which began in Genesis 2 will be completed in Christ and his people and will encompass the whole new creation.

### *The new covenant*

The affirmation in Revelation 21:3–4 that God’s dwelling is now with human beings and that ‘they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God’ (NIV) indicates that the new creation, towards which history is moving, will bring to fulfilment the new covenant promised in the book of Jeremiah and inaugurated by Jesus Christ. In essence, like the Sinai covenant which foreshadows it, the new covenant binds together in a special relationship God and his people. However, while the Sinai covenant made it possible for God to come and dwell uniquely in the midst of the Israelites, access into the very presence of God was limited to the high priest and then only briefly on one occasion during the year, the Day of Atonement. These limits will not exist in the new creation, for

through the new covenant all those ‘whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life’ will see God’s face and take delight in being in his presence.

### *The new Israel*

The new creation unveiled in Revelation 21–22 is presented in images which clearly indicate that its inhabitants are to be viewed as a new Israel. This picture is created by an interesting ‘fusion of tribal and apostolic imagery’ (Dumbrell, *The End*, p. 119). Thus on the gates of the holy city are ‘the names of the twelve tribes of Israel’ (12:12), and ‘the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb’ (21:14).

The continuity between tribal ‘Israel’ and apostolic ‘Israel’ builds on God’s desire to create for himself a special people. In Exodus 19:6 God offers to those whom he has just delivered from slavery in Egypt the prospect of becoming ‘a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’. While this conditional promise is never fully realized by OT Israel, the same opportunity is extended to those who believe in Christ. Thus the apostle Peter, writing to God’s elect in Asia Minor, states, ‘But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light’ (1 Pet. 2:9). While God’s people will include individuals ‘from every tribe and language and people and nation’, this inclusion is based on the understanding that they are the spiritual seed of Abraham (\*e.g. Gal. 3:29). For this reason they may legitimately be considered to be the new Israel. Furthermore, the idea of a new Israel is reinforced by the designation ‘new Jerusalem’ given to the city at the heart of the new creation (Rev. 21:2).

### *The new Jerusalem*

John’s vision of ‘a new heaven and a new earth’ centres on the descent from heaven of the ‘Holy City, the new Jerusalem’. The new city, radiant with God’s glory and constructed from the most precious of minerals, dominates the landscape. Indeed, such is the light emanating from it that there is no need for sun or moon. To this new Jerusalem the nations will bring their glory and honour in worship of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.

The image of the city at the heart of the new earth clearly draws upon OT passages which highlight the special significance of Jerusalem/Zion in the purposes of God. A close relationship exists between the divine appointment of David as king over Israel, the choice of Jerusalem as the capital of the new kingdom, and the construction of a temple in the city. This relationship between king, city and temple continues to be important even after the destruction of the temple and the removal of the Davidic monarchy at the time of the Babylonian exile. The hope remained that there would yet be a restoration involving all three. In the light of this the Gospels give special attention to the relationship between Jesus, Jerusalem and the temple. However, just as Jesus is much more than a son of David, so too the NT writers develop a new understanding of Jerusalem/Zion and the temple. While the earthly Jerusalem is doomed to destruction, believers are encouraged to come ‘to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God’ (Heb. 12:22).

## **The Place of Christians in the Present Age**

### **Of the World**

In the light of the above discussion and of an exegetical analysis of the entire book, the main idea of Revelation can be roughly formulated as follows: the sovereignty of God and Christ in redeeming and judging brings them glory, which is intended to motivate saints to worship God and reflect his glorious attributes through obedience to his word. It is not coincidental that the passages in which the most significant expressions of worship are recorded occur just at the points where God’s glory is highlighted (\*cf. Rev. 4–5; 7:9–12; 11:15–19; 15:2–8; 19:1–8; where words for ‘worship’ are also

found). Idolatry in Revelation is not merely worshipping other false gods, but ‘the failure to worship the one who is Lord of all’ (M. M. Thompson, in *EA* 8, p. 51). People may claim that they are religiously neutral and worship no god, but in John’s mind this is still idolatry.

The book portrays an end-time new creation which has irrupted into the present old world through the death and resurrection of Christ, as well as through the sending of the Spirit at Pentecost. John’s vision communicates values that run counter to the values of the old world and which provide ‘a structure of meaning that grounds’ the lives of Christians in the new world (so L. L. Thompson, in *Sacred Places and Profane Spaces*, p. 120). The symbols which describe the new world spell out the eternal significance and consequences of Christ’s life, death and resurrection, and of the present choices and behaviour of the readers. Part of John’s purpose is to motivate the readers not to compromise with the world but to align their thoughts and behaviour with the God-centered standards of the new creation. They are to see their own situation in this world in the eternal perspective of the new world which is now their true home.

So the churches are to read and re-read the book in their assemblies in order that they may continually be reminded of God’s real, new world which stands in opposition to the old, fallen system in which they presently live. Such a continual reminder will cause them to realize that their home is not in this old world but in the new world portrayed parabolically in the heavenly visions of Revelation. Continual reading of the book will encourage genuine saints to realize that what they believe is not strange, but truly normal from God’s perspective. They will be prevented from being discouraged by worldliness, including that which has crept into the churches, which always makes godly standards appear odd and sinful values seem normal (for this concept see D. Wells, *God in the Wasteland*, pp. 35–59, and *passim*, as well as Wells, *No Place for Truth*). John refers to true unbelievers in the book as ‘earth-dwellers’ because their ultimate home is on this transient earth. They cannot trust in anything except what their eyes see and their physical senses perceive; they are permanently earthbound, trusting only in earthly security, and will perish with this old order at the end of time when the corrupted cosmos is finally judged and passes away.

On the other hand, Christians are like pilgrims passing through this world. As such they are to commit themselves to the revelation of God in the new order, so as progressively to reflect his image and increasingly to live according to the values of the new world, not being conformed to the fallen system, its idolatrous images and associated values (similarly *cf.* Rom. 12:2).

In this connection it may be profitable to ask why Christ addresses the churches in the letters of chapters 2 and 3 through their angelic representatives, especially since it does not seem logical to blame and reproach angels for the sins of the churches. One answer to this question is that essential to the idea of corporate representation is the accountability of the representative for the group and the accountability of the group for the actions of the representative. So there is a sense in which the angels are responsible for the churches; yet the churches also benefit from the position of the angels.

Thus the existence of the churches in heaven is represented and embodied in their representative angels. In fact, one of the reasons for the presence of so many angels throughout the visions of Revelation, and especially for God addressing the churches through their representative angels, is to remind true Christians that a dimension of their existence is already in the heavenly realm, that their real home is not with the unbelieving ‘earth-dwellers’, and that they have heavenly help and protection in their struggle not to be conformed to the pagan environment. And the purpose of the weekly gatherings of the church on earth (as in 1:3, 9–10), in addition to the purposes noted above, is to be reminded of its heavenly identity by the modelling of its worship on that of the angels’ and heavenly church’s worship of the exalted Lamb. This is why scenes of heavenly liturgy are woven throughout Revelation, especially as part of concluding sections which serve as interpretations of preceding visionary narratives. It is from these passages that the churches are to learn how to worship in their gathered meetings and to be given a zeal for worship of the true God. The intended consequence is that believers in the churches should develop an attitude of worshipful reverence for God, not only in their

assemblies, but in their bowing to divine sovereignty in every aspect of their lives and in every area of its outworking.

### **The Theological Meaning of the Use of Symbols**

John's method of symbolizing the heavenly world and other invisible forces, such as demonic powers, is theologically significant. The literary form of symbolic parable appears whenever ordinary warnings are no longer heeded, and no warning will ever be heeded by people who are spiritually callous and intent on continuing in disobedience (*\*cf.* G. K. Beale, in *A Vision for the Church: Studies in Early Christian Ecclesiology*, pp. 167–180). The parabolic aspect of OT prophets' messages is closely linked to the hardening commission of Isaiah 6:9–10 and, therefore, may be considered one of the means by which people are to be blinded. Yet the parables are also intended to have a jolting effect on the remnant who have become complacent among the compromising majority; in addition, a remnant of pseudo-believers are woken up and genuinely converted. Parables function in the same manner in Ezekiel and in Jesus' ministry. Therefore the appearance of parables in redemptive history signals judgment on the majority of the covenant community.

John's repeated use of the hearing formula is thus not novel but in line with the prior prophetic pattern. John's use of the phrase 'the one having ears, let him hear' is linked to Isaiah 6:9–10, as well as to Ezekiel 3:27 (*\*cf.* Ezek. 12:2), and is a development of the Gospels' use of the phrase (*\*e.g.* Matt. 13:9–17, 43), which itself builds upon Isaiah 6:9–10. As also in the case of the OT prophets and Jesus, the expression about hearing indicates that parabolic communication has the dual purpose of opening the eyes of the true remnant but blinding counterfeit members of the covenant community.

There is a consensus that this repeated formula 'the one who has an ear, let him hear' in Revelation 2–3 is an allusion to the Synoptic formula. Therefore, as in Isaiah 6, Ezekiel and the Synoptics, the formula refers to the fact that Christ's message in Revelation will reveal truth to some but conceal it from others. John addresses the formula to the church, which is the continuation of the true Israel and the genuine covenant community. But, the church, like Israel, has become spiritually dull and has begun to compromise by associating with idolatry. The parabolic method of revelation is instituted in Revelation because many among the churches have become intractable in their compromising stance. The symbols in Revelation have both a hardening effect on the unbelieving and a shock effect upon genuine saints caught up in the church's compromising complacency. For example, the symbols reveal the terrible, satanic essence of the idolatrous institutions with which God's true people are beginning to associate, in order that they may realize the horrific nature of these institutions and immediately break off their association with them.

The hearing formulas at the end of each of the letters anticipate the visionary parables of chapters 4–21. A very similar formula in 13:9, 'if anyone has ears, let him hear', is a further hint that John intends the symbolic visions of Revelation 4–21 to have the dual revelatory function mentioned above.

This means that the symbolic visions of chapters 4–21 are parabolic portrayals of the more abstractly expressed material in chapters 2–3. Therefore the letters broadly interpret the symbolic visions and *vice versa*. The twofold spiritual function of the symbols is further indicated by the parallel between the series of trumpets and bowls and the Exodus plague signs, which functioned originally to harden the Egyptians but to give insight and redemption to Israel. Yet it needs to be recalled that a remnant among the Egyptians responded positively to the plagues and left Egypt with Israel; it should also be remembered that the majority of Israelites who left Egypt were characterized by unbelief and hard hearts (see Psalm 95). Consequently, as probably in the case of the OT prophets and Jesus, the symbols used by John not only harden the reprobate, but also both jolt genuine believers out of their spiritual anaesthesia and shock a remnant among the unbelieving mass so that they truly believe. John applies the Exodus model to the church and the world. Consequently, the large amount of symbolic material in Revelation is due primarily to John's theological intention, of identifying his relationship to

the situation of the Asia Minor churches with the relationship of the OT prophets and Jesus to the plight of Israel.

## Conclusion

Many consider Revelation (esp. chs. 4–22) to be primarily a map of future events which have yet to happen. While there are significant sections which look to the future, there are also many which refer to the past and the present. This is to say, in view of the preceding discussion, that the book of Revelation is not merely a futurology but also a redemptive-historical and theological psychology for the church's thinking throughout the age before Christ's final coming.

*See also:* THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS.

## Bibliography

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<sup>1</sup> *New dictionary of biblical theology*. 2001 (T. D. Alexander & B. S. Rosner, Ed.) (electronic ed.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.