

Love Is The Only Way To Endure

Revelation 2:1-7

What kind of book is Revelation?

The genre of Revelation:

-An Apocalypse

-A Prophecy

-A Pastoral Letter

Revelation a *Hybrid Document*

The *revelation* (apokalypsis) from (of) Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Rev. 1:1-2

Blessed is the one who reads aloud
the words of this *prophecy*, and
blessed are those who hear it and
take to heart what is written in it,
because the time is near.

Rev. 1:3

John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father –to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

Most scholars agree that
Revelation is "an apocalyptic
prophecy in the form of a circular
letter."

Richard Bauckham, *New Testament Theology, Revelation*

Scholars debate the origins of apocalyptic theology and literature, but its basic function seems fairly clear: to sustain the people of God, especially in times of crisis, particularly evil and oppression. Apocalyptic literature both expresses and creates hope by offering scathing critique of the oppressors, passionate exhortations to defiance[...]

(and sometimes even preparation for confrontation), and unfailing confidence in God's ultimate defeat of the present evil. Usually articulated in symbolic, even cryptic, language, this hope means that apocalyptic is also the language and literature of resistance....

Apocalyptic theology includes ... a temporal dualism. It divides history into two ages, this age and the age to come. The present age is characterized by evil, injustice, oppression, and persecution, while the coming age will be a time of goodness, justice, and peace. Since these two ages are so antithetical, and since the current age is so completely infested with the power of Satan and evil, apocalyptic theology is marked by pessimism; [...]

there is no hope for a human solution to the crisis of this age. Only God can—and will!—intervene to set things right.

Therefore, apocalyptic pessimism does not have the final word; it gives way to optimism. This is not optimism based on human activity, but confidence in the coming triumph of God.

Michael Gorman, *Reading Revelation Responsibly*

Prophets comfort God's people in crisis because they need assurance that, despite all signs to the contrary, God is God and will one day bring an end to all evil and oppression. On the other hand, prophets warn the people about the coming judgment because the people may be participating in, or be tempted to participate in, the very evil for which the oppressive system and its perpetrators will be judged. [...]

In fact, in the case of Revelation, we have clear evidence that John believes some in the churches to which he writes were engaging in forms of idolatry and immorality, the general categories for sins against God and sins against neighbor, that the human forces of evil were practicing. [...]

This is part of the fundamental and perpetual message of both Old and New Testament prophets: Flee idolatry! Flee immorality! Or, in Revelation's version of this message, "Come out" (18:4)

Michael Gorman, Reading Revelation Responsibly

A S I A

(Modern Eastern Turkey)

Pergamum

Thyatira

Sardis

Smyrna

Philadelphia

Ephesus

Laodicea

Patmos



A S I A

(Modern Eastern Turkey)



“Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Rev. 1:19-20

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus
write:

These are the words of him who holds
the seven stars in his right hand and
walks among the seven golden
lampstands. I know your deeds, your
hard work and your perseverance. I know
that you cannot tolerate wicked people,
that you have tested those who claim to
be apostles but are not, and have found
them false.

You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.

Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

Rev. 2:1-7

The word of the Lord came to me: "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem:

"This is what the Lord says: "I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them," declares the Lord.

Hear the word of the Lord, you
descendants of Jacob, all you clans of
Israel.

This is what the Lord says: "What fault
did your ancestors find in me, that they
strayed so far from me..."

Jeremiah 2:1-4