THE REVELATION TO JOHN

BACKGROUND:

This book begins with the Greek word, *apokalypsis*, which means “revelation, disclosure.”

An example of this genre is found in the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament. There are several features of an apocalyptic book: it describes a cosmic struggle between Good and Evil, it is revealed to the human writer by a heavenly being, symbolic names or creatures are used to represent contemporary persons or things, the faithful are called to persevere, and God guides human history to a predetermined end.

The author was most likely part of the Johannine community and wrote Revelation in the late first century A.D. Prof. David Aune speculates, “he was probably a well-known itinerant Christian prophet.” Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria included Revelation in his list of the 27 authoritative books of the New Testament in this Easter letter of 367 A.D.

PROF. CRAIG KOESTER:

“The apocalyptic tradition differs from the older prophetic tradition in its theme of dualism. We often see in apocalyptic writings a sharp contrast between the powers of good and evil. There is a contrast, too, between the present age, in which evil is operative, and the coming age, when goodness will prevail” (The Apocalypse, p. 10).

KEY VERSE:

“They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” (Revelation 17:14)

OUTLINE:

I. Introduction. 1:1 – 1:8

II. A Vision of Christ. 1:9 – 1:19

III. Messages to the Seven Churches. 1:20 - 3:22

Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea

IV. Heavenly Worship. 4:1 – 4:11

V. The Scroll and the Lamb. 5:1 – 5:14

VI. The Seven Seals. 6:1 - 8:5

VII. The Seven Trumpets. 8:6 - 11:19

VIII. The Dragon. 12:1 – 12:17

IX. The Two Beasts. 13:1 – 13:18

X. The Lamb and the 144,000. 14:1 – 14:5

XI. Messages of the Three Angels. 14:6 – 14:13

XII Reaping the Harvest. 14:14 -14:20

XIII. Seven Plagues and Bowls of Wrath. 15:1 – 16:21

XIV. Judgment on Babylon, the Great Whore. 17:1 – 19:10

XV. Rider on the White Horse and Defeat of the Beast. 19:11 -19:21

XVI. The Thousand Years. 20:1 – 20:6

XVII. The Judgment. 20:7 – 20:15

XVIII. The New Jerusalem. 21:1 – 22:7

XIX. Benediction. 22:8 – 22:21

VERSES FOR REFLECTION:

Rev. 2:4-5. “But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then from what you have fallen; repent and do the works you did at first.” (Message to Ephesus)

Rev. 2:23. “I am the one who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve.” (Message to Thyratira)

Rev. 3:1. “I know your works; you have a name of being alive, but you are dead.” (Message to Sardis)

Rev. 3:15-16. “I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot, I wish that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” (Message to Laodicea)

Rev. 7:17. “For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Rev 22:2. “On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”

SENSES OF SCRIPTURE:

Origen (Alexandria, 184-253 AD)

1. Literal 2. Moral. 3. Spiritual

Augustine (North Africa, 354-430 AD)

1. Literal 2. Typological 3. Moral 4. Future

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

Prof. David Aune (Notre Dame), Introduction and Commentary on Revelation in The Harper Collins Study Bible.

Prof. David Brakke (Ohio State), Undertanding the New Testament, The Great Courses No. 6006.

Prof. Craig Koester (Luther Seminary), The Apocalypse: Controversies and Meaning in Western History, The Great Courses No. 6433.