

APOCALYPSE OF JOHN

Settings and Context

Many believe the Revelation of John was written during the time of persecution by the Emperor Nero. The writing is believed to be a call for the Christians to have endurance during this time of persecution. The author used themes of persecution to help illuminate the vision of the second judgement. The author of Revelation of John interprets past literature and imagery through his writings. In the text, the author gives some advice on how to be saved from punishment. In recent times, the book of Revelation has been used to interpret the time of the Parousia.

Eschatological Events

The book of revelation begins with addresses to 7 churches, explaining how they have done right and corrections that need to be made.

Collective/Personal Eschatology

The book of revelation is a collective eschatology. This could be seen by the judgment of everyone at the same time. The saints and the martyrs and the souls beneath the altar – all were made to wait until the end and were judged at the same time. Incidentally this could also be an argument for the intermediate state, but it does not clearly state a position on the intermediate state.

Criteria

The Revelation of John offers some insight on how to be on the right side of judgement. The book of Revelation puts an emphasis on those who are righteous. There is not much of an emphasis on deeds or doing good for others. While it is slightly mentioned (see Rev 21:8), there is more of an emphasis on staying righteous and true to the faith. Not worshipping idols is important on how to remain righteous and was relevant to the original audience.

Battle of World's End

The Revelation of John includes a battle between the angels and the dragon. The dragon is an image used for the Devil/Satan. The dragon first waited by the woman who was birthing a child to consume the child, but was thwarted by the angels. After being defeated, the dragon went to the earth and tricked the people of the earth. Eventually, another battle broke out where the dragon was once again defeated by the angels and contained for 1000 years. (*This is known as the thousand-year reign.*) During this time, those “who had not worshiped the beast or its image nor had accepted its mark on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4) Those who were faithful, resurrected and those who were not stayed dead until the 1000 years was over. After the 1000 years, the devil was let loose again and eventually thrown into a pool of fire with his angels and followers. This fire consumes the earth and lays the ground work of creating a new earth; a new heaven and new Jerusalem were created where there was no suffering and pain.

Figures

1. The whore of Babylon mentioned represents Rome who falls and is judged.
2. The Book of Revelation uses imagery familiar to the Jews like the image of the beast from Daniel 7. The beasts in both books represent pagan nations and/or rulers.
3. Woman and the baby: Can be interpreted as Mary and Jesus
4. Dragon: Satan/Devil

Determining the time of the Parousia

The book of Revelation does not give a particular time for the Parousia, but it does suggest that it is going to happen soon. People have tried to calculate when the Parousia is going to happen based on the numbers given by the book of revelation.