

Final Thoughts and Summary of Revelation:

The book of Revelation is a book of 'apocalyptic literature' (apocalyptic = uncovering, or disclosure).

It is a book that uses signs and symbols to express ideas and is also a book of prophecy.

It is written to the 'seven churches of Asia' both to encourage them to remain faithful to the truth of God's Word and to warn them about problems they were facing.

While the 'seven churches of Asia' were actual churches (congregations) – they are symbolic of all the congregations of the church and what all the Christians were facing. The message is intended for all Christians. Rev 22:16

Several times, the point is made that what John is seeing in his revelation will soon begin to happen.

Rev 1:1,3 Rev 22:6,10, 20

This book is written to encourage the Christians who were being imprisoned, killed, or exiled for refusing to acknowledge the Roman Emperor as a god or worship him.

While Revelation includes a vision of the final judgment and of heaven, **it is primarily a vision of the things that would affect the lives of those Christians in the Roman empire. It was given to encourage them to remain faithful and wait for God's judgment on those who were persecuting them.**

It is NOT a book of prophecy about everything that will happen until the end of time as some have tried to make it – that would be of little help or encouragement to those to whom it was addressed at that time.

Also note that John is NOT told to seal up the vision because it applies to some distant future time, as Daniel was, in Daniel 8:26 – this was for the people's encouragement now.

The Christians were being persecuted.

-They were persecuted by the Jews who rejected Jesus as Messiah. These Jews claimed that they alone were “God’s chosen people’ and that the Christians were heretics.

-They were persecuted by Roman officials who did not recognize Christianity as one of the ‘official sanctioned religions’ of the empire. They considered the Christians to be promoting another ‘king’ besides the Roman emperor. This could lead to Christians being called ‘traitors to Rome’ and sentenced to prison or death.

-They were persecuted because they refused to engage in emperor worship. The Roman emperors were proclaimed to be gods and each city had its pagan temples and altars to the current Roman emperor. Each citizen was 'required' to give allegiance to the Roman emperor each year by burning a pinch of incense on the altar and saying that the emperor was 'god'. Once a person did this , they were given a certificate of allegiance signed by the local 'priest' of the emperor. This allowed you to buy and sell in the marketplace and take part in city affairs. Without this you were excluded from the everyday affairs.

Christians refused to do these things and so were shut out of trading or working in the area, as well as living under the threat of arrest as an 'enemy of the state'.
- **They were constantly being told by false teachers that they could 'do whatever they wanted' and act like all those around them and that God's grace would cover them**, that they didn't have to stay faithful.



VESPASIAN



69-79 AD

DOMITIAN



81-96 AD

The book of Revelation indicates by the description given in Rev 17:10 that it was written sometime between 69 and 79 AD during the reign of Vespasian – most likely shortly after the fall of Jerusalem.

Peter and Paul are both said according to tradition to have died in 64 AD under the persecution of Nero. **While John, the writer of Revelation is said to died in 99 AD after returning from exile when Emperor Domitian died in 96 AD.**

Why does the book of Revelation only tell about the Roman emperors up to Domitian?

When Domitian died in 96 AD , a new set of Roman emperors came to power who are called in history the 'good emperors'. They focused their attention on reuniting the fractured empire, building projects, providing free grain and help for the poor (to win favor), and ceased the persecution of Christians. The Christians were allowed to worship God as they wished and only came into conflict with Rome when they broke the law as any other citizen.