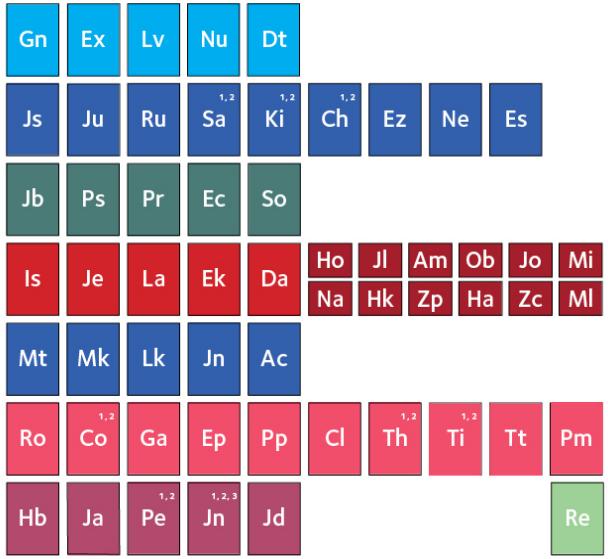
One Bible One Year

Revelation



Summary

The literary style of the book of Revelation is apocalyptic, but in contrast to other apocalyptists, John presents a vision of the future which offers hope and renewal.

The Apostle and Disciple John wrote Revelation around 95AD from the Island of Patmos, a small island between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean sea. He writes to Christians who under fierce persecution from Emperor Domitian, who made it mandatory for everyone to worship him and call him Lord. This came in direct opposition to their Christian faith to call Jesus, and only Jesus, Lord.

Revelation begins with seven letters to 'the seven churches in the province of Asia', western Turkey today. These letters are given to the churches direct from God and John is simply the messenger who delivers them. Each letter is a challenge to the churches to prevail and not let their first love for the Lord go cold.

The book then tells the story of the final events of the earth, the victory of Jesus over evil and the creation of the New Heaven and New Earth. Much of the content is symbolic and visual, and therefore care is needed to understand it and to look at the big themes and principles rather than trying to identify specific predictions of future dates or characters.

As Martin Lloyd-Jones explains:
"And why was the book of Revelation written? It was not written primarily, let me assure you, in order that people might be able to work out the date of the end of the world! That is a very grievous misunderstanding of that book. The book of Revelation was written in order that God's people who were passing through terrible persecutions and terrible adversity might be able to go on rejoicing. It is a book that showed them the ultimate victory of the Lord over Satan and all the other forces of evil."

Revelation shows that the questions raised in Genesis will be answered. The book describes how the earth that was subject to decay and people who were subject to death because of our rebellion against God will be restored and made fully new. It is therefore a great book of hope that God's promise to solve the great divide between heaven and earth will one day be fully known. One day the dwelling of God will be with people again and we will be with him in Eden restored. As chapter 21 describes:
"*I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling-place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'.*"

It may not be clear when these events will take place, but what is clear is that Jesus will return and he invites us now to drink his water of life, know the healing of his forgiveness and look forward to entering the new creation city of life. The final words of the Bible are of Jesus saying he is coming soon.
Amen. Come Lord Jesus!

Further thinking

Read Revelation 1:1-3:22
Revelation starts with Jesus 'writing' to his churches. What are Jesus' longings, concerns and promises for each church? In what ways do we need to hear what the Spirit says to us from this?

Read Revelation 21:1-22:21
Revelation ends with a picture of the restored new creation. Why is this so little talked about by Christians? Look at each statement of the future and ask how these truths of the future change how you think, speak and act in the present.

Outline

I. Introduction (1:1-8)
  A. Prologue (1:1-3)
  B. Greetings and Doxology (1:4-8)
II. Jesus among the Seven Churches (1:9-20)
III. The Letters to the Seven Churches (chs. 2 - 3)
  A. Ephesus (2:1-7)
  B. Smyrna (2:8-11)
  C. Pergamum (2:12-17)
  D. Thyatira (2:18-29)
  E. Sardis (3:1-6)
  F. Philadelphia (3:7-13)
  G. Laodicea (3:14-22)
IV. The Throne, the Scroll and the Lamb (chs. 4-5)
  A. The Throne in Heaven (ch. 4)
  B. The Seven-Sealed Scroll (5:1-5)
  C. The Lamb Slain (5:6-14)
V. The Seven Seals (6:1;8:1)
  A. First Seal: The White Horse (6:1-2)
  B. Second Seal: The Red Horse (6:3-4)
  C. Third Seal: The Black Horse (6:5-6)
  D. Fourth Seal: The Pale Horse (6:7-8)
  E. Fifth Seal: The Souls under the Altar (6:9-11)
  F. Sixth Seal: The Great Earthquake (6:12-17)
  G. The Sealing of the 144,000 (7:1-8)
  H. The Great Multitude (7:9-17)
  I. Seventh Seal: Silence in Heaven (8:1)
VI. The Seven Trumpets (8:2;11:19)
  A. Introduction (8:2-5)
  B. First Trumpet: Hail and Fire Mixed with Blood (8:6-7)
  C. Second Trumpet: A Mountain Thrown into the Sea (8:8-9)
  D. Third Trumpet: The Star Wormwood (8:10-11)
  E. Fourth Trumpet: A Third of the Sun, Moon and Stars Struck (8:12-13)
  F. Fifth Trumpet: The Plague of Locusts (9:1-12)
  G. Sixth Trumpet: Release of the Four Angels (9:13-21)
  H. The Angel and the Little Scroll (ch. 10)
  I. The Two Witnesses (11:1-14)
  J. Seventh Trumpet: Judgments and Rewards (11:15-19)
VII. Various Personages and Events (chs. 12-14)
  A. The Woman and the Dragon (ch. 12)
  B. The Two Beasts (ch. 13)
  C. The Lamb and the 144,000 (14:1-5)
  D. The Harvest of the Earth (14:6-20)
VIII. The Seven Bowls (chs. 15-16)
  A. Introduction: The Song of Moses and the Seven Angels with the Seven Plagues (ch. 15)
  B. First Bowl: Ugly and Painful Sores (16:1-2)
  C. Second Bowl: Sea Turns to Blood (16:3)
  D. Third Bowl: Rivers and Springs of Water Become Blood (16:4-7)
  E. Fourth Bowl: Sun Scorches People with Fire (16:8-9)
  F. Fifth Bowl: Darkness (16:10-11)
  G. Sixth Bowl: Euphrates River Dries Up (16:12-16)
  H. Seventh Bowl: Tremendous Earthquake (16:17-21)
IX. Babylon: The Great Prostitute (17:1;19:5)
  A. Babylon Described (ch. 17)
  B. The Fall of Babylon (ch. 18)
  C. Praise for Babylon's Fall (19:1-5)
X. Praise for the Wedding of the Lamb (19:6-10)
XI. The Return of Christ (19:11-21)
XII. The Thousand Years (20:1-6)
XIII. Satan's Doom (20:7-10)
XIV. Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)
XV. New Heaven, New Earth, New Jerusalem (21:1;22:5)
XVI. Conclusion and Benediction (22:6-21)