

The Revelation: Bibliography and Notes

Robert W. Guffey, Jr. ♦ Winter Study on Wednesday Nights, January 3–April 4, 2007

General Reading

G. R. Beasley-Murray, Hershel H. Hobbs, Ray Frank Robbins and David George, *Revelation: Three Viewpoints* (Nashville: Broadman, 1977). In 1976, in response to the need for serious students of the Bible to address the mishandling of the book of Revelation by extremists, the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (now called Lifeway) convened the Revelation Bible Conference at Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina. Among pastors and scholars in Southern Baptist life, Beasley-Murray, Hobbs and Robbins were enlisted to represent the *premillennial*, *amillennial* (or *non-millennial*) and *apocalyptic* viewpoints, respectively.

James L. Blevins, *Revelation as Drama* (Nashville: Broadman, 1984).

Stephen Gregg, *Revelation: Four Views: A Parallel Commentary* (Nashville: Nelson Reference, 1997).

*Bruce M. Metzger, *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999).

Earl F. Palmer, *Mastering the New Testament: 1, 2, 3 John and Revelation/Volume 12 Communicator's Commentary: Mastering the New Testament* (Dallas: Word, 1982).

*Eugene H. Peterson, *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988). Peterson, translator of the popular English Bible, *The Message*, is always highly readable and informative.

Commentaries

*G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1966). Caird's understanding of the world of the early church and its Roman persecutors is without peer.

Mitchell G. Reddish, *Revelation* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001).

Eugene Boring, *Revelation (Interpretation: A Biblical Commentary for Teaching and Preaching)* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989).

Ray Summers, *Worthy Is the Lamb: Interpreting the Book of Revelation in Its Historical Context* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1951).

Leonard L. Thompson, *Revelation (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries)* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998)

*James A. Walther, Sr., *The Book of Revelation: Visions for the Church in Crisis* (Pittsburgh: The Kerygma Program, 1989). The single best study course on Revelation I have ever found. Excellent.

Edwin M. Yamauchi, *New Testament Cities in Western Asia Minor: Light from Archeology on Cities of Paul and the Seven Churches of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980)

Apocalyptic Writings

While the style of Revelation's language and images are strange to 21st century readers, apocalyptic writings were common among the experience of Jews and Christians in biblical times. These writings became popular during times of threat, danger and high anxiety. In them, the writers would, in most cases, write in apocalyptic style to affirm hope in God.

Even though the Bible contains only two complete apocalypses (Daniel and Revelation), many Jewish and Christian works of this genre were produced. The dates given for these works are, in many cases, only approximate. This list is representative and not exhaustive of all that was written.

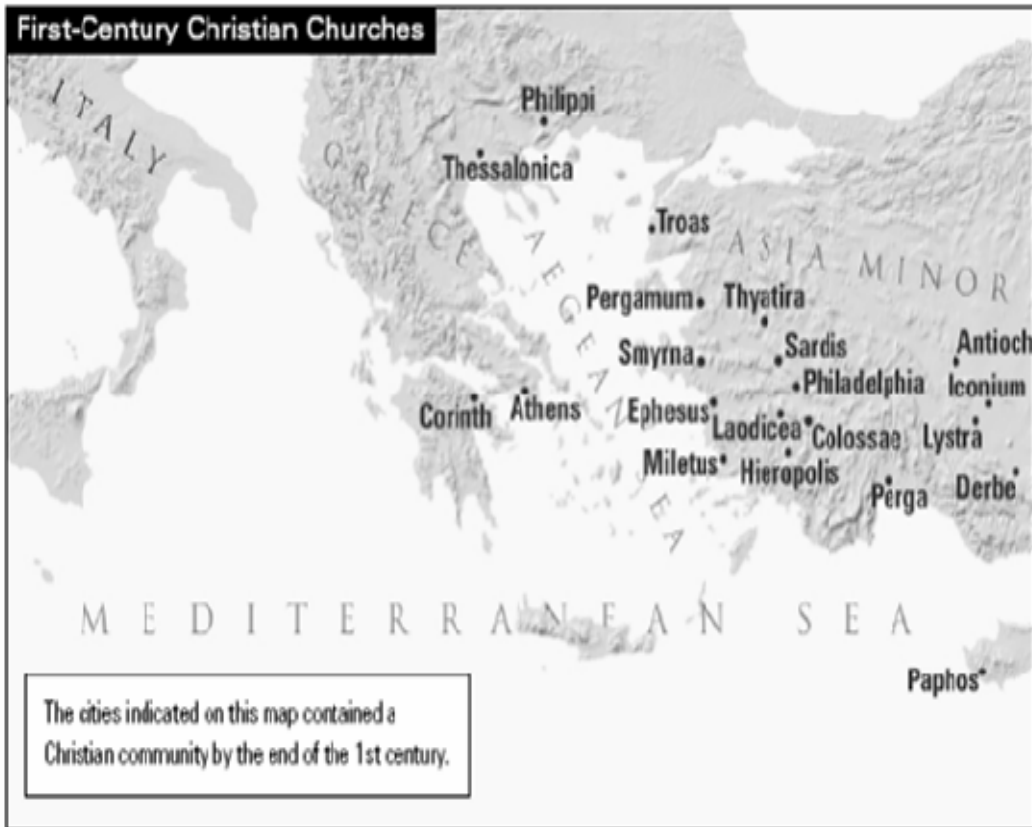
Jewish Apocalypses

1. The "Book of the Watchers" (*1 En.* 1–36)—3rd century BC
2. The "Book of the Heavenly Luminaries" (*1 En.* 73–82)—3rd century BC
3. The "Animal Apocalypse" (*1 En.* 85–90)—2d century BC
4. The "Apocalypse of Weeks" (*1 En.* 93:1-10; 91:11-17)—2d century BC
5. *Jubilees* 23—2d century BC
6. The *Testament of Levi* 2–5—2d century BC
7. The *Testament of Abraham*—1st century BC–2d century AD
8. The *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*—1st century BC–1st century AD
9. The "Similitudes of Enoch" (*1 En.* 37–71)—1st century AD
10. *2 Enoch*—1st century AD
11. *4 Ezra*—1st century AD
12. *2 Baruch*—1st century AD
13. The *Apocalypse of Abraham*—1st–2d century AD
14. *3 Baruch*—1st–2d century AD

Christian Apocalypses (Gnostic Christian works are not included in this list.)

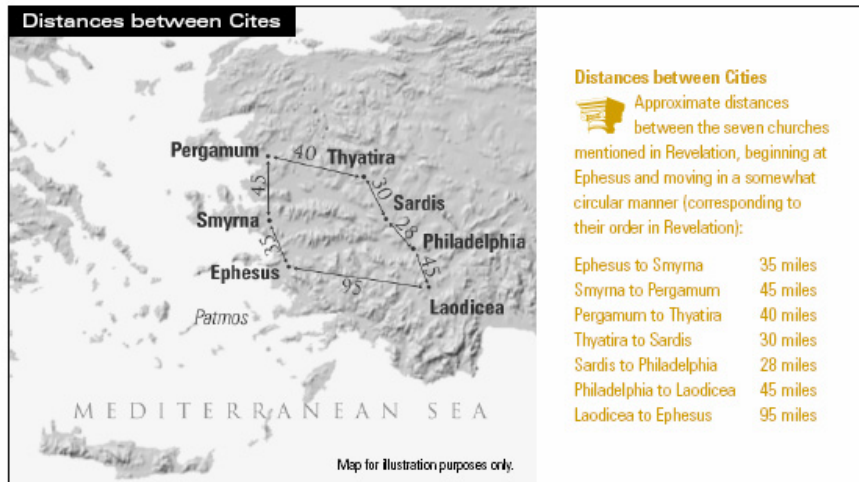
1. The *Shepherd of Hermas*—1st or 2d century
2. The *Book of Elchasai*—2d century
3. The *Ascension of Isaiah* 6–11—1st or 2d century
4. The *Apocalypse of Peter*—2d century
5. *5 Ezra* 2:42-48
6. *Jacob's Ladder*—2d century?
7. The *Testament of the Lord* 1:1-14—3rd century?
8. The *Questions of Bartholomew*—3rd century?
9. The *Apocalypse of Sedrach*—2d–4th century?
10. The *Apocalypse of Paul*—4th century
11. The *Testament of Isaac* 2-3a—1st–5th century?
12. The *Testament of Isaac* 5-6—1st–5th century?
13. The *Testament of Jacob* 1-3a—2d–5th century?
14. The *Testament of Jacob* 2-5—2d–5th century?
15. The *Story of Zosimus*—3rd–5th century
16. The *Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian*—2d–9th century?
17. The *Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle* 8b-14a—3rd–6th century?
18. The *Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle* 17b-19b—3rd–6th century?
19. The *Apocalypse of the Virgin Mary*—4th–9th century?
20. The *Apocalypse of Esdras*—5th–9th century?
21. The *Apocalypse of the Holy Mother of God Concerning the Punishments*—4th–11th century?
22. The *Apocalypse of James, the Brother of the Lord*—pre-11th century
23. The *Mysteries of St. John the Apostle and Holy Virgin*—pre-11th century

Map: The Seven Churches (from Mitchell Reddish, *Revelation*)



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Revelation 2



their poverty may have resulted from economic discrimination against the Christians by the inhabitants of Smyrna. Materially poor as they were, they were nonetheless spiritually rich (2:9). [Travel and Communication in New Testament Times]

The major problem confronting the church at Smyrna was antagonism from the Jewish population of the city. The tone of the message indicates that the antagonism was severe. Jewish violence against the church apparently continued into the next century, as evidenced by the second-century letter from the church at Smyrna describing the death of Polycarp. This letter, known as *The*