

Revelation

ILLUSTRATED

The word 'Revelation' is rendered in a highly stylized, gothic-inspired font. The letters are three-dimensional and have a metallic, golden-yellow finish with a gradient of red and orange, giving them a glowing, fiery appearance. The letters are set against a dark, almost black background. Below the main word, the word 'ILLUSTRATED' is written in a bold, red, sans-serif font on a golden ribbon that curls and flows across the bottom of the main text.

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Dating Revelation

- All critics agree that Revelation was written during a period of severe persecution in the first century.
- All critics agree that the persecution is at the hands of the Romans
- What is in disagreement: Time Frame

1st Century Roman Emperors

Name

Reigned

27 BC

Augustus
GAIVS IVLIVS
CAESAR
AVGVSTVS

January 16 27 BC -
August 19, 14 AD

14 AD

Tiberius
TIBERIVS IVLIVS
CAESAR
AVGVSTVS

September 18, 14 AD
- March 16, 37 AD

37 AD

Caligula
GAIVS IVLIVS
CAESAR
AVGVSTVS
GERMANICVS

March 18, 37 AD -
January 24, 41 AD

41 AD

Name

Reigned

41 AD

Claudius
TIBERIVS
CLAVDIVS
CAESAR
AVGVSTVS
GERMANICVS

January 25, 41 AD -
October 13, 54 AD

54 AD

Nero
NERO
CLAVDIVS
CAESAR
AVGVSTVS
GERMANICVS

October 13, 54 AD
- June 11, 68 AD

68 AD



1st Century Roman Emperors

Name

Reigned

68 AD

Galba

SERVIVS GALBA
IMPERATOR
CAESAR
AVGVSTVS

June 8, 68 AD –
January 15, 69 AD

69 AD

Otho

MARCVS OTHO
CAESAR
AVGVSTVS

January 15, 69 AD –
April 16, 69 AD

69 AD

Vitellius

AVLVS
VITELLIVS
GERMANICVS
AVGVSTVS

April 17, 69 AD –
December 20, 69 AD

69 AD

Name

Reigned

69 AD

Vespasian

TITVS FLAVIVS
CAESAR
VESPASIANVS
AVGVSTVS

July 1, 69 AD –
June 24, 79 AD

79 AD

Titus

TITVS FLAVIVS
CAESAR
VESPASIANVS
AVGVSTVS

June 24, 79 AD –
September 13, 81 AD

81 AD

Domitian

TITVS FLAVIVS
CAESAR
DOMITIANVS
AVGVSTVS

September 14, 81 AD
– September 18, 96
AD

96 AD

Dating Revelation

What is debated: Time Frame

Three Primary Views:

- The reign of Nero (54-68)
- The reign of Vespasian (69-79)
- The reign of Domitian (81-96)



Case for a Neronian Time Frame



1. Started under Nero in 64AD

2. Evidences for this date (54-68) are internal
to Revelation

- Revelation 11:1 implies that the Temple at Jerusalem was still standing

3. Assumption:

- The book had to be written before A.D. 70 before destruction of the temple

Objections to the Neronian Date

1. Cannot assume that Revelation 11:1 indicates that the Temple was still standing.
 - Written in symbolical terms . We cannot be positive that the Temple was still standing
2. Most available evidence points to a later date.
3. There are no real witnesses in the early church who hold to this date.
4. The internal condition of the churches.
 - Some of these churches had been organized only a few years when the Neronian persecution came.
 - It is impossible that such rapid growth and development had taken place

Objections to the Neronian Date

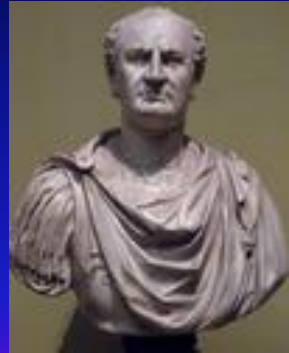
5. Many evidences forbid that the book was written during the Neronian persecution
- Revelation clearly indicates Christians were being persecuted because they refused to worship the emperor.
 - There was no such demand during the time of Nero
 - He persecuted Christians to divert from himself to others the blame for burning the city of Rome
 - The Neronian persecution was confined to Rome
 - It never reached the other parts of the empire.

Objections to the Neronian Date

6. Exile is never mentioned as a form of punishment during the Neronian period
7. Persecution started after the burning of Rome.
- 64 AD



Case for a Vespasian Time Frame



The reign of Vespasian (69-79)

1. This date has only one point of evidence and that is of an internal nature:

Interpretation of Revelation 17:9-11

⁹ *Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, ¹⁰ and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. ¹¹ The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. (NASB Revelation 17: 9-11)*

Case for a Vespasian Time Frame

⁹ Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, ¹⁰ and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. ¹¹ The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. (NASB Revelation 17: 9-11)

1. Revelation 17:9-11 is evidently a discussion of the emperors of the Roman Empire.
2. While numbers in Revelation are mostly seen as symbolical, here they appear to be literal.

Case for a Vespasian Time Frame

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The question becomes:

1. Are the numbers literal?
2. If so, with which emperor do they start?

The first Roman who held the empire as an established form of government was Augustus. Apparently John begins with Augustus (1st declared emperor of Rome) and gives the following sequence:

Five are fallen:

1. Augustus
2. Tiberius
3. Caligula

4. Claudius
5. Nero

Case for a Vespasian Time Frame

⁹ Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, ¹⁰ and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, **the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.** ¹¹ The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. (NASB Revelation 17: 9-11)

“the one is” Becomes Vespasian

and

“one who is to come for a little while”

Becomes Titus: ruled for two years



Case for a Vespasian Time Frame

*⁹ Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, ¹⁰ and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. ¹¹ **The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven**, and he goes to destruction. (NASB Revelation 17: 9-11)*

"the beast that was and is not is also an eighth and is of the seven"

Who is the eighth king according to this sequence?

**Following this sequence the logical conclusion is
Domitian**

(thought of as the reincarnation of Nero; his was a revival of the same type of work as that of Nero but was much more intense and widespread)

Case Against Vespasian Time Frame

1. No references to Vespasian persecuting the Christians
2. Anomalies in 8 King Theory
 - ❑ Sequence omits Galba, Otho, and Vitellius:
 - each ruled for a brief time, but never recognized as emperors by the provinces
 - ❑ Julius Cesar was the first “emperor” but was not named the emperor of the organized Roman government
 - ❑ Verse 10
 - If verse ten points to Vespasian, verse eleven points to an unnamed eighth who was one of the seven already mentioned.
3. Two possible solutions:
 1. John, writing in the Domitian period, places himself back into the Vespasian age, representing history under the form of apocalyptic prophecy so as to deceive the Romans as to the real time of writing.
 2. Domitian, recalling and playing the part of Nero, represents a later addition, inserted to bring the work up to date.

The Case for a Domitian Time Frame



- The date most generally accepted by New Testament criticism for the writing of Revelation
- Largely based on tradition: Evidence of time near the writing of the book

1. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.30.3 says that Revelation was written at the end of the rule of Domitian (born c. 120/140, Asia Minor — died c. 200/203)

“We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign.”

The Case for a Domitian Time Frame



- The date most generally accepted by New Testament criticism for the writing of Revelation
- Largely based on tradition: Evidence of time near the writing of the book
 2. Origen says that John wrote the book while exiled on Patmos (born c. 185, probably Alexandria, Egypt — died c. 254, Tyre, Phoenicia) Greek theologian, one of the Fathers of the Church.
 3. Victorious says John wrote what he saw while on the isle of Patmos at the order of Domitian
 4. Same position was held by Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, Hegesippus, and Jerome
- Summary: This indicates the belief of the early church that the book was written during the Domitianic persecution.

The Case for a Domitian Time Frame: ANTIPAS

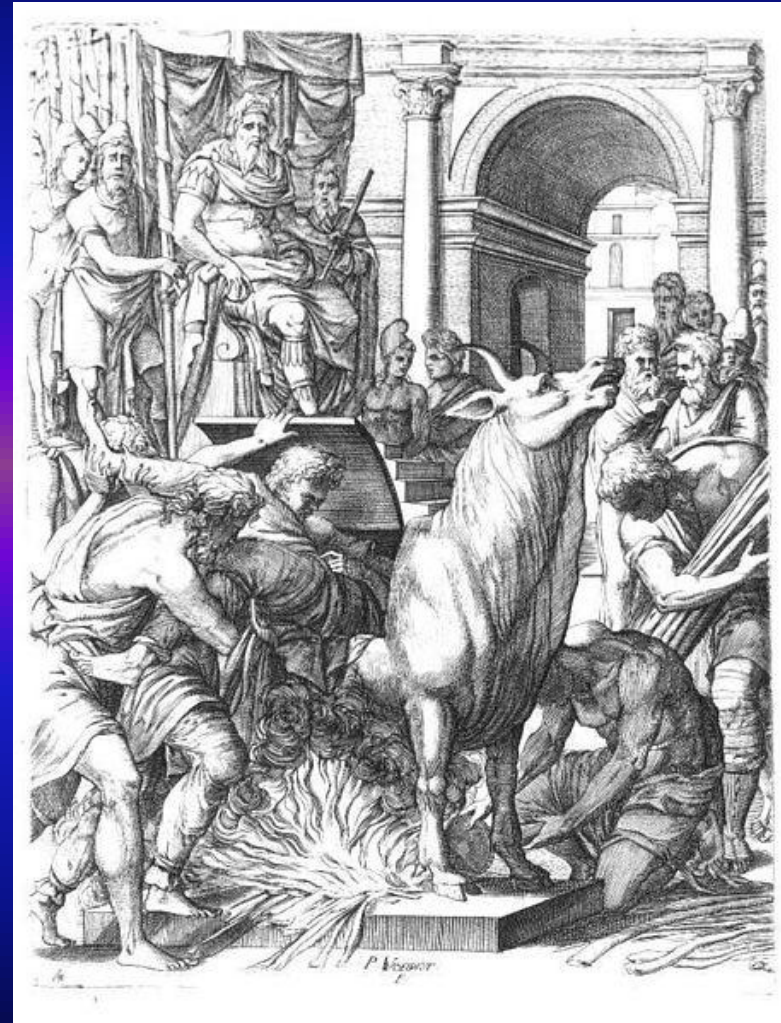
“ I know where you dwell, where satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where satan dwells.”

NASB Rev. 2:13

- According to Christian tradition, the first bishop of Pergamon, Antipas, was martyred there in ca. 92 AD
- Under Domitian, Christians were also ordered to deny Christ. Antipas refused. For his insolence in refusing to worship the Roman Emperor, Antipas was sentenced to death in 92 A.D. Simeon Metaphrastes says Antipas was roasted alive in a copper bull-shaped altar.

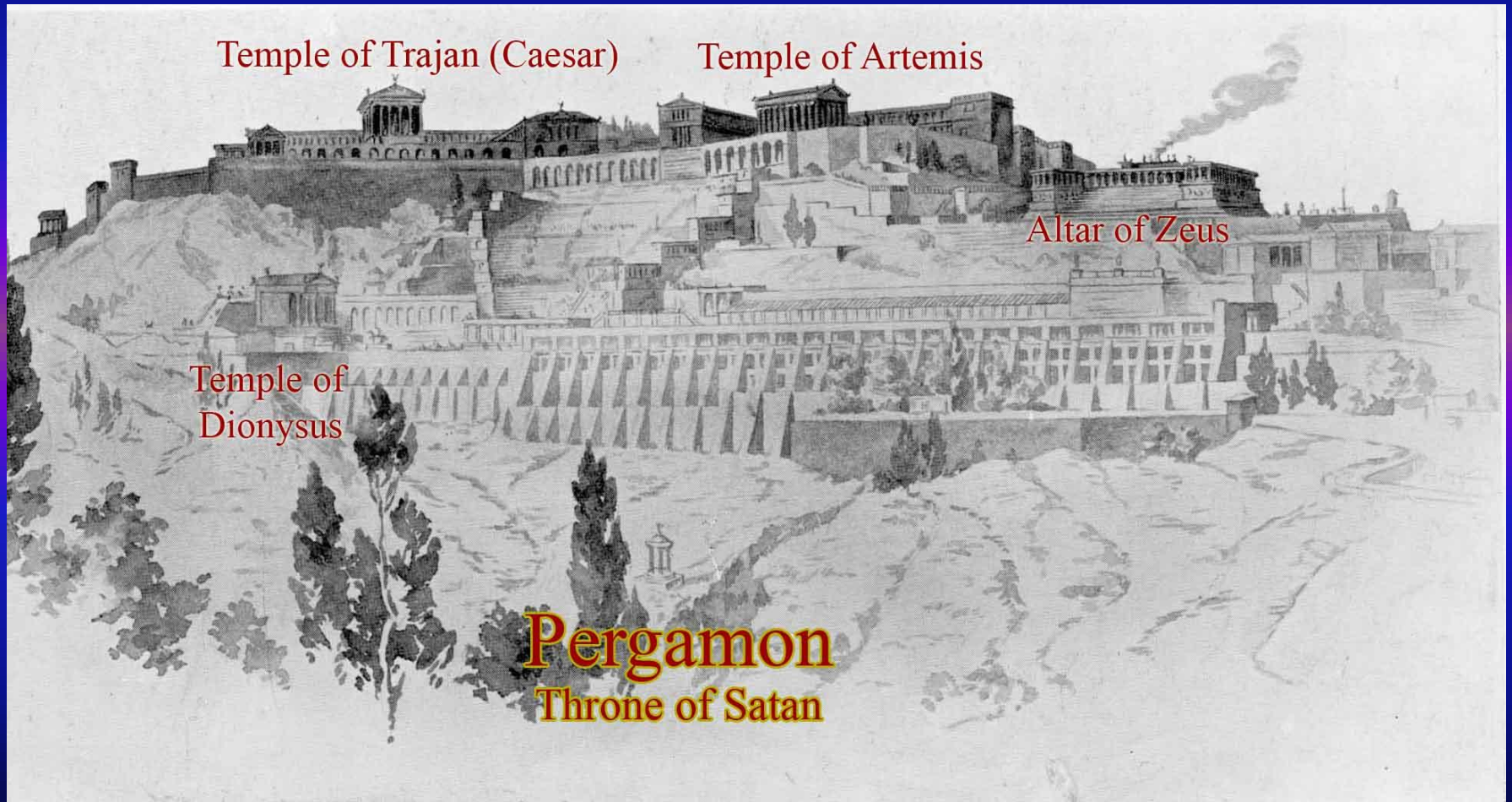
The Case for a Domitian Time Frame: ANTIPAS

Saint Antipas was a contemporary of the holy Apostles, by whom he was made Bishop of Pergamum. He contested during the reign of Domitian, when he was cast, as it is said, into a bronze bull that had been heated exceedingly.



THE GREEK (EASTERN) ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

Pergamom: Throne of Satan



Temple of Trajan (Caesar)

Temple of Artemis

Altar of Zeus

Temple of
Dionysus

Pergamon
Throne of Satan

The white marble grandiose temples would have easily been considered a wonder of the world in the days of the early church.

Periods of Persecution under Roman Rule

1. **Nero** (c. 64-68).

Traditional martyrdoms of Peter and Paul.

2. **Domitian** (r. 81-96).

3. **Trajan** (112-117). Christianity is outlawed but Christians are not sought out.

4. **Marcus Aurelius** (r. 161-180). Martyrdom of Polycarp.

5. **Septimus Severus** (202-210). Martyrdom of Perpetua.

Periods of Persecution under Roman Rule

6. **Maximinus the Thracian (235-38).**

7. **Decius (250-251).**

Christians are actively sought out by requiring public sacrifice. Could buy certificates (*libelli*) Instead of sacrificing. Martyrdoms of bishops of Rome, Jerusalem and Antioch.

8. **Valerian (257-59).** Martyrdoms of Cyprian of Carthage and Sixtus II of Rome.

9. **Aurelian (r. 270–275).**

10. **Diocletian and Galerius (303-324).**