

THE DATE OF REVELATION

Kevin Kay

Introduction:

- A. Of all the books in the Bible, it is probably safe to say that there is no book that has prompted more **discussion** and **debate** than the book of Revelation, and this debate has involved almost every aspect of the book
 1. Its **authorship**
 2. Its **date** of composition
 3. Its **structure**
 4. The proper **interpretive approach**
 5. The **meaning of its symbols**
 6. Etc.
- B. The great distance in **time** and **culture** separating us from first century Christians has served to make the resolution of these questions exceedingly difficult
- C. The date of the book's composition is something that has challenged Bible students for centuries, and with the passage of time, **scholarship has frequently shifted** from one position to another
 1. The book has been dated in the reigns of several different Roman emperors: **Claudius** [AD 41-54], **Nero** [AD 54-68], **Galba** [AD 68/69], **Vespasian** [AD 69-79], **Domitian** [AD 81-96], and **Trajan** [AD 98-117]
 2. But there are basically **two predominant views** concerning the date of the book
 - a. **The Early Date View:** During the reign of **Nero** [i.e. mid AD 60's], before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70
 - b. **The Late Date View:** During the reign of **Domitian** [i.e. mid AD 90's]
 3. While the majority of current scholarship accepts **the late date** for the book of Revelation, many reputable scholars of the nineteenth century accepted **the early date** for the book¹
 - a. Although one writer declares that the late date for the Apocalypse is almost **unanimously accepted** by NT scholars², other late date advocates are a bit **more cautious** in their assessments³
 - 1) **Kenneth Gentry:** "The early date viewpoint cannot be easily dismissed by a quick counting of noses in that some of those noses have furrowed brows above them." ("Preface To New Edition," *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xix)
- D. The question concerning the date of the Apocalypse is an important one, because the more certain we are about the **writers** and the **recipients** of the NT letters, and the **circumstances** that gave rise to their composition, the better our position will be to understand the **meaning** of Scripture, and that is the ultimate goal of legitimate Bible study⁴
 1. If the Apocalypse was written before AD 70, then it is certainly possible that some, or even many of the visions in the book pertain to **the threatened downfall of the Jewish**

state. On the other hand, if the book was written toward the end of the first century then **other events** were obviously in view

2. So the date of the book's composition has a **definite impact on the interpretation of the book**, since it prophesied of "**things which must shortly take place**" (Rev. 1:1) for "**the time is near**" (Rev. 1:3)

E. In this study, we want to examine and evaluate the **major arguments** for the two predominant views concerning the date of composition for the Apocalypse

ARGUMENTS FOR THE LATE DATE:

I. External Arguments [Evidence from Secular Sources]:

F. The quotations of the early "Church Fathers"

1. Explanation:

- a. The early "Church Fathers" date the Apocalypse in the reign of **Domitian** [AD 81-96]⁵
- b. **Irenaeus** [AD 130-202], the bishop of Lyons, said that John's Apocalyptic vision was seen near the end of Domitian's reign⁶
 - 1) Since Irenaeus was a pupil of **Polycarp**, who in turn was a pupil of **John**, and since he is an indisputably important Church Father, his testimony is very significant⁷
- c. **Clement of Alexandria** [ca. AD 150-215] states that John left the island of Patmos and went to Ephesus after the death of the tyrant⁸
- d. **Origen** [AD 185-254], a disciple of Clement of Alexandria, says that John wrote the Apocalypse while exiled on Patmos (presumably during the reign of Domitian)⁹
- e. **Victorinus**, who was martyred in AD 303 in the persecution of Diocletian, says that John saw the Apocalypse while condemned to labor in the mines by Caesar Domitian¹⁰
- f. **Eusebius** [ca. AD 260-340], bishop of Caesarea in Palestine and known as "the Father of Church History," believed that John received the Apocalypse in the reign of Domitian¹¹
- g. **Jerome** [AD 340-420] says that John saw the Apocalypse while banished to the island of Patmos by Domitian¹²

2. Evaluation:

- a. The **different views** concerning the date of the Apocalypse among the "Church Fathers" indicate that **the question was not conclusively settled**¹³
 - 1) The generally accepted dates from just a few notable early witnesses yield different conclusions
 - a) **A pre-Vespasianic date** [Epiphanius, Theophylact, the Syriac Revelation manuscripts]
 - b) **A Domitianic date** [Irenaeus, Jerome, Eusebius, Sulpicius Severus, Victorinus]
 - c) **A Trajanic date** [Dorotheus]
- b. There are several reasons to question the strength of the testimony of **Irenaeus**

-
- 1) The **ambiguity of Irenaeus' reference** renders his testimony far from conclusive. It is not possible to determine whether Irenaeus meant to say that **John** was seen by Polycarp, or that **the Apocalypse** was seen toward the end of Domitian's reign¹⁴
 - a) **LDA objection:** A re-interpretation of Irenaeus' statement should be rejected because **the ancients** clearly understood the matter as it is commonly interpreted
 - 1] **EDA reply:** While many ancient "Church Fathers" employed Irenaeus with high respect, they did not regard him as a **final authority**
 - a] Tertullian placed John's banishment after his being dipped in a cauldron of burning oil, which Jerome says occurred in Nero's reign
 - b] Epiphanius, Arethas, Theophylact, and the Syriac versions of Revelation record a pre-Domitianic date for John's banishment
 - b) **LDA objection:** The **Latin translation** of Irenaeus stands against the re-interpretation theory
 - 1] **EDA reply:** The Latin translator may indeed have understood the Greek phrase as commonly interpreted, but **the Latin translation is not Irenaeus' original** and thus did not come with his imprimatur. Furthermore, the Latin translation of Irenaeus' writings is very poor, and some think the Latin text may be corrupt
 - c) **LDA objection:** How could Irenaeus speak of those who saw John toward the latter end of Domitian's reign in light of the fact that he also tells us **John lived into Trajan's reign?** (cf. *Against Heresies* 2:22:5 and 3:3:4)
 - 1] **EDA reply:** Domitian died in AD 96 and Trajan became emperor in AD 98. Since only two years separate the reigns, it is not unreasonable to suppose that almost a century later, the two year's difference separating the two emperors could have been **blurred** by Irenaeus. Furthermore, Irenaeus does not say (upon the reconstruction of his argument by some) that John **died** at the end of Domitian's reign, only that he **was seen**
 - d) **LDA objection:** "Irenaeus's use of the same verb *oraw*, *horao* in both sentences ["him who *saw* the apocalyptic vision" and "that was *seen*....," ksk], without any noticeable change of subjects, naturally implies he is talking about the same subject in each, that is, the apocalypse." (Charles Hill, *Always Reforming*, n.p., quoted in Kenneth Gentry, "Preface to New Edition," *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xlvi)
 - 1] **EDA reply:** Irenaeus's fuller context mentions "those who have *seen* (*horao*) John face to face"
 - 2) Irenaeus was referring to **the close of the Domitian rule** (i.e. the rule of **Domitius Nero**)¹⁵
 - 3) It may be that Irenaeus, writing a century after the fact, mistakenly **confused** one persecuting emperor (Domitian) for another (Domitius Nero)¹⁶
-

-
- a) After all, **Irenaeus was certainly not infallible in historical matters**, since he believed that Jesus lived beyond the age of fifty¹⁷
 - b) And he made **other mistakes** as well¹⁸
 - c) **James Moffatt** [LDA]: “Irenaeus, of course, is no great authority by himself on matters chronological, but he is reporting here what there was no obvious motive for inventing.”” (*The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Vol. 5, p. 320)
- 4) Irenaeus could have had information that related to **Domitian’s brief reign for Vespasian** in AD 70 when he had “full consular authority”¹⁹
 - 5) John may have **suffered twice**, under both Nero and Domitian
 - 6) The **apparent incompatibility of other statements** by Irenaeus concerning the Apocalypse also calls into question the common interpretation of his statement
 - a) Irenaeus’ statement, “As these things are so, and this number is found in all the approved and ancient copies” (5:30:1) would seem to suggest something more ancient than the “end of Domitian’s reign” which he speaks of as “almost in our own generation”²⁰
 - 7) Irenaeus’ statement that the revelation was seen in the days of Domitian is **incompatible with Jerome’s description of the apostle John** at that age²¹
 - 8) Irenaeus may have **confused the time** that John’s Apocalyptic vision was **revealed** with the time that it began to **circulate** among the churches²²
- c. The quotation from **Clement** is far from conclusive evidence of the Domitianic date for the Apocalypse
- 1) First, and most importantly, **the identity of the tyrant is not revealed** by Clement
 - 2) Second, **Nero best fits** the qualification of “**tyrant**,” above all other emperors, for several reasons
 - a) Nero’s infamous evil was greatly feared, even outside Christian circles²³
 - b) Nero was so dreaded by many that after his death the rumor began to circulate that he would return to earth to reign again
 - c) Nero was an especially dreadful emperor for Christians²⁴
 - d) Domitian’s “persecution,” if it can be called that, was much less severe than Nero’s²⁵
 - 3) Third, the context of Clement’s quotation is more easily believable if John were **several years younger** than the age required by the late date view
 - a) Clement’s account of **John’s apostolic activity among the Gentile churches** and his account of **John chasing down an apostate church leader on horseback** are much more believable if speaking of a man much younger than in his 90’s (*Who Is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved?* 42)
 - 4) Fourth, Clement speaks of **the end of apostolic revelation** in the time of Nero²⁶
 - a) How could Clement have done this if the Apocalypse was written by John some 25 years after Nero?
-

- d. The quotation from **Origen** is at best ambiguous and can easily be interpreted as favorable to the early date position
 - 1) It is not at all clear that Origen had Domitian in mind when he spoke of “**the King of the Romans**”²⁷
- e. The quotation from **Victorinus** seems to be too incredible to be completely accurate²⁸
- f. The quotation of **Eusebius** is not conclusive proof of the late date for the Apocalypse
 - 1) **Traditions** had already been well established by Eusebius’ time
 - 2) Eusebius is not always as **critical** and **discerning** as the great classical historians
 - 3) Eusebius patently declares his **dependency upon Irenaeus**; thus whatever difficulties there are with Irenaeus must necessarily apply to Eusebius
 - 4) The fact that Eusebius **denied that the apostle John was the author of Revelation** casts serious doubt on the worthiness of this particular testimony²⁹
- g. The quotation by **Jerome** may not be as strongly supportive as many think
 - 1) The context of Jerome’s statement suggests that he may have **confounded two different traditions**
 - 2) The reference from Tertullian would strongly suggest a **Neronic date**
 - 3) Thus Jerome’s evidence cannot indicate anything like a unanimous persuasion of the late date in his time
 - 4) **T Randell**: “Eusebius and Jerome, in the fourth century, do not strengthen what they merely repeat.” (“The Revelation Of St. John The Divine,” *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 22, p. iv)

II. Internal Arguments (Evidence from Scripture):

G. The general conditions of the churches

1. Explanation:

- a. The general condition of the churches described in Revelation demands **more time for development** than the early date will allow³⁰
- b. The **spiritual decline** in Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea would not likely have occurred by the mid to late AD 60’s (Rev. 2:4-5; 3:1-2, 15-18)
 - 1) When Paul wrote his letter to the church at Ephesus [ca. AD 62], he commended the saints for their love (Eph. 1:15), but by the time John writes, the church has **lost its first love** (Rev. 2:4). This would have taken some time to develop
 - 2) It would have taken some time for men to lay **claim to apostleship** at Ephesus (Rev. 2:2) after Paul had warned the Corinthians against this very thing (2 Cor. 11:13)
 - 3) The fact that the church at Sardis had a **reputation for spiritual life** though she was really dead and there were only a few who had not defiled their

garments (3:1, 4) suggests that a lengthy period was necessary for such a state of **spiritual lethargy** to develop

- 4) When Paul wrote to the church at Colosse, he indicated that the church in Laodicea was then **an active group** (Col. 4:13, 15-16). It would have required more than a decade for the church at Laodicea to depart so completely from its earlier acceptable status that there was nothing about it to be commended
 - c. The influence of **the Nicolaitans** at Ephesus and Pergamum (Rev. 2:6, 15) developed only after Paul's day, and this would have taken time to develop³¹
 - d. **The church at Smyrna was evidently not in existence** in the days of Paul, which means that it must have been founded later than AD 67 or 68; therefore, the Apocalypse must have been written even later³²
 - e. Pergamum was a **center of emperor worship** (Rev. 2:13), and this worship was more intense in the reign of Domitian than in Nero's
 - f. **The Jezebel at Thyatira** fits into the pattern of Peter's prophecy. These saints seem to be steeped in "**the deep things of Satan**" (Rev. 2:24), and this condition is far removed from that which is found in the letters written prior to AD 68
 - g. Laodicea was destroyed by **an earthquake** in AD 60/61 (Tacitus, *Annals* 14:27), and it would have taken time for the church there to become rich again (Rev. 3:17)³³
2. Evaluation:
- a. Although it is quite reasonable to expect that a passage of time is best suited to a decline of faith, **apostasy does not necessarily require a long period of time**
 - 1) Paul wrote to **the Galatians**, because they were so quickly leaving the One who had called them to follow a different gospel (Gal. 1:6-9; 5:7)
 - 2) The **church at Ephesus** was already beginning to experience trouble when Paul wrote to Timothy [ca. AD 64] (1 Tim. 1:3-6, 19-20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18)
 - 3) **Demas** deserted the faith during the course of Paul's ministry (2 Tim. 4:10)
 - 4) John's characterization of the seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation is similar to the conditions pictured in Paul's letters to **Timothy**, the epistles of **Peter** and **John**, and the book of **Jude**
 - 5) Paul seems to have been concerned with the labors of **Archippus** at Laodicea (Col. 4:16-17)
 - b. Polycarp's statement does not necessarily imply that the church at Smyrna was not founded until after Paul's death³⁴
 - 1) The book of Acts suggests that **Smyrna was probably, if not certainly, evangelized very soon after Ephesus**, before AD 60 (cf. Acts 19:10, 26), and if this did indeed occur, there is ample time for a situation as presupposed in John's letter to have transpired
 - 2) Furthermore, as far as Smyrna is concerned, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that **she was not old enough to have lost her perfection**
 - c. The destruction of the **city** of Laodicea by an earthquake is not necessarily inconsistent with John's description of the **church** in Laodicea

- 1) It may be that the Laodiceans viewed themselves as **being rich spiritually**, not materially (cf. Lk. 12:21; 1 Cor. 1:5; 2 Cor. 8:9; 1 Cor. 4:8 & Hos. 12:8)³⁵
- 2) History documents the fact that **Laodicea's recovery** from the earthquake was apparently effortless, unaided, and rapid³⁶
 - a) The time element would not necessarily be a crucial factor, because **earthquakes were very frequent** in that area and **rebuilding doubtless followed at once**. If the Apocalypse were written as early as AD 65 or 66, that would still have given four years for rebuilding
- 3) Although the city of Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in AD 61, that does not necessarily mean that **every sector of the city** was destroyed. Perhaps by God's grace, the Christians were in areas less affected by the quake, as was the case with Israel when God brought the plagues upon Egypt (cf. Ex. 8:22; 9:4, 6, 24; 10:23; 11:27)
- d. **James Moffatt [LDA]**: "The religious development of the churches is often held to presuppose a considerable length of time, but this argument must be used with caution. Worldliness and error and uncharitable feelings did not require decades to spring up in the primitive churches of Asia Minor and elsewhere. No great stress can be laid on this feature." (*The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. 5, p. 318)

H. **The martyrs cry for vindication** (Rev. 6:9-11)

1. Explanation:

- a. The cry of the souls underneath the altar, seems to indicate **impatience** or **restlessness** at the long delay in vindicating the blood of martyred Christians
- b. This delay suggests that a later date for the book's composition is more likely than an earlier date

2. Evaluation:

- a. An **intense persecution** would make even a relatively short period of time **seem interminable** to those who were suffering

I. **The severity and extent of the persecution** (Rev. 1:9; 2:10, 13; 3:10; 6:9; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4)

1. Explanation:

- a. The persecution described in the book of Revelation **does not fit the Neronian persecution** which was local, brief, and fierce
 - 1) The Apocalypse indicates that Christians were being persecuted because **they refused to worship the emperor** (Rev. 13:4-8, 15), but there was no such demand during the time of Nero
 - 2) Unlike the persecution described in the Apocalypse, there is **no evidence** that **Nero's persecution** was a **war against Christianity** *per se*³⁷
 - 3) The Apocalypse describes a **persecution that was coming upon the saints in the seven churches of Asia** (Rev. 1:9; 2:10; 3:10), but there is **no solid evidence that Nero's persecution extended beyond Rome into the provinces**. There was **no empire-wide persecution** by the Romans until late in the reign of Domitian³⁸

-
- 4) The Apocalypse describes a **persecution because of an edict or proscription against Christians** (Rev. 13:15-17), but **Nero did not issue an imperial edict or proscription against Christians**³⁹
 - a) **State action** against Christians developed in the empire within the period between AD 70 and 96; but even during this period, there seems to have been **no imperial edict of proscription** from any emperor completely outlawing Christianity
 - b. **The persecution under Domitian** corresponds more closely with the persecution described in the book of Revelation
 - 1) There can be no doubt that Nero's policy was continued by Vespasian and Titus, but there is no record of a direct confrontation with Christians by either of these rulers
 - 2) However, under Domitian, who was motivated by fear of conspiracy and by his insatiable desire for divine honors, the policy against any freedom of the individual or any opposition to despotism was carried to extreme
 - 3) This **disposition of Domitian** and **the spirit of his reign** fits much better into the tenor of Revelation than the attitude of Nero⁴⁰
 2. Evaluation:
 - a. This argument seems to ignore the fact that **the Jews were the first and primary persecutors of the church** before Jerusalem was destroyed, and **the Jews were scattered throughout the empire**. Everywhere that Christians went, the Jews were there to persecute them
 - 1) **Peter** and **John** were arrested and threatened in Jerusalem (Acts 4:1-3, 18-21)
 - 2) **The apostles** were arrested and beaten in Jerusalem (Acts 5:17-18, 40-41)
 - 3) **Stephen** was arrested and stoned to death in Jerusalem (Acts 6:11-15; 7:54-60)
 - 4) **The church** in Jerusalem was laid waste by Saul of Tarsus (Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-2)
 - a) *Note:* Luke describes this "a great persecution"
 - 5) **The Way** was persecuted to the death by Saul of Tarsus (Acts 22:4-5; 26:9-11)
 - 6) **James** was executed by Herod Agrippa I in Jerusalem (Acts 12:1-2)
 - 7) **Peter** was imprisoned by Herod Agrippa I in Jerusalem (Acts 12:3-6)
 - 8) **Paul** and **Barnabas** were opposed in Antioch and expelled from the city (Acts 13:44-46, 50-51)
 - 9) **Paul** and **Barnabas** fled Iconium to escape stoning (Acts 14:1-2, 5-6)
 - 10) **Paul** was stoned in Lystra and left for dead (Acts 14:19)
 - 11) **Jason** and the **brethren** were arrested in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9)
 - 12) **Paul** and **Silas** were opposed in Beroea (Acts 17:13)
 - 13) **Paul** was opposed in Corinth (Acts 18:5-6, 12-16)
-

-
- 14) **Sosthenes** was beaten in Corinth (Acts 18:17)
- 15) **Paul** was plotted against in Greece (Acts 20:2-3)
- 16) **Paul** was arrested, falsely accused, and beaten in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-32; 23:1-2)
- 17) **Paul** was plotted against by more than 40 in Jerusalem (Acts 23:12-15)
- 18) **Paul** was falsely accused in Caesarea (Acts 24:1-9; 25:1-3, 7)
- a) **LDA reply: The nature of the persecution** described in the book of Revelation **does not fit the Jewish persecution** that we read about in the book of Acts⁴¹
- 1] The Jewish antagonism toward Christianity that is reported in the book of Acts was really **discrimination** rather than **persecution**
- a] Paul was **received by Jews** in several localities (Acts 18:19-20; 19:10; 20:31; 28:17-21; 1 Cor. 16:9)
- b] **Stanley Paher**: “Obviously only some fanatical Jews engaged in oppressing Paul, for in two subsequent stays in the area (Acts 15:36-16:5 18:23) the apostle could freely strengthen the churches (15:41, 16:5, 18:23), apparently unhindered by orthodox local Jews. Again, there is no mention of any kind of persecution. Therefore, the claim of widespread, interprovincial, first-century Jewish persecution is flatly denied; evidence for it is sorely lacking.” (*The Identity of Babylon*, p. 15, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xxxvi-xxxvii)
- 2] Later **church historians omit** or downplay the extent of the Jewish persecution of the early church⁴²
- b) **EDA reply**: The record of Jewish persecution (i.e. its extent and intensity) in the book of Acts speaks for itself
- c) **EDA reply**: The persecution described in Revelation 13 speaks of the Roman persecution under Nero (Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xxxvii)
- 1] *Note*: Some scholars [Ewald, Renan, Schaff, Frend, McGiffert] suggest that even Nero’s persecution was induced by Jews in Rome
- 2] **LDA objection**: How could John be prophesying of a **42 month period of persecution** (Rev. 13:5) that was already partially past when he wrote?
- a] **EDA reply**: John refers to **the birth of Jesus** (Rev. 12:1-5) long after it had actually occurred
- b] **EDA reply**: Jeremiah prophesied of **the 70 years of Babylonian Captivity** after it had already begun (Jer. 25:1, 11)
- c] **EDA reply**: Furthermore, John’s prophecy demonstrates that the persecution is **under the control of God** (cf. Rev. 4) and **limited by God** (Rev. 13:5). It answers the question “**How long?**” (Rev. 6:9-11)
-

-
- d) **EDA reply:** Certain statements in the letters to the seven churches suggest that there was **some kind of Jewish persecution** in that area (cf. Rev. 2:9; 3:9-10)
 - e) **EDA reply:** The **dramatic imagery** of Revelation 17 could apply to a **local Jewish persecution** if “it is therefore not uncommon to couch local oracles of judgment in universal and radical language” (Stanley Paher, *If Thou Hadst Known*, 1978, p. 99)
 - f) **EDA reply:** In his letters, Paul sees much more than mere **discrimination** from the Jews (cf. 1 Th. 2:14-16)
 - g) **EDA reply:** Eusebius says “the first and **greatest persecution** was instigated by **the Jews** against the church of Jerusalem in connection with the martyrdom of Stephen...” (Emphasis added, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2:1:8)
 - h) **EDA reply:** Tertullian was writing about **contemporary Roman persecution**, not persecution arising from the Jews
 - i) **EDA reply:** Other Church Fathers attribute the death of the apostles to the Jews⁴³
- b. In addition to this, Christians suffered when the Romans began to persecute the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem, because at that time **the Romans viewed Christianity as merely another sect of Judaism**
 - c. And then **Nero began the first Roman persecution of Christianity** after the burning of Rome late in AD 64⁴⁴
 - d. It is very **difficult to find evidence of a widespread Domitianic persecution** of Christians outside Rome⁴⁵
 - 1) There is **no evidence from contemporary sources** with Domitian that he persecuted Christians, much less that he “bathed the empire in their blood”⁴⁶
 - a) **LDA reply:** The demand for “**contemporary evidence**” is too much
 - 1] There is **little “contemporary evidence”** from secular sources for **the historicity of Jesus**⁴⁷
 - 2] The **earliest evidence** for a **Neronian persecution** comes from the **writings of Tacitus** [AD 115], more than 50 years later
 - b) **LDA reply:** While the extent of persecution by Domitian has been exaggerated in many sources, **we must not “throw the baby out with the bath water”**
 - 1] **The Apocalypse** itself provides abundant evidence of persecution (Rev. 1:9; 2:10, 13), and **the testimony of the Church Fathers dates the book in the reign of Domitian**
 - 2] There is **reliable testimony**, though not contemporary testimony, from the Church Fathers for the Domitianic persecution⁴⁸
 - 3] Discounting this testimony amounts to a **rejection of ancient history**⁴⁹
 - e. It is **not difficult to find evidence of the Neronian persecution** of Christians
 - 1) There can be no doubt that **Christians were persecuted by Nero**
-

-
- 2) They were punished in **huge numbers**
 - 3) They were punished as **Christians**⁵⁰
 - 4) The Neronian persecution was **more gruesome** and **longer lasting** than the alleged Domitianic persecution⁵¹
 - 5) Although the matter is still subject to debate, there is reason to believe that **the Neronian persecution extended beyond Rome** and into the provinces⁵²
 - 6) The **chronological occurrence** of the Neronian persecution is more suitable to Revelation's treatment of the subject⁵³
- J. **The widespread worship of the beast** (Rev. 13:4, 8, 12-17; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4)
1. Explanation:
 - a. There can be little doubt, that **the sea-beast** in John's vision represents the **Roman Empire** (cf. Dan. 7:1-28)
 - b. There is also little doubt that **the worship of the sea-beast**, enforced by the earth-beast, also called the false prophet (Rev. 16:13; 19:20), is an allusion to **emperor-worship** (Rev. 13:12; 14:11)
 - c. **Widespread emperor-worship does not fit the time of Nero**⁵⁴
 - 1) When he was declared emperor, **Nero forbade statues to himself** of solid gold and silver (Tacitus, *Annals*, 13:10)
 - 2) Suetonius reports that Nero "despised all religious cults except that of Atargatis, the Syrian Goddess," to whom he sacrificed three times a day (*Nero*, 56)
 - d. In sharp contrast to Nero, **Domitian avidly courted the worship of himself** by the people and wanted them to look upon him as a god⁵⁵
 - 1) This reverence for the gods and the emperor was considered **proof of loyalty** to the empire; a refusal to pay this homage was considered **sacrilege** and **treason**
 - 2) **Emperor-worship was not imposed by the emperors, at least before Domitian.** It was the spontaneous response of the people in the provinces to the peace and good government they owed to the Romans
 2. Evaluation:
 - a. **Dating the rise and the extent of the emperor cult is exceedingly difficult**⁵⁶
 - b. As early as 195 BC, a temple dedicated to **Dea Roma**, which personified Rome as a goddess, existed in Smyrna
 - c. **Julius Caesar** [100-44 BC] claimed **divine honor**⁵⁷
 - d. Although **Augustus** forbade divine honors to himself in Rome, he sanctioned his worship and the erection of altars elsewhere⁵⁸
 - e. Although **Tiberius** actively discouraged the practice of emperor-worship, he was **worshipped after his death**⁵⁹
 - f. **Caligula** was a madman who **believed in his own deity**⁶⁰

-
- 1) In AD 40, Caligula sent an army into Judea with orders to erect his image in the temple at Jerusalem and to demand that the Jews bow before it. War with the Jews was averted only by his untimely death (Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 8:1-9; 19:1-2)
 - g. Although **Claudius** completely reversed Caligula's policy of emperor-worship, he was **voted a god upon his death** only to have his enrollment among the gods annulled by Nero but later restored by Vespasian
 - h. There is significant evidence of **Nero's endorsement of the emperor cult**⁶¹
 - i. **Galba, Otho, and Vitellius** reigned so briefly that the question was not real for them
 - j. **Vespasian and Titus** were practical men who did not concern themselves with being worshipped
 - k. The claim that **Domitian** instigated the **death penalty** as state policy upon Christians for refusing to bow to his deity is without historical foundation⁶²
- K. **The allusion to the Nero Redivivus Myth** (Rev. 13:1-3, 14; 17:8-11)
1. Explanation:
 - a. Nero so fearfully impressed the world of his time that **legends** began to circulate among the general populace, either that **he did not actually die** or that **he would come back to life**
 - b. **John alludes to this myth in the Apocalypse**, and since it would have taken **time** for this myth to arise and be widely circulated, this suggests a late date for the book of Revelation⁶³
 2. Evaluation:
 - a. Not all **late date advocates** believe this is a significant argument for determining the date of Revelation⁶⁴
 - b. A number of **early date advocates** [e.g. Moses Stuart, J. Stuart Russell, Bernard W. Henderson, James M Macdonald, F. W. Farrar, and John A. T. Robinson], who accept the myth as existing within Revelation, nevertheless maintain that **the book was written during the time of Nero**
 - c. **The seeds** of the Nero Redivivus Myth were **sown early** in the reign of Nero⁶⁵
 - d. The myth is known to have made its **effects felt almost immediately** upon Nero's death⁶⁶
 - e. Although there are some intriguing likenesses between the *Nero Redivivus* Myth and several verses in Revelation, **the two may not be related**
 - 1) First, it could be that the slain head that died was in fact Nero, but his return to life as the eighth head was **not a literal, corporeal reappearance in history but a moral and symbolical return**
 - a) The eighth emperor **Otho** had a very real predilection for Nero⁶⁷
 - b) The same thing was true of **Vitellius**, the ninth emperor⁶⁸
 - c) So a case can be made that **Nero came to life again in the adulation and the actions of his successors**

- 2) Second, **the beast** [i.e. the Roman Empire] is the one who is **revived**, not the slain head [i.e. Nero]
 - a) *Note:* At times **the “beast”** refers to **the Roman Empire** (cf. Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 8) and at other times to **an individual** (cf. Rev. 13:14, 18; 17:11)
 - b) The mortal sword-wound to one of the heads should have killed the beast, but it didn't. The Roman Empire survived **two major threats** to its existence
 - 1] With the death of Nero, the **Julio-Claudian line** of emperors ceased⁶⁹
 - 2] Following the death of Nero, the Roman Empire was hurled into a **civil war** so terrible that it almost destroyed the empire⁷⁰

L. **John's exile to Patmos** (Rev. 1:9)

1. Explanation:

- a. John was exiled to Patmos, and while **Domitian used banishment** as a form of punishment, there is **no evidence that Nero did**⁷¹

2. Evaluation:

M. **The authority of the writer over the seven churches**

1. Explanation:

- a. There is no evidence that the apostle exercised any authority over the churches of Asia before the destruction of Jerusalem

2. Evaluation:

- a. The apostles exercised their **authority in all churches** (Mt. 16:18-19; 18:18; Eph. 2:19-21; 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; 14:33, 37; 16:1)

N. **The different attitude toward Rome**

1. Explanation:

- a. The **earliest opposition** to the preaching of the gospel came from **the Jews**, not the Romans (cf. Acts 8:1-4; 12:1-19; 13:50-52; 14:2)
- b. Early on, the **Roman government** manifested an attitude of **tolerance** for Christianity⁷²
 - 1) In **Philippi**, Paul brought the local magistrates to heel by revealing his Roman citizenship (Acts 16:36-40)
 - 2) In **Corinth**, Gallio dismissed the complaints against Paul with impartial Roman justice (Acts 18:1-17)
 - 3) In **Ephesus**, the Roman authorities were careful to guard Paul's safety against the rioting mob (Acts 19:13-41)
 - 4) In **Jerusalem**, the Roman tribune rescued Paul from what might have become a “lynching” (Acts 21:30-40)
 - 5) When **the Roman tribune** in Jerusalem heard that there was to be an attempt on Paul's life on the way to Caesarea, he took every possible precaution to ensure his safety (Acts 23:12-31)

6) When Paul despaired of justice in Palestine, he exercised his right as a Roman citizen to **appeal directly to Caesar**, and his appeal was honored (Acts 25:10-11)

c. But in the Apocalypse, all this has changed. **The beast** [i.e. the Roman Empire] manifests nothing but **blazing hatred** for the saints of God

2. Evaluation:

O. **Intrinsic propriety**

1. Explanation:

a. **Philip Schaff**: “In favor of the traditional date may also be urged an intrinsic propriety that the book which closes the canon, and treats of the last things till the final consummation, should have been written last.” (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 1, p. 428)

2. Evaluation:

a. This argument is **highly subjective** in its nature

b. Is it certain that the Apocalypse deals with “**the last things till the final consummation**”?

c. Is it possible that while John wrote the Apocalypse early, instead of late, it was **still the last book** of the NT to be written?

ARGUMENTS FOR THE EARLY DATE:

III. **External Arguments [Evidence from Secular Sources]:**

P. **The quotations from other early writers**

1. Explanation:

a. The **title-page of the Syriac Version** dates the Apocalypse in the reign of **Nero**⁷³

b. The Syriac *History of John, the Son of Zebedee* says that John was banished under **Nero**⁷⁴

c. **Tertullian** [AD 160-220] associates the **deaths of Peter and Paul** with the **banishment of John**⁷⁵

1) The **deaths of Peter and Paul occurred during the reign of Nero**, and Tertullian’s association of John’s banishment with their martyrdom lends support for the early date of the Apocalypse⁷⁶

d. **Clement of Alexandria’s** story of **John and the robber chieftain** seems to suggest an early date for the Apocalypse

e. **Arethas** [6th cen.] applied the **sixth seal** to the **destruction of Jerusalem**⁷⁷

f. **The Muratorian Canon** implies that the Apocalypse was written **early** rather than **late**⁷⁸

1) If this ancient writer [ca. AD 127-157] is correct that **John preceded Paul in writing letters to the seven churches**, and **Paul died before AD 70**, either in AD 67 or 68, as historians and theologians universally agree, then the Apocalypse must have been written at an early date

- g. The apocryphal work *The Acts of John* suggests that **the Apocalypse was written before John's banishment by Domitian**⁷⁹
- 1) This statement suggests a **Domitianic exile for John**, but the rationale for the exile is suggestive of a **prior publication of the Apocalypse**
 - 2) It could very well be that **John was banished twice**, once under **Nero** and later under **Domitian** (which would explain **the Neronian and Domitianic exile traditions**)
- h. **Theophylact**, Metropolitan of Bulgaria and noted Byzantine exegete [d. AD 1107], provides evidence of a **dual tradition on John's banishment**⁸⁰
2. Evaluation:
- a. These sources are **further removed** from the date of the Apocalypse and **less credible** than those cited for the late date⁸¹
 - b. Tertullian does not **explicitly state** or **necessarily imply** that **John's banishment** occurred at the same time as the **martyrdom's of Peter and Paul**
 - 1) **EDA reply:** In his *Against Jovinianum* (1:26), Jerome certainly understood Tertullian to state that **John was banished by Nero**, even though he accepted a Domitianic date for the Apocalypse from Eusebius' *Chronicle*

IV. Internal Arguments [Evidence from Scripture]:

Q. The mourning of the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7)

1. Explanation:
- a. NT writers speak of **many different "comings" of the Lord**, so we must not automatically assume that John is alluding here to **the Final Coming**
 - 1) The **incarnation** (Jn. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 9:26-28)
 - 2) The **giving of the Holy Spirit** to the apostles (Jn. 14:16-18, 28)
 - 3) The **indwelling of Deity** (Jn. 14:23)
 - 4) The **coming in His kingdom** (Mt. 16:28; cf. Mk. 9:1)
 - 5) The **preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles** (Eph. 2:17)
 - 6) The **outpouring of chastisement or blessing on churches** (Rev. 2:5, 16, 25; 3:3, 11, 20; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20)
 - 7) The **destruction of Jerusalem** (Mt. 10:23; 24:27, 30; 26:64; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27; Heb. 10:37; Jas. 5:8)
 - 8) The **judgment on the beasts and Babylon** (Rev. 1:7; 11:16-18; 14:14-20; 16:4-7; 19:1-2, 11-16, 19-21)
 - 9) The **Final Coming** (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Th. 3:11-13; 4:13-18; 2 Th. 1:6-10; 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 6:13-16)
 - b. OT writers frequently use **clouds** as indicators of **divine judgment**
 - 1) Thick, foreboding clouds are emblems of God's unapproachable **holiness** and **righteousness** (cf. Ex. 13:21-22; 14:19-20; 19:9, 16-19; Dt. 4:11; Job 22:13-14; Psa. 18:8-12; 97:2; 104:3; Nah. 1:2-3)

-
- 2) **God** is poetically portrayed as coming on/with **clouds** in **historical judgments** upon wicked men or nations
 - a) The **enemies of David** (Psa. 18:7-15)
 - b) **Egypt** (Isa. 19:1, 4; cf. Ezek. 30:1-5, 18-19; 32:7-8, 11)
 - c) **Judah** (Joel 2:1-2; Zeph. 1:14-16)
 - d) The **earth** (Isa. 26:20-21)
 - e) **Jerusalem** in 586 B.C. (Jer. 4:11-13; cf. Ezek. 34:12-13)
 - f) **Israel and Judah** (Mic. 1:2-7)
 - g) The **fourth beast** (Dan. 7:13-14, 21-22, 24-27)
 - h) **Jerusalem** in A.D. 70 (Mt. 24:27, 30; 26:64; Mk. 13:26; Mk. 14:62)
 - i) The **ungodly** (Jude 14-15)
 - j) The **persecutors** (Rev. 1:7; 14:14-20)
 - k) **Final Judgment** (Acts 1:9-11)
 - c. The reference to “**those who pierced Him**” is a clear allusion to **the Jews**⁸²
 - 1) Although it was **the Romans who actually nailed Jesus to the cross** (Jn. 18:30-31), it was **the Jews who instigated and demanded it**
 - a) They **sought** His death (Jn. 11:53; Mt. 26:4; 27:1)
 - b) They **paid** to have Him captured (Mt. 26:14-15, 47; 27:3-9)
 - c) They **brought** false witnesses against Him (Mt. 27:59-62)
 - d) They initially **convicted** Him (Mt. 27:65-66)
 - e) They **turned Him over** to the Roman authorities (Mt. 27:2, 11-12; Acts 3:13)
 - f) They arrogantly **called down His blood** upon their own heads (Mt. 27:24-25)
 - g) When Pilate sought to free Jesus, they **demand**ed that the robber and murderer Barabbas be released instead (Jn. 18:38-40)
 - h) They even subtly **threatened** Pilate’s tenuous Roman governorship (Jn. 19:14-15)
 - 2) The NT places **the burden of responsibility** for the crucifixion of Jesus squarely on **the shoulders of the Jews** (cf. Acts 2:22-23, 36; 3:13-15; 5:30; 7:51-52; 10:39; 1 Th. 2:14-15)
 - 3) *Note:* The word “**tribes**” [*phule*] most frequently refers to **the Jewish tribes**
 - 4) The word “**earth**” [*ge*] could also be translated “**land**” [i.e. the Promised land] (cf. Zech. 12:10)
 - a) “Lo, he doth come with the clouds, and see him shall every eye, even those who did pierce him, and wail because of him shall all **the tribes of the land**. Yes! Amen!” (Emphasis added, *Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, p. 167)
-

- b) “Behold he comes with the clouds, and will see him every eye and [those] who him pierced, and will wail over him all **the tribes of the land**. Yes, amen.” (Emphasis added, Marshall, *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, p. 957)
- d. This is a clear allusion to **Christ’s judgment upon the Jews** for rejecting their Messiah
2. Evaluation:
- a. If the Apocalypse primarily focuses on the destruction of Jerusalem, **why was it written to the seven churches of Asia?**
- 1) **EDA reply:**
- a) For the same reason that **Ezekiel wrote to the Jews in Babylonian Captivity** about the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC – to convince them that the destruction of Jerusalem was from God
- b) The **period of tribulation** preceding the destruction of Jerusalem was expected to **affect the Jews throughout the world**
- c) To **warn the Jewish Christians** about the trying times that were coming upon the earth (Rev. 3:10), **prepare them to endure**, and **give them incentives** necessary for victory
- d) The seven churches **represent churches everywhere**, so the message was not for them alone, but for Christians the world over
- 2) **Kenneth Gentry:** “Jerusalem’s judgment necessarily impacts the larger socio-political world beyond Jerusalem – much like America’s War Between the States influenced even Europe in many respects.” (“Preface To New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xvii, f.n. 7)

R. The expectation of proximate fulfillment

1. Explanation:
- a. When John wrote Revelation, **he expected the fulfillment of his prophecies within a very short period of time** (Rev. 1:1, 3, 19; 2:16; 3:10-11; 22:6-7, 10, 12, 20), even **during the lifetime of his readers** (Rev. 2:25)⁸³
- b. The deducible internal *sitz im Leben* [i.e. “situation in life”] of the recipients of the Apocalypse **demand a proximate fulfillment**
- 1) John was writing to **seven contemporary historical churches** (Rev. 1:11) that were facing very real, serious, repeated, and intensifying threats (Rev. 2 - 3)
- a) The phrase **“he who overcomes”** (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7) indicates an **imminent trial of faith** by ominous impending events, forecasting a momentous struggle
- b) The exhortation **“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer”** (Rev. 2:10) is more than a **general admonition** for faithfulness in ordinary trials and temptations; it is of a **portentous nature**

-
- c) The warning “**you will have tribulation ten days**” (Rev. 2:10) can have no other meaning than that **they themselves** were to pass through this period of tribulation
 - d) The exhortation “**Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life**” (Rev. 2:10) indicates that this period of tribulation would come upon **them**
 - e) The **commendation of patience** coupled with **the warning** to the church at Thyatira (Rev. 2:19) suggests that they were standing on the **threshold of events** which would require patience in greater degree
 - f) The promise of **the preservation of the Philadelphian church** through this period of trial (Rev. 3:10) is *prima facie* evidence that the events of the Apocalypse belonged to that time
- 2) John himself was already a partaker in “**the tribulation**” with them (Rev. 1:9). He notes with concern **the expectant cry** from the martyred souls underneath the altar (Rev. 6:9-10)
- c. The Apocalypse foretells **imminent events** of such great magnitude that they are described as a “**coming**” of the Lord (Rev. 1:7; 2:5, 16, 25; 3:3, 11, 20; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20) **upon the Jews** (Rev. 1:7; 2:9; 3:9) and **the churches** (Rev. 1:9; 2:9-10, 16:3:2) and **the Roman Empire** (Rev. 3:10). **What historical era best accounts for all these things?**
- 1) **The Jewish War** [AD 67-70] resulted in the **deaths** of tens of thousands of Jews and the **enslavement** of even more, the final and complete **destruction of the temple**, and the **total devastation of Jerusalem** itself⁸⁴
 - 2) **The first persecution of Christianity** [AD 64-68] by Imperial Rome resulted in the **deaths** of many Christians, among them **Peter and Paul**
 - 3) **The Roman Civil War** [AD 68/69] almost brought **an end to the empire**
 - a) **Nero** committed suicide in June, AD 68 at the outbreak of civil revolt
 - b) **Galba** declared himself emperor and was accepted by the Praetorian Guard and Senate
 - c) In January, AD 69, the Praetorians switched their allegiance to **Otho** and killed Galba
 - d) The Rhine armies then proclaimed **Vitellius** emperor, and his armies defeated Otho’s forces at Bedriacum
 - e) Upon Otho’s suicide April 17, AD 69, **Vitellius** was declared emperor
 - f) Later the Eastern provinces declared **Vespasian** emperor, and he took Rome in a destructive, bloody battle Dec. 20, AD 69
 - 4) **Philip Schaff**: “There is scarcely another period in history so full of vice, corruption, and disaster as the six years between the Neronian persecution and the destruction of Jerusalem.” (*History of the Christian Church*, 1:391, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 180)
 - 5) Nothing in or around **Domitian’s era** had anything like the dramatic significance of these events
-

- d. If Revelation were **written in the mid AD 90's**, and **its fulfillment** were in the **Edict of Milan** [AD 313], which finally ended the Roman persecution of Christians, or in the **destruction of the Rome Empire** [AD 476], the time of fulfillment would not have been “**near**” (Rev. 1:3), because those things did not “**shortly take place**” (Rev. 1:1; 22:6, 10)⁸⁵

2. Evaluation:

- a. **Futurist objection:** Peter says “But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord **one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day**” (2 Pet. 3:8), so the timeframe passages should not be taken so literally
- 1) **Reply:** Peter did not mean that time is **meaningless** to God, but that it is **immaterial** to the outworking of His plan
 - 2) **Reply:** Furthermore, John was writing to **men, not God**, and **one day is not as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day to men**
 - 3) **Reply:** The **temporal expectation** in Revelation harmonizes with NT teaching elsewhere (cf. Mt. 24:34; 26:64; Mk. 9:1)

S. **The existence of the twelve tribes** (Rev. 7:1-8)

1. Explanation:

- a. A temporary **divine protection** of “**the land**” is followed by **the sealing of the 144,000** from the twelve tribes of Israel, and this implies that **the Jewish nation was still in existence** and occupying its homeland⁸⁶
- 1) The reference to the **Twelve Tribes** is a reference to Christians
 - a) God intervenes to **protect** them (Rev. 7:3)
 - b) They are called “**bond-servants of our God**” (Rev. 7:3)
 - 2) But they are **Christians of Jewish extraction**
 - a) They are in “**the land**” (Rev. 7:1)
 - b) They are **contrasted with the “great multitude”** from “every nation” (Rev. 7:4, 9)
 - 3) But **only 144,000 are protected**, not all of Israel, just the “**cream of the crop**”
- b. The fact that **an angel intervenes before they are destroyed** in the land indicates the era prior to the final and total devastation of the land in AD 70⁸⁷

2. Evaluation:

T. **The measuring of the temple in Jerusalem** (Rev. 11:1-2, 8)

1. Explanation:

- a. **The temple** in Jerusalem is referred to as **still standing**, which indicates that the Apocalypse was received before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70⁸⁸
- b. In a vision, **John sees Jerusalem being destroyed**; therefore, the Apocalypse must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70⁸⁹

2. Evaluation:

- a. **LDA objection:** The **symbolic nature of the Apocalypse** and the obvious **allusion to Ezekiel’s vision of the temple** (Ezek. 40 - 48) indicates that a **symbolic interpretation** is more likely correct than a **literal interpretation**.
[*Note: Solomon’s temple* was no longer standing, having been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC, when Ezekiel received his vision of the temple in 573 BC (Ezek. 40:1)]
- 1) **EDA reply:** The description **fits literal Jerusalem too precisely** to be a **symbolic description of the church**
 - a) The language of this passage (Rev. 11:1-2) is **parallel to Luke 21:24**, which suggests that this is a reference to the destruction of the literal temple in Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 21:20-21)
 - b) The **temple, altar** and **court** are said to be located in the **“holy city,”** which seems to be a clear allusion to Jerusalem (Isa. 48:2; 52:1; Neh. 11:1, 18; Dan. 9:24; Mt. 4:5; 27:53; cf. 1 Macc. 2:7; 2 Macc. 1:12; 3:1; 9:14; 15:14; Tob. 13:10; Sir. 36:12; 49:6; Psa. Sol. 8:4)
 - c) The term **“great city”** would certainly have applied to Jerusalem (Jer. 22:8)⁹⁰
 - d) The city is identified as the place **“where our Lord was crucified”** (Rev. 11:8), which was certainly Jerusalem (cf. Mt. 16:21; 20:17-18; Lk. 13:33-34; 18:31-33)
 - e) Moreover, the Apocalypse was written to warn that those who **crucified Jesus** would see **His cloud-judgment** coming upon them (Rev. 1:7)
 - b. **LDA objection: Clement of Rome** spoke of the **temple as still standing**, even though the **temple had long since been destroyed** when he wrote ca. AD 90+; therefore the reference to the temple in the Apocalypse does not necessarily imply that it was actually still standing⁹¹
 - 1) **EDA reply: Kenneth Gentry:** “Unfortunately, there is almost as serious a question over the dating of Clement’s letter as there is over the dating of Revelation.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 177)

U. **The number of the beast** (Rev. 13:18)

1. Explanation:

- a. In ancient alphabets, like Hebrew and Greek, **letters** were also given **numerical values**, and **cryptogrammic riddles** were common in ancient cultures⁹²
- b. John says that the number of the beast, **666**, is **the number of a man**, and according to a Hebrew spelling, **the letters in Nero’s name adds up to 666**⁹³
 - 1) N = 50
R = 200
O = 6
N = 50
K = 100
S = 60
R = 200
666

-
- c. Kenneth Gentry suggests that there may be **subtle incidental allusions to Nero** in Revelation 13
- 1) The **character** of the beast (Rev. 13:1-2) befits Nero's character⁹⁴
 - 2) The beast seems to have a **serpent-like quality**, and a well-known legend associated Nero with a serpent⁹⁵
 - 3) The beast's **red color** may be indicative not only of bloodshed but of Nero's red beard
 - 4) The **manner of Nero's death** corresponds with statements in Revelation 13 (Rev. 13:10, 14)
- d. **Art Ogden**: "If Nero fits the bill, why look for another? Everyone admits that Nero is one of the seven heads of the sea beast. He also fits the other descriptions in the chapter. He was the first Roman Emperor to 'make war with the saints' (13:7) and he did die by the sword (13:10). Nero, then, is the obvious man identified as the beast about which John wrote in Revelation 13." (*Dating The Apocalypse*, p. 7)
2. Evaluation:
- a. **LDA objection**: Since there is **no indefinite article** in the Greek language, the phrase "**the number of a man**" could also be translated "**the number of man**" [i.e. the number that designates man] (cf. Dt. 3:11; Gal. 1:11; 3:15; Rev. 21:17)
- 1) **EDA reply**: This view **denies what John expressly affirms** -- that the number of the beast is the number of a man
 - 2) **EDA reply**: The presence of the definite article in the phrase literally translated "**the number of the name of it**" (Rev. 13:17) would suggest a specific name
 - 3) **EDA reply**: The early "**Church Fathers**" seemed to be convinced that the number of the beast represented a **particular person in history**
 - 4) **EDA reply**: Why would the symbolic requirements of the passage demand **three sixes**, as in 666? With the common number seven so prominent in the book, why wasn't the number of the beast, if wholly symbolic, simply a lone **6**? Or why not **66**? Or **6666**? And if wholly symbolic, how could the number have been corrupted to **616** before the time of Irenaeus?
 - 5) **EDA reply**: Why couldn't the number be both a **cryptogram** for Nero and a **symbol of failure, incompleteness, imperfection**, etc. at the same time? In the Sibylline Oracles (1:328-329), Jesus' name is signified by **888**, specifying a particular person and also serving a symbolic function
- b. **LDA objection**: To arrive at Nero as the designation, one must use a **Hebrew spelling**, but John was writing in **Greek to Gentile churches**⁹⁶
- 1) **EDA reply**: Although it is true that John wrote in Greek, the Apocalypse has long been recognized as one of the most "**Jewish books**" of the NT
 - a) Other names in Revelation are very Hebraic [i.e. "**Abaddon**" (Rev. 9:11), "**Armageddon**" (Rev. 16:16), "**Satan**" = "the devil" (Rev. 12:9)], so why would it be so unnatural to adopt a **Hebraic spelling** for the basis of a cryptogram?
-

-
- b) Furthermore, there are a number of examples in the NT of **Greek spellings of Hebrew names** [i.e. “Simon the *Kananaios* (or Zealot)” (Mk. 3:18)]
 - c) **Asia Minor was well populated by Jews, and in fact, the Jewish presence was felt throughout the Roman Empire**⁹⁷
 - c. **LDA objection:** The number 666 has been **applied to many different individuals, and the possibilities are almost endless**⁹⁸
 - 1) **EDA reply:** This objection is invalid, because whatever the reference, it must have had **contemporary relevancy** for first-century Christians who were under severe tribulation (Rev. 1:9; 2:22; 6:10). The name “**Nero**” well meets the three fundamental criteria: (1) **proper numerical valuation**, (2) **reference to a man**, and (3) **contemporary relevancy**
 - d. **LDA objection:** **No early “Church Father” suggests Nero’s name** as the proper designation of the number 666, even though various suggestions were given by such men as Irenaeus, Andreas of Caesarea, Victorinus, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria and others⁹⁹
 - 1) **EDA reply:** The very fact that Irenaeus, writing just 100 years after the Apocalypse was written, could not be sure of the proper designation demonstrates that **the true interpretation**, whatever it was, **very quickly had been lost**. If this was true of Irenaeus in AD 180, it is certainly true of the later fathers
 - 2) **EDA reply:** If Irenaeus had offered with conviction **a specific alternative**, the case against the Nero theory would be seriously challenged, but he does not. In fact, he suggested that it was hopeless to determine the proper understanding. **Irenaeus’ admission of ignorance cannot prove the Nero theory wrong**
 - 3) **EDA reply:** Irenaeus suggests three possible solutions: (1) *Euanthas*, (2) *Lateinos*, and (3) *Teitan*, and two of these are quite compatible with the Nero designation
 - a) The name *Lateinos*, which signifies **the Roman Empire**, could well involve **the Empire’s head** at that particular time [i.e. Nero, if in fact John wrote during his reign], since the interchangeability of the “**beast**” with one of its “**heads**” is a well-known phenomenon in the Apocalypse
 - b) The name *Teitan* was also a name for **the sun god**, and Nero was widely known to have **adopted the attributes of the sun deity** as his own
 - c) So Irenaeus may at least have been on the right track
 - 4) **EDA reply:** It may be that Irenaeus did not record the Nero theory because of his **predisposition to a futuristic interpretation** of the book which was generated by his **premillennialism**
- V. **The seven kings** (Rev. 17:9-11)
- 1. Explanation:
 - a. The angel tells John that the **seven heads** represent **seven mountains**, and **Rome** is the one city in history that has been distinguished for and universally recognizable
-

by its seven hills [i.e. the Palatine, Aventine, Caelian, Esquiline, Viminal, Quirinal, and Capitoline hills]¹⁰⁰

- b. The angel tells John that the **seven heads** also represent **seven kings**: “**five have fallen, one is** [when the Apocalypse was revealed to John], **and the other has not yet come**”
 - c. If one follows the most **natural method of reckoning** the Caesars and begins counting with **Julius, Nero** is the sixth king -- the one who is¹⁰¹
 - 1) **Five have fallen**: (1) Julius, (2) Augustus, (3) Tiberius, (4) Caligula, (5) Claudius
 - 2) **One is**: (6) Nero
 - 3) **The other has not yet come**: (7) Vespasian
 - 4) **The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the** [lit. “an”] **eighth, and is of the seven**: (8) Titus
2. Evaluation:
- a. There are some **basic questions** that must be answered:
 - 1) Are the numbers **literal** or **figurative**?
 - 2) With which emperor do we **begin counting**?
 - 3) Are any of the Caesars to be **omitted**?
 - b. **LDA objection: Augustus** was the **first true Roman emperor**, not Julius¹⁰²
 - 1) The Roman historian **Tacitus** begins counting the emperors with **Augustus**, not Julius Caesar
 - 2) **Augustus** is generally accepted as the **first Roman emperor** among **commentators** even though they often do not understand John’s conclusion
 - 3) *Note*: Those who date the Apocalypse in the reign of **Vespasian** do so primarily because of this passage, but they begin counting with **Augustus** instead of Julius
 - a) **Five have fallen**: (1) Augustus, (2) Tiberius, (3) Caligula, (4) Claudius, (5) Nero
 - b) **One is**: (6) Vespasian
 - c) **The other has not yet come**: (7) Titus
 - d) **The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the** [lit. “an”] **eighth, and is of the seven**: (8) Domitian
 - e) **Galba, Otho, and Vitellius** are omitted in Revelation because they ruled for a brief period of time, and they were never recognized as emperors by the provinces
 - 1] *Note*: They are not omitted in Daniel 7
 - 4) **EDA reply**: There are very **good reasons to begin with Julius Caesar**
 - a) While it is true that **the Roman empire was officially established as an empire under Augustus**, and there are some lists of the emperors that

- begin the enumeration with Augustus, **the most logical place to begin is with Julius Caesar**¹⁰³
- b) He was **dictator** for more than four years before his death and **none of the Emperors were more imperial than he**
 - c) His power was so stately that he was **offered the title and crown**, though he refused it
 - d) **Josephus**, the Jewish historian who was contemporary with John [AD 37-101], identifies **Augustus, Tiberius, and Caius** [Caligula] as the **second, third, and fourth** emperors of Rome respectively; therefore **Julius Caesar** must have been **the first** Roman emperor in the mind of this Jewish historian¹⁰⁴
 - e) **Suetonius**, a Roman historian [ca. AD 70-160], in his *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, **begins his numbering with Julius** as the first. His first book is entitled *The Divine Julius*
 - f) **Dio Cassius**, another Roman historian [ca. AD 150-235], **numbers Julius as the first** of the emperors (*Roman History* 5)
 - g) **The writer of 4 Ezra** [ca. AD 100-120], sometimes called 2 Esdras, apparently **considered Julius to be the first** of the Roman Emperors (4 Ezra 12:13ff; 11:13ff)¹⁰⁵
 - h) **The Epistle of Barnabas** (4:4) speaks of **ten kings** upon the earth, evidently beginning the count with Julius¹⁰⁶
 - i) **The Sibylline Oracles** allude to **Julius** as the **first prince**¹⁰⁷
 - j) **Theophilus of Antioch** [ca. AD 115-181] identified **Julius** as the **first Roman emperor**¹⁰⁸
 - k) **Art Ogden**: “Should not he whose name became the title by which all the Emperors were addressed be recognized as the first? Caesar was Julius’ last name and it became the title by which all the Emperors were called. There were no Caesars if Julius was not the first. In fact, every Emperor was the extension of Julius. If Julius had not been mercilessly slain by members of the Roman Senate in 44 B.C., returning the reins of government back to that of a triumvirate, there would be no doubt about who was the first Emperor.” (*Dating The Apocalypse*, p. 6)
- c. **LDA objection:** The Roman emperors were not properly called “**kings**”
- 1) **EDA reply:** While this was **technically correct**, it was not uncommon for the emperors to be referred to as “**kings**”
 - a) Scripture (cf. 1 Pet. 2:13, 17; 1 Tim. 2:2; Jn. 19:15; Acts 17:7)
 - b) Secular sources (*Sibylline Oracles* 12:25, 35, 57, 137, 145, 147, 188, 208, 236)
- d. **LDA objection:** **Galba, Otho, and Vitellius** should be omitted because they each ruled for such a short time and were not accepted by the provinces. When they are omitted, that leaves **Vespasian** as the **seventh king**, but he ruled for 10 years, not a “**short while**”

- 1) **EDA reply: Suetonius** includes these three in his book *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, and these three are considered emperors by **Tacitus, Josephus**, the **Sibylline Oracles** and **4 Ezra**. Although the policy changes of these three men would have had a negligible impact on provincial affairs, their warring for the purple was of great concern to the provinces
- e. **LDA objection:** The number “seven” should be understood **symbolically, not literally**¹⁰⁹
 - 1) **EDA reply:** Because their very lives were on the line, it would have been **important for early Christians to know**, not only this king’s **spiritual affiliations**, but also **his identity**. Furthermore, this passage is **an explanation** of the symbols in the vision, and ordinarily we would not expect to **interpret the interpretation of a symbol symbolically**
- f. **Futurist objection:** The seven “kings” represent **seven successive “kingdoms”**
 - 1) **EDA reply:** The angel explained that the seven mountains represented seven “kings” [*basileis*], not “kingdoms” [*basileia*]. The obvious allusion to Rome via the “seven hills” cannot be mistaken. The expectation of **proximate fulfillment** rules out the possibility of successive kingdoms (Rev. 1:1, 3; 3:11; 22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20)

W. The Jewish influence on Christianity in Revelation

1. Explanation:

- a. The Apocalypse suggests that the time in which John wrote was one in which **Christianity** was still largely **affected by** and **strongly attached to the Jewish community**¹¹⁰
 - 1) Christianity was **born in Jerusalem** (Acts 2)
 - 2) It was “**headquartered**” **there** in its earliest period (Acts 8:1; 11:2; 15:2; Gal. 1:17-18; 2:1-2)
 - 3) In his missionary journeys, Paul went first to **the synagogues** and **preached to the Jews** (Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1-2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8)
 - 4) Two of the seven churches [i.e. Smyrna and Philadelphia] were plagued by “**those who say they are Jews**” (Rev. 2:9; 3:9)¹¹¹
 - 5) The **Judaizers** are having an **influence** in the churches (Rev. 2:1-6)¹¹²
 - 6) Christians are designated as **the true Jews**, the fullness of the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:4-8; 14:1ff; 21:12)¹¹³
 - 7) The expressions of Revelation are very **Hebraic**, and some words are even translated into Hebrew (Rev. 9:11; 16:16)
 - 8) The church is pictured with a **strongly Jewish symbol** as a **woman with a crown of twelve stars on her head** (Rev. 12:1ff)
 - 9) Christians are represented as **worshipping in the temple** and **ministering in Jerusalem** (Rev. 11:1-8)
- b. Until the mid-60’s, **the Romans identified Christianity as a sect of Judaism**, but all of this changed with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70

2. Evaluation:

X. Parallels with obvious prophecies of Jerusalem's destruction

1. Explanation:

- a. **Parallels between the Apocalypse and other obvious prophecies of Jerusalem's destruction** indicate that the Apocalypse was written before AD 70¹⁴
- b. The **completion of the mystery** announced to the prophets (Rev. 10:7) was fulfilled before Jerusalem's destruction
 - 1) Only the **OT prophets** are identified as **God's servants the prophets** (cf. 2 Ki. 9:7; 17:13, 23; 21:10; 24:2; Ezra 9:11; Jer. 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Ezek. 38:17; Dan. 9:6, 10; Amos 3:7; Zech. 1:6)
 - 2) The **mystery of God** declared to them are **those prophecies relating to God's plan of salvation** formulated before the foundation of the world but revealed to us in these last times (Rom. 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:7-13; Eph. 3:1-11)
 - a) The **OT prophets** looked to **the time of Christ** (cf. Acts 3:18, 20-21, 24-25; 13:26-29, 40-41)
 - 3) Thus, the seventh angel's sounding would be a **sign that the mystery of God revealed through the OT prophets was complete**
 - 4) **Daniel's Vision of the Seventy Weeks** (Dan. 9:24-27) associates the time when **God's mystery of salvation** would be completed with **the destruction of the holy city**¹⁵
- c. The **great tribulation** (Rev. 7:14) points to **the destruction of Jerusalem**
 - 1) The angel speaks of **the great tribulation**
 - 2) Other passages identify **the great tribulation as the destruction of Jerusalem** Jer. 30:7-9; Dan. 12:1; Mt. 24:21¹⁶
 - 3) Therefore, the Apocalypse had to be written before the event it prophesied
- d. The **blood of the prophets and saints was found in Babylon** (Rev. 18:20, 24), but **Jesus identified Jerusalem as the place where the blood of the prophets and saints was to be found** (Lk. 11:49-50; 13:33-34; Mt. 23:34-35)¹⁷

2. Evaluation:

- a. **Similar or identical language** does not necessarily prove **an identical reference**
- b. The term "**mystery**" is used in Scripture to refer to **different things**
 - 1) The "mysteries" of the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 13:11; Mk. 4:11; Lk. 8:10)
 - 2) The hardening of Israel (Rom. 11:25-26)
 - 3) The gospel of Christ (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 6:19; Col. 1:24-26; 4:3; 1 Tim. 3:8-9)
 - 4) God's wisdom prepared for those who love Him (1 Cor. 2:6-13)
 - 5) Spiritual truths revealed in the gospel (1 Cor. 4:1)
 - 6) All the secrets of God (1 Cor. 13:2)
 - 7) Uninterpreted tongue-speaking (1 Cor. 14:2)
 - 8) The corruptible putting on incorruption (1 Cor. 15:50-53)
 - 9) God's purpose to sum up all things in Christ (Eph. 1:9-11)

-
- 10) The salvation of the Gentiles (Eph. 3:3-6, 8-9; Col. 1:27-29)
 - 11) The relationship between Christ and the church (Eph. 5:32)
 - 12) Christ (Col. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:16)
 - 13) The revelation of the man of sin (2 Th. 2:1-12)
 - 14) The identity of the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks (Rev. 1:20)
 - 15) God's judgment on the wicked (Rev. 10:7; 11:16-18)
 - 16) The name of the great harlot (Rev. 17:5)
 - 17) The identity of the harlot and the beast (Rev. 17:7)
- c. The term **“great tribulation”** refers to **different destructions**
- 1) The day of Jehovah (Joel 2:1-2)
 - 2) The destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC (Jer. 30:7; Ezek. 5:8-9; Dan. 9:12)
 - 3) The desecration of the Temple in 168/167 BC (Dan. 12:1)
 - 4) The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Mt. 24:21; Mk. 13:19)
 - 5) The judgment of the seventh seal (Rev. 16:18)
- d. **LDA objection:** The description of the **Great Harlot**, Babylon, best fits **Rome**, not Jerusalem
- 1) She sits on **many waters** (Rev. 17:1, 15; cf. Jer. 51:13)
 - 2) She sits on a **scarlet-colored beast** (Rev. 17:3, 7)
 - 3) She sits on **seven mountains** (Rev. 17:9)
 - 4) She is the great city that **reigns over the kings of the earth** (Rev. 17:18)
 - 5) She has **made the merchants rich** (Rev. 18:3b, 15)
 - 6) She has **merchandise of gold, silver**, etc. (Rev. 18:11-14)
 - 7) She is **mourned by kings, merchants, & sailors** (Rev. 18:9-11, 15-19)
 - 8) She has **deceived the nations** with her sorcery (Rev. 18:23c)
 - a) **EDA reply:** While some of the descriptions **appear to fit Rome** the best, **things are not always as they appear**. Many of Christ's descriptions in His Olivet Discourse appear to refer to **the Second Coming** (Mt. 24:14, 21, 27, 29-31), but they cannot refer to that event (Mt. 24:34)
 - b) **EDA reply:** Other descriptions of **the Great Harlot** seem to fit **Jerusalem** much better than **Rome**
 - 1] She is the **“great city”** (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18-19, 21; cf. Jer. 22:8; Rev. 11:8)
 - 2] **“Come out of her, my people....”** (Rev. 18:4; cf. Mt. 24:15-16)
 - 3] She is to be **repaid double** (Rev. 18:6; cf. Isa. 40:2)
 - 4] She says **“I sit a queen...and shall in no wise see mourning”** (Rev. 18:7; cf. Lam. 1:1)
-

5] The **blood of prophets and saints** is found in her (Rev. 18:24; Mt. 23:32-39; Lk. 11:47-51; 13:33-35)

- c) **EDA reply:** While some of the descriptions of the Great Harlot are certainly **more easily applied to Rome, plausible applications can be made to Jerusalem**. Furthermore, the **weight of other evidence tips the scale** in favor of identifying “**Babylon**” with **Jerusalem** despite these difficulties

Y. The ease of application to the Jewish War

1. Explanation:

- a. Much of the **vivid language** in the Apocalypse **fits the catastrophic events of the Jewish War**, and “if it waddles like a duck and quacks like a duck...”¹¹⁸
- b. The scenes in the Apocalypse veritably breathe a time of **wild commotion, horrendous devastation, and destructive upheaval**, and the era of the late AD 60’s was far more tumultuous than that of the AD 90’s because of:
 - 1) **Nero’s persecution** [AD 64-68]
 - 2) **The Jewish War** [AD 67-70]
 - 3) **The Roman Civil Wars** [AD 68/69]
- c. **The Second Seal** (Rev. 6:3-4) well suits the **temporary breach of the Pax Romana** which was ruptured by the events of the AD 60’s¹¹⁹
- d. **The Civil War** described in the Apocalypse (Rev. 6:4) fits the turmoil of the AD 60’s¹²⁰
- e. **The famine** described in the **Third Seal** (Rev. 6:5-6) fits the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70¹²¹
- f. **The sealing of the 144,000** (Rev. 7:1-7) well fits the **providential protection of Jewish Christians** during the destruction of Jerusalem¹²²
- g. **The treading of the temple courts** (Rev. 11:1-2) fits the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Dan. 8:13; Lk. 21:24)
- h. **The bridle-deep blood** (Rev. 14:19-20) well describes **the carnage** of Jerusalem’s destruction by the Romans¹²³
- i. **The huge hailstones** (Rev. 16:21) fit the description of the Roman’s catapult stones¹²⁴

2. Evaluation:

- a. One could fairly **easily find parallels** between the **vivid judgment language** in the Apocalypse and **various historical events** or periods
- b. There is a very real danger that with this kind of argument, one “**finds what he’s looking for**” instead of “**looking for what he finds**”
 - 1) **EDA reply:** This is very true, and taken by itself this argument would not be compelling. It is only when **all the other evidence** for the early date is considered, that this argument gains strength

Z. Other apostles living (Rev. 2:2)

1. Explanation:

- a. The pretenders' **claims to apostleship** at Ephesus would have been absurd if **John** were **the sole surviving apostle**, and he received the Apocalypse when late date advocates suggest¹²⁵

2. Evaluation:

AA. **John's future prophesying** (Rev. 10:10-11)

1. Explanation:

- a. John was commanded to **prophesy again to many nations**, which would have been **extremely difficult** if not impossible for a man of his **advanced age** if he did not receive this revelation until the early to mid AD 90's¹²⁶

2. Evaluation:

BB. **The allusions in the NT epistles to the contents of Revelation**

1. Explanation:

- a. The allusions in the **NT epistles** to the Apocalypse (cf. Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22) indicate that it was written before they were¹²⁷

2. Evaluation:

- a. **Is it certain that the NT epistles are alluding to the Apocalypse** instead of various passages in the OT?
- b. Is it possible that with this argument, one "**finds what he's looking for**" instead of "**looking for what he finds**"?

CC. **The references to the once faithful city turned harlot** (Rev. 17:5)

1. Explanation:

- a. There is no evidence that **Rome** ever was **the faithful city** which later became a **harlot**. This was only true of **Jerusalem**¹²⁸

2. Evaluation:

- a. Isaiah refers to Jerusalem as the faithful city that became a harlot (Isa. 1:21), but where is the **harlot** in the Apocalypse referred to as a **once-faithful-city**?

DD. **No mention of the destruction of Jerusalem**

1. Explanation:

- a. The **absence of any NT reference** to such a significant event as the destruction of Jerusalem, after the fact, indicates that **the NT canon was completed** before Jerusalem's destruction took place¹²⁹

2. Evaluation:

- a. An argument from the "**silence of revelation**" [i.e. What God **should have** revealed and **would have** revealed if He **could have** revealed it before the completion of the NT canon] is a **subjective argument** that takes one down a "**slippery slope**"

EE. **The existence of only seven churches in Asia**

1. Explanation:

- a. Since the Apocalypse was **addressed to only seven churches in Asia**, it must have been **written early before the diffusion of Christianity** following the destruction of Jerusalem¹³⁰
- 2. Evaluation:
 - a. The **symbolic significance of the number seven** in a highly **symbolic book** like Revelation suggests that these **seven historical churches** were **representative of other churches** as well¹³¹
 - b. The churches of **Colosse** and **Hierapolis** were both in Asia and they are not included among the seven churches of Asia
 - 1) **EDA reply:** After the great earthquake, **these cities were not rebuilt and the congregations merged with Laodicea**¹³²

FF. The inferior linguistic qualities

- 1. Explanation:
 - a. Since the **linguistic quality** of the Apocalypse is **awkward, ungrammatical** and **quite inferior** to the Gospel and the Epistles of John, it must have been **written early** before John had learned Greek very well
- 2. Evaluation:
 - a. **Linguists can be found on both sides of this issue.** While there are marked differences between the Revelation and John's other writings, this is certainly **not the only possible explanation** for those differences
 - b. This argument ignores **the differences in subject-matter** between the Apocalypse and John's gospel and epistles. It also ignores the fact that John received this revelation through **visions**, and it seems to discount the **inspiration of the Holy Spirit** in the whole process¹³³

Conclusion:

- A. **Philip Schaff** [EDA]: "External evidence points to the reign of Domitian, A.D. 95; internal evidence to the reign of Nero, or soon after his death, A.D. 68." (*History of the Christian Church*, 1:427, quoted in Hailey, 27)
- B. **Arthur Ogden** [EDA]: "When there is a conflict between internal and external evidences, we must trust internal evidence (Romans 3:4). We should never believe fallible men above Holy Spirit inspired men. External evidence can contribute to our conclusions but it must be considered only as circumstantial and never as conclusive proof. External evidence must not contradict inspiration." (*Dating The Apocalypse*, p. 1)

Kevin Kay
 1008 Quality Circle, #12
 Gray, TN 37615
 kaykevin@aol.com

Endnotes

Selected Bibliography

- Barclay, William. *The Revelation of John*. The Westminster Press. Philadelphia. 1976. Briefly discusses two arguments for the late date and ignores any arguments for the early date. Some helpful information about the rise of emperor worship in the Roman Empire, but greatly overstates the case for the Domitianic persecution with no documentation.
- Barnes, Albert. "Revelation." *Barnes' Notes*. Baker. Grand Rapids, Michigan. A brief and not very helpful defense of the late date.
- Gentry, Kenneth. *Before Jerusalem Fell*. American Vision. Atlanta. 1998. An exhaustive (and at times exhausting) defense of the early date of the book. He supplies a great deal of documentation from primary sources. He presents a compelling case. Worthy of one's serious consideration.
- Hailey, Homer. *Revelation: An Introduction And Commentary*. Baker. Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1979. A fairly brief but good summary of the major arguments for the late date. On the whole, a helpful commentary on the book.
- Harkrider, Robert. "Revelation," *Truth Commentaries*. Guardian of Truth Foundation. Bowling Green, Kentucky. 1997. A pretty good summary of the major arguments for the late date.
- Hendriksen, William. *More Than Conquerors*. Baker. Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1967. A very brief and poor discussion of the arguments for the date of Revelation. The arguments for the early date are virtually dismissed with the words, "One cannot find a single really cogent argument in support of the earlier date. The arguments produced are based on late and unreliable testimonies, on the wholly imaginary idea that John did not yet know his Greek when he wrote the Apocalypse, and on a very questionable literal interpretation of certain passages which most certainly have a symbolical meaning (p. 14)." I also find no compelling evidence for Hendriksen's argument that the book of Revelation contains a cycle of seven parallel sections, each dealing with the Church Age to the end of the world.
- Moffatt, James. *The Expositor's Greek Testament*. Eerdmans. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Vol. 5. A brief listing of a few of the major arguments for the late date with no discussion of the arguments for the early date. Too brief to be very helpful.
- Morris, Leon. *The Revelation of St. John*. Eerdmans. 1981. A good, though brief, summary of the major arguments for dating the book of Revelation.
- Ogden, Arthur. *The Avenging of the Apostles & Prophets*. A rather brief treatment of the arguments for the late and early dates.
- Ogden, Arthur. *Dating The Apocalypse* (Electronic Brochure). Alex Ogden Software. A good defense of the early date, though containing some strained interpretations in my opinion. Misinterprets some OT prophecies in Daniel.
- Randell, T. "The Revelation Of St. John The Divine." *The Pulpit Commentary*. Eerdmans. Grand Rapids, Michigan. A brief defense of the early date with little usable information.
- Summers, Ray. *Worthy Is The Lamb*. Broadman Press. Nashville, Tennessee. 1951. Very brief treatment of some of the general arguments concerning the dating of the book with little documentation. On the whole a very helpful commentary, but his treatment of the date is not very thorough.
- Wallace, Foy, Jr. *The Book Of Revelation*. Foy E. Wallace Jr. Publications. Ft. Worth, Texas. 1966. A thorough, though not exhaustive, defense of the early date of the book. The wording is a bit old-fashioned and stilted, but a good summary of the arguments for the early date.

¹ **Philip Schaff** [EDA]: “The early date [of Revelation] is now accepted by perhaps the majority of scholars.” (Schaff’s editorial note to Warfield’s “Revelation” article in *A Religious Encyclopedia: Or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, Vol. 3, p. 2036, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 28)

William Milligan [LDA]: “Recent scholarship has, with little exception, decided in favour of the earlier and not the later date.” (*Discussions on the Apocalypse*, 1893, p. 75, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 28)

E.J.A. Hort: “The general tendency of criticism has been towards the view that the circumstances and events present to the writer’s eye are not those of Domitian’s time, and are those of the time between Nero’s persecution (about 64) and the fall of Jerusalem (70), i.e. at least 25 years earlier than on the common view.” (*The Apocalypse of St. John*, 1908, p. x, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 28)

Arthur S. Peake: “In deference to our earliest evidence, the statement of Irenaeus, the Book was generally considered to belong to the close of Domitian’s reign; but during the greater part of the nineteenth century there was a strong majority of critics in favour of a date some quarter of a century earlier. This view was entertained by both advanced and conservative scholars. But some time before the close of the last century opinion began to move back to the traditional date, and for several years it has secured the adhesion of the great majority of scholars.” (*The Revelation of John*, 1919, p. 70, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 28)

Milton S. Terry: “The trend of modern criticism is unmistakably toward the adoption of the early date of the Apocalypse.” (*Biblical Hermeneutics*, (1883) 1974, p. 241n, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 29)

² **Barclay M. Newman, Jr.**: “Among present-day New Testament scholars it is almost unanimously agreed that the book of Revelation was written at a period late in the first century, when the churches of Asia Minor were undergoing persecution by the Roman Authorities.” (*Rediscovering the Book of Revelation*, 1968, p. 11, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 24-25)

³ **Leon Morris**: “The date of John is far from certain and there are some grounds for holding that it is to be dated before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But, while the evidence is far from being so conclusive that no other view is possible, on the whole it seems that a date in the time of Domitian, i.e., c. A.D. 90-95, best suits the facts.” (*The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 39-40)

Alan Johnson: “Therefore, though the slender historical evidence on the whole favors the later date (81-96), in the light of the present studies, the question as to when Revelation was written must be left open.” (“Revelation,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, p. 406)

J. Ramsey Michaels: Revelation provides us “little information about the date of its composition. It is difficult to either prove or disprove the traditional date near the end of the reign of Domitian.” (*Revelation*, 1997, pp. 21-22, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface To New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xx)

G. K. Beale: “There are no single arguments that point clearly to the early date or the late date. The early date could be right but the cumulative weight of the evidence points to the late date.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, 1999, 4, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface To New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xx)

Robert Reymond: “I must conclude that the evidence for the proposed dates is inconclusive. The Apocalypse may have been written around A.D. 65 or 66 before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, or it may have been written around A.D. 95 toward the end of Domitian’s reign, I am inclined toward the late date.” (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 1998, p. 1056, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface To New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xxi)

Arthur S. Peake: “It may be granted that the case for a date in the reign of Domitian has been sometimes overstated. But this date is *probably* [emphasis added] to be accepted.” (*The Revelation of John*, 1919, p. 96, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 26)

J.P.M. Sweet: “We have assumed so far that the book was written well after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, but the evidence is far from conclusive....To sum up, the earlier date may be right, but the internal evidence is not sufficient to outweigh the firm tradition stemming from Irenaeus.” (*Revelation*, 1979, pp. 21, 27, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 26)

R. H. Charles [LDA]: “It thus follows that the date of the Apocalypse, according to [the Preterist] school, was about 67-68 or thereabouts. And if the absolute unity of the Apocalypse be assumed, there is no possibility, I think, of evading this conclusion.” (*Studies in the Apocalypse*, 1913, p. 57, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 26-27)

⁴ **James M. Macdonald**: “The question whether the Apocalypse was written at an early date or in the very closing period of the apostolic ministration has importance as bearing on the interpretation of the book. A true exposition depends, in no small degree, upon a knowledge of the existing condition of things at the time it was written; i.e., of the true point in history occupied by the writer, and those whom he originally addressed...If the book were an epistle, like that to the Romans or to the Hebrews, it might be of comparatively little importance, in ascertaining its meaning, to be able to determine whether it was written at the commencement of the apostolic

era or at its very close.” (*The Life and Writings of St. John*, 1877, pp. 151-152, quoted in Foy Wallace, Jr., *The Book of Revelation*, p. 22)

⁵ **Henry B. Swete:** “Early Christian tradition is almost unanimous in assigning the Apocalypse to the last years of Domitian.” (*Commentary on Revelation*, p. xcix, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 43)

Ray Summers: “The Domitian period is the date most generally accepted by New Testament criticism for the writing of Revelation. This is the traditional date going back to a time near the writing of the book. Irenaeus V.30.3 says that the book was written at the end of the rule of Domitian. Origen says that John wrote the book while exiled on Patmos, no doubt holding the tradition of the Domitianic exile though he does not name the emperor. Victorinus says John wrote what he saw while on the isle of Patmos at the order of Domitian. This same position was held by Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, Hegesippus, and Jerome. This indicates the belief of the early church that the book was written during the Domitianic persecution.” (*Worthy Is The Lamb*, p. 83)

⁶ **Irenaeus:** “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.” (*Against Heresies* 5:30:3 as preserved in Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, 3:18:3, ANF 1:559-560, quoted by Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 46-47)

⁷ **John T. Hinds:** “Irenaeus was an intimate associate of Polycarp, who died in A.D. 155. He was contemporary with the apostle John for more than thirty years. There is little chance for Polycarp not to have known the true date, or for Irenaeus to have misrepresented his information. The testimony of Irenaeus is of the highest class.” (*A Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, p. ix)

⁸ **Clement:** “And to give you confidence, when you have thus truly repented, that there remains for you a trustworthy hope of salvation, hear a story that is no mere story, but a true account of John the apostle that has been handed down and preserved in memory. When after the death of the tyrant he removed from the island of Patmos to Ephesus, he used to journey by request to the neighboring districts of the Gentiles, in some places to appoint bishops, in others to regulate whole churches, in others to set among the clergy some one man, it may be, of those indicated by the Spirit.” (*Who is the Rich Man that shall be Saved?*, quoted in G. W. Butterworth, *Clement of Alexandria*, 1919, pp. 356ff, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 68)

⁹ **Origen:** “The King of the Romans, as tradition teaches, condemned John, who bore testimony, on account of the word of truth, to the isle of Patmos. John, moreover, teaches us things respecting his testimony [i.e., martyrdom], without saying who condemned him when he utters these things in the Apocalypse. He seems also to have seen the Apocalypse...in the island.” (*Matthew* 16:6, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 97-98)

¹⁰ **Victorinus:** “When John said these things he was in the island of Patmos, condemned to the labour of the mines by Caesar Domitian. There, therefore, he saw the apocalypse; and when grown old, he thought that he should at length receive his quittance by suffering, Domitian being killed, all his judgments were discharged. And John being dismissed from the mines, thus subsequently delivered the same Apocalypse which he had received from God.” (*Commentary on the Apocalypse* at Rev. 10:11, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 99)

Victorinus: “The time must be understood in which the written Apocalypse was published, since then reigned Caesar Domitian; but before him had been Titus his brother, and Vespasian, Otho, Vitellius, and Galba. These are the five who have fallen. One remains, under whom the Apocalypse was written – Domitian, to wit.” (Comment on Rev. 17:10, ANF, 7:358, quoted in Robert Harkrider, “Revelation,” *Truth Commentaries*, xxxv)

¹¹ **Eusebius:** “When Domitian had given many proofs of his great cruelty and had put to death without any reasonable trial no small number of men distinguished at Rome by family and career, and had punished without a cause myriads of other notable men by banishment and confiscation of their property, he finally showed himself the successor of Nero’s campaign of hostility to God. He was the second to promote persecution against us, though his father, Vespasian, had planned no evil against us.

“At this time, the story goes, the Apostle and Evangelist John was still alive, and was condemned to live in the island of Patmos for his witness to the divine word. At any rate Irenaeus, writing about the number of the name ascribed to the anti-Christ in the so-called Apocalypse of John, states this about John in so many words in the fifth book against Heresies.” (*Ecclesiastical History*, 3:17-18, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 101)

Eusebius: “Tertullian also has mentioned Domitian thus: ‘Domitian had reigned fifteen years, and Nerva succeeded to the government, the Roman senate decreed, that the honours of Domitian should be revoked, and that those who had been unjustly expelled, should return to their homes, and have their goods restored.’ This is

the statement of the historians of the day. It was then also, that the apostle John returned from his banishment in Patmos, and took up his abode at Ephesus, according to an ancient tradition of the church.” (*Ecclesiastical History*, 3:20:103, quoted in Robert Harkrider, “Revelation,” *Truth Commentaries*, p. xxxv)

¹² **Jerome:** John was “a prophet, for he saw in the island of Patmos, to which he had been banished by the Emperor Domitian as a martyr for the Lord, an Apocalypse containing the boundless mysteries of the future. Tertullian, moreover, relates that he was sent to Rome, and that having been plunged into a jar of boiling oil he came out fresher and more active than when he went in.” (*Against Jovinianum*, 1:26, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 105)

Jerome: “In the fourteenth year after the persecution of Nero, John was banished to the island of Patmos, and there wrote the Revelation... Upon the death of Domitian, and upon the repeal of his acts by the senate, because of their excessive cruelty, he returned to Ephesus, when Nerva was emperor.” (Quoted in William Barclay, *The Revelation of John*, Vol. 1, p. 14)

¹³ **Moses Stuart:** “Beyond the testimony of John himself, there is such a diversity of views, as serves to show that mere floating reports and surmises were the basis of the views. Were not this the case, how could there have been so great a variety of opinions about a simple matter of fact?” (*Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 1845, Vol. 1, p. 271, quoted by Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 44)

¹⁴ **Milton S. Terry:** “1. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, says that in his boyhood he had conversed with Polycarp, and heard him tell of his personal friendship with the apostle John. In speaking of the mystic number given in Rev. 13:18, he says: ‘If it were necessary to have his name distinctly announced at the present time it would doubtless have been announced by him who saw the apocalypse; for it was not a great while ago that (it or he) was seen, but almost in our own generation, toward the end of Domitian’s reign.’ Here the critical reader (of the Greek sentence) will observe that the subject of the verb *was seen*, is ambiguous, and may be understood either of John or the Apocalypse. To assert, as some do, that the only grammatical and legitimate construction requires us to understand the *Apocalypse* rather than *John* as the subject of the verb, is arbitrary and presumptuous. To say the least, in fairness, one construction is as correct and legitimate as the other. But why should he say that *the book* was recently seen? The point that he aims to make is that the man who saw the visions of the Apocalypse had lived almost into the times to which Irenaeus belonged, and had it been needful to declare the name of the Antichrist he would himself have done it. The time when John saw the Apocalypse was of no consequence for determining the name of the Antichrist so long as the apostle himself was yet alive. There is more reason for believing that the reference is to the apocalypse in the fact that Irenaeus elsewhere says that John lived on into the times of Trajan.

“2. But admitting that Irenaeus refers to the Apocalypse as having been seen near the close of Domitian’s reign, his ambiguous statement is the only evidence of any real value for determining the question. All other statements are later, and like the numerous statements of Eusebius, seem to be either repeated from Irenaeus or based on mere inferences. And it is notorious that even Eusebius, after Irenaeus and others, leaves the question of the authorship of the Apocalypse in doubt.” (*Biblical Apocalypics*, p. 256-257, quoted in Foy Wallace, Jr., *The Book Of Revelation*, 25-26)

S. H. Chase: “The logic of the sentences seems to me to require this interpretation. The statement that the vision was seen at the close of Domitian’s reign supplies no reason why the mysterious numbers should have been expounded ‘by him who saw the apocalypse,’ had he judged such an exposition needful. If, on the other hand, we refer ε ω ρ α θ η to St John, the meaning is plain and simple. We may expand the sentences thus: ‘Had it been needful that the explanation of the name should be proclaimed to the men of our own day, that explanation would have been given by the author of the Book. For the author was seen on earth, he lived and held converse with his disciples, not so very long ago, but almost in our own generation. Thus, on the one hand, he lived years after he wrote the Book, and there was abundant opportunity for him to expound the riddle, had he wished to do so; and, on the other hand, since he lived on almost into our generation, the explanation, had he given it, must have been preserved to us.’” (“The Date of the Apocalypse,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 8, 1907, p. 431, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 50-51)

George Edmundson: “But surely this rendering [i.e., the common rendering of Irenaeus] is wrong. It should be ‘for *he* (St. John the writer) was seen...almost in our generation toward the end of the reign of Domitian.’ It is of the Seer and his ability to declare the name of Antichrist that Irenaeus is speaking. The misunderstanding about the meaning of the passage is largely due to Eusebius, who after a reference to Domitian’s persecution proceeds ‘in this (persecution) report [he] affirms that the Apostle and Evangelist John, who was still living, in consequence of his testimony to the divine word was condemned to dwell on the island

of Patmos,' and then he quotes Irenaeus in support of his statement." (*The Church in Rome in the First Century*, 1913, pp. 164-165, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 53)

¹⁵ **Robert Young:** "It was written in Patmos about A.D. 68, whither John had been banished by Domitius Nero, as stated in the title of the Syriac version of the book; and with this concurs the express statement of Irenaeus in A.D. 175, who says it happened in the reign of Domitianou -- i.e., Domitius (Nero). Sulpicius, Orosius, etc., stupidly mistaking Domitianou for Domitianikos, supposed Irenaeus to refer to Domitian, A.D. 95, and most succeeding writers have fallen into the same blunder. The internal testimony is wholly in favor of the earlier date." (*Commentary On Revelation*, n.p., quoted in Foy Wallace, Jr., *The Book Of Revelation*, pp. 23-24)

F. W. Farrar [EDA]: "Guericke proposes to take 'Domitianou' as an adjective, and to render the clause 'near the close of the Domitian rule,' i.e., the rule of Domitius Nero. But the absence of the article on which he relies gives no support to his view, and no scholar will accept this hypothesis, though he may admit the possibility of some confusion between the names Domitius and Domitian." (*The Early Days of Christianity*, p. 407, quoted in David Watts, "The Date of Revelation," p. 11)

¹⁶ **T. Randell:** "Irenaeus, writing a century after the fact, may easily have made the mistake of putting the name of one famous persecuting emperor instead of the other, and it is remarkable that his statement is supported by no other writer earlier than Victorinus of Pettau, after a second interval of a century." ("The Revelation Of St. John The Divine," *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 22, p. iv)

¹⁷ **Irenaeus:** "For how had He disciples., if He did not teach? And how did He teach, if He had not a Master's age? For He came to Baptism as one Who had not yet fulfilled thirty years, but was beginning to be about thirty years old...and He preached for one year only after His Baptism: completing His thirtieth year He suffered, while He was still young, and not yet come to riper age. But the age of 30 years is the first of a young man's mind, and that it reaches even to the fortieth year, everyone will allow: but after the fortieth and fiftieth year, it begins to verge towards elder age: which our Lord was of when He taught, as the Gospel and all the Elders witness, who in Asia conferred with John the Lord's disciple...." (*Against Heresies*, 2:22:5, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 63-64)

Philip Schaff: "It is indeed difficult to set aside the clear testimony of Irenaeus...but we must remember that he was mistaken even on more important points of history, as the age of Jesus, which he asserts, with an appeal to tradition to have been above fifty years." (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 1, p. 427n, quoted in David Watts, "The Date of Revelation," pp. 11-12)

¹⁸ **F. W. Farrar:** "When Irenaeus says that the 'Pastor of Hermas' is canonical; that the head of the Nicolaitans was the Deacon Nicolas; and that the version of the LXX. was written by inspiration; -- we know what estimate to put on his appeals to apostolic tradition." (*The Early Days of Christianity*, p. 398, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 61)

¹⁹ **James Moffatt [LDA]:** "The attempts to turn the force of this passage by supposing that Irenaeus confounded Domitian's actual reign with his temporary regency in 70 A.D., or by referring ε ω ρ α θ η to the seer instead of to the vision, are ingenious but quite unconvincing. The tradition must be taken as it stands." (*The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. 5, p. 319)

²⁰ **Francis Nigel Lee:** "It is difficult to see why the A.D. 130ff Irenaeus would have referred (as he did) to 'ancient copies' (rather than simply to 'copies') -- if the original autograph had itself been written only 'towards the end of Domitian's rule.'...For then, the first 'ancient copies' would and could only have been made after A.D. 96 -- whereas Irenaeus implies that those ancient copies were made before that date! Moreover, even if the copies concerned were made only after A.D. 96 -- they could hardly have been called 'ancient' by the time of Irenaeus (born 130 A.D.). Still less could such first copies then (at a date only after 96 A.D.) appropriately have been described by Irenaeus as 'the most approved and ancient copies.' Surely the compilation of many copies would thereafter require even further time. And the further determination of such of those approved and ancient copies as Irenaeus refers to as the 'most approved and ancient copies' of the original, would need a further long time to take place." ("Revelation and Jerusalem," 1985, 36, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 59)

²¹ **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** "Moreover it is stated by Jerome that in the year A.D. 96 the apostle was so aged and weak and infirm that 'he was with difficulty carried to the church, and could speak only a few words to the people.' This fact is incompatible with the interpretations of the alleged claim of Irenaeus, based on the reference in Eusebius." (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 25)

²² **Jim McGuigan:** “In any case, suppose Irenaeus said the Revelation was seen toward the end of the reign of Domitian. What if Irenaeus said it -- does that make it infallibly correct?”

“But Roberts, it seems to me, has the best solution of all. He thinks it very possible that John was exiled toward the close of the rule of Vespasian -- saw the Revelation -- and that it was not released until he got back to the mainland. Following Vespasian, Titus reigned only two years. John could easily have spent that time on Patmos. The Revelation might well have begun to circulate early in the reign of Domitian and thus the tradition grew up that it was seen in Domitian’s reign.” (*The Book of Revelation*, p. 184)

²³ Pliny the Elder described him as “the destroyer of the human race,” and “the poison of the world,” and “the enemy of mankind” (*Natural History* 7:45; 22:92, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 69-70)

Apollonius of Tyana: “In my travels, which have been wider than ever man yet accomplished, I have seen many, many wild beasts of Arabia and India; but this beast, that is commonly called a Tyrant, I know not how many heads it has, nor if it be crooked of claw, and armed with horrible fangs....And of wild beasts you cannot say that they were ever known to eat their own mothers, but Nero has gorged himself on this diet.” (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 4:38, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 70)

Suetonius [60-138]: “Neither discrimination nor moderation [were employed] in putting to death whomsoever he [Nero] pleased on any pretext whatever.” (*Nero* 37:1, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 70)

Juvenal spoke of “Nero’s cruel and bloody tyranny” (*Satires* 7:225, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 70)

Merrill C. Tenney: “Having exhausted the imperial treasury by his heedless expenditures, he [Nero] looked for some method of replenishing it. Heavy taxation of the estates of childless couples, false accusations followed by confiscation of wealth, and outright murder of the aristocracy or else invitation to suicide made life unbearable. Wealthy men lived in dread of the emperor’s displeasure, and so great was the terror that the senatorial class endured unimaginable insults and mistreatment as the price of staying alive. Men betrayed their best friends, perjured themselves, and stooped to any infamy to aver the emperor’s hatred or cupidity.” (*New Testament Times*, 1965, p. 289, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 61)

²⁴ **Tacitus:** “[Nero] inflicted unheard-of punishments on those who, detested for their abominable crimes, were vulgarly called Christians....So those who first confessed were hurried to the trial, and then, on their showing, an immense number were involved in the same fate.” (*Annals*, 15:44, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 77-78)

Clement of Rome spoke of Nero’s persecution as one that claimed “a vast multitude of the elect...through many indignities and tortures.” (*1 Clement* 6:1, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 78)

Tertullian [AD 160-220]: “Consult your histories. There you will find that Nero was the first to rage with the imperial sword against this school in the very hour of its rise in Rome. But we glory -- nothing less than glory -- to have had such a man to inaugurate our condemnation. One who knows Nero can understand that, unless a thing were good -- and very good -- it was not condemned by Nero.” (*Apology* 5:3, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 78)

Eusebius [AD 260-340]: “When the rule of Nero was now gathering strength for unholy objects he began to take up arms against the worship of the God of the universe. It is not part of the present work to describe his depravity: many indeed have related his story in accurate narrative, and from them he who wishes can study the perversity of his degenerate madness, which made him compass the unreasonable destruction of so many thousands, until he reached that final guilt of sparing neither his nearest nor dearest, so that in various ways he did to death alike his mother, brothers, and wife, with thousands of others attached to his family, as though they were enemies and foes. But with all this there was still lacking to him this -- that it should be attributed to him that he was the first of the emperors to be pointed at as a foe of divine religion.” (*Ecclesiastical History*, 2:25:1-3, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 78-79)

Lactantius [AD 260-330]: “He [Nero, ksk] it was who first persecuted the servants of God; he crucified Peter, and slew Paul: nor did he escape with impunity; for God looked on the affliction of His people; and therefore this tyrant, bereaved of authority, and precipitated from the height of empire, suddenly disappeared.” (*On the Death of the Persecutors* 2, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 79)

Sulpicius Severus [AD 360-420]: “As to Nero, I shall not say that he was the worst of kings, but that he was worthily held the basest of all men, and even of wild beasts. It was he who first began a persecution; and I am not sure but he will be the last also to carry it on, if, indeed, we admit, as many are inclined to believe, that he will yet appear immediately before the coming of Antichrist....I content myself with the remark, that he showed himself in every way most abominable and cruel....He first attempted to abolish the name of Christian, in accordance with the fact that vices are always inimical to virtues, and that all good men are ever regarded by the

wicked as casting reproach upon them.” (*Sacred History*, 2:28, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 79)

Paulus Orosius [AD 385-418]: “For [Nero] was the first at Rome to torture and inflict the penalty of death upon ‘Christians, and he ordered them throughout all the provinces to be afflicted with like persecution; and in his attempt to wipe out the very name, he killed the most blessed apostles of Christ, Peter and Paul.” (*The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, Book 7, Chapter 7, trans. P. J. Deferrari; in *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 50, 1964, pp. 298-299, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 82-83)

²⁵ **Glenn W. Barker, William L. Lane, and J. Ramsey Michaels**: “Early evidence is lacking for any general religious persecution during Domitian’s reign. Though the emperor was a violent man, his violence was directed not against Christians or any other group but against carefully selected individuals whom he suspected of undermining his authority.” (*The New Testament Speaks*, 1969, p. 368, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 81)

George Edmundson: Domitian’s persecution was “not a general persecution at all, but a series of isolated acts directed chiefly against a few influential persons, including members of his own family.” (*The Church in Rome in the First Century*, p. 168, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 81)

F. J. A. Hort: The dramatic language of Revelation “does not fit the short local reign of terror under Domitian. Nero affected the imagination of the world as Domitian, as far as we know, never did.” (*The Apocalypse of St. John*, p. xxvi, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 81)

G. E. Ladd [LDA]: “There is no evidence that during the last decade of the first century there occurred any open and systematic persecution of the church.” (*A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, 1962, p. 8, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 81-82)

²⁶ **Clement of Alexandria**: “For the teaching of our Lord at His advent, beginning with Augustus and Tiberius, was completed in the middle of the times of Tiberius. And that of the apostles, embracing the ministry of Paul, *ends with Nero*.” (*Miscellanies* 7:17, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 84)

²⁷ **Moses Stuart**: “This remarkable passage deserves special notice. We cannot suppose Origen to have been ignorant of what Irenaeus said in V. 30....Yet Origen does not at all refer to Irenaeus, as exhibiting anything decisive with regard to which Roman emperor it was who banished John. He does not even appeal to tradition, as according with the report of Irenaeus. Moreover he notes expressly, that John has not himself decided this matter in the Apocalypse....If now he regarded the opinion of Irenaeus as decisive in relation to this subject, how could he have failed, on such an occasion, of appealing to it?...We cannot well come to any conclusion here, than that Origen knew of no way in which this matter could be determined.” (*Commentary on the Apocalypse* Vol. 1, pp. 271-272, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 98)

²⁸ **Arthur S. Barnes**: “Inevitably, therefore, when Domitian began his policy of persecution in 96, St. John must have been somewhere between ninety and a hundred years old. We are asked to believe that at that great age he was able to stand the journey as a prisoner from Ephesus to Rome -- that is possible, for St. Polycarp stood it -- to go through a trial before the Emperor; to be scourged publicly and cruelly in the Forum; to be banished to Patmos and to work under the lash in the mines; and, after having endured all this, to return to Ephesus still possessed of enough vigour to...reorganize the Churches of Asia and to survive, in spite of all this activity, for several years more.” (*Christianity at Rome In the Apostolic Age*, p. 166, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 100)

²⁹ **Art Ogden**: “If the statement was not strong enough to convince Eusebius that the apostle John saw the Apocalypse, what makes one think today that it is strong enough to convince one that the apostle John saw it during the reign of Domitian?” (*The Avenging of the Apostles & Prophets*, p. 12)

³⁰ **Leon Morris** [LDA]: “A further indication is that the churches of Asia Minor seem to have a period of development behind them. This would scarcely have been possible at the time of the Neronian persecution, the only serious competitor in date to the Domitianic period.” (*The Revelation of St. John*, p. 37)

Homer Hailey: “The general condition prevailing when John wrote fits the period of Domitian better than that of Nero. It was definitely a period of general tribulation shared by John and the brethren to whom he wrote (Rev. 1:9). In these letters we detect a marked difference of condition and attitude in the congregations from that revealed in the letters of Paul and Peter.” (*Revelation: An Introduction And Commentary*, p. 32)

H. B. Swete: “The condition of the Asian Churches, as it is described in *cc. ii., iii.*, is that of a period considerably later than the death of Nero. Their inner life has undergone many changes since St Paul’s ministry at Ephesus, and even since the writing of the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians and the two Epistles to Timothy. Deterioration has set in at Ephesus, and at Sardis and Laodicea faith is dying or dead.” (*Commentary on Revelation*, pp. c-ci, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 326-327)

William Hendriksen: “When, in connection with these strong and definite evidences, we remember that the Apocalypse reflects an age in which Ephesus has already lost its first love; Sardis is already ‘dead’; Laodicea—which was destroyed by an earthquake during Nero’s reign—has been rebuilt and is boasting of its spiritual wealth (3:17); John has been ‘banished’—a very common form of persecution during Domitian’s reign; the Church has already endured persecutions in the past (20:4); and the Roman Empire, as such, has become the great antagonist of the church (17:9); when we remember all these facts, we are forced to the conclusion that the late date (AD 95 or 96) is correct.” (*More Than Conquerors*, p. 14)

³¹ **Leon Morris** [LDA]: “That they [the Nicolaitans, ksk] are referred to simply by name and with no reference to what they taught or did seems to indicate that they were an established group, perhaps even a sect or heresy. But this, too, would take time to develop.” (*The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 37-38)

Ray Summers: “The character of the heresies described in the letters to the seven churches presupposes an acquaintance with incipient gnosticism which requires a later period than AD 70 for its development.” (*Worthy Is The Lamb*, p. 83)

³² **Polycarp** [AD 69-156, Bishop of the church at Smyrna]: “But I have not found any such thing in you [the church at Philippi, ksk], neither have heard thereof, among whom the blessed Paul labored, who were his letters in the beginning. For he boasteth of you in all those churches which alone at that time knew God; for we knew him not as yet.” (*Letter to the Philippians* 11:3, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 322)

R. H. Charles: “The Church of Smyrna did not exist in 60-64 A.D. -- at a time when St. Paul was boasting of the Philippians in all the Churches. Cf. Polycarp (*Ad Phil...*). But though Polycarp’s letter tells us that the Church of Smyrna was not founded in 60-64 A.D., he gives no hint as to when it was founded. Hence several years may have elapsed after that date before it was founded. When, however, we turn to Rev. 2:8-11 we find that our text presupposes a Church poor in wealth but rich in good works, with a development of apparently many years to its credit. This letter, then, may have been written in the closing years of Vespasian (75-79) but hardly earlier...The natural conclusion, therefore, is that though our author wrote the Letters in the reign of Vespasian, he re-edited them in the closing years of Domitian for incorporation in his Book.” (*The Revelation of St. John*, Vol. 1, p. xciv, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 323)

³³ **Robert Harkrider:** “Reconstruction after such a city-wide catastrophe would take time, even as it would today even with our modern machinery and technology. When Sardis, a city of similar wealth, experienced a devastating earthquake in A.D. 17, Sardis accepted help from the Roman emperor. However, it was about nine years later before Sardis could begin to compete with other cities in trade and service to Rome. It is unknown how long it took for the Laodiceans to rebuild their city, but it would be remarkable indeed, if it took Sardis nine years with Rome’s help, to learn that autonomous Laodicea could be rebuilt to the extent of being ‘wealthy’ again by A.D. 65-68.” (“Revelation,” *Truth Commentaries*, xxxviii-xxxix)

³⁴ **Charles C. Torrey:** “Polycarp, moreover, is misquoted. He is merely complimenting the Philippian church on its very early reputation. He refers expressly to the beginning of Paul’s Epistle (Phil. 1:5), and adds: We, the church of Smyrna did not exist at the time when you of Philippi were already praised by Paul, as he went about among the earliest churches (referring to Phil. 4:5f).” (*The Apocalypse of John*, p. 78, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 324)

John A. T. Robinson: “One objection however can be dismissed, which is constantly repeated from one writer to another. This is that Polycarp in his epistle to the Philippians (11:3) states that his own church at Smyrna had not been founded till after the death of Paul -- so that it could not therefore be addressed as it is in Rev. 2.8-11 as early as the late 60s. But, as Lightfoot observed long ago, all that Polycarp actually says is that ‘the Philippians were converted to the Gospel before the Smyrnaens -- a statement which entirely accords with the notices of the two churches in the New Testament.’ It is astonishing that so much has continued to be built on so little.” (*Redating the New Testament*, pp. 229-230, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 324)

³⁵ **Robert Mounce** [LDA]: “The material wealth of Laodicea is well established. The huge sums taken from Asian cities by Roman officials during the Mithridatic period and following indicate enormous wealth....The ‘wealth’ claimed by the Laodicean church, however, was not material but spiritual....[T]he Laodiceans felt they were secure in their spiritual attainment.” (*The Book of Revelation*, p. 126, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 320-321)

³⁶ **Tacitus:** “[Laodicea] arose from the ruins by the strength of her own resources, and with no help from us.” (*Annals* 14:27, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 321)

³⁷ **Homer Hailey:** “Three points stand out clearly: the Christians were hated for abominations not specified; they were charged with firing the city, the truth of which charge Tacitus seemed to doubt; and their conduct, in sharp contrast to Roman society generally, made them appear to hate mankind. It seems clear that although the Christian’s religion was involved, the persecution was not a war against their religion *per se*. Nero’s approach passed through two stages: first, he sought to divert suspicion from himself as the cause of the fire; and second, he persecuted the Christians on the charge of hostility to society. The conduct of Christians did not fit in with Roman social customs, and so they were considered enemies of the Roman society. They were charged with using magic because of their power over people and over their own lives. Consequently, they were inflicted with the punishment that was imposed on users of magic and Nero soon dropped the charge of incendiarism.” (*Revelation: An Introduction And Commentary*, p. 28)

³⁸ **Robert Harkrider:** “The apocalypse is addressed to ‘the seven churches of Asia.’ These disciples were being prepared for a persecution which would reach out to saints in places *other* than the cities of Rome or Jerusalem. If the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is the focal point of the book as most early date advocates stress, why was it written to churches of Asia Minor?” (“Revelation,” *Truth Commentaries*, p. xxxvi)

Homer Hailey: “There is no solid evidence that Nero’s persecution extended beyond the city of Rome itself. The two earliest writers to assert clearly that it extended beyond Rome are Sulpicious Severus and Orosius (both ca. A.D. 400). Schaff admits that Severus gives his account ‘mostly from Tacitus.’” (*Revelation: An Introduction And Commentary*, p. 29)

Edward Gibbon: “It is evident that the effect, as well as the cause, of Nero’s persecution, were confined to the walls of Rome.” (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. 1, p. 605, quoted in Homer Hailey, “The Book Of Revelation,” *Bible Class Notes*, 1973, p. 2)

³⁹ **Homer Hailey:** “William Ramsay...quotes Severus as saying in almost the words of Tacitus, ‘This was the beginning of severe measures against the Christians. Afterwards the religion was forbidden by formal laws, and the profession of Christianity was made illegal by published edicts.’ But were formal laws making Christianity illegal by published edicts issued by Nero, or did they come later? It seems clear from the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan...that even at this time (A.D. 111-113) there had been no formal edict; for if there had been such an edict issued, Pliny would have known what to do. It seems therefore, as pointed out by Ramsay, that Nero’s principle was an unwritten law by which the governors of the provinces judged Christians. This means that punishments inflicted were administrative and not judicial.” (*Revelation: An Introduction And Commentary*, p. 29)

⁴⁰ **Ray Summers:** “Domitian (c. 81-96) is the emperor who has gone down in history as the one who bathed the empire in the blood of the Christians.” (*Worthy Is The Lamb*, p. 83)

⁴¹ **Stanley Paher:** “In Revelation 17:6, Babylon is described as ‘drunken with the blood of the saints,’ a phrase which does not coincide with the intentions or actions of reactionary Jewish leaders in Jerusalem during the middle of the first century.” (*The Identity Of Babylon*, p. 11, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xxxvi)

Stanley Paher: “Occasional persecution by local Jewish officials scattered here and there hardly fits the context of Revelation 13.” (*The Identity Of Babylon*, p. 13, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xxxvii)

⁴² **Stanley Paher:** “The prolific Tertullian’s historical essay on first century persecutions – *De Fugas Persecutine* [*sic*] – did not comment upon the events of Acts 8:1. The respected early church historian, Eusebius, in his great *Ecclesiastical History*, barely mentioned it, quoting Acts 8:1-4 without comment. Neither of these men described anything resembling first-century wide-spread Jewish persecution anywhere, despite writing voluminously about the history of the church and its varied activities, successes, and hindrances.” (*The Identity Of Babylon*, p. 16, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xxxvii)

⁴³ **Ignatius:** “If any one celebrates the Passover along with the Jews, or receives the emblems of their feast, he is a partaker with those that killed the Lord and His apostles.” (*Phil.* 14, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xlii)

Irenaeus: “Unless, then, the Jews had become the slayers of the Lord (which did, indeed, take eternal life away from them), and, by killing the apostles and persecuting the Church, had fallen into an abyss of wrath, we could not have been saved.” (*Against Heresies* 4:18:3, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xliii)

⁴⁴ **Tertullian:** “And if a heretic wishes his confidence to rest upon a public record, the archives of the empire will speak, as would the stones of Jerusalem. We read the lives of the Caesars: At Rome Nero was the

first who stained with blood the rising faith.” (*Scorpion’s Sting* 15, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 290-291)

Eusebius: “When the rule of Nero was now gathering strength for the unholy objects he began to take up arms against the worship of the God of the universe....he was the first of the emperors to be pointed out as a foe of divine religion.” (*Ecclesiastical History* 2:25, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 291)

Sulpicius Severus: “He [Nero, ksk] first attempted to abolish the name of Christian, in accordance with the fact that vices are inimical to virtues, and that all good men are ever regarded by the wicked as casting reproach upon them. For, at that time our divine religion had obtained a wide prevalence in the city....

“In the meantime, the number of the Christians being very large, it happened that Rome was destroyed by fire, while Nero was stationed at Antium....He therefore turned the accusation against the Christians, and the most cruel tortures were accordingly afflicted upon the innocent....In this way, cruelty first began to be manifested against the Christians.” (*Sacred History* 2:28, 29, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 291)

Orosius: “He [Nero, ksk] was the first at Rome to torture and inflict the penalty of death upon Christians, and he ordered them throughout all the provinces to be afflicted with like persecution; and in his attempt to wipe out the very name, he killed the most blessed apostles of Christ, Peter and Paul.” (*The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* 7:7, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 291)

Tacitus: “But by no human contrivance, whether lavish distributions of money or of offerings to appease the gods, could Nero rid himself of the ugly rumor that the fire was due to his orders. So to dispel the report, he substituted as the guilty persons and inflicted unheard-of-punishments on those who, detested for their abominable crimes, were vulgarly called Christians....

“So those who first confessed were hurried to the trial, and then, on their showing, an immense number were involved in the same fate, not so much on the charge of incendiaries as from hatred of the human race. And their death was aggravated with mockeries, insomuch that, wrapped in the hides of wild beasts, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or fastened to crosses to be set on fire, that when the darkness fell they might be burned to illuminate the night. Nero had offered his own gardens for the spectacle, and exhibited a circus show, mingling with the crowd, himself dressed as a charioteer or riding in a chariot. Whence it came about that, though the victims were guilty and deserved the most exemplary punishment, a sense of pity was aroused by the feeling that they were sacrificed not on the altar of public interest, but to satisfy the cruelty of one man.” (*Annals* 15:44, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 292)

Suetonius: “During his [Nero’s] reign many abuses were severely punished and put down, and no fewer new laws were made: a limit was set to expenditures....Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition.” (*Nero*, 16:2, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 292)

Tacitus: “I proceed to a work rich in disasters, full of atrocious battles, of discord and rebellion, yea, horrible even in peace. Four princes killed by the sword; three civil wars, several foreign wars; and mostly raging at the same time. Favorable events in the East [the Jewish War won], unfortunate ones in the West. Illyria disturbed, Gaul uneasy; Britain conquered and soon relinquished; the nations of Sarmatia and Suevia rising against us; the Parthians excited by the deception of a pseudo-Nero. Italy also weighed down by new or oft-repeated calamities; cities swallowed up or buried in ruins; Rome laid waste by conflagrations, the old temples burned up, even the capitol set on fire by citizens; sanctuaries desecrated; adultery rampant in high places. The seas filled with exiles; the rocky islands contaminated with murder. Still more horrible the fury in the city. Nobility, riches, places of honor, whether declined or occupied, counted as crimes, and virtue sure of destruction.” (*Histories* 1:2, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 180)

⁴⁵ **George Eldon Ladd [LDA]:** “The problem with this theory is that there is no evidence that during the last decade of the first century there occurred any open and systematic persecution of the church.” (*A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, p. 8, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 287)

Leon Morris [LDA]: “It [the persecution described in the Apocalypse, ksk] is said to accord much better with Domitian. But it is very difficult to find evidence that Domitian did in fact persecute outside Rome. There is evidence of his having certain people executed there, such as Flavius Clemens and his wife Domitilla. The reason given for this was ‘atheism’, which suggests to most students Christianity (it was a denial of the Roman gods, and Christians were often accused of this crime, their retention of belief in one God not being held sufficient to refute it). While later Christians sometimes speak of a persecution under Domitian the evidence is not easy to find. Of course, if it be held on other grounds that this writing is to be dated during Domitian’s reign, then it will certainly afford evidence of such persecution. But as far as establishing the date of the book goes, all that we can say from the evidence of persecution is that it accords with all that we know of Domitian that there should have been such persecution, and that there is no other period in the first century which fits nearly as

well.” (*The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 36-37)

F. J. A. Hort: “There is nothing in the accounts which suggests anything like a general persecution of Christians, even at Rome: it would rather seem that Christians of wealth or station were mainly, if not wholly, struck at.” (*The Apocalypse of St. John*, p. xxiv, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 288)

Kenneth Gentry: “The problem with the evidence for this persecution is that it proceeds almost solely from Christian sources -- sources somewhat later than the events. For instance, the earliest specific evidence for a general (that is, empire wide) persecution of Christianity under Domitian is Melito of Sardis who flourished in the middle of the second century.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 288)

Kenneth Gentry: “Furthermore, it is remarkable that though Suetonius credited Nero with the persecution of Christians, he makes no mention of Domitian’s alleged persecution. It would seem that since he viewed the punishment of Christians as praiseworthy under Nero, that any general persecution of them under Domitian would have deserved comment.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 289)

Arthur Ogden: “In fact there is no literary record to substantiate a persecution of any kind by Domitian against Christians. Neither Tacitus, Suetonius nor Pliny, all of whom resided in Rome (Tacitus and Pliny were members of the Roman Senate during Domitian’s reign), leave any record of any kind of campaign against Christians. This would appear strange since Tacitus and Suetonius both left a record of Nero’s persecution against Christians. Would not a persecution directed against Christians of the magnitude described above demand a place in the historical records of these and other writers? And why was Pliny, who was a member of the Senate during the reign of Domitian, ignorant of the precise crimes Christians were guilty of and how they were to be convicted and punished since such trials of Christians would have taken place in the Senate? He wrote Trajan, his emperor, ‘I have never taken part in trials (cognitiones) of Christians; consequently I do not know the precedents regarding the question of punishment or the nature of the inquisition.’ How could a man of his political background have been so ignorant of what to do to Christians if there had been a sustained persecution directed against them during the reign of Domitian?” (“The Domitian Persecution,” *Searching The Scriptures*, June, 1989, 30:6:423-424)

Elmer T. Merrill: “It should be further observed that neither in Suetonius, nor in Dio, nor in any other of the pagan writers who touch upon the subject, is there the slightest intimation that Domitian’s bloody jealousy was directed against any but the leading aristocrats whom he supposed he had reason to fear, or that it ravaged at all outside the narrow circle of the Court and the Parliament. There is no indication of its extension into the provinces, or among the commonalty even in Rome. And if there had been such extension, it is altogether probable that some echo of it would be heard. There is absolute silence.” (*Essays In Early Christian History*, p. 150, quoted in Arthur Ogden, “The Domitian Persecution,” *Searching The Scriptures*, June, 1989, 30:6:424)

D. A. Carson: “Those more contemporary to Domitian’s time, both Christian and pagan, say nothing about a systematic persecution of Christians. In contrast, evidence for a persecution of Christians under Nero is clear and irrefutable.... Advocates of an early date have a point: many scholars have exaggerated the evidence for a persecution under Domitian.” (*An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1992, p. 474, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xlv)

M. Eugene Borings: “Recent research has made it increasingly clear that there was no universal, systematic persecution of Christians in Domitian’s time.” (*Revelation: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 1989, p. 17, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xlv)

Leonard L. Thompson: “Most modern commentators no longer accept a Domitianic persecution of Christians.” (*The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire*, 1990, p. 16, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xlv)

J.P.M. Sweet: “The evidence that [Domitian] persecuted the church, as opposed to a few individuals who may or may not have been Christians, dissolves on inspection.” (“Revelation,” *Oxford Companion to the Bible*, p. 653, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xlv)

A. Yarbro Collins: “There is insufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that Domitian persecuted Christians as Christians.” (*Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse*, 1984, p. 77, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xlv)

David Aune: “It is striking that Irenaeus, the first author to date the composition of Revelation to the reign of Domitian, failed to mention that Domitian persecuted Christians (Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 5.30.3.” (*Revelation*, 1:lxvii, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, “Preface to New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xlv)

Robert Mounce: “Although the evidence for widespread persecution under Domitian is not especially strong, there is no other period in the first century in which it would be more likely.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 34)

⁴⁷ **Ferrell Jenkins:** “Unbelievers make much of the fact that we have very few references to Jesus and the church from sources outside the New Testament. From the first century we have only a few references in Josephus (written more than 60 years after the event), Tacitus (more than 50 years after the event mentioned), and possibly Suetonius (about 70 years after the event he describes).” (“The Domitianic Persecution (A Response),” *Searching The Scriptures*, June, 1989, 30:6:426)

⁴⁸ **Melito** [Bishop of Sardis]: “Nero, and Domitian, alone, stimulated by certain malicious persons, showed a disposition to slander our faith....” (His apology to the emperor Marcus Aurelius ca. AD 175, quoted in Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History*, 4:26, quoted in Ferrell Jenkins, “The Domitianic Persecution (A Response),” *Searching The Scriptures*, June, 1989, 30:6:427)

Tertullian: “Consult your histories. There you will find that Nero was the first to rage with the imperial sword against this school in the very hour of its rise in Rome....Domitian too, who was a good deal of a Nero in cruelty, attempted it...soon stopped...restored those he had banished. Such are ever our persecutors...” (*Apology* to Septimus Severus, ca AD 197, quoted in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III.xx; III.xxiii, quoted in Ferrell Jenkins, “The Domitianic Persecution (A Response),” *Searching The Scriptures*, June, 1989, 30:6:427)

Eusebius [ca. 325 AD]: “Domitian, indeed, having exercised his cruelty against many, and unjustly slain no small number of noble and illustrious men at Rome, and having, without cause, punished vast numbers of honourable men with exile and the confiscation of their property, at length established himself as the successor of Nero, in his hatred and hostility to God. He was the second that raised a persecution against us, although his father Vespasian had attempted nothing to our prejudice.” (*Ecclesiastical History*, 3:17:101, quoted in Robert Harkrider, “Revelation,” *Truth Commentaries*, p. lv)

Eusebius [ca. 325 AD]: “In this persecution, it is handed down by tradition, that the apostle and evangelist John, who was yet living, in consequence of his testimony to the divine word, was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos. To such a degree, indeed, did the doctrine which we profess, flourish, that even historians that are very far from befriending our religion, have not hesitated to record this persecution and its martyrdoms in their histories. These also, have accurately noted the time, for it happened, according to him, in the fifteenth year of Domitian. At the same time, for professing Christ, Flavia Domitilla, the niece of Flavius Clemens, one of the consuls of Rome at that time, was transported with many others, by way of punishment, to the island of Pontia.” (*Ecclesiastical History*, 3:18:101-102, quoted in Robert Harkrider, “Revelation,” *Truth Commentaries*, pp. lv-lvi)

⁴⁹ **W. M. Ramsay:** “The persecution of Domitian burned itself ineradicably into the memory of history; it may be doubted by the critic, but not by the historian....So strong and early a tradition as that which constitutes Domitian the second great persecutor cannot be discredited without wrecking the foundations of ancient history. Those who discredit it must, to be consistent, resolve to dismiss nine-tenths of what appears in books as ancient history, including most that is interesting and valuable.” (*The Church in the Roman Empire Before A.D. 170*, quoted in Ferrell Jenkins, “The Domitianic Persecution (A Response),” *Searching The Scriptures*, June, 1989, 30:6:426)

⁵⁰ **Sulpicius Severus:** “In this way, cruelty first began to be manifested against the Christians. Afterwards, too, their religion was prohibited by laws that were enacted; and by edicts openly set forth it was proclaimed unlawful to be a Christian. At that time Paul and Peter were condemned to death, the former being beheaded with a sword, while Peter suffered crucifixion.” (*Sacred History* 2:29, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 298)

⁵¹ **F. J. A. Hort:** “The whole language about Rome and the empire, Babylon and the Beast, fit the last days of Nero and the time immediately following, and does not fit the short local reign of terror under Domitian. Nero affected the imagination of the world as Domitian, as far as we know, never did.” (*The Apocalypse of St. John*, p. xxvi, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 296)

⁵² **Philip Schaff:** “The example set by the emperor in the capital could hardly be without influence in the provinces, and would justify the outbreak of popular hatred.” (*History of the Christian Church*, 1:384, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 297)

William Ramsay: “We conclude that if Tacitus has correctly represented his authorities, the persecution of Nero, begun for the sake of diverting popular attention, was continued as a permanent police measure under the form of a general prosecution of Christians as a sect dangerous to the public safety....When Nero had once established the principle in Rome, his action served as a precedent in every province. There is no need to suppose a general edict or formal law. The precedent would be quoted in every case where a Christian was accused.” (*Church in Roman Empire*, pp. 241, 245, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 297)

⁵³ **James J. L. Ratton:** “To all appearance, at Rome, the Christian Church was drowning in its own blood in Nero’s reign. We must consider the feeling of the ordinary Christian -- the man in the street, so to speak -- and look at it from his point of view. In later persecutions men had got to know that the Church could survive the

furious edicts of Rome. But that was just the doubt which presented itself to the mind of the average Christian man in Nero's time." (*The Apocalypse of St. John*, p. 87, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 299)

Kenneth Gentry: "No imperial persecution other than the very first would be more important to establishing the durability of the faith. No imperial persecution more than this one required a word of exhortation and consolation to the beleaguered faith." (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 299)

⁵⁴ **R. H. Charles:** "There is no evidence of any kind to prove that the conflict between Christianity and the imperial cult had reached the pitch of antagonism that is presupposed in the [Revelation] before the closing years of Domitian's reign. ...Vespasian did not take his claims to divinity seriously. But Domitian insisted on the public recognition of these claims, and in the last year of his reign he began to persecute the Church in the capital of the Empire....Compliance with the claims of the imperial cult was made the test of loyalty to the Empire. In the earlier days, Christians had been persecuted for specific crimes, such as anarchy, atheism, immorality, etc. But in the latter days of Domitian the confession of the name of Christ (cf. [Rev.] 2:3, 13; 3:8; 12:11; 20:4) was tantamount to a refusal to accede to the Emperor's claims to divinity, and thereby entailed the penalty of death (13:15)." (*The Revelation of St. John*, Vol. 1, pp. xciv-xcv, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 261-262)

Homer Hailey: "Although Nero reveled in the plaudits of the populace and accepted worship as a god, he seems to have been somewhat restrained at deification by the general principle 'that divine honors are not paid to an emperor till he has ceased to live among men.'" (*Revelation: An Introduction And Commentary*, p. 31)

Homer Hailey: "In sharp contrast to Nero's disposition, Domitian avidly courted the worship of himself by the people and wanted them to look upon him as a god. This disposition of Domitian and the spirit of his reign fits much better into the tenor of Revelation than the attitude of Nero." (*Revelation: An Introduction And Commentary*, p. 31)

⁵⁵ **Ray Summers:** "This emperor [Domitian, ksk], who, because of his infamous career, failed to receive the honor of apotheosis from the Senate at his death, was strenuous in claiming divinity in his life; to his subordinates he became 'deus et dominus.' According to Suetonius, he began his letters, 'Our Lord and God commands that it should be done so and so,' and formally decreed that no one should address him otherwise, either in writing or by word of mouth. He had images of himself erected throughout the empire to make this worship more convenient. According to Pliny, Domitian regarded any slight to his gladiators or resistance to his officers as an act of impiety toward his divinity. Pliny continues his discussion by stating that Domitian raised himself above all the other gods and chose for his statues the most hallowed sites in the temple and caused entire hosts of victims to be sacrificed for refusal to worship him." (*Worthy Is The Lamb*, p. 84)

⁵⁶ **Leon Morris [LDA]:** "But dating this [emperor-worship, ksk] is more difficult. Thus Julius Caesar had been worshipped as a god during his lifetime, and, while Augustus was more cautious, there were temples in his honor in some of the provinces. Tiberius actively discouraged the practice, but Caligula went to the other extreme with the demand that his statue be worshipped (though there is not much evidence of any real attempt to enforce this). In any case his successor, Claudius, completely reversed this policy. Nero persecuted the Christians, but this was because he wanted a scapegoat for the great fire in Rome, not because he claimed to be divine. Neither in his reign nor in that of his immediate successors was emperor-worship set forward. Galba, Otho and Vitellius reigned so briefly that the question cannot be said to have been real for them, while Vespasian and Titus were practical men who did not concern themselves with being worshipped. It is true that, from the time of Nero on, the cult tended to grow in some areas and it is barely possible that the references in Revelation could be understood of some period under or after Nero." (*The Revelation of St. John*, p. 35)

Donald B. Guthrie: "No knowledge of any rescript or edict has survived from the first century which enforced emperor worship...[A]lthough the emperor worship presupposed in the Apocalypse would well suit the later period of Domitian's reign, there is no conclusive evidence that it could not have occurred earlier." (*New Testament Introduction*, pp. 950-951, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 263)

John A. T. Robinson: "The growth of the imperial cultus is again something which it is almost impossible to date with confidence." (*Redating the New Testament*, p. 236, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 263)

⁵⁷ Julius Caesar was described in an inscription at Ephesus as "god manifest and common saviour of the life of man" (H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, p. 152, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 265)

Another inscription read "To the goddess Roma and the divine Julius" (Isbn T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John: Studies in Introduction*, p. 190, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 265)

Suetonius: "He [Julius Caesar, ksk] allowed honours to be bestowed on him which were too great for mortal man;...temples, altars, and statues beside those of the gods; a special priest, an additional college of the

Superci, and the calling of one of the months by his name.” (*Julius 76*, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 265)

Kenneth Gentry: “After Julius’s death the Roman Senate ‘decreed his *consecratio*, apotheosis, and the appearance of a comet was regarded as a sign of his reception into the company of the superior divinities.’ From that time forth he began to be called ‘*Divus Iulius*.’ In addition, a formal cult of *Divus Iulius* was established and ‘an altar to him was erected in the forum.’ Ratton notes that ‘his statue was put up in the temple of Quirinius, with the inscription “To the invincible God.”’” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 265-266)

⁵⁸ **Edward C. Selwyn:** “As early as 29 B.C. he [Augustus] allowed the diets of Asia and Bithynia to erect temples and shew divine honour to him at their places of assembly, Pergamus and Nicomedia. The high priest of the new temple was appointed year by year, and he was the most eminent dignitary in the province.” (*The Christian Prophets and the Prophetic Apocalypse*, pp. 122-123, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 266)

William Barclay: “To provincials who were *not* Roman citizens Augustus gave permission to erect temples in Pergamum in Asia and in Nicomedia in Bithynia, for the worship of Roma and *himself*.” (*The Revelation of John*, Vol. 1, p. 17)

William Barclay: “Augustus, who died in A.D. 14, allowed the worship of Julius Caesar, his great predecessor. He allowed non-citizens in the provinces to worship himself but he did not permit citizens to do so; and he made no attempt to enforce this worship.” (*The Revelation of John*, Vol. 1, p. 18)

⁵⁹ **Kenneth Gentry:** “History records that at Tiberius’s death ‘eleven cities of Asia struggled for the honour of erecting a temple to his memory.’ The Senate finally awarded the temple to Smyrna....” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 269)

⁶⁰ **Friedrich Dusterdieck:** “[Caligula] put the head of his own statue upon one of the Olympian Jupiter, and had himself saluted as Jupiter Latiaris, erecting a temple to himself, with special priests and sacrifices.” (*Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Revelation*, p. 51, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 269)

⁶¹ **Kenneth Gentry [EDA]:** “Nero was particularly infatuated with Apollo; he even claimed ‘the title “Son of Apollo,” and appeared ostentatiously in this role.’” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 271)

Kenneth Gentry: “As early in his reign as 55 the Senate erected a statue of Nero ‘on divine scale in the Temple of Mars at the Forum Augusti..., thus introducing the cult into the city of Rome.’ The statue was the same size as that of Mars in Mars’s own Temple. That Nero actually was worshiped is evident from inscriptions found in Ephesus in which he is called ‘Almighty God’ and ‘Saviour.’ Reference to Nero as ‘God and Savior’ is found in an inscription at Salamis, Cyprus.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 272)

H. H. Scullard: “As his [Nero’s, ksk] megalomania increased, the tendency to worship him as ruler of the world became stronger, and in Rome his features appeared on the colossus of the Sun near the Golden House, while his head was represented on the coinage with a radiate crown. Members of the imperial house also began to receive unheard of honours:...Nero defied his child by Poppaea and Poppaea herself after their deaths. All this was far removed from the modest attitude of Augustus.” (*From the Gracchi to Nero*, p. 371, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 272-273)

Kenneth Gentry: “In A.D. 67 Nero went to Greece where he remained for more than a year...Soon thereafter ‘Nero was actually deified by the Greeks as “Zeus, Our Liberator.” On the altar of Zeus in the chief temple of the city they inscribed the words “to Zeus, our Liberator” namely Nero, for ever and ever; in the temple of Apollo they set up his statue; and they called him “The new Sun, illuminating the Hellenes,” and “the one and only lover of the Greeks of all time.”’” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 274-275)

⁶² **Elmer T. Merrill:** “It should be further observed that neither in Suetonius, nor in Dio, nor in any other of the pagan writers who touch upon the subject, is there the slightest intimation that Domitian’s bloody jealousy was directed against any but the leading aristocrats whom he supposed he had reason to fear, or that it ravaged at all outside the narrow circle of the Court and the Parliament.” (*Essays In Early Christian History*, p. 150, quoted in *Dating The Apocalypse*, p. 12)

⁶³ **Ray Summers:** “This myth...held that Nero did not actually die from his self-inflicted wounds but escaped to the East, where he was appreciated by the Parthians, and that he was gathering an army to come back and take possession of Rome. This myth took several years to develop; so it could not fit the Neronian period but could be well enough established by the Domitian period to be successfully used for the purpose of illustration by John in Revelation.” (*Worthy Is The Lamb*, p. 85)

Leon Morris [LDA]: “After Nero’s death it was thought in some circles that he would return. At first this appears to have been a refusal to believe that he was actually dead. Later it took the form of a belief that he

would come to life again. This took time to develop and Domitian's reign is about as early as we can expect it." (*The Revelation of St. John*, p. 37)

H. B. Swete: "If it be asked whether any of the earlier Roman Emperors received a death-blow from which he recovered or was supposed to have recovered, the answer is not far to seek. In June 68 Nero, pursued by the emissaries of the Senate, inflicted upon himself a wound of which he died. His remains received a public funeral, and were afterwards lodged in the mausoleum of Augustus. Nevertheless there grew up in the eastern provinces of the Empire a rumour that he was still alive, and in hiding. Pretenders who claimed to be Nero arose in 69 and 79, and even as late at [sic] 88 or 89....The legend of Nero's survival or resuscitation took root in the popular imagination, and Dion Chrysostom...at the end of the century sneers at it as one of the follies of the time. Meanwhile the idea of Nero's return had begun to take its place in the creations of Jewish and Christian fancy....The legend has been used by St. John to represent the revival of Nero's persecuting policy by Domitian." (*Commentary on Revelation*, p. 163, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 302)

⁶⁴ **Donald B. Guthrie [LDA]:** "[I]t must be regarded as extremely inconclusive for a Domitianic date. The most that can be said is that it may possibly point to this." (*New Testament Introduction*, p. 954, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 303)

Robert H. Mounce: "A basic problem with identifying the slain head as Nero (or any specific emperor) is that the text does not say that the *head* was restored. It was the *beast* who recovered from the death-stroke upon one of his heads." (*The Book of Revelation*, p. 253, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 304)

⁶⁵ **Kenneth Gentry:** "The *Nero Redivivus* myth did not come from nowhere. Its seed was firmly planted early in his reign and well-watered by the deluge of tyranny that he unleashed in the later years of his reign. In fact, 'this popular belief in regard to Nero was founded on a prediction of the soothsayers in the early part of his reign.' Stuart argues quite ably that it had ample time to disseminate from this early prediction." (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 305)

⁶⁶ **H. B. Swete:** "In Asia the story of Nero's recovery was *common talk* as early as A.D. 69." (*Commentary on Revelation*, p. cii, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 306)

Tacitus: "About this time [early in A.D. 69, ksk] Achaia and Asia were terrified by a false rumour of Nero's arrival. The reports with regard to his death had been varied, and therefore many people imagined and believed that he was alive....Then the alarm spread far and wide. Many came eagerly forward at the famous name, prompted by their desire for a change and their hatred of the present situation. The fame of the pretender was increasing from day to day when a chance shattered it." (*Histories* 2:8, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 306)

Suetonius: "Yet there were some who for a long time decorated his tomb with spring and summer flowers, and now produced his statues on the ostra in the fringed toga, and now his edicts, as if he were still alive and would shortly return and deal destruction to his enemies." (*Nero* 57, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 307)

⁶⁷ **Suetonius:** "When in the midst of the other adulations of those who congratulated and flattered him, he was hailed by the common herd as Nero, he made no sign of dissent; on the contrary, according to some writers, he even made use of that surname in his commissions and his first letters to some of the governors of the provinces." (*Otho* 7, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 308)

Tacitus: "It was believed that he also brought up the question of celebrating Nero's memory with the hope of winning over the Roman people; and in fact some set up statues of Nero; moreover on certain days the people and soldiers, as if adding thereby to Otho's nobility and distinction, acclaimed him as Nero Otho." (*Histories* 1:78, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 308-309)

Dio Cassius: "But men did not fail to realize that his rule was sure to be even more licentious and harsh than Nero's. Indeed, he immediately added Nero's name to his own." (*Roman History* 63, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 309)

⁶⁸ **Dio Cassius:** "Vitellius...delighted in and commended the name and the life and all the practices of Nero." (*Roman History* 65:4, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 309)

Arthur Weigall: "[Vitellius] imitated [Nero] closely, and greatly pleased the public by offering sacrifices to Nero's spirit in the Campus Martius, making all the priests and people attend." (*Nero: Emperor of Rome*, p. 300, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 309)

Suetonius: "And to leave no doubt in anyone's mind what model he chose for the government of the State, he made funerary offerings to Nero in the middle of the Campus Martius, attended by a great throng of the official priests." (*Vitellius* 11:2, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 309)

⁶⁹ **Bernhard Weiss:** “Through the death of the last Emperor from the original imperial Julian family, namely Nero, it seemed as though the old imperial power had received its death-blow.” (*A Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 453, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 311)

⁷⁰ **Tacitus:** “The history on which I am entering is that of a period rich in disasters, terrible with battles, torn by civil struggles, horrible even in peace. Four emperors fell by the sword; there were three civil wars, more foreign wars and often both at the same time. There was success in the East [i.e., the Jewish War], misfortune in the West. Illyricum was disturbed, the Gallic provinces wavering, Britain subdued and immediately let go. The Sarmatae and Suebi rose against us; the Dacians won fame by defeats inflicted and suffered; even the Parthians were almost roused to arms through the trickery of a pretended Nero. Moreover, Italy was distressed by disasters unknown before or returning after the lapse of ages....Rome was devastated by conflagrations, in which her most ancient shrines were consumed and the very Capitol fired by citizens’ hands. Sacred rites were defiled; there were adulteries in high places. The sea was filled with exiles, its cliffs made foul with the bodies of the dead. In Rome there was more awful cruelty. High birth, wealth, the refusal or acceptance of office -- all gave ground for accusations, and virtues caused the surest ruin. The rewards of the informers were no less hateful than their crimes; for some, gaining priesthoods and consulships as spoils, others, obtaining positions as imperial agents and secret influence at court, made havoc and turmoil everywhere, inspiring hatred and terror. Slaves were corrupted against their masters, freedmen against their patrons; and those who had no enemy were crushed by their friends....Besides the manifold misfortunes that befell mankind, there were prodigies in the sky and on the earth, warnings given by thunderbolts, and prophecies of the future, both joyful and gloomy, uncertain and clear. For never was it more fully proved by awful disasters of the Roman people or by indubitable signs that gods care not for our safety, but for our punishment.” (*Histories* 1:2-3, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 312)

James Moffatt [LDA]: “The allusion is...to the terrible convulsions which in 69 A.D. shook the empire to its foundations....Nero’s death with the bloody interregnum after it, was a wound to the State, from which it only recovered under Vespasian.” (*The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Vol. 5, p. 430)

⁷¹ **Ray Summers:** “Exile is never mentioned as a form of punishment during the Neronian period; it was far too mild for the pagan city.” (*Worthy Is The Lamb*, p. 80)

Robert Harkrider: “This verse [Rev. 1:9] is especially troublesome to the early date advocates because the Jews would have no authority to exile John to Patmos, nor has any evidence survived to show that Nero would have done so. On the other hand, Domitian throughout his reign banished political and religious enemies regularly.” (“Revelation,” *Truth Commentaries*, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii)

⁷² **William Barclay:** “In *Acts* the tribunal of the Roman magistrate was often the safest refuge of the Christian missionaries against the hatred of the Jews and the fury of the mob. Paul was proud that he was a Roman citizen and again and again claimed the rights to which every Roman citizen was entitled.” (*The Revelation of John*, Vol. 1, p. 14)

⁷³ **James MacDonald:** “In the Syriac version this book is entitled: ‘The revelation which was made by God to John the evangelist in the island Patmos, into which he was thrown by Nero Caesar’. And Theophylact, in the eleventh century, places the origin of the Apocalypse during the reign of Nero.” (*The Life And Writings of John*, p. 171, quoted in Foy Wallace, Jr., *The Book Of Revelation*, p. 28)

⁷⁴ “After these things, when the Gospel was increasing by the hands of the Apostles, Nero, the unclean and impure and wicked king, heard all that had happened at Ephesus. And he sent [and] took all that the procurator had, and imprisoned him; and laid hold of S. John and drove him into exile; and passed sentence on the city that it should be laid waste.” (William Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*, 2:55, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 105-106)

⁷⁵ **Tertullian:** “But if thou art near to Italy, thou hast Rome, where we also have an authority close at hand. What an happy Church is that! on which the Apostles poured out all their doctrine, with their blood: where Peter had a like Passion with the Lord; where Paul hath for his crown the same death with John; where the Apostle John was plunged into boiling oil, and suffered nothing, and was afterwards banished to an island.” (*Exclusion of Heretics* 36, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 95)

⁷⁶ **Moses Stuart:** “Now it strikes me, that Tertullian plainly means to class Peter, Paul, and John together, as having suffered at nearly the same time and under the same emperor. I concede that this is not a construction absolutely necessary; but I submit it to the candid, whether it is not the most probable.” (*Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Vol. 1, p. 284n, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 96)

⁷⁷ **Kenneth Gentry:** “On Revelation 6:12 Arethas writes: ‘Some refer this to the siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian.’ On Revelation 7:1 he notes: ‘Here, then, were manifestly shown to the Evangelist what things were to befall the Jews in their war against the Romans, in the way of avenging the sufferings inflicted upon Christ.’ Of Revelation 7:4 we read: ‘When the Evangelist received these oracles, the destruction in which the Jews were involved was not yet inflicted by the Romans.’” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 107)

⁷⁸ **The Muratorian Canon:** “The blessed Apostle Paul, following the rule of his predecessor John, writes to no more than seven churches by name.” And then later reports: “John too, indeed, in the Apocalypse, although he writes to only seven churches, yet addresses all.” (ANF 5:603, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 94)

⁷⁹ “And the fame of the teaching of John was spread abroad in Rome; and it came to the ears of Domitian that there was a certain Hebrew in Ephesus, John by name, who spread a report about the seat of empire [*sic*] of the Romans, saying that it would quickly be rooted out, and that the kingdom of the Romans would be given over to another. And Domitian, troubled by what was said, sent a centurion with soldiers to seize John, and bring him....[Later when John appeared before Domitian, we read:] And Domitian, astonished at all the wonders, sent him away to an island, appointing for him a set time.

“And straightway John sailed to Patmos.” (ANF 8:560-562, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 100)

⁸⁰ **Kenneth Gentry:** “In his *Preface to Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Theophylact puts the banishment of John under Nero when he says that John was banished 32 years after the ascension of Christ....In his commentary on Matthew 10:22, he mentions John’s banishment under Trajan (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 108)

⁸¹ **Albert Barnes:** “This version [the later Syriac, ksk], however, was made in the beginning of the sixth century, and can have little authority in determining the question. It is not known by whom the version was made, or on what authority the author relied, when he said that John was banished to Patmos in the time of Nero. So also Andreas and Arethas, commentators on the book of Revelation, one of them in the beginning of the sixth century and the other in the middle of the sixth century, make quotations from the book in such a manner as to show that they supposed that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. They, however, made no express declaration on that point, and their testimony at any rate, at that late period, is of little value.” (“Revelation,” *Barnes’ Notes*, p. xlviii)

Robert Harkrider: “[T]he earliest source which dates the Apocalypse to the time of Nero is a heading found in the Syriac Version of A.D. 508, more than 400 years after its writing. Left without external corroboration, advocates of the early date resort to raising doubts about the existing testimony of men like Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Victorinus, and Eusebius. But there is no justification for setting aside the strong, consistent testimony of these early writers of the Ante-Nicene church.” (“Revelation,” *Truth Commentaries*, xlv)

⁸² **Adam Clarke:** “By this [Rev. 1:7, ksk] the *Jewish people* are most evidently intended, and therefore the whole verse may be understood as predicting the destruction of the Jews; and is a presumptive proof that the Apocalypse was written *before* the final overthrow of the Jewish state.” (*Clarke’s Commentary*, 6:971, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 127)

Foy Wallace Jr.: “As the prophecy of Zech. 14:1-2, on ‘the day of the Lord,’ foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, so ‘the coming of the Lord’ in Rev. 1:7 applies to the events attending its destruction. The Jews ‘pierced him’ and the ‘tribes’ (the Jewish families) over all the earth ‘mourned’ for the destruction of their city, the demolition of their temple, the downfall of their theocracy, and the end of their Jewish state.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, pp. 45-46)

⁸³ **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** “There are terms employed and expressions used in each of the seven letters which clearly indicate that the events envisioned would come within the life and experience of these churches.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 37)

⁸⁴ **Josephus:** “Whereas the war which the Jews made with the Romans hath been the greatest of all those, not only that have been in our times, but, in a manner, of those that ever were heard of; both of those wherein cities have fought against cities, or nations against nations....

“Accordingly it appears to me, that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were....” (*The Wars of the Jews*, Preface 1:1; 4:12)

John Laurence von Mosheim: “Throughout the whole history of the human race, we meet with but few, if any, instances of slaughter and devastation at all to be compared with this [the destruction of Jerusalem].” (*Historical Commentaries on the State of Christianity*, 1854, 1:125, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 143n)

⁸⁵ **James Moffatt:** “When the advent of Jesus is hailed as a relief, it is no consolation to say that the relief will come suddenly; sudden or not, it must come soon (x. 7), if it is to be of any service. The keynote of the Apocalypse is the cheering assurance that upon God’s part there is no reluctance or delay; His people have not long to wait now.” (*The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Vol. 5, p. 335)

⁸⁶ **James Macdonald:** “The language and the manner in which the whole thing is stated could hardly more distinctly imply that the Jewish nation was still existing, and occupying its own land, -- a land exposed to some impending desolation, from which the sealed, the one hundred and forty-four thousand, were to be exempt. The twelve tribes are named, notwithstanding so many of them had been lost, because the destruction revealed in connection with the sealing was to overtake the whole land of Judaea, once the inheritance of and partitioned among these twelve tribes. It was a destruction that was to overtake Judaea; therefore Jewish Christians are alone selected.” (*The Life and Writings of St John*, 1877, p. 157, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 232-233)

⁸⁷ **Kenneth Gentry:** “...upon the A.D. 95-96 hypothesis, there would be no need for the angels protectively to seal Christians from the devastation: it already would have occurred.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 236)

⁸⁸ **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** “The temple, the court and the altar, were referred to as yet intact, and the reference in present tense to ‘the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified,’ clearly refers to Jerusalem, and reveals that neither the city of Jerusalem nor the temple of Herod had been overthrown and destroyed -- but their utter demolition was at hand and was shortly to occur.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 31)

Kenneth Gentry: “The fall of the Temple and of Jerusalem were major events in the history of not only Judaism but also Christianity.at the time of the writing of Revelation the Temple complex is spoken of as still standing. It is inconceivable that a book of the nature of Revelation could fail to mention its already having been destroyed, if Revelation were written after A.D. 70.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 192)

⁸⁹ **Art Ogden:** “The Apocalypse reveals **things which were shortly to come to pass**. John saw Jerusalem being destroyed. Unless John uses the destruction of Jerusalem to symbolize a city other than the one identified, Jerusalem’s destruction was still future. Therefore, the book of Revelation was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.” (*Dating The Apocalypse*, pp. 14-15)

⁹⁰ **Tacitus:** “However, as I am about to describe the last days of a famous city, it seems proper for me to give some account of its origin.” (*Histories* 5:2, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 171)

Tacitus said the temple in Jerusalem “was famous beyond all other works of men” (*Fragments of the Histories* 2, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 171)

Pliny said that Jerusalem was “by far the most famous city of the ancient Orient” (*Natural History* 5:14:70, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 171)

Agatharchides: “There are a people called Jews, who dwell in a city the strongest of all other cities, which the inhabitants call Jerusalem.” (*Against Apion* 1:197, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 171)

The *Sibylline Oracles* repeatedly refer to Jerusalem as a “great city” (*Sibylline Oracles* 5:150-154, 225-227, 408-413, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:396, 398, 403, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 172)

Josephus: “This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind.” (*The Wars of the Jews* 7:1:1:4)

Josephus: “And where is not that **great city**, the metropolis of the Jewish nation, which was fortified by so many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towers to defend it, which could hardly contain the instruments prepared for the war, and which had so many ten thousands of men to fight for it? Where is this city that was believed to have God himself inhabiting therein? It is now demolished to the very foundations....” (*The Wars of the Jews*, 7:8:7:375-376)

Alfred Edersheim: “‘Ten measures of beauty,’ say the Rabbis, ‘hath God bestowed upon the world, and nine of these fall to the lot of Jerusalem’ -- and again, ‘A city, the fame of which has gone out from one end of the world to the other.’ ‘Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, and eternity.’ This -- explains the Talmud -- ‘Is Jerusalem.’ In opposition to her rival Alexandria, which was designated ‘the little,’ Jerusalem was called ‘the great.’” (*Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, p. 82, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 172-173)

⁹¹ **Clement of Rome:** “Let each of you, brethren, in his own order give thanks unto God, maintaining a good conscience and not transgressing the appointed rule of his service, but acting with all seemliness. Not in every place, brethren, are the continual daily sacrifices offered, or the freewill offerings, or the sin offerings and the trespass offerings, but in Jerusalem alone. And even there the offering is not made in every place, but before

the sanctuary in the court of the altar; and this too through the high-priest and the aforesaid ministers, after that the victim to be offered hath been inspected for blemishes.” (*1 Clement* 41, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 176-177)

⁹² **Kenneth Gentry:** “In ancient days alphabets served a two-fold purpose. Their first and foremost design was, of course, their service as letters from which words were composed in written communication. But in the second place, letters were also assigned numerical values and thus served as numerals.

“Because of the two-fold use of letters as both alphabets and numbering systems, cryptogrammic riddles were common in ancient cultures. Cryptograms involved the adding up of the numerical values of the letters of a word, particularly a proper name. In Greek these riddles were called $\iota \sigma \omicron \psi \epsilon \phi \iota \alpha$ (‘numerical equality’); in Rabbinic Hebrew such cryptograms were known as ‘gematria’ (from the Hebrew word for ‘mathematical’). By the very nature of the case cryptograms almost invariably involved a riddle. This can be seen in that the word very simply could have been spelled out, and also in that any particular arithmetical value could fit a number of words or names.

“Zahn provides us an example of a cryptogram discovered in excavations from Pompeii, which was buried by volcanic eruption in A.D. 79. In Greek the inscription written was: $\phi \iota \lambda \omega \eta \zeta \alpha \rho \iota \theta \mu \omicron \zeta \phi \mu \epsilon$ (‘I love her whose number is 545’).” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 194)

⁹³ **Kenneth Gentry:** “...John clearly says ‘the number of the beast’ is ‘the number of a man’ (Rev. 13:18). Thus, this beast, despite the apocalyptic imagery used to describe him, is a man...not an angelic or demonic being, or a non-human creature of some sort, or an idea. The beast imagery describes his cruel character, not his physical form.

“As a great many scholars have come to conclude with a satisfying degree of confidence, the name which fits the circumstances most admirably is that of the nefarious Nero Caesar. Here we must realize that the name ‘Nero Caesar,’ if spelled according to a Hebrew spelling (John and most first century Christians were of Hebrew extraction), gives us precisely the value 666.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 198-199)

Ferrell Jenkins [LDA]: “The general consensus among scholarly commentators is that the numbers refer to Nero Caesar.” (*Studies in the Book of Revelation*, p. 22)

⁹⁴ **Kenneth Gentry:** “According to Suetonius, Nero ‘compelled four hundred senators and six hundred Roman knights, some of whom were well to do and of unblemished reputation, to fight in the arena.’ He was a sodomist (*Nero* 28) who is said to have castrated a boy named Sporus and married him (*Nero* 28, 29). He enjoyed homosexual rape (*Nero* 28) and torture (*Nero* 29). He killed his parents, brother, wife, aunt, and many others close to him (*Nero* 33-35). He even ‘so prostituted his own chastity that after defiling almost every part of his body, he at last devised a kind of game, in which, covered with the skin of some wild animal, he was let loose from a cage and attacked the private parts of men and women, who were bound to stakes’ (*Nero* 29).” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 213)

Tacitus: “So, to dispel the report, [Nero] substituted as the guilty persons and inflicted unheard-of punishments on those who, detested for their abominable crimes, were vulgarly called Christians....And their death was aggravated with mockeries, insomuch that, wrapped in the hides of wild beasts, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or fastened to crosses to be set on fire, that when the darkness fell they might be burned to illuminate the night....Whence it came about that, though the victims were guilty and deserved the most exemplary punishment, a sense of pity was aroused by the feeling that they were sacrificed not on the altar of public interest, but to satisfy the cruelty of one man.” (*Annals* 15:44, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 213-214)

Apollonius of Tyana [b. 4 BC]: “In my travels, which have been wider than ever man yet accomplished, I have seen many, many wild beasts of Arabia and India; but this beast, that is commonly called a Tyrant, I know not how many heads it has, nor if it be crooked of claw, and armed with horrible fangs....And of wild beasts you cannot say that they were ever known to eat their own mother, but Nero has gorged himself on this diet.” (*Philostratus, Life of Apollonius* 4:38, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 214)

⁹⁵ **Kenneth Gentry:** “The sound of the number 666 even in English sounds hauntingly like a serpent’s chilling hiss. In the Greek the situation is the same. The three letters serving as the number are: $\chi \xi \zeta$. Phonetically their eerie sound is that of a serpent’s hiss. What is more, the middle number-letter even has the appearance of a writhing serpent: ξ .” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 215)

⁹⁶ **Leon Morris:** “The possibilities are almost endless. In modern times the most favoured solution is ‘Nero Caesar’ (if the final letter be omitted to give the equivalent of the Latin spelling of the name the total is 616, the

variant reading). But to get this result we must use the Greek form of the Latin name, transliterated into Hebrew characters, and with a variant spelling at that....This solution has its attractions, but no one has shown why a Hebrew name with an unusual spelling should be employed in a Greek writing. It is also to be borne in mind that in the ancient world when Nero was a considerable figure...this solution was apparently never thought of.” (*The Revelation of St. John*, p. 174)

⁹⁷ **Philip Schaff**: “The Jews, since the Babylonish captivity, had been scattered over all the world. They were as ubiquitous in the Roman empire in the first century as they are now throughout Christendom. According to Josephus and Strabo, there was no country where they did not make up a part of the population.” (*History of the Christian Church*, 1:85, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 211)

⁹⁸ **Ray Summers**: “By this cryptic method the number has been applied to several popes and a larger number of political personages during the course of the world’s history. A pathetic loss of time and thought and mathematical ingenuity has marked the labor of an endless number of men who have tried to solve the riddle of this mystic number and assign it to some contemporary.” (*Worthy Is The Lamb*, p. 177)

⁹⁹ **Leon Morris [LDA]**: “...Zahn maintains that the view that Nero is in mind was not thought of by anyone until 1831 when Fritzsche put it forward. The number of the beast cannot be said to give strong support.” (*The Revelation of St. John*, p. 38)

¹⁰⁰ **Charles C. Ryrie**: “No reasonable doubt can be entertained as to the meaning of these words. The seven hills of Rome were a commonplace with the Latin poets. In other words, the center of the beast’s power is Rome.” (*Revelation*, 1968, p. 102, quoted in “Preface To New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xxviii)

Robert Mounce: “There is little doubt that a first-century reader would understand this reference in any way other than as a reference to Rome.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, 1998, p. 315, quoted in “Preface To New Edition,” *Before Jerusalem Fell*, xxviii)

¹⁰¹ **Milton S. Terry**: “This [the early date, ksk] receives additional confirmation in the fact that the book assumes to belong to the period of the sixth king as mentioned in 17:10, ‘the one that now is’, and if we follow the most natural method of reckoning the Caesars, and the one which appears in Suetonius and Sibylline Oracles, we have (1) Julius, (2) Augustus, (3) Tiberius, (4) Caligula, (5) Claudius, (6) Nero. The reign of Nero extended from A.D. 54-68, and somewhere between these dates we must assign the composition of the Apocalypse.” (*Biblical Apocalypics*, p. 259, quoted in Foy Wallace Jr., *The Book Of Revelation*, p. 33)

¹⁰² **Jim McGuigan**: “Should we not begin the list of kings from Julius Caesar? Why should we? Everyone knows that Julius was a self-appointed dictator and that he died 17 years before the Republic became an empire. Nor was he the first to grab the reigns of the Roman state. Marius and Sulla did some of that. Read almost anyone on who was the first Roman emperor.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 184)

¹⁰³ **Ray Summers [LDA]**: “In popular apprehension the first Roman emperor was Julius Caesar; in strict constitutional law, the first who held the empire as an established form of government was Augustus. The series of ‘kings’ might legitimately begin with either of these but not with one later.” (*Worthy Is The Lamb*, p. 81)

Moses Stuart: “At most, only an occasional beginning of the count with Augustus can be shown, in classic authors. The almost universal usage is against it.” (*Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Vol. 2, p. 276, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 154)

¹⁰⁴ **Josephus**: “After him [Marcus Ambivius] came Annius Rufus, under whom died Caesar, the second emperor of Romans, the duration of whose reign was fifty-seven years, besides six months and two days (of which time Antonius ruled together with him fourteen years; but the duration of his life was seventy-seven years); upon whose death Tiberius Nero, his wife Julia’s son, succeeded. He was now the third emperor; and he sent Valerius Gratus to be procurator of Judea, and to succeed Annius Rufus.” (*The Antiquities of the Jews*, 18:2:2:32-33)

Josephus: “So when Tiberius had at this time appointed Caius to be his successor, he outlived but few days, and then died, after he had held the government twenty-two years five months and three days. Now Caius was the fourth emperor....” (*The Antiquities of the Jews*, 18:6:10:224)

¹⁰⁵ **Kenneth Gentry**: “The crucial statement reads: ‘Behold, the days are coming when a kingdom shall arise on earth, and it shall be more terrifying than all the kingdoms that have been before it. And twelve kings shall reign in it, one after another. But the second that is to reign shall hold sway for a longer time than any other of the twelve.’ Here Julius is included in the line of the twelve Caesars, for the reference to the ‘second’ king is obviously to Augustus Caesar, whose 44 year reign was one-third of the combined reigns of the first twelve

emperors.

“The same is true in chapter 11: ‘And I looked, and behold, on the right side one wing arose, and it reigned over all the earth. And while it was reigning it came to its end and disappeared, so that its place was not seen. Then the next wing arose and reigned, and it continued to reign a long time. And while it was reigning its end came also, so that it disappeared like the first. And behold, a voice sounded, saying to it, “Hear me, you who have ruled the earth all this time; I announce this to you before you disappear. After you no one shall rule as long as you, or even half as long.” The third wing raised itself up, and held the rule like the former ones, and it also disappeared.’ Coggins notes that ‘the first wing can be identified as Julius Caesar because the next wing is clearly Augustus.’” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 156)

¹⁰⁶ **Kenneth Gentry:** “The Epistle of Barnabas 4:4 speaks of ten kings upon the earth: ‘Ten kings shall reign upon the earth, and a little king shall rise up after them, who shall subdue under one three of the kings.’ The three subdued kings represent Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. The tenth must be Vespasian, which indicates a start from Julius.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 157)

¹⁰⁷ “There will be the first prince who will sum up twice ten with his initial letter. He will conquer long in wars. He will have his first letter of ten, so that after him will reign whoever obtained as initial the first of the alphabet” (Sibylline Oracle 5:12-15). This is a cryptic allusion to Julius. The reference to “fifteen kings” (Sibylline Oracle 8:135-138) requires a count beginning with Julius and including Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Julius is mentioned as the first of the Roman emperors (Sibylline Oracle 11:261ff). (Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 157)

¹⁰⁸ “Afterwards those who are called emperors began in this order: first, Caius Julius..., then Augustus.” (*Theophilus to Antolyucus* 2:28, ANF 2:120, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 158)

¹⁰⁹ **J.P.M. Sweet:** “John’s history, like his geography and arithmetic, is *spiritual* (11:8); his hearers needed to be told not *who* was reigning but his spiritual affiliations. The number *seven* is symbolic -- there were many more *churches* than *seven* -- though it can refer to actual entities. John ‘means to represent the Roman power as a historic whole.’” (*Revelation*, p. 257, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 162)

¹¹⁰ **Charles Cutler Torrey:** “The Apocalypse of John plainly belongs to the period in which Jews and Christians still lived together.” (*The Apocalypse of John*, p. 80, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 225)

Kenneth Gentry: “...When John wrote Revelation Christianity’s situation was one in which it was still operating within Jewish circles and institutions to a very large extent. Its grammatical peculiarities and cultural allusions are evidently of a strongly Jewish color. Historically we know that this simply was not the case in the post-temple era beyond A.D. 70. The cleavage between Judaism and Christianity was too radical. Hence, this factor of the *Sitz im Leben* is indicative of a pre-70 date for Revelation.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 231)

¹¹¹ **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** “...the pre-destruction of Jerusalem date of Revelation is indicated by apparent references to the persecutions of that time proceeding from the Jews. The early persecutions of the church in the apostolic age were in consequence of Jewish instigation....” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 30)

¹¹² **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** “There are clear and repeated references in the letters to the churches, and other parts of the apocalypses to the prevalent activities of the Judaizers, and to their existence and presence in the churches as a source of strife, trouble, discord and contention. But after the destruction of Jerusalem, the demolition of the temple, the overthrow of their theocracy and the end of the Jewish state, the activities of the Judaizers became nonexistent, and their influence null and void.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 31)

¹¹³ **Kenneth Gentry:** “...either this number [144,000, ksk] represents the totality of the Christian Church as the fulfillment of the Jewish hope, or it represents the saved of Jewish lineage. In either case the interpretation most likely supports the early date of Revelation in that Christian history was at a state in which either the Church at large was called by Jewish names or in which the bulk of Christians were Jewish.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 224)

¹¹⁴ **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** “The parallels between the Lord’s forecasts of the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24, and John’s visions in Revelation, join them together as being descriptions of the same events and as belonging to the same period of time.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, 41)

¹¹⁵ **Art Ogden:** “The final destruction of Jerusalem came in 70 A.D. God’s purposes and plans were all in place by this time. Nothing remained to be done. The sounding of the seventh angel (Revelation 11:15), then, symbolizes the final step in the fall of the nation of Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem. Luke 21:22, along with Daniel 9:24-27, teaches the same thing as Revelation 10:7. Since these texts were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, Revelation 10:7 must also be fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. Therefore, the Apocalypse existed before the destruction of Jerusalem.” (*Dating The Apocalypse*, p. 16)

¹¹⁶ **Art Ogden:** “It is evident Jesus was talking about what would befall the nation of Israel. His statement parallels the prophecy of Daniel. Jesus made the connection Himself; ‘When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains’ (24:15,16). Jesus explained Daniel’s prophecy. Both Daniel and Jesus foretold a period of suffering upon the Jews. This period of tribulation would come in connection with the fall of Israel as a nation. This period of trouble took place during the years of 66-70 A.D. and ended in the destruction of Jerusalem.

“Jeremiah, Daniel and Jesus all foretold this period of unprecedented tribulation coming upon Israel. Nothing ever compared to it before or would compare to it again. It was so great that it earned the designation ‘the great tribulation.’ Some question this conclusion but to do so is to question God’s word. No other tribulation upon earth can compare when we consider all of the details. This was God’s wrath poured out upon His holy nation in which he caused them to suffer for their rejection of Him and His son. He brought them to a sudden and complete end in a blood bath of which there is no comparison.

“Since Revelation 7:14 identifies victorious saints coming out of “the great tribulation,” the substance of the Revelation must center around the desolation of Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem. Otherwise, it is not “the great tribulation.” There are no if, and, or buts about it. These passages identify the same period of time or Jesus is talking out of both sides of His mouth. Are you ready to accuse Him of that? Since the Apocalypse was written before the things it foretold, it was written before “the great tribulation.” This period of tribulation began in earnest in 66 A.D.” (*Dating The Apocalypse*, p. 19)

¹¹⁷ **Art Ogden:** “Identifying Babylon with Rome or any other city demands proof that they were responsible for the deaths of prophets. Who can name even one prophet of either Old or New Testament variety that Rome was solely responsible for their death? The fact is, Rome was never responsible for the deaths of prophets. Jerusalem alone carried this responsibility. Jesus said, “Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation” (Luke 11:49,50). Note carefully; the blood of “ALL the prophets ... from the foundation of the world” was required of that generation. God avenged the blood of His prophets upon Jerusalem in 70 A.D. There is no proof that prophecy continued after 70 A.D., therefore, neither Rome nor any other city could be held responsible for their deaths. Jerusalem, and Jerusalem alone, was held responsible for ‘the blood of ALL the prophets.’” (*Dating the Apocalypse*, p. 20)

¹¹⁸ **Kenneth Gentry:** “...much of Revelation’s vivid imagery lends itself admirably to the catastrophic events of the Jewish War. And if the imagery does fit reasonably well, such would suggest at least the *prima facie* plausibility of the argument for an early date....Contrariwise, if it were incapable of explication from history, the overall argument would be greatly weakened. Of course, many of the historical judgment elements could satisfy the situation in various ancient wars....But, with a number of the distinctive elements, there are simply too many converging lines of evidence pointing to the Jewish War to allow for this argument’s hasty *a priori* dismissal.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 239)

¹¹⁹ **Bo Reicke:** “By about 4 B.C., Augustus had finished most of his constitutional reforms in the Roman Empire, and the Roman system of government was fixed for the next several decades. This stability is typified by the succession, which remained in the Augustan line until the suicide of Nero A.D. 68. Politically, this was the period of the *Pax Romana* throughout the Empire. Augustus’ inauguration of an Age of Peace at the *Ludi Saeculares* in 17 B.C. (Horace *Carmen saeculare*) was not an empty gesture. In the Roman Empire proper, this period of peace remained comparatively undisturbed until the time of Nero. Like two harbingers of revolution, however, a fire broke out in Rome in 64 and a war at Zion in 66; after Nero’s death, the whole Roman Empire was ablaze and at war during the year 69. The same *homo novus* who conquered the Jews, Vespasian, was soon able to restore the power of the emperors, but upon a new foundation.” (*The New Testament Era: The World of the Bible from 500 B.C. to A.D. 100*, pp. 109-110, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, pp. 241-242)

¹²⁰ **Josephus:** “There were besides disorders and civil wars in every city; and all those that were at quiet from the Romans turned their hands one against another. There was also a bitter contest between those that were fond of war, and those that were desirous of peace.insomuch that for barbarity and iniquity those of the same nation did no way differ from the Romans; nay, it seemed to be a much lighter thing to be ruined by the Romans than by themselves.” (*The Wars of the Jews*, 4:3:2:131-134)

¹²¹ **Josephus:** “But the famine was too hard for all other passions, and it is destructive to nothing so much as to modesty; for what was otherwise worthy of reverence, was in this case despised; insomuch that children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating, out of their very mouths, and what was still more to be pitied, so did the mothers do as to their infants; and when those that were most dear were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drops that might preserve their lives....” (*The Wars of the Jews*, 5:10:3:429-430)

¹²² **Eusebius:** “But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And when those that believed in Christ had come thither from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men.” (*Ecclesiastical History*, 3:5:3, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 244)

¹²³ **Josephus:** “But although they [the Roman soldiers, ksk] had this commiseration for such as were destroyed in that manner [by the famine, ksk], yet had they not the same for those that were still alive, but they ran every one through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men’s blood.” (*The Wars of the Jews*, 6:8:5:406, cf. 3:10:9:529-530; 4:7:5-6:435-437)

¹²⁴ **Josephus:** “The engines [catapults, ksk], that all the legions had ready prepared for them, were admirably contrived; but still more extraordinary ones belonged to the tenth legion; those that threw darts and those that threw stones, were more forcible and larger than the rest, by which they not only repelled the excursions of the Jews, but drove those away that were upon the walls also. Now, the stones that were cast, were of the weight of a talent, and were carried two furlongs and further. The blow they gave was no way to be sustained, not only by those that stood first in the way, but by those that were beyond them for a great space. As for the Jews, they at first watched the coming of the stone, for it was a white colour....” (*The Wars of the Jews*, 5:6:3:269-271)

¹²⁵ **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** “If it were known that John alone survived, the claim of the pretenders ‘which say they are apostles,’ thus claiming that there were other apostles than John yet alive, would have been so palpably false as to have been completely untenable, and none would have dared to make the claim. If the churches were aware that no other apostle than John was then living, as they would have assuredly known if the late date is correct, such a claim would have been so utterly false that no such crisis over it could have existed in the Ephesian church as that which made it necessary to bring the imposters to trial.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 32)

¹²⁶ **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** “After the visions John expected to be an active emissary to prophesy *again*, ‘before (or *among*) many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.’ It is hardly possible, and altogether improbable, that John, at the supposedly advanced age of ninety-six, would or could have undertaken a mission requiring several years to accomplish. And in the light of the testimony of Jerome, that in the year A.D. 96, the apostle John was so aged, weak and infirm, that ‘he was with difficulty carried into the church, and could speak only a few words to the people,’ such an itinerary would have been wholly impossible.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 43)

¹²⁷ **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** “The various allusions in the other New Testament epistles to the contents of Revelation indicate that it was written earlier than these other epistles....There has been no disagreement over Galatians and Hebrews having been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and as John manifestly did not compose ‘the warp and woof’ of the visions and apocalypses of Revelation from the few expressions in two preceding epistles, it rather follows that these allusions in the epistles were adaptations from Revelation. As Peter’s reference to the epistles of Paul in II Peter 3:15-16 proves the prior existence of Paul’s epistles, so these allusions indicate the earlier date of Revelation.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 44)

¹²⁸ **Foy Wallace Jr.:** “As the prophet in the Isaiah reference compared the former apostasies of Jerusalem to harlotry -- ‘How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers’ -- so the seer in Revelation envisioned apostate Jerusalem as the harlot and the mother of harlots in this later apocalypse. There is not a line in either secular or sacred history to prove that Rome was ever a faithful city; but the once faithful Jerusalem that *turned harlot*, the apostate Jerusalem, the spiritual Babylon, was the harlot city of Revelation, and its fate along with the Jewish theocracy was the object of John’s visions.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 45)

¹²⁹ **John A.T. Robinson:** “One of the oddest facts about the New Testament is that what on any showing would appear to be the single most datable and climactic event of the period -- the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 -- is never once mentioned as a past fact...[T]he silence is nevertheless as significant as the silence for Sherlock Holmes of the dog that did not bark.” (*Redating The New Testament*, p. 13, quoted in Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 167)

¹³⁰ **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** “By reason of the fact that the preamble of the book addresses *the seven churches*, it is evident that the vision was received when there were only seven churches in proconsular Asia. But after the destruction of Jerusalem, as a result of the diffusion of Christianity, the Asian churches were numerous....” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 35)

¹³¹ **Kenneth Gentry [EDA]:** “The argument from the number of churches may be discounted as based upon insufficient evidence. The number could well be a limitation based on symbolic requirements. And if there were many churches, it would have been cumbersome to list them all in the preface; the churches listed could be representative churches.” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 118)

¹³² **Foy Wallace, Jr.:** “But the historical fact is that after ‘the great earthquake,’ by which this region was so dreadfully shaken, that these cities were not rebuilt and the congregations merged with Laodicea. Geographically, these cities were separated by only a few miles, and it was entirely feasible for the congregations to consolidate after this catastrophe. So the churches named did not maintain a separate existence after the earthquake, about the middle of the century, before the date of the Apocalypse.” (*The Book Of Revelation*, p. 36)

¹³³ **Kenneth Gentry [EDA]:** “The ‘crudeness’ of Revelation’s Greek does not necessarily suggest a primitive grasp of the language. Its unusual grammar and syntax are perhaps more determined by the purpose at hand (prophetic panorama), the means of its reception (by vision through angelic mediator, e.g., Rev. 1:1), and the subject matter (covenantal wrath). Austin Farrer observes that ‘the suggestion that St. John wrote like this because he knew no better may be dismissed out of hand. He was writing a Christian Ezekiel or Zechariah in the phrase of the Old.’” (*Before Jerusalem Fell*, p. 118)

Leon Morris [LDA]: “The date of John is far from certain, and there are some grounds for holding that it is to be dated before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. But the decisive thing is that the language of Revelation is not that of a raw beginner in Greek. It is not that the writer does not know the rules of Greek grammar, but that he decides for himself which rules he will keep. This view also disregards the possibility of the use of an amanuensis for the writing of the Gospel. If this was done (and it seems to me the only way in which common authorship of the two writings can be defended) nothing can be concluded from the standard of Greek as to the dates of the two writings.” (*The Revelation of St. John*, p. 39)