

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE APOCALYPSE AND THE TIME OF ITS CREATION

The authors cite the Apocalypse from the 1898, 1912, and 1968 Russian editions of the Bible ([67]). The translation uses the New International Version.

The Apocalypse, also called the Book of Revelation, is the twenty-seventh and last book of the New Testament. It is also the last book of the contemporary canon of the Bible. The Apocalypse is considered an integral part of the New Testament. However, in mediaeval Russia the Apocalypse was not included in the New Testament manuscripts as a rule. As we shall demonstrate in the chapters related to the Slavic Bible manuscripts in CHRON6, Slavic manuscripts of the Apocalypse are exceptionally rare – for instance, there is only one known manuscript of the Apocalypse dating from the IX–XIII centuries, whereas there are 158 known manuscripts of the remaining books of the New Testament dating from the same period. Furthermore, even as recently as the XVII century, references to the Apocalypse and the Revelation of St. John the Divine apparently could indicate entirely different books. (See Appendix 2 to CHRON6.)

This means that many uncertainties are closely related to the history of the Apocalypse, and primarily with its dating. Proposed dates are very diverse, pointing at the disagreement amidst the historians. For example, Vandenberg van Eysing dated the Apocalypse to 140 A.D., A. Y. Lentsman to 68–69 A.D., A. Robertson to 93–95 A.D., Garnak and E. Fisher to not earlier than 136 A.D., and so forth. (See the survey in [765].)

I. T. Senderlend wrote that “dating the Book of Revelation to this epoch [the end of first century A.D. – A. F.] or indeed any other epoch at all [sic! – A. F.] is a task of *tremendous complexity*” ([765], page 135).

Furthermore, in the opinion of V. P. Rozhitsyn and M. P. Zhakov ([732]), the creation of the Apocalypse was completed in the II–IV centuries A.D., most likely in the IV century! This opinion is in no way congruous with the Scaliger-Petavius chronology.

The Apocalypse itself doesn’t contain a single explicit chronological indication of the epoch when it was written. No actual historical figures have been identified as definitely living in the epoch of the cre-

ation of the Apocalypse. No absolute dates whatsoever have been given in the work itself. The Apocalypse is commonly considered to be *the last* written book of New Testament; however, F. H. Baur, for one, has categorically asserted that the Apocalypse is not the last, but the “*earliest* writing of the New Testament” ([489], page 127). A. P. Kazhdan and P. I. Kovalev had also been of the opinion that the Apocalypse was the *first* book of the New Testament, and not the *last* one ([765], page 119).

Furthermore, some researchers categorically reject to credit the Apocalypse to John, who had allegedly written a Gospel and three Epistles. Generally, it is assumed that no exact information about the author of the Apocalypse remains in existence ([448], page 117).

G. M. Lifshitz noted that the author of the Apocalypse is quite familiar with astronomy: the images of the dragon, beasts, horses, and so forth that he describes resemble the figures of the constellations in the celestial sphere, which are similarly designated on the mediaeval star charts ([489], pages 235–236).

However, all these considerations had already been expressed by N. A. Morozov in the beginning of the XX century. Apparently his line of reasoning produced a strong impression on at least some of the abovementioned authors, and they actually reiterated his assertions without referring to him, which is very typical for such researchers.

M. M. Kublanov sums up: “The reasons for this abundance of contradictory hypotheses on questions of chronology are explained primarily by the scarcity of reliable evidence. The ancients did not leave us any reliable data in this respect. Under the prevailing circumstances, *the only means for the datings of these writings are the writings themselves...* The establishment of a reliable chronology of the New Testament still remains an open issue” ([448], page 120).

So, let us finally turn to the Apocalypse itself. *Its astronomical nature becomes immediately evident, especially when comparing it with the ancient celestial charts.* (See the mediaeval maps allegedly dating from the XVI century, for instance – figs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4.)

Apparently, some time after the Apocalypse was written, its explicit astronomical meaning was forgotten. Even if some professional astronomer noted