

## Authorship

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The authentic authorship of the Book of Revelation remains a point of contention in biblical scholarship (Kruse). Many scholars connect the author of Revelation to John the Apostle, the author of the Gospel According to John and the Epistles of John, while others simply refer to Revelation's writer as "John of Patmos" or "John the Theologian." Revelation itself was most likely written between 69 CE and 96 CE, as many scholars believe John wrote his initial version under the reign of Roman Emperor Vespasian and then a newer edition during the time of Domitian (Burkett).

## Biography + Analysis

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The John Bot, while officially keeping his precise identity a mystery to "derive pleasure from trolling people," assumes the loose identity of John the Apostle. Born in 6 CE in Galilee (under the Roman Empire), John, a fisherman, was the son of Zebedee and brother of James (Chadwick).

John served as one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, referred to in the Bible as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," John was the youngest of Jesus' original disciples, prompting many scholars to connect John to Jesus' statement "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (*KJV*, Matthew 16.28). While literally John died a physical death around 94 CE, the verse could allude to a spiritual death in which not all Jesus' disciples experience before the Last Judgement. The use of "taste" to describe death connotes a sense of temporal triviality, signifying the death and Satan's powerlessness during God's return to humanity. Throughout the New Testament, John is associated with a variety of behaviors commonly depicted in Christian art, including leaning on Jesus during the Last Supper ("John the Apostle"). The Gospel According to John, another New Testament book commonly attributed to John the Apostle, remains in heavy contrast to the other three gospels (called the Synoptic Gospels) characterized by its repeated incorporation of Greek Neoplatonism philosophy and the idea of Christianity's transcendence rather than continuity of Judaism.

In the New Testament, John (along with Peter and James) falls asleep and fails to keep watch as Jesus prays for his apostles, leading to Jesus' arrest and subsequent sentencing to death by crucifixion (Matthew 26.56). During Jesus' crucifixion, John is portrayed as the only disciple remaining at the base of the cross in Golgotha, described as the "disciple standing by" (John 19.26). The use of "standing by" connotes a sense of loyalty and commitment, positively portraying John as a faithful servant to Jesus and thus validating his title as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." In contrast to the frightened cowardice of Jesus' other apostles as they fled from potential conflict with Roman authorities and citizens, John stably "stands by" and "took [Jesus' mother] unto his own home" (John 19.27). Such obedience to Jesus' last earthly wish, along with the lack of

punctuation and consistency in meter in this line connoting harmony, represents John's commitment and piety. In a literary sense, the lack of direct mention of John's name may symbolize a heightened sense of purity and humility in his role as a disciple—while the other named disciples fled in the tensest moment of Jesus' time on earth, the unnamed John remains defined by his *stable* actions and *internal* morality over any external recognition (through a name).

After Jesus' death, John remained very active in promoting the spread of Christianity, engaging in a variety of missionary activities and playing a leading role in the budding Christian church and participating in the Council of Jerusalem in 51 CE (Chadwick). After the Council of Jerusalem, the history of John remains ambiguous, with the author of Revelation (potentially John the Apostle) writing the final prophetic book of the Bible on Patmos, a small island off the coast of Asia Minor. The Roman Empire often banished people thought to conduct magic (including Christianity) to islands such as Patmos. John most likely died around 100 CE on Patmos after completing Revelation, the only apostle believed to have died from natural causes as opposed to suicide or martyrdom (Collins).

## References

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