

# Exploring the Book of Revelation



**Week 1: Introduction**

# Week 1

## Introduction

- Genre
- Authorship
- Date
- Recipients
- Historical Situation & Purpose

# Genre

## Apocalyptic

- *apokalyptō* = to uncover, reveal, or disclose what is hidden
- Features:
  - Angels are guides and interpreters
  - Written for times of intense persecution
  - Use of images and symbols to portray good vs evil
  - Uses numbers symbolically

# Genre

## Prophetic

- John calls the work a prophecy
- John is referred to as a prophet
- Revelation is an apocalyptic prophecy or prophetic apocalypse

# Genre

## Letter

- Follows the same letter writing conventions as the apostle Paul's
- Addressed to seven churches
- Sent along a postal route
- Addressing pastorally the needs of his churches

# Authorship

## Who is John?

- Written by John (irregular feature for an apocalypse)
- Doesn't identify as an apostle
- Possibly a second known as the presbyter
- Issue of Greek style
- Arguments for and against

# Authorship

## Who is John?

For I have never, like many, delighted to hear those that tell many things, but those that teach the truth.... But if I met with anyone who had been a follower of the elders anywhere, I made it a point to inquire what were the declarations of the elders. What was said by Andrew, Peter or Philip. What by Thomas, James, John, Matthew or any other of the disciples of our Lord. What was said by Aristion, and *the presbyter John*, disciples of the Lord.

Eusebius in *Ecclesiastical History*

# Date of Writing

## Late and Early Date

- Early Date
  - After Nero's Death (54–68 CE)
  - 68–69 CE
- Late Date
  - End of Domitian's reign (81–96 CE)
  - 95 CE

# Date of Writing

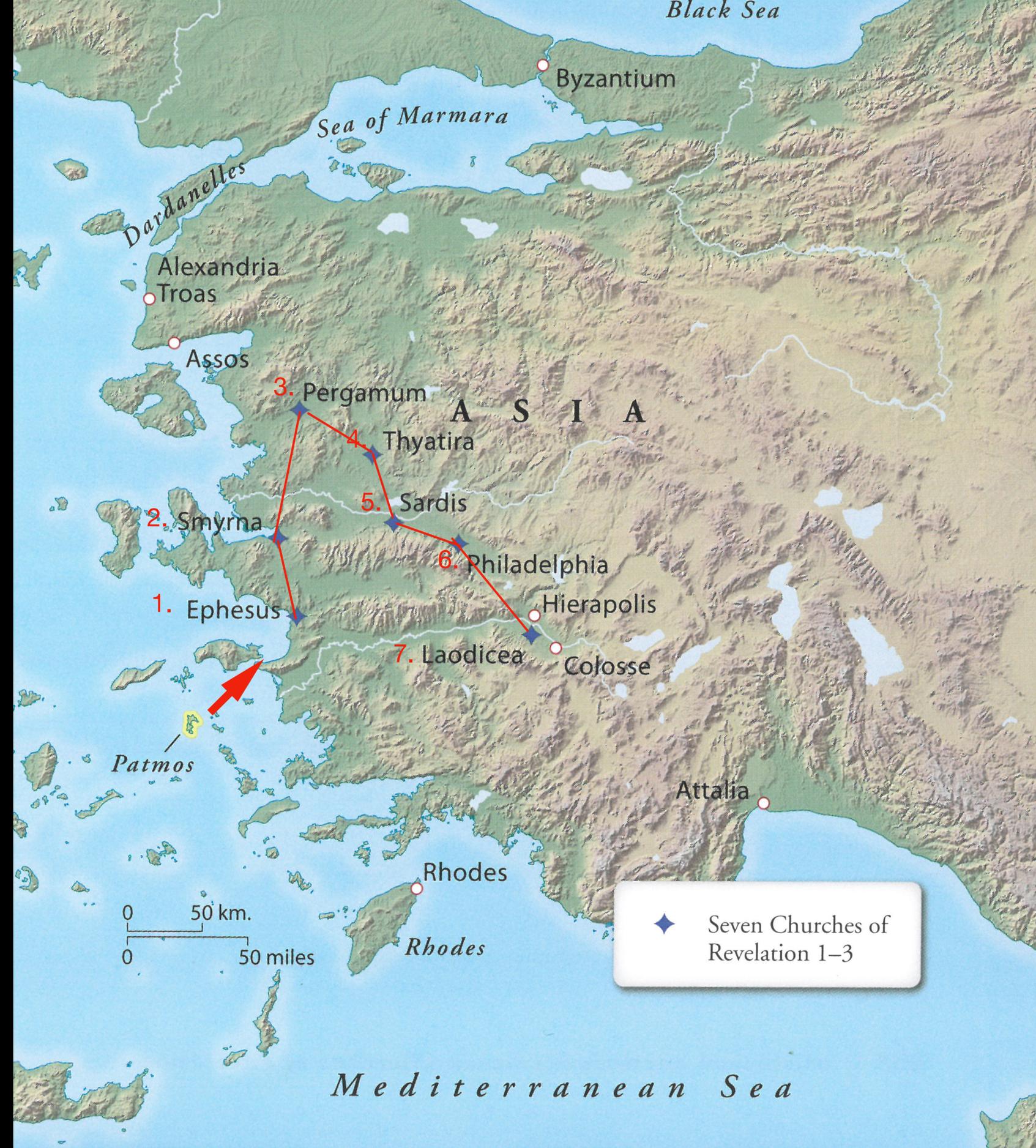
## Late and Early Date

Now since this is so, and since this number [666] is found in all the good and ancient copies, and since *those who have seen John face to face testify*, and reason teaches us that the number of the name of the beast appears according to the numeration of the Greeks by the letters in it ... 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.*

Irenaeus

# Recipients Seven Churches

1. Ephesus
2. Smyrna
3. Pergamum
4. Thyatira
5. Sardis
6. Philadelphia
7. Laodicea



# Purpose

## Assurance of Vindication and Encouragement to Faithfulness

- Revelation is written to a group of Christian churches in the Roman province of Asia at the end of the first century. These Christians were under intense pressure to engage in emperor worship (or anticipating it) and were already beginning to face attacks and possible death for their faith. The revelation of Jesus Christ shows them a picture of the past, present, and future from a heavenly point of view in order to reassure them of the final overcoming of evil by the Lamb and encouragement for them to remain faithful to Jesus even to death.