

Evidence	Early Date (ca. A.D. 69)	Late Date (ca. A.D. 95)
Christian literary evidence	Domitian ruled eleven months in Rome until his father Vespasian returned from the Jewish War; perhaps Irenaeus, wrong on other dates, got the evidence confused	Firm tradition in Irenaeus (Adv. Haer. 5.30.3): "Seen not long ago, but almost in our own day, at the close of the principate [reign] of Domitian"
Church situation	Galatians quickly deserted (Gal. 1:6) and Paul's companions shipwrecked in their faith (1 Tim. 1:19), so period needed for decline can be brief	Decline takes time: Ephesus has lost first love; Sardis is dead and Laodicea is now lukewarm; rise of Nicolaitan party shows time lapse
Historical situation	60s a turbulent time in Roman Empire with Nero's suicide and year of four emperors	Reign of terror begins against Domitian's enemies in A.D. 93
Persecution by Domitian	No literary evidence exists for Domitian persecuting Christians; he killed only presumed political opponents	Eusebius (Hist. eccl. 3.17–20) calls Domitian a second Nero, who persecuted and martyred Christians
Food sacrificed to idols (2:14, 20)	Problematic "hot" issue among several churches in Asia	Issue appears resolved with only brief mention in Didache (6.3) and not mentioned by Ignatius
Asian earthquake in A.D. 60 (cf. 3:17)	Laodicea refused aid from Rome because of civic independence; her wealth enables city to begin rebuilding right away	Devastation of earthquake at Laodicea required decades to restore city to former grandeur
Great Tribulation (7:9–14)	Fiercest persecution of Christians occurred under Nero after Rome's fire of 64; Tacitus (Ann. 15.44) and Clement (1 Clem. 6:1) speak of "great multitudes" of Christians dying	Asian persecution limited only to Antipas in Pergamum; expectation of greater persecution suggests later period
Temple in Jerusalem (11:1–2)	That the temple can be measured suggests it is still standing	Reference to temple is from an earlier source incorporated into the vision
Political situation (13:1–8)	Beast need not refer to Domitian but could refer to earlier Caesar (Nero)	Beast depicts Caesar's (Domitian's) successful war against saints and his worship by all earth dwellers
Nero redivivus (resurrection) myth (13:3, 12, 14; 17:8)	First Nero pretender appears on Aegean island of Cythnus in 69 and his body is displayed publicly in Ephesus; myth circulates soon after	References to resurrected Beast suggest time period needed for myth to arise following Nero's death in 68
Roman imperial cult (13:11–15)	Cult active in Asia since Augustus authorized temple in Pergamum in 29 B.C., and Tiberius authorized temple in Smyrna in A.D. 26	Worship of emperor as "Lord and God" reached zenith under Domitian; temple to Flavian dynasty built in Ephesus in A.D. 89/90
666 (13:18)	Gematria (numerology) in Hebrew fits only Nero	Apocalyptic tradition is now historicized and fulfilled in Flavian dynasty
Name "Babylon" (14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21)	If 1 Peter (5:13) and Rev. are dated before A.D. 70, this is early literary evidence for use of "Babylon"	Use of "Babylon" not documented in literary sources until after A.D. 70
Seven emperors (17:9–11)	Nero is the fifth "fallen" emperor of the principate	Domitian is the fifth "fallen" emperor among the principate's tyrants