

REVELATION REVEALED

INTRODUCTION

A. Revelation 1:1; Ephesians 3:3-5

“Revelation” is translated from the Greek “apokalypsis,” which gave us the English transliteration “apocalypse,” so the word “apocalypse” does not mean doomsday, just “revelation.” It speaks of that which is revealed, unveiled, uncovered. What has been revealed cannot be a mystery.

B. Revelation 1:3; James 1:22

The Revelation is meant to be read and God intends blessings upon those who “read” and “hear” and “keep” what is written. Notice, as with every other word inspired of God, reading or hearing is insufficient without obedience.

C. This lesson is not intended to go deep into an admittedly complex book, filled as it is with symbols. Rather, this is intended to concisely summarize the Revelation, with the specific goal of avoiding misapplication.

I. WHY WOULD THE PROPHECY BE FULFILLED?

Seeing the purpose of the disaster foretold should clarify everything that follows.

A. Revelation 6:9-11; 16:4-7; 18:21-24

The vengeance of the martyrs was the particular intent of the doom to come.

B. Revelation 19:1-9

Specifically, by punishing the one guilty of the blood of martyrs, the “harlot,” the way was cleared for the marriage of the Lamb, Christ Jesus, to His “wife.”

1. Revelation 17:5

The harlot is symbolically identified as “Babylon.”

2. Jeremiah 51:54-58

The actual city of Babylon was destroyed centuries before the Revelation was written, so that monicker appears in the Revelation as a

figure to represent a wicked place upon which havoc would descend from God.

3. **Revelation 14:8**

The place metaphorically referred to as "*Babylon*" is also called the "*great city*."

4. **Revelation 11:8**

"*The Great city*" is identified as the location of the Lord's crucifixion, which was, of course, Jerusalem.

5. **Revelation 21:2**

The "*bride*" is the "*New Jerusalem*" and she emerged from heaven. The New Jerusalem is not in heaven, but came from there.

6. **Galatians 4:21-31**

Another way of describing New Jerusalem, Christ's bride, is to call her "*Jerusalem above*," our "*mother!*"

7. **Ephesians 5:25-27**

The church is married to Christ.

To put it succinctly: old Jerusalem got replaced with New Jerusalem, the whore was replaced with the wife. The city that persecuted prophets and apostles was wiped out to celebrate the establishment of the church.

C. **Matthew 23:29-35**

Jesus personally foretold the coming calamity would be retribution for the Jews who rejected the messengers sent from the Lord.

II. WHEN WOULD THE PROPHECY BE FULFILLED?

The most common approach to the Revelation is to presume it concerns itself chiefly with the final judgment at the end of time. There is no basis for that in the reading, however.

A. **Revelation 1:1, 3; 22:6-7, 12, 20**

1. From the first verse of the book, readers should immediately know that it is concerned with *“things which must shortly take place.”* And within a few words, still in the first chapter, it is confirmed that *“the time is near.”*
2. Several instances in the closing chapter state unequivocally that the fulfillment would be near at hand.
3. Two millennia later, if the events foretold in this book have not come to pass, then these words are meaningless.

B. Revelation 22:10; Daniel 8:26; 12:4

1. John was instructed not to seal the prophecy because its contents would soon take place. This is a clear reference to Daniel being told to do the opposite and for precisely the opposite reason.
2. Daniel wrote about five or six centuries before the Revelation. If the fulfillment was a long time removed from Daniel, but not from John receiving the Revelation, then the prophecy had to be fulfilled considerably sooner than 500 years and definitely a long time ago from where we stand now.

C. Matthew 23:36; 24:32-34; (Mark 13:30; Luke 11:50-51)

Speaking of the same events, Jesus said they would transpire during that generation.

III. WHERE WOULD THE PROPHECY BE FULFILLED?

Since many believe the Revelation pertains to the destruction of the world, it is helpful to see that, in fact, it is concerned with one very particular place.

A. Revelation 11:1-2, 8

1. It was the *“holy city”* where the temple was located, was what would be trampled. That means it was Jerusalem.
2. The names *“Sodom”* and *“Egypt”* were what the place was called *“spiritually.”* They were symbolic applications to remind readers of

places God had punished, one with utter annihilation and the other with severe plagues. Literally, though, the place was “*where also our Lord was crucified*” – undeniably Jerusalem.

B. Matthew 23:37-24:31

1. In a discourse conspicuously paralleling the Revelation, Jesus lamented the imminent demise of Jerusalem by name (23:37)
2. He went on to foretell the destruction of the temple in particular (24:1-2).
3. As his warnings continued, Christ mentioned Judea as a place to flee from (24:16).

IV. HOW LONG WOULD THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECY LAST?

A. Revelation 11:1-3; 13:5; 12:6, 14

1. Jerusalem would be subject to Gentile incursion 42 months or 1,260 days (11:1-3; 13:5).
2. The righteous of God were protected when they fled for the same duration: 1,260 days (12:6) or 3½ units of time (12:14) – meaning 3½ years, which is what 1,260 days or 42 months amount to.

B. Daniel 7:21-25; 12:7, 11

The same timeframe was foretold much earlier by Daniel concerning the same events.

1. Daniel 11:31

In that duration there would occur “*the abomination of desolation.*”

2. Matthew 24:15-16

Jesus cited Daniel’s prophecy in particular as He warned of the judgment coming against Jerusalem.

C. Josephus, The Jewish War 1:1 (32)

Secular history verifies what Daniel, Jesus, and the Revelation foretold, the Jewish historian Josephus, who lived in the first century, having written:

“Antiochus Epiphanes... also plundered the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of atonement for **three years and six months.**”

CONCLUSION

- A.** Whatever else is to be concluded in the pages of the Revelation – whether about a beast, a dragon, a pit, horns, seals, trumpets, a number to be calculated, or any such thing – let it be understood in the light of the facts now laid bare:
1. The calamity forecast in this book had the specific purpose of punishing Jews who had rejected God’s prophets, especially His Son.
 2. The events of the Revelation transpired during the lifetime of Jesus’ contemporaries.
 3. It happened in Jerusalem.
 4. It lasted 3½ years, which is verified by history.
- B. **Revelation 21:8****
- Although the primary thrust of the prophecy pertains to events now past, the book still does what the New Testament as whole does – it warns of reserved for sinners.
- C. **Revelation 22:17****
- An invitation awaits to drink the water of life for any who so desire.