



# Revelation

## Introduction

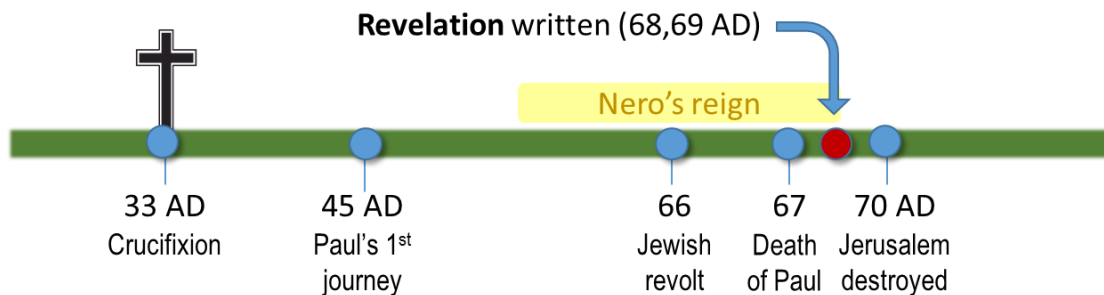
Revelation. The very title reveals the attitude with which we will approach our study of this book. It is the *Revelation*, not the *mystery*. This book is meant to be understood and it will be understood.

The book of Revelation is often called “The Apocalypse.” This is derived from *apokalupsis* the first word of the book in the Greek text in which it was written. *apokalupsis* translated in our English versions as “The Revelation.” The word means “an uncovering, or unveiling.” It is used about a dozen times in the New Testament, and related words are used another 30 times. We refer to all the Bible as God's revelation and indeed it is, but there is one essential difference between the book of Revelation and the other books of the Bible. It was revealed by Jesus Christ to John through His angel (1:1).<sup>1</sup>

The key to understanding the Revelation is in first understanding the **background** to its writing and the larger **context** of the Bible in which it fits.

## Background

For the sake of our study we will assume the pre 70 A.D. writing of this book to be correct (around 68 or 69 A.D.)<sup>2</sup>. At this time the gospel has spread throughout the Roman Empire with great success. Paul, who was largely responsible for taking the gospel to the Gentile world, has been imprisoned for the second time and has been most likely martyred in Rome.<sup>3</sup>



The church was undergoing a severe persecution from both Jews and the Roman government. To quote Jesus, this was a persecution “such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever

<sup>1</sup> *The Avenging of the Apostles and Prophets*; Art Ogden, pg. 1,2

<sup>2</sup> I am well aware of the debate over the date which Revelation was written. The student is encouraged to familiarize themselves with the evidence for a pre 70 A.D. date and those for a post 70 A.D. date.

<sup>3</sup> Paul's death is traditional placed at 67-68 A.D.

will"<sup>4</sup>. Nero was the reigning Caesar at this time. Central to the conflict between Rome and the Christians was the issue of who was indeed Lord. Rome insisted that all must worship the Caesar while Christians were resolute in *only* worshipping God.<sup>5</sup> The Christian teaching of their being only *one Lord* was "nothing less than a declaration of war against the pretensions of the Roman State."<sup>6</sup>

The frequent martyrdom of Christians raised the question as to the legitimacy of the church and the reign of Jesus Christ over His kingdom. The Jews still claimed that they were the only covenant people of God and they pointed to the temple in Jerusalem as evidence of their relationship with God. The continual murder of many Christians only served to substantiate their claim. The disciples were asking *why?*

"If we are the children of God why are we dying? Why is God not acting and avenging our deaths? Is not our death a sign of our defeat?"

It is to these events and these questions that Jesus writes to His people.

*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.* (Revelation 1:3)

Jesus is about to take action. He is pictured in the Revelation as sitting on a white horse as the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16) who is ready to battle the nations. Revelation is book of vengeance, hope and victory.

## Context

1. A Book of Prophecy: *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the **prophecy**.*
  - a. Understand that this is a book of prophecy: 1:3; 10:11; 22:7, 10, 18-19
  - b. It speaks of events which were *shortly to take place*. The reader is admonished to both hear and heed the message. To do so requires understanding of the prophecy.
  - c. Prophecy is not merely a prediction of future events, but rather a promise of what is to come based upon the "evaluation of man's ethical response to God's Word of command and promise."<sup>7</sup> Consider God's statement spoken through Jeremiah:

*At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; 8 if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. 9 Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; 10 if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.* (Jeremiah 18:7-10)

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew 24:21 (NASB) see Revelation 7:14

<sup>5</sup> "Let us not forget why the Christians were killed. They were not killed because they worshipped Jesus.... Nobody cared who worshiped whom so long as the worshiper did not disrupt the unity of the state, centered in the formal worship of Caesar. The reason the Christians were killed was because they were rebels. ... We may express the nature of their rebellion in two ways, both of which are true. First, we can say they worshiped Jesus as God and they worshiped the infinite-personal God only. The Caesars would not tolerate this worshipping of the one God only. It was counted as treason." *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*; Francis Schaeffer, Revell, 1976 pg. 24

<sup>6</sup> *The Days of Vengeance*; David Chilton, Dominion Press, pg.8

<sup>7</sup> Chilton pg. 11

- d. Revelation will speak of a coming judgment brought about by the failure of those being judged to be faithful to God and His covenant with them.
2. A Book of Signs: *He sent and **signified** it by his angel unto his servant John.* (ASV)
- a. Revelation is authored by Jesus, and communicated to John by the use of **signs**. John was not told what *words* to write, but was shown visions and scenes which he was to write about.
  - b. The word “saw” is used over 40 times in this book in reference to what John was shown (i.e. “I saw”).
    - i. *Write in a scroll **what you see** and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”* (Revelation 1:11)
    - ii. *Therefore **write** down the things you have **seen**, and the things that are, and the things that will happen after this.”* (Revelation 1:19)
3. The Context of Biblical language
- a. The book of Revelation makes frequent references to the Old Testament.<sup>8</sup>
  - b. One of the keys to understanding this book is to become familiar with the language used in its writing.
    - i. Often called *apocalyptic language*<sup>9</sup>, Revelation employs judgment language that is used by God in the Old Testament.<sup>10</sup>
    - ii. The language is natural and understandable when it is first understood in its original context of the Old Testament. The reason people have trouble understanding Revelation is simple because they do not know the Old Testament.
4. The Context of Time:
- a. In the text we have clues which define and dictate the time frame in which the predicted events will take place. We will see that these events find their fulfillment in a time contemporary to those whom it was written.
  - b. The first clue is found in chapter one:
    - i. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the **things which must soon take place*** (Revelation 1:1)
      - Must shortly come to pass (ASV, KJV)

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<sup>8</sup> “Revelation is the most “Biblical” book in the Bible. St. John quotes hundreds of passages from the Old Testament, often with subtle allusions to little-known religious rituals of the Hebrew people. In order to understand Revelation, we need to know our Bibles backward and forward.” Chilton, pg 11.

<sup>9</sup> Type of biblical literature that emphasizes the lifting of the veil between heaven and earth and the revelation of God and his plan for the world. Apocalyptic writings are marked by distinctive literary features, particularly prediction of future events and accounts of visionary experiences or journeys to heaven, often involving vivid symbolism. Later apocalypses often build upon and elaborate the symbolism employed by earlier ones. This is particularly the case in the Book of Revelation, in which not only earlier apocalypses but the whole Old Testament is plundered for ideas and symbols. Readers need to be alert to discern allusions. Elwell, Walter A. “Entry for ‘Apocalyptic’”. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. . 1997.

<sup>10</sup> “It is filled with references to events and characters of the Old Testament, and a great deal of its phraseology is taken directly from the Old Testament books. ... Oddly enough, there is not one direct citation in Revelation from the Old Testament with a statement that it is quoted from a given passage; but a count of the significant allusions which are traceable both by verbal resemblance and by contextual connection to the Hebrew canon number three hundred and forty-eight. O” Merrill Tenney; *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 101.

- Must shortly take place (NASB 1977)
  - Come to pass *quickly* (Young’s Literal Translation)
  - Original Word: *tachos*; (Strong’s 5034) quickness, speed, hastily, immediately
  - For others uses see Acts 12:7; 22:18; 1 Timothy 3:14
- ii. *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for **the time is near**.* (Revelation 1:3)
- Time is at hand ASV, KJV
  - Original word: *eggus*; (Strong’s 1451) near, nearby, close, ready
  - For other uses see Matthew 24:32; 26:18; John 2:13
- c. The Second clue(s) is found in chapter 22
- i. *“And he said to me, “These words are faithful and true”; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which **must soon take place**.”* (Revelation 22:6)
- Same word as used in 1:1 (*tachos*, Strong’s 5034)
- ii. *“And behold, **I am coming quickly**. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”* (Revelation 22:7)
- Similar to the word as used in 1:1; 22:6 (*tachu*, Strong’s 5035)
  - Used six times in Revelation: 2:16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:7; 22:12; 22:20
- iii. *And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the **time is near**.”* (Revelation 22:10)
- Same word as used in 1:3 (*eggus*, Strong’s 1451)
- iv. *“Behold, **I am coming quickly**, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”* (Revelation 22:12)
- Same word as used 22:7 (*tachu*, Strong’s 5035)
- v. *He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, **I am coming quickly**.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.* (Revelation 22:20)
- Same word as used in 22:7, 10 (*tachu*, Strong’s 5035)
- d. These two clues server as *bookends* for the timeframe of the book’s coming events. The book opens with *“I am coming quickly...the time is near”* and the book closes with *“I am coming quickly...the time is near”*. Any interpretation of the events mentioned in between these two bookends must fit the time frame which they describe – *both quickly and near!*
- i. If the book was written around 68 A.D. then the events it predicts must have happened within the next generation (40 years) – all in the first century. For us, the events recorded in the book of Revelation are mostly history, having already happened.
- ii. Interpretations that make the fulfillment of these events still future to us today (some 2000 years after the book was written) do not fit the time frame established by our Lord and are therefore incorrect. This book is not a prophecy about nuclear war or any other event which may take place in the present 21<sup>st</sup> century.



**Soon!  
Near!**

‘the things which must soon take place’

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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**Soon!  
Near! QUICKLY!**

## 5. The Internal Clues

- a. There are several clues found within the book of Revelation which help direct us to the proper understanding of this book. Individually, they are not necessarily conclusive as to Revelation's meaning, but when they all are considered together they lead us to an inevitable conclusion.
- b. ONE: There will be a **fulfillment of God's mystery** – *the mystery of God is finished*.
  - i. *...but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then **the mystery of God is finished**<sup>11</sup>, as He preached to His servants the **prophets**.* (Revelation 10:7)
  - ii. Understanding the mystery of God will help us understand the Revelation, for the mystery is finally completed when these events take place. This clue will be examined in detail later.
- c. TWO: The clue of **unsealed prophecy** – John is told not to seal the words of this prophecy.
  - i. *Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of prophecy in this book, because the time is near." (Revelation 22:10)*
  - ii. In contrast, Daniel was specifically ordered to seal up his prophecy, because it referred to "the end," in the distant future. *"Conceal the words and seal up the book until the time of the end." (Daniel 12:4)*
  - iii. John is told not to seal up this prophecy, because the time of which it speaks is near. We can only conclude that the events were going to take place in a time frame contemporary to its readers.
- d. THREE: The topic of **vengeance**
  - i. Notably, there is a picture of martyred saints before God asking for vengeance for their blood which was shed on the earth (Revelation 6:9-11). This theme reappears throughout this book and will be examined later.
  - ii. Revelation 16:6 – *"For they have spilled the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink as they deserve."*
  - iii. Revelation 17:6 – *"I could see that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and of the witnesses for Jesus. And I was greatly astonished at the sight of her."*
  - iv. Revelation 18:24 – *"And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."*
- e. Specifics statements:
  - i. The mention of a **great tribulation** (7:14).
  - ii. The mention of the city where Jesus was **crucified** (11:8).
  - iii. The great day of **wrath** which will come from Jesus (6:6, 17; 14:10; 15:1).

## 6. Initial Conclusion

- a. From the clues examined thus far, one understands that Revelation presents a view<sup>12</sup> of events that are *soon to take place* in accordance with God's plan which is soon to be finished.
- b. These events are a display of God's wrath and His vengeance upon those on the earth who have shed the blood of His people.

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<sup>11</sup> The word finished (teleo) means "1. to bring to a close, to finish, to end; 2. to perform, execute, complete, fulfil, (so that the thing done corresponds to what has been said, the order, command, etc.), i.e. a. with special reference to the subject-matter, to carry out the contents of a command

<sup>12</sup> The reader should be aware of and examine the four views of interpreting Revelation: 1) The Preterist view; 2) the Futurist view (premillennialism); 3) The Historical view; and 4) The Symbolic view

## The Larger Biblical Context

### 1. The **Mystery**: God's plan to save mankind through Jesus Christ was referred to as the mystery.

- a. Before the creation, God had a plan by which He intended to bring those willing into an eternal relationship with Him. This plan, when it was hidden from man, was referred to as the 'mystery'. Now that this plan has been revealed, it is called the *gospel*.

- i. God's plan was **hidden** during the times of the Old Testament:

*Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the **mystery** which has been kept **secret** for long ages past. (Romans 16:25)*

*...the **mystery** which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things. (Ephesians 3:8)*

- ii. God's plan was **revealed** during the times of the New Testament:

*In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the **mystery** of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ. (Ephesians 1:8-9)*

*...by revelation there was made known to me the **mystery**, as I wrote before in brief. 4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the **mystery** of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. (Ephesians 3:3-5)*

- b. The fulfillment of this plan is realized completely in Jesus.

*Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, 26 that is, the **mystery** which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this **mystery** among the Gentiles, **which is Christ in you**, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:25-27)*

*...a true knowledge of God's **mystery**, that is, Christ Himself. (Colossians 2:2)*

### 2. The **Covenants**: The mystery of God was carried out through the covenants He established.

- a. The Covenant with **Abraham**: **Genesis 12:1-3**

*Now the Lord said to Abram,  
"Go forth from your country,  
And from your relatives  
And from your father's house,  
To the land which I will show you;  
2 And I will make you a great nation,  
And I will bless you,  
And make your name great;  
And so you shall be a blessing;  
3 And I will bless those who bless you,  
And the one who curses you I will curse.  
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*

- i. The physical fulfillment of this covenant resulted in the Jewish nation (i.e. the children of Israel), which were given the land of Canaan in which to dwell.
  - ii. The spiritual fulfillment of blessings being extended to all families of the earth was fulfilled in Jesus who, as a direct descendant of Abraham, was sent by God to save mankind by dying for their sins (see Galatians 3:8-18).
  - iii. This plan to save man is called the 'mystery'<sup>13</sup> in the New Testament, for it was hidden from minds of man until it was revealed after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Having now been revealed, it is referred to as the 'mystery of the gospel' (Ephesians 6:19).
- b. The Covenant with Israel.
- i. Made at Mt Sinai (Exodus 19-24)
    - Made with all of *physical* Israel.
    - An agreement to do all that God commanded: *And he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"* (Exodus 24:6, 7)
    - The terms of the covenant consisted of the ten commandments and all the other laws given at that time (Exodus 34:28).
    - This covenant was inaugurated by the blood of animals: *So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."* (Exodus 24:8)
  - ii. The covenant contains both a **blessing** and a **curse**.
    - A **blessing**: *"Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today...All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the Lord your God."* (Deuteronomy 28:1-2)
    - A **curse**: *"But it shall come about, if you do not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you."* (Deuteronomy 28:15)
    - Israel's favored status as God's people and their possession of the land were both *conditional* on them keeping their covenant with God.
    - Failure to keep the covenant would result in God executing *vengeance for the covenant*.<sup>14</sup>
  - iii. **Warning**: God knew that Israel would not keep His covenant and that she would eventually fall away, which would invoke the curse and brings about God's vengeance.
    - Deuteronomy 31:16  
*...this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.*

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<sup>13</sup> For uses of the word *mystery* see Mark 4:11; Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; Colossians 1:16-27; 4:3; 1 Timothy 3:16

<sup>14</sup> Leviticus 26:25

- Nations will ask ‘Why?’  
*All the nations will say, ‘Why has the Lord done thus to this land? Why this great outburst of anger?’ 25 Then men will say, ‘Because they **forsook the covenant** of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 29:24-25)*
- The Song of Moses:  
***Vengeance is Mine**, and retribution, in due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, and the impending things are hastening upon them.’ (Deuteronomy 32:35)*

iv. **Judgment:** God will bring a nation from afar and **destroy** Israel. (Deuteronomy 28:49-68)

- 28:49 – *The Lord will bring a **nation** against you **from afar**, from the end of the earth, as the **eagle** swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand.*
- 28:53 – *Then you shall **eat the offspring of your own body**, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters whom the Lord your God has given you, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you.*
- 28:56-57 – *The refined and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground for delicateness and refinement, shall be hostile toward the husband she cherishes and toward her son and daughter, 57 and toward her **afterbirth** which issues from between her legs and toward her children whom she bears; for she will **eat them secretly** for lack of anything else, during the **siege** and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you in your towns.*
- 28:64 – *the **Lord will scatter you** among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth.*

**NOTE:** The mystery will not be completely fulfilled until both events happen: the promised salvation through Jesus AND the promised judgment by Jesus.

c. A Promised **New Covenant**

i. “Behold the days are coming, “ declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 31)

- *“I will make a new covenant” 31:31*
- *“not like the covenant I made” 31:32*
- *“I will put My law with in them and on their heart I will write it” 31:33*
- *“I will forgive their iniquity, and there sin I will remember no more” 31:34*
- *“I will put My law with in them and on their heart I will write it” 31:33*

ii. This covenant will

- **Be made with anybody who will come to God through Christ:**

*Now it will come about that in the **last days** the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; And **all the nations** will stream to it. 3 And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways*



*And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from **Jerusalem**. (Isaiah 2:2, 3)*

- Inaugurated by the blood of Christ: *"This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* (Matthew 26:28)
- The fulfillment of this promised covenant resulted in the establishment of Christ's church.<sup>15</sup>

3. The **Judgment**: This mystery includes provision for the final judgment of those who would rebel against God and His plan to save man through Jesus.

a. Jesus condemns the Pharisees for their hypocrisy in Matthew.<sup>16</sup>

i. Jesus charges the Pharisees with the guilt of murdering the prophets:

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' 31 "So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets." (Matthew 23:29-31)*

ii. Jesus says the proof of their guilt will be realized when He sends additional prophets whom they will kill:

*"Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. 33 "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? 34 "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will **kill and crucify**, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and **persecute** from city to city." (Matthew 23:32-34)*

b. The ultimate consequence for their guilt will be them bearing judgment for *all of the deaths* of the prophets who have come to Israel.

*...so that **upon you** may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. (Matthew 23:35)*

i. This judgment will come upon that generation of Jews living at the time of Jesus:

*"Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation." (Matthew 23:36)*  
*Because of this, the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles; some of them they will kill and others they will persecute.' 50 As a result, **this generation will be charged with the blood of all the prophets** that has been shed since the foundation of the world, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, **all of it will be charged to this generation**. (Luke 11:49-51)*

ii. Why would this generation of Jews pay for all the guilt of the shed blood? Because they were guilty of murdering the Son of God – *who was sent by God as the fulfillment of His plan to save them!*

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<sup>15</sup> It is important to remember that the church of Christ exists as a spiritual temple where God dwells (Ephesians 2:19-22). This spiritual house is comprised of individual Christians who as living stones are built upon Christ who is the cornerstone (1 Peter 2:4-8).

<sup>16</sup> Matthew 23:1-36

- c. The murder of Jesus filled up Israel's cup of iniquity to the full.
- i. God has never arbitrarily destroyed a nation without cause. It is only when the nation became utterly sinful that God would judge them – when their cup of sin was full.<sup>17</sup>
  - ii. Every time the Jews killed one of God's prophets they added to their measure of guilt. The cup became full when they murdered Jesus.
 

*"Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers." (Matthew 23:32)*

*Which of the prophets did your fathers fail to persecute? They even **killed** those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One. And now **you** are His betrayers and **murderers** — 53 you who have received the Law ordained by angels, yet have not kept it." (Acts 7:52, 53)*

*For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Judea that are in Christ Jesus. You suffered from your own countrymen the very things they suffered from the Jews,<sup>18</sup> 15 **who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets**, and drove us out as well. They are displeasing to God and hostile to all men, 16 hindering us from telling the Gentiles how they may be saved. As a result, they continue to **heap up their sins to full capacity**; the utmost **wrath** has come upon them. (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16)*
  - iii. Recall that God had promised, through Moses, the total destruction of the Jewish nation. This would not result in just the leadership being punished, but the entire physical nation would cease to exist as God's chosen people. Ultimately, this would require the destruction of the temple itself when Jerusalem fell.
- d. The fall of Jerusalem with the destruction of the temple completes the fulfillment of the mystery of God. His vengeance is complete.
- i. "The greatest enemy of the early Church was apostate Israel, which used the power of the pagan Roman Empire to try to stamp out Christianity, just as it had used Rome in the crucifixion of the Lord Himself."<sup>19</sup>
  - ii. "Jerusalem's destruction was the last blast of the trumpet, signaling that the "mystery of God" was finished (Rev. 10:7). There would be no further canonical writings once Israel was gone."<sup>20</sup>
  - iii. "The Temple thus was forsaken by God. No longer would He dwell on the Holy of Holies of the earthly Temple. The House of God was now the House of Desolation. Its destruction was inevitable after its desolation."<sup>21</sup>
  - iv. Luke 21:20 – "...these are days of **vengeance**, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled."

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<sup>17</sup> God would not displace the Amorites so Abraham's descendants could possess the land until their *iniquity was full* (Genesis 15:16). Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed only after sufficient righteous persons were unable to be found (Genesis 18:20-33).

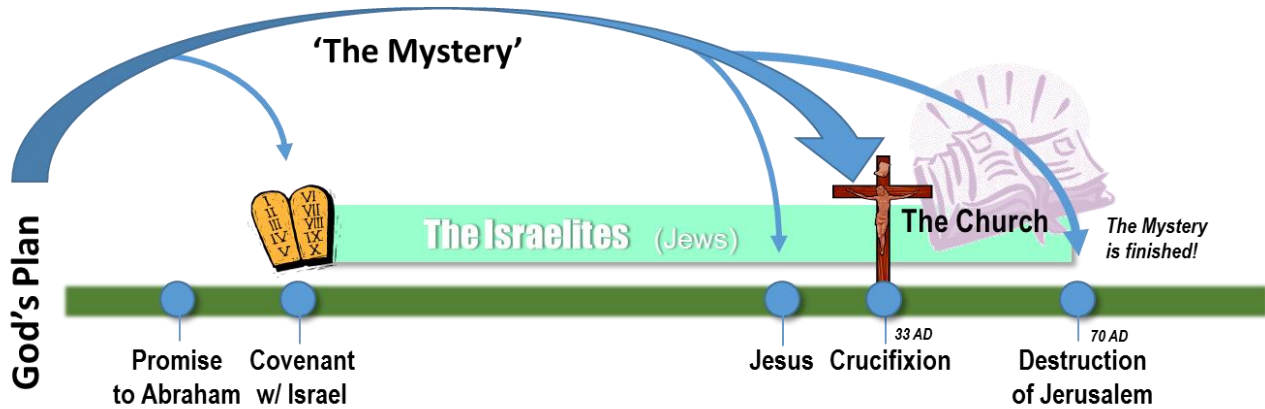
<sup>18</sup> For accounts of Jews persecuting the church see: Acts 9:23; 9:29; 12:3; 13:45; 13:50; 14:2; 14:5; 14:19; 17:5; 17:13; 20:3,19; 21:27; 23:12; 24:9; 25:2,7

<sup>19</sup> Chilton, pg 40

<sup>20</sup> Chilton, pg 6

<sup>21</sup> Kik, *Matthew Twenty-Four*, 25-26

- v. This is the theme of the book of Revelation. God is going to avenge the death of all the prophets, the death of His Son, and the deaths of the Christians. He will do this by bringing His wrath upon the Jews – the ones guilty for all their murders. The physical nation of Israel will come to an end. At this time the mystery is pronounced as finished.



## The Promised Destruction of Jerusalem

1. Matthew 24 records the promise of Jesus that Jerusalem will fall and the temple will be destroyed.<sup>22</sup>

*Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. 2 And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."<sup>23</sup> (24:1, 2)*

- a. As already discussed, this judgment is a result of Israel's rejection of God.
  - i. All of Matthew 24 speaks of the coming judgment upon Israel. This would be a local event and not a universal event.
  - ii. The key to understanding this chapter is in understanding the time of its fulfillment.
- b. The disciples of Jesus understand that the fall of the temple meant the coming end of the Jewish age. Thus, they ask three questions in regards to this event:

*As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3)*

- i. "When will these things happen?" The answer:
 

*"Truly I say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until all these things take place."* (Matthew 24:34)

<sup>22</sup> Parallel accounts are given in Mark 13:1-37 and Luke 21:5-36

<sup>23</sup> Matthew 24:1, 2

- ii. “What will be the sign of Your coming?” They assumed that He would be the one coming in judgment against Israel.
- iii. “What will be the sign of the end of the age?” Also, they correctly realize that for the temple to fall, then all of Jerusalem had to fall. This meant that the end of the Jewish age was at hand.<sup>24</sup>

c. End of the ages:

- i. The term literally means the ‘consummation of the ages’.

*Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the **ends of the ages** have come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)*

*But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the **end of the ages** to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Hebrews 9:26)*

- ii. Again, the end of the Jewish age was a result of their rejection of Jesus:

*And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. <sup>24</sup> “Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.” (Matthew 11:23-24)*

*For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, <sup>44</sup> and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because **you did not recognize the time of your visitation.**” (Luke 19:43-44)*

*“Therefore I say to you, the **kingdom** of God will be **taken away from you** and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. <sup>44</sup> “And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.” (Matthew 21:43, 43)*

2. Old Testament judgment language is used in this chapter and must be recognized:

- a. The sun being darkened, a dark moon, and stars falling<sup>25</sup>:
  - i. This language figuratively speaks of the fall of a king, or a city, and even an entire nation.
  - ii. It was used in speaking of Babylon’s judgment – Isaiah 13:10, 13, 19-20
  - iii. It was used in speaking of Edom’s judgment – Isaiah 34:3-6
  - iv. Remember, Jesus says, “*Truly I say to you, this generation<sup>26</sup> will not pass away until all these things take place.*” (Matthew 24:34)
- b. The Son of Man coming on the clouds
  - i. God came on the clouds in judgment against Egypt – Isaiah 19:1-4
  - ii. This language is used of God coming in judgment against Judah – Jeremiah 4:13

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<sup>24</sup> “Basically the discourse is about God’s judgment on Jerusalem, on the temple, and on the Jewish leaders.... It is thus primarily not about the end of the world, but the end of a world – the world of early Judaism as a temple centered faith.” (Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 340)

<sup>25</sup> For more examples of this language see Amos 8:9; Ezekiel 32:7-8; Jeremiah 4:23-28; Joel 3:15-16

<sup>26</sup> The word *generation* comes from the Greek word *genea* and is defined by Bauer's Lexicon as “the sum total of those born at the same time, expanded to include all those living at a given time” (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*; BDAG); It is clear that Jesus meant the current generation of people would see these things happen.

- iii. The Psalms use similar language of judgment – Psalm 97:2-3; 104:3
- iv. The promise to Caiaphas – Matthew 26:64
- v. This coming of the Son of Man was promised to occur in their life time – Matthew 16:28
- vi. Remember, Jesus says, “*Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.*” (Matthew 24:34)
- vii. Both Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation contain similar Old Testament language which is used to speak of the coming judgment against Israel.<sup>27</sup> The student must be familiar with the language of the Old Testament if they wish to correctly understand the Revelation.

## Introduction Summary

### 1. Basic Information

- A. The **Author**: John, the apostle (1:1-2).
- B. The **Place**: John was on the island of Patmos (1:9), most likely exiled there.
- C. The **Date**: 68, 69 AD (pre-destruction of Jerusalem).
- D. The **Title**: Revelation, (*apokalupsis*) meaning *uncovering*, or *unveiling*.
- E. The **Recipients**: The seven churches are identified as the specific recipients (1:4).

### 2. The Purpose of the Book

- A. To reveal things which shortly must take place (1:1).
- B. Specifically, to outline the coming **judgment** on Jerusalem, who is referred to as the *Babylon the harlot* (17:6), for persecuting God’s people and killing His Son.
- C. To encourage the Christians who were undergoing a severe persecution by assuring them that there was victory even in death, and that their deaths would soon be avenged.
- D. To assure blessings from Christ to those who **overcome** (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5; 12, 21).

### 3. Outline of the Book

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| A. Introduction and vision of Christ     | 1:1-20     |
| B. Letters to the seven churches of Asia | 2:1- 3:22  |
| C. Throne scene and sealed book          | 4:1-5:14   |
| D. Opening of the seven seals            | 6:1-8:1    |
| E. The seven trumpets                    | 8:2-11:19  |
| F. The great battle with Satan           | 12:1-14:20 |
| G. The seven bowls of wrath              | 15:1-16:21 |
| H. The fall of Babylon, the great harlot | 17:1-19:10 |
| I. The new Jerusalem                     | 20:1-22:5  |
| J. Conclusion                            | 22:6-21    |

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<sup>27</sup> Revelation's dependence upon the language and imagery of Ezekiel has long been recognized; one scholar has found in Revelation no less than 130 separate references to Ezekiel. [see Albert Vanhoye, "L'utilisation du Livre d'Ezechie1 dans l'Apocalypse," *Biblica* (1962), pp. 436-76].