

Date of Writing for the Apocalypse

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(Excerpt from Revelation Survey & Research)

The Syriac Peshitto affirms a pre-70 date for its composition when it states on its title page, "*The Revelation, which was made by God to John the Evangelist, in the Island of Patmos, to which he was banished by Nero the Emperor.*" See the photocopy of this Syriac title page statement at the end of this Introduction. Nero died in AD 68, so it must have been written before that time, since prisoners banished by Nero would have been released after his death. In order for the letter to have any real advantage to the Christians of Asia it needed to be delivered before Vespasian came through the area (AD 67), as well as before the war even began (AD 66), since the Romans would have plundered the Christians along with the diaspora Jews after the war broke out (AD 66). The book certainly seems to anticipate the outbreak of the war in AD 66 in the section which John is told was still future, but about to happen.

Internal evidence dates the Apocalypse before the destruction of Jerusalem, Rev. 10:11. "You must proclaim God's Word before many people, many nations, many kings." If John indeed wrote as early as 66 A.D. he could have accomplished his task. He would have been able to preach during the reign of Galba, 68 A.D. Otho, 69 A.D. Vitellius, 69 A.D. Vespasian, 69-79 A.D. Titus, 79-81 A.D. Domitian 81-96 A.D. But if, as tradition holds, and John wrote the book late in 96 A.D., we have a problem. First, tradition also says that John died in 96 A.D. Second, he could not have accomplished his task of preaching before many kings.

A late date would deny the proper application of spiritual symbols. If John saw the temple standing, and if written in 96 after the temple was destroyed, it would lead to the restoration of Israel and Judaism. Such an idea is not in keeping with the prophetic scriptures.

A late date denies a complete Gospel unto salvation. John said, "When the seventh angel has sounded then the mystery of God will be completed," Rev. 10:7. (NAS) No other conclusion can be reached respecting the mystery of God than what the Holy Scriptures teach. The mystery is the Gospel of Christ, Eph. 3:3; 4:9; Col. 1:26; 4:3; Rom. 11:25; 16:25. (NAS)

Rev. 11:1,2 sets forth the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. Now notice the parallel in Zech. 14:2, "I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women raped, and the city exiled." There can be no question as to the time this should occur, it is to occur shortly after the Shepherd scatters his sheep, Zech. 13:7-9. Jesus quoted from this passage in Matt. 26:31.

Rev. 11:2 is parallel with Malachi 4:1-3. In Malachi a day of the Lord is seen when He will burn the chaff, the apostate, He will set them ablaze, and the wicked shall be tread down. Both are parallel with Christ foretelling the burning of apostate Israel at the end of the world, Matt. 13:40,49. (KJV) Notice this burning was to be done at the end of the world. But when is the end of the world? Paul says the Messiah died at the end of the world, Heb. 9:26. "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself \ (NAS).

I submit to you that the end of the world in Matt 13:40,49 (KJV) and Heb. 9:26 is one and the same time, the time when the Messiah was put to death.

The coming of Christ is introduced in Revelation 1, and flows through chapter 22, with the warning "Behold I come quickly." Rev. 1:7 depicts the Lord coming on the clouds, and says that those who pierced his side would see him, and that the tribes would mourn. Verse 7 is quoted from Zech. 12:10, and are the very words spoken by Christ to Caiaphas the high priest in Matt. 26:64.

The description of our Lord's coming in Matt. 16:27,28; 23:34-39; 24:30-31 are parallel with Daniel 9:24- 27. To the apostles the Messiah makes it very clear that his coming will be during their own generation, "But whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next, for truly I say to you, you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of man comes," Matt.

10:23

The coming of Christ in a progressive judgment against apostate Israel was imminent, near at hand. Christ was coming to recompense the wicked for their persecution of himself, and that of the church. Notice the word used in Matt. 16:27, "And the Son of man is going to come." The English word shall is rendered in the Greek text as *mello*, and it means "is about to come." *Thayer Greek and English Lexicon*, p. 396

Thus in Matt. 16:27, the Messiah is telling his disciples that He is about to come. And the next verse confirms it; "truly I say to you, that some of you standing here shall not taste of death until the Son of man comes in his kingdom." Some of those He spoke to would be alive when He came back. Now, either He came back, or we have some people somewhere in the world waiting for the return of Christ who are almost two thousand years old!

This coming was one of progressive judgments, and is parallel with the Lord's coming in Gen. 3, when Adam and Eve were judged for their transgression. It also parallels the Lord's coming in Genesis chapter 18, when He came in judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah, It parallels the Lord's coming to Egypt during the exodus, Ex. 3:8, and Isa. 5:25; 10:5-11; Joel 2:1; Zeph. 1:1-18, 14:5.

Of the coming of Christ in Rev. 1:7, Adam Clarke states, "This relates to his coming to execute judgment on the enemies of his church, and perhaps to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, as He was particularly manifested to them that pierced his side, which must mean the incredulous and rebellious Jews." [*Commentary on Revelation*. 1844 ed. Vol. 6, pp. 970-971]