

# Understanding the Book of Revelation

## Introduction

Revelation is a confusing book to most people despite the many commentaries written. The reason most commentaries fail to enlighten the book's contents is because they violate one or more of the three basic principles of sound biblical interpretation. These are the following: 1) acceptance of the Scriptures as God-breathed ([θεόπνευστος](#)), 2) correct placement of the text within the framework of God's progressive revelation, and 3) sound and consistent hermeneutic or interpretative method.

The first word of the book is "revelation" ([ἀποκάλυψις](#))—hence its title. The word means to "unveil," or "reveal." The first phrase of the book is (Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) "Revelation of Jesus Christ." The "revelation of Jesus Christ" should be interpreted as both a subjective and an objective genitive. The book reveals Jesus Christ, the God of the Bible, in His role during the Tribulation and as King of Kings (subjective genitive) and is the revelation from Jesus about the events that will transpire during the Tribulation and afterwards (objective genitive).

God wishes us to understand His Word (cf. Revelation 1.3). The goal of this study is to reveal to whom the book was written and the purpose of the book.

## Summary

Title	The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1.1).
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Meaning	“Revelation” ( <a href="#">ἀποκάλυψις</a> ) means “disclose,” “unveil,” “reveal.” Subjective and objective genitive: Christ is revealed and He reveals things to come.
Message	Overcoming ( <a href="#">νικάω</a> ) in the Day of the Lord (Revelation 2.7, 11, 17, 26, 3.5, 12, 21, 21.7)
Author	The Apostle John (Revelation 1.1, 4, 9)
Location	Written from the isle of Patmos (Revelation 1.9)
Occasion	The Day of the Lord: ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ (Revelation 1.10)
Audience	Seven Jewish assemblies in Asia Minor (Turkey) (Revelation 1.4, 6, 22.16)
Literature	Prophetic with many symbolic expressions, i.e., Lamb, Beast, etc.
Hermeneutic	Normal reading and literal interpretation. Symbols have literal antecedents, many of which are found in writings of the prophets.
Date	About 50-55 A.D. <sup>1</sup>

## Interpretative Schools

Four Major Interpretative Schools	
Preterist	Events were fulfilled by 70 A.D.
Historical	Events were fulfilled throughout history
Idealist	Events symbolize the battle of good vs. evil
Futurist	Events remain future

Preterist and Historical schools of interpretation face insurmountable obstacles in identifying events described in Revelation with events in history. To overcome these obstacles they imagineer passages and interpret them in a figurative manner. Under such a system the text can mean almost anything the interpreter wishes. This weakness was summarized by E. W. Bullinger:

*"The historical interpreters differ so much among themselves that we may well ask, 'Which one of them are we to believe?' It is this very diversity which has caused so many earnest students to put the Apocalypse aside in despair."<sup>2</sup>*

An example of such confusion is the teaching that the seven "churches" represent successive stages of Church history. This is represented by charts similar to the one below:



While this interpretation is widespread in Christendom, it has no Scriptural basis. It is fantasy. The seven "churches" in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation are Jewish assemblies, not Christian churches. The language associated with them is wholly Jewish; no Pauline or Church language is present. Everything the Lord said was associated with Israel and concerned God's judgment and how to obtain salvation during those seven years.

The Idealist school suffers from similar inadequacies. It is so broad and general in approach that it cannot provide helpful insight into the meaning of the events in the book other than to say that forces of good are at war with the forces of evil and that good will conquer evil.

For serious students of the Scriptures, only one interpretive school has hermeneutical rigor and merit: the Futurist. This method alone can integrate and interpret consistently the hundreds of Old Testament prophecies and the words of our Lord concerning end-time events (cf. Matthew 24).

## Interpretive Methods

Another essential factor in understanding Revelation is its method of interpretation. Those who engage in a figurative hermeneutic wrestle the text into almost any shape they wish.

For example, most who take a figurative approach of interpretation declare the two witnesses of Revelation 11 are the Church. This is pure imagination. Nothing in the context of the passage would lead to this conclusion. A normal reading of the text is that the two witnesses are just that, two witnesses, i.e., two men whom God will use during those days.

Much of the language in Revelation is figurative or symbolic. So are passages in Isaiah. Isaiah wrote, "all flesh is grass." Did he mean skin is bermuda, zoysia, or fescue? Everyone recognizes Isaiah was using a figure of speech to communicate our bodies are mortal. The literal point remains: life ends, we die. The text will usually indicate when a passage is a figure of speech by its context or the use of "like" or "as." In other cases, when symbolic language is used, one can understand the literal sense behind the symbol. In Revelation, we know the Lamb is Christ. We know the Beast is the Antichrist, the one who comes in the place of Christ and opposes Him. This is straightforward. In the same way, who are the two witnesses? The most natural interpretation is the two witnesses are two men God has commissioned as servants to reveal Him and oppose the Antichrist. In other words, the two witnesses are two witnesses. Lastly, since Revelation is a Jewish book, many of the symbols in the text allude to events and language of the Old Testament. The meaning of such passages can be found by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

If one is open to a normal reading of the text and will allow the Scriptures to speak plainly, Revelation is quite forthright. Only when one applies a non-literal interpretive method and tries to identify events to past history or impose ideological constructs or theological presuppositions does it become complex, difficult, and unverifiable.

Structure of the Book (Governed by Groups of 7)

Introduction and the Seven Assemblies	Revelation 1-3
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Praise of God	Revelation 4
The Seven Seal Judgments	Revelation 5-6
Sealing 144,000 Jews of 12 Tribes of Israel	Revelation 7
The Seven Trumpet Judgments	Revelation 8-9
The Seven Thunders	Revelation 10
The Two Witnesses	Revelation 11
War in Heaven and Earth	Revelation 12
The Beast and the False Prophet	Revelation 13
The Six Angels and the Son of Man	Revelation 14
The Seven Bowl Judgments	Revelation 15-16
Babylon: World System of Satan	Revelation 17-18
The Return of the King	Revelation 19
The Judgment of Unbelievers	Revelation 20
The New Heavens and New Earth	Revelation 21
Concluding Words and Warnings	Revelation 22

## Audience

Everything in Revelation concerns Israel and the nations. The Tribulation is the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30.7) and God’s judgment of the nations. Paul wrote the Church, the body is Christ, would not go through the wrath of the Day of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 1.10, 5.1-9; 2 Thessalonians 2.1-15; Romans 5.9; Ephesians 5.6; Colossians 3.6). Therefore, no Church language of evidence of the Church is present in Revelation. Paul warned that those who teach the Church will go through the Tribulation were false teachers (2 Thessalonians 2.1-2).

The primary audiences of Revelation are Jews who belong to the seven [ἐκκλησίαι](#), “churches,” “assemblies,” “congregations,” etc., identified in the second and third chapters of Revelation (cf. Revelation 1.4-5). Notice each assembly did not just receive the message written to it but received the

letters of *all* the assemblies (Revelation 1.4, 2.7, etc.). Each received all the messages. Why these seven? Why are they only in Turkey? Why are none in Israel? No one knows. The best answer may be that these believers were the same Jews to whom James and Peter wrote (James 1.1; 1 Peter 1.1). Only three of the seven cities of the assemblies are mentioned outside of Revelation: Ephesus (Acts 18.19, 21, 24, 19.1, 17, 26, 35, 20.16, 17; 1 Corinthians 15.32, 16.8; Ephesians 1.1; 1 Timothy 1.3; 2 Timothy 1.18, 4.12), Thyatira (Acts 16.14), and Laodicea (Colossians 2.1, 4.13, 15, 16). The other four are not mentioned.

The three assemblies mentioned are clearly different from the churches associated with Paul's ministry. The language surrounding them is wholly Jewish and vastly different from the language Paul used in writing to members of the body of Christ. Paul's language of grace, peace, the cross, resurrection, the body of Christ, etc. does not exist in these passages. Rather, the messages are of judgment, works, repentance, overcoming, etc. Each message contains the Lord's familiar refrain "he that has an ear" from the gospels (Matthew 11.15, 13.9; Mark 4.9; Luke 8.8). Members of these assemblies were not saved by believing Paul's gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20.24; Romans 16.25; 1 Corinthians 15.1-4). Those composing the ἐκκλησίαι of Revelation were Jews who believed the gospel of the kingdom. They had believed who Christ was (Matthew 16.15-16; John 11.25-27)—in His identity.

The Lord Himself communicated to these assemblies. The allusions and symbols are Jewish and the passages read like texts from the prophets. Revelation could snap into the Biblical canon right after Zechariah or Malachi and we would think nothing of it. John wrote to those who were "kings and priests" (Revelation 1.6). Members of the Church, the body of Christ, are never described as "kings and priests." "Kings" and "priests" are designations of Jews (cf. Exodus 19.6; Matthew 19.28; 1 Peter 2.5, 9; Revelation 5.10).

The occasion or timeframe of the book is the Day of the Lord. John wrote he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day or the Day of the Lord: ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ (Revelation 1.10). Clearly, he did not mean Sunday. What John recorded were events that would fulfill the prophecies of the prophets concerning this day (Isaiah 2.12; 13.6, 9; Ezekiel 13.5, 30.3; Joel 1.15, 2.1, 11, 31; 3.14; Amos 5.18, 20; Obadiah 1.15; Zephaniah 1.7, 14; Zechariah 14.1; Malachi. 4.5 cf. Revelation 6.17; 16.14)<sup>3</sup>

The Lord communicated directly to John to them (Revelation 1.4, 11) and warned about events that would soon (τάχος) occur (Revelation 1.1, 22.6) and were "at hand" ἐγγύς (Revelation 1.3, 22.10). The word τάχος (from which we get tachometer) means either (or both) something that will happen soon or something that will happen speedily. The word ἐγγύς means to be near either (or both) in time or place.

To make their case, Preterists place enormous weight upon the terms τάχος and ἐγγύς. They argue the events recorded in Revelation occurred by 70 A.D. While difficulties exist in explaining the terms outside of the 70 A.D. framework, they are trivial compared to explaining the events within a 70 A.D. framework. Consider the following: Zephaniah wrote the Day of the LORD (the Tribulation) was near (□□□□□) in Zephaniah 1.14. The Hebrew word □□□□□ corresponds to the Greek word ἐγγύς and means near in time or place. How near was the Day of the LORD to the prophets? Zephaniah wrote in the 6th century B.C. Joel wrote that the Day of the LORD was near □□□□□ (Joel 2.1) in the 9th century B.C. So what is "near?" Near for whom? How is the problem of "near" solved? That is another story and the subject of a future article.<sup>4</sup>

## Date

Most commentators maintain Revelation was written about 95-96. Evidence for such dating is highly problematic. The primary evidence for dating Revelation during Domitian's reign (95-96)

comes from Irenaeus. But what Irenaeus meant by what he wrote is unclear. Furthermore, Irenaeus' reliability is questionable. For example, he stated Jesus was over fifty when he died (*Adversus haereses*, 2:22). Irenaeus specific quote for a late date is the following:

*"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" (Adversus haereses, 5:30:3).*

More likely, John wrote between 50-55 A.D., during the reign of Nero. Preterists maintain the events of Revelation were fulfilled by 70 A.D. So their theological position requires on early dating. Some have argued against Preterism on the basis of a later dating of the text (95-96 A.D.) but this approach is unnecessary. Prophecy is future. Revelation could easily have been written prior to 70 A.D. and have its fulfillment far in the future.

The great hurdle that exists for those who maintain the book was written late (95-96 A.D.) is no mention is made of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. To the Jew, Jerusalem and the Temple were everything. Not to mention their destruction in a book like Revelation would be like an American history text failing to mention the Civil War or WW2. J. A. T. Robinson commented on this matter in his book *Redating the New Testament*:

*One of the oddest facts about the New Testament is that what on any showing would appear to be the single most datable and climactic event of the period—the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and with it the collapse of institutional Judaism based on the temple—is never once mentioned as a past fact. It is,*



*of course, predicted; and these predictions are, in some cases at least, assumed to be written (or written up) after the event. But the silence is nevertheless as significant as the silence for Sherlock Holmes of the dog that did not bark. S.G.F. Brandon made this oddness the key to his entire interpretation of the New Testament: everything from the gospel of Mark onwards was a studied rewriting of history to suppress the truth that Jesus and the earliest Christians were identified with the revolt that failed. But the sympathies of Jesus and the Palestinian church with the Zealot cause are entirely unproven and Brandon's views have won scant scholarly credence. Yet if the silence is not studied it is very remarkable.*

James Moffatt wrote:

*We should expect . . . that an event like the fall of Jerusalem would have dented some of the literature of the primitive church, almost as the victory at Salamis has marked the Perae. It might be supposed that such an epochal-making crisis would even furnish criteria for determining the dates of some of the NT writings. As a matter of fact, the catastrophe is practically ignored in the extant Christian literature of the first century.*

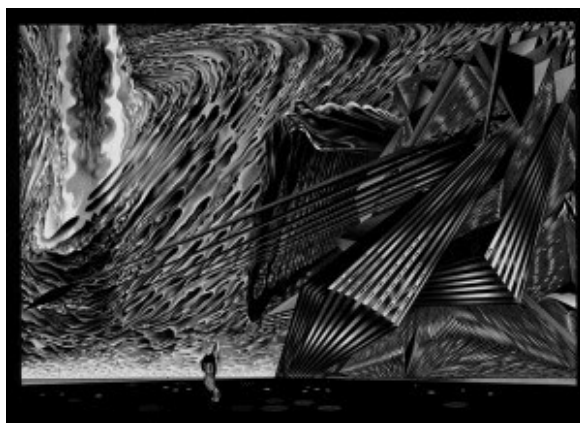
Similarly, C.F.D. Moule wrote:

*It is hard to believe that a Judaistic type of Christianity which had itself been closely involved in the cataclysm of the years leading up to A.D. 70 would not have shown the scars—or, alternatively, would not have made capital out of this signal evidence that they, and not non-Christian Judaism, were the true Israel. But in fact our traditions are silent.*

The book of Revelation is the last book of the Bible in our

canon for good reason. It is the final expression of and complement to the prophecies of the Jewish prophets. Revelation reveals the events of the Day of the LORD (Revelation 1.10; Zephaniah 1.14-18; Joel 2.1-11; Acts 2.14-21), what Jesus called the "Tribulation" (Matthew 24.21, 29) and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth.

## Theme and Purpose



Survival in the Tribulation will be almost impossible.

Jesus provided His disciples with details about the end-time and His return (Matthew 24). His chief warning to them in His Olivet discourse was that they should not be deceived ([πλανάω](#)) (Matthew 24.4, 5, 11, 24). The reason Jesus gave this warning was that deception will characterize the Day of the LORD (the Tribulation). The book of Revelation is the record of Satan's great attempt as the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4.4) to rule overtly the world he now controls behind the scenes (Matthew 4.8-9; Luke 4.5-6). Satan has manipulated the world's governments for thousands of years as a great puppet master and will finally step from behind the curtain onto the world stage in the person of the Antichrist a.k.a. "the Beast" to rule (1 John 2.18; Revelation 13.1-4). Jesus prophesied about him in John 5 and issued a chilling warning about how the Jewish people (and the world) will respond to this deceiver.

<sup>39</sup> *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;* <sup>40</sup> *and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.* <sup>41</sup> *I do not receive glory from men;* <sup>42</sup> *but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.* <sup>43</sup> *I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him (John 5.39-43).*

Jesus declared to the Jews who opposed Him that He came in His Father's name. He told them that while they refused to receive Him, they would receive "another" who would come in his own name. This will be Satan's man, the Antichrist, the Beast (cf. John 5.43).

## A Guide For Survival

Revelation is a survival manual. Beyond revealing the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the events that will transpire until His return, its primary purpose is a survival guide. In His Olivet message, Jesus declared the Tribulation period would be a time of extraordinary deceit. This deception will be to such a degree that even believers may be deceived:

<sup>24</sup> *For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.* <sup>25</sup> *Behold, I have told you in advance (Matthew 24.24-25).*

Jesus made it clear that this period of time will also be a time of unprecedented distress:

<sup>9</sup> *Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.* <sup>10</sup> *At that time many will fall away and will betray one*

*another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup> Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. <sup>12</sup> Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. <sup>14</sup> This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24.9-14).*

The Lord warned His disciples of coming tribulation with death and hatred because of Him. People (believers included?) will abandon the faith and betray and hate one another. False prophets will be everywhere and crime rampant. Jesus warned, “the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.” This is a key phrase and has reference to what the Lord told John to write to the Jewish assemblies about “overcoming.” The gospel of the kingdom will reach the entire world and then the end (the return of the King) will come. Finally, each address to these assemblies includes the words, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 2.7, 11, 17, 29, 3.6, 13, 22). This mirrors the seven times Jesus spoke these words in the Gospels (Luke 8.8; Matthew 11.15, 13.9, 43; Mark 4.23, 7.16; Luke 14.35). The eighth usage of this adage occurs in Revelation 13.9. The significance of this occurrence is that it sums up the earlier seven warnings and explains these warnings concern the worship of the Beast and the Dragon (Satan) who empowers him.

The words Jesus gave His disciples about enduring to end is the central message to the seven Jewish assemblies in Revelation.

Assembly	Message: Overcome ( <a href="#">νικῶ</a> )
Ephesus	<b>To him who overcomes</b> , I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God (Revelation 2.7).

Smyrna	<b>He who overcomes</b> will not be hurt by the second death (Revelation 2.11).
Pergamum	<b>To him who overcomes</b> , to him I will give <i>some</i> of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it (Revelation 2.17).
Thyatira	<sup>26</sup> <b>He who overcomes</b> , and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; <sup>27</sup> AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received <i>authority</i> from My Father; <sup>28</sup> and I will give him the morning star (Revelation 2.26-28).
Sardis	<b>He who overcomes</b> will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels (Revelation 3.5).
Philadelphia	<b>He who overcomes</b> , I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name (Revelation 3.12).
Laodicea	<b>He who overcomes</b> , I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne (Revelation 3.21).

The message Jesus gave to the members of each assembly was a message of salvation, i.e., “eat of the tree of life,” “not hurt by the second death,” etc. Nothing in Jesus’ words indicate that the members of these assemblies had salvation as a present possession. He said, “I will grant/give” ([δύσω](#)—future active indicative) salvation to those who “overcome.” Such language is entirely different from Paul’s teaching that believers “have” salvation as a present

possession on the basis of believing his gospel (cf. 1 Corinthians 15.1-4; Ephesians 1.7; Colossians 1.13-14). For those whom Jesus addressed in Revelation 2-3, salvation is based upon “overcoming.” If they “overcome” they will (future tense) be saved.



La Bête de la Mer (from the Tapisserie de l'Apocalypse in Angers, France). This detail shows the False Prophet, the Dragon, and the Beast of the Sea.

What constitutes “overcoming” (νικᾶω) to obtain salvation? The challenge for the generation in which these events will occur will be a choice: to trust the true Christ or embrace the false Christ. Jesus warned of the tremendous pressure that will be exerted to earth’s inhabitants to worship and identify with the false Christ. John witnessed that “all who dwell upon the earth will worship him” (Revelation 13.8) and that none can buy or sell without accepting his identifying mark (Revelation 13.16-17). Worship of and accepting the Antichrist’s mark will constitute a rejection of Christ and seal one’s eternal doom (Revelation 14.9-11). Such language presents an impossible hurdle for preterists and historicists since this has never happened. It remains future.

The “enduring until the end” of which Jesus spoke referred to one of two outcomes: the end of a person’s life—being executed

for not worshiping the Antichrist and accepting his mark—or Christ's return at the end of the Tribulation. The one who endures to the end is the one who overcomes. By "saved" Jesus meant both eternal salvation and physical salvation.

Another thing to note from the Matthew 24 passage is that the "gospel of the kingdom" will be preached during the end time. This gospel was the good news John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Twelve proclaimed: that Christ was the Messiah-King. It declared the King and His kingdom were near (Matthew 3.3, 4.17, 23, 9.35). Under the kingdom gospel one was saved by believing Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God (Matthew 16.15-16; John 11.26-27). This gospel will be revived and preached again during the Tribulation period. Believing Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, means one will reject the Beast, the Antichrist as God—worshiping and taking his mark.

## Conclusion

The book of Revelation serves strategic and tactical purposes. The strategic purpose is to reveal Christ, His return, the setting up of His kingdom, the defeat of Satan, and the establishment of the eternal state (new heavens and new earth). The tactical purpose, which is most of the book, is to reveal the horrors of the Tribulation and how one can be saved in the midst of tremendous deception and pressure.

<sup>1</sup> Dating is based on several factors. The most explicit statement for the dating of the book is Colossians 1.25. Paul wrote that God gave him the job of completing the Scriptures. Since Paul died around 67-68 A.D., it means 2 Timothy was the last book written. This eliminates the prevalent idea that Revelation was written in the 90s. John thought the coming of Christ was near (Revelation 1.1) as did Peter (Acts 2.16-21), as did Paul. Paul thought the Rapture would occur in his lifetime and the Day of the Lord would follow shortly. While the stoning of Stephen was the crisis point for national Israel, God let Israel's rejection run its course for 40 years

(the biblical time of testing) until Titus destroyed Jerusalem (70 A.D.). Had Israel repented, the Tribulation would have occurred during the reign of Nero, who would have fulfilled the requirements of the Antichrist. One of the cities John addressed was Laodicea, which was destroyed (along with Colossae and Heiropolis) in the mid-60s A.D. This would seem to indicate he wrote before then. Paul mentioned believers in both of these cities in his letter to the Colossians, but neither Colossae or Heirapolis is mentioned in Revelation. About 60 A.D., Paul made his last appeal to Israel (Acts 28). In 51 A.D., the Jerusalem Council agreed Paul's gospel was the only valid gospel from then onward. Thus, this meeting marked the end of the gospel of the kingdom proclaimed by the Twelve (Acts 15.11, cf. Galatians 1.6-9). John wrote of future events, which would indicate before Nero, who reigned from 54-68 A.D. What he wrote would have had to be before or within his reign, i.e., probably before 54 and before Laodicea was destroyed. John gave no indication of the decision of the Jerusalem Council. He recorded the words of Jesus that salvation was based upon "overcoming" (νικᾶω, cf. Matthew 24.13-14), through the gospel of the kingdom, not Paul's gospel of grace. No Church, body of Christ, doctrine exists in Revelation or doctrines proclaimed by Paul. This seems to indicate John wrote Revelation before Pauline doctrine was assimilated (cf. 2 Peter 3.14-16). Lastly, is the matter of the Temple, destroyed in 70 A.D., discussed above.

<sup>2</sup> E.W. Bullinger, [\*Commentary on Revelation\*](#), p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> The predominant view is the that "Lord's day" referred to Sunday. However, a strong minority view has favored that the phrase meant the "day of the Lord" or the "day of Yahwe," cf. Revelation 6.17, 16.14 (*Encyclopedia Biblica*, s.v. "Lord's Day"). J. A. Seiss wrote: He says he "was in Spirit in the Lord's day," in which he beheld what he afterward wrote. What is meant by this Lord's day? Some answer, Sunday—the first day of the week; but I am not satisfied with this explanation. Sunday belongs indeed to the Lord, but the Scriptures nowhere



call it "the Lord's day." None of the Christian writings, for 100 years after Christ, ever call it "the Lord's day." But there is a "Day of the Lord" largely treated by prophets, apostles, and fathers, the meaning of which is abundantly clear and settled. It is that day in which, Isaiah says, men shall hide in the rocks for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty;—the day which Joel describes as the day of destruction from the Almighty, when the Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake;—the day to which the closing chapter of Malachi refers as the day that shall burn as an oven, and in which the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings;—the day which Paul proclaimed from Mars' Hill as that in which God will judge the world, concerning which he so earnestly exhorted the Thessalonians, and which was not to come until after a great apostasy from the faith, and the ripening of the wicked for destruction;—the day in the which, Peter says, the heavens shall be changed, the elements melt, the earth burn, and all present orders of things give way to new heavens and a new earth;—even "the day for which all other days were made." And in that day I understand John to say, he in some sense was. In the mysteries of prophetic rapport, which the Scriptures describe as "in Spirit," and which Paul declared inexplicable, he was caught out of himself, and out of his proper place and time, and stationed amid the stupendous scenes of the great day of God, and made to see the actors in them, and to look upon them transpiring before his eyes, that he might write what he saw, and give it to the Churches. This is what I understand by his being "in Spirit in the Lord's day." I can see no essential difference between ἡ Κυριακή ἡμέρα—the Lord's day, and ἡ ἡμέρα Κυρίου—the day of the Lord. They are simply the two forms for signifying the same relations of the same things" (J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*). A good study of the subject is Ranko Stefanovic's ["The Lord's Day" of Revelation 1:10 in the Current Debate](#), *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 2, 2011, pp.

261-284.

<sup>4</sup> See the author's study, [How "Near" is the Day of the Lord?](#)

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