

# AN INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

## PART 3: WHAT IS THE BOOK OF REVELATION ALL ABOUT?

We must interpret the book of Revelation in harmony with what it says about itself: that it concerned "things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1). We must also take into account that those words were written prior to AD 70 (as were all New Testament Scriptures). These are important things to remember when trying to figure out what the book is all about.

### IT IS A REVEALING OF IMMINENT EVENTS

- *Revelation* means "an uncovering" or "an unveiling."
- In this book, Jesus was revealing "things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1).
- So, this book, written in the mid-60s AD spoke about things which were "at hand" (1:3) when John first wrote it.
  - John the Baptizer said "the kingdom of God is at hand" when it was around 3½ years away.
  - It would be truly stretching the words of the Scripture to place the fulfillment of these prophecies any more than a generation away from when it was written.

Other Notes:

---

---

Question:

1. When is the latest possible date you think the events in Revelation could be fulfilled and still be "shortly come to pass" and "at hand"? \_\_\_\_\_

### IT IS A DESCRIPTION OF A COMING JUDGMENT

- Isaiah 19:1-4 describes God's coming "on a swift cloud" to overthrow Egypt.
- Matthew 24:29-30 describes Jesus coming in the clouds in judgment upon Jerusalem.
- Revelation 1:7 describes a "coming with clouds" as well.
- So the book of Revelation is about a judgment that was imminent when John wrote in the mid-60's AD.

Other Notes:

---

---

## IT WOULD CAUSE THE JEWS TO MOURN

- "All kindreds of the earth shall wail..." (Revelation 1:7) is the exact same words in Greek as in Matthew 24:30, "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn."
- In Matthew, Jesus is speaking of the tribes of Israel who would mourn because of the destruction of Jerusalem.
  - The exact same phrase should have the exact same meaning.
- The book of Revelation is about a judgment that was imminent which would cause the Jews to mourn or wail.

Other Notes:

---

---

Question:

1. What city's destruction (which took place near to when the book was written) do you think would cause the Jews to mourn? \_\_\_\_\_

## IT DESCRIBES THE OVERTHROW OF A CITY

- The Harlot is the one being judged in this book (17:1).
- The Harlot is a city (17:18).
- The Harlot is identified as "the great city" (17:18).
  - This "Great City" was introduced and identified in 11:8 as "that great city which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."
  - Jerusalem was called Sodom in the Old Testament (Isaiah 1:9, Jeremiah 23:14, Ezekiel 16:46-56).
  - Jerusalem was the city in which Jesus died (Luke 13:33).
- The Book of Revelation is about a coming judgment upon a city, the overthrow of which would cause the Jews to mourn.

Other Notes:

---

---

Question:

1. What does the phrase "kings of the earth" mean as the early Christians used it in Acts 4:26-27? \_\_\_\_\_

## **IT DESCRIBES GOD AVENGING THE BLOOD OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS**

- Revelation 18:20-21 – The holy apostles and prophets were avenged when the city (the Harlot, called Babylon) was destroyed violently.
- Revelation 18:24 – This city was guilty of the blood of prophets, saints, and all that were slain upon the earth [or upon the land].
- Matthew 23:34-36 – Jesus said the blood of the prophets and all the righteous would be upon the city of Jerusalem in that generation.
- Matthew 23:37 – Jesus said Jerusalem was guilty of killing the prophets and the "ones sent" [Greek, apostles] to them.

Questions:

1. What city did Jesus say was guilty of murdering the apostles, prophets, and all the righteous? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What city would need to be destroyed in order to avenge the blood of the apostles, prophets, and all the righteous? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What city was judged by God shortly after Revelation was written, and its destruction caused the Jews everywhere to mourn? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the book of Revelation about? \_\_\_\_\_

Other Notes:

---

---

---

## **IT DESCRIBES THE FULL REVEALING OF THE CHURCH AS GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE.**

- The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was the very visible end to the Old Testament system.
  - God has made it physically impossible for anyone to follow the Law of Moses.
- Though the church existed since Pentecost, AD 30, it was still viewed by many as a sect of Judaism (Acts 24:5, 28:22).
- When the Old (physical) Jerusalem was destroyed, the New (spiritual) Jerusalem shined forth as the glorious dwelling place of God.
  - This is seen in the book of Revelation after the judgment scene in chapter 20.
  - No longer could anyone say that God could be accessed through Old Jerusalem.
  - God can only be accessed by being in the New Jerusalem – the Church

Other Notes:

---



---



---

Questions:

1. In what ways did God make it impossible for anyone to follow the Law of Moses after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Should the destruction of Jerusalem have proven to any honest person that the Jews were no longer God's chosen people? \_\_\_\_\_

## BONUS MATERIAL

The following is a timeline of sorts, comparing Israel to the church. A type, perhaps?

Israel	Time period	The Church
Passover memorial instituted		Lord's Supper instituted
Passover occurs	<b>Days later</b>	Death of Christ occurs
Law of Moses given, physical Israel is a nation.	<b>50 days later</b>	Law of Christ given (Acts 2), the church (spiritual Israel) is a nation
A fully established and fully revealed nation	<b>40 years later</b>	A fully established and fully revealed nation

A comparison of Matthew 23:34-39 with Revelation 18:20-19:2

Jerusalem (Matthew 23:34-39)	Babylon (Revelation 18:20-19:2)
Apostles and prophets killed by her (23:34, 37)	Apostles and prophets killed by her (18:20, 24)
Blood of the apostles, prophets, and the righteous would be required on her (23:35)	Blood of the apostles, prophets, and the righteous was avenged by God on her (18:20, 19:2)
Guilty of ALL the blood of the righteous (23:34)	Guilty of ALL the blood of the righteous (18:24).
Their dwelling shall be left desolate (23:38)	The city is desolate (18:21-22)
Would come on "this generation" (23:36)	Happened "shortly" after the book was written (22:6, 10).