

# What Time Is It?

Central to the discussion of Eschatology, or the End Times, is the question, What Time is it? By that, we mean, where in the sequence of events relating to the things prophesied in Scripture are we. Which events are fulfilled, which are not, and where should we see ourselves on the time-line of those things.

While there may be disagreements, it is in rightly identifying the correct markers in Scripture, identifying which are past, which are not. This task, while it may take some time to establish itself, is possible, and fruitful, that we might know the times in which we live.

As we study the prophecies of Scripture, especially Daniel and Revelation, it can become easy to get lost in the mass of material, and become overwhelmed. Realizing, however, that Daniel's revelatory portion consists merely of five major encounters over six chapters, and that the actual number of symbols in each of these is relatively few, helps us cope with the grasping of the points. Revelation, too, is a simple straight-forward approach, with several symbols, but once those symbols begin to be identified and we familiarize ourselves with them, the cloudiness wears off.

But, in the book of Daniel, in Daniel 2, the main point of the prophecy is that of the coming Kingdom (Daniel 2:44). The disciple of Jesus must then ask regarding the Gospels, "Is this the Kingdom we were expecting, or should we look for another?" Honestly, when all is told, the question is certainly most laughable, if it were not so pertinent and important, and seemingly so misunderstood. Most certainly, yes, the Kingdom of the Gospels is the same Kingdom as in Daniel 2! In the time of those kings, the kings of the fourth kingdom, God "set up" a Kingdom. Now, even if you consider that kingdom to be only a mustard seed, the "setting up" of a tree is when you plant it, not three years later when it creates some shade or produces fruit. No, the Kingdom that always was was finally "set up" upon the Earth. Not created then, but finally here.

Now, the ramifications of this mean that Daniel 2 is completely fulfilled. This is the case, as the only interpretation that works is when all four materials of the statue are broken together. Since the four empires, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome, which this statue represent, are all broken from the Earth and do no longer exist in any form in the world today, whatever it is that broke them is obviously the Kingdom. Looking briefly at history, the only thing we see in that time period is the church, and hence the Kingdom of God. Since the head, the chest, and the waist are all completely destroyed, as they are no longer in the Earth, no other explanation, not even a revived Rome, could ever fulfill the vision. The Babylon that Nebuchadnezzar built is destroyed, as are the rest of it, at the beginning of the Middle Ages.

So, this brings us to the next important point. In another study, we looked at the interpretation of Matthew 24, and how it proves to point to two separate events at two separate times. There was the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, completely fulfilled, and the Second Coming in vv29-31, which hasn't been.<sup>1</sup>

We see that the Great Tribulation, spoken of in Matthew 24 is already past, and correlated to Daniel 12. Daniel 11 was seen to start in antiquity, and vv40-43 depict the battle of Actium at the beginning of the fourth empire of Daniel 2, Rome, with its first emperor, Caesar Augustus. This leads us to the book of Revelation.

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<sup>1</sup> See the document [The Olivet Discourse \(Matthew 24\)](#) for the full explanation of this division.

Now, while many have vary different approaches to Revelation, we have to understand what has happened in the book of Daniel first. Seeing that all of Daniel lead up to chapter 12, and chapter 12 talked about the Great Tribulation that occurred in 70 AD, we now see that Revelation is poised to lead us further.

In the study of the beast of Revelation 17, we see the explanation of the seven horns of the beast. We see that John says that five were, one is, and one will come and remain a short while. An eight, part of the seven, will come later, and he is the beast that was in the pit, and will come out, and go to the lake of fire.

A simple history lesson will enlighten this discussion. The five kings before, starting with Caesar Augustus, ended with Nero, who killed himself with a self inflicted head wound (a sword to the neck). The king alive at the writing of the book of Revelation was Vespasian, who was in charge of the siege of Rome at the time of Nero's death. This overlooks, obviously, the three short-lived emperors, who reigned less than a year, in what was known as the "year of the four emperors". These were not counted among the seven, possibly because they did not reign in Judea.

But, after Vespasian, his son Titus ruled for the space of two years and three months. After him, another of Vespasian's sons ruled, Domitian. But, this was no ordinary emperor. He was first of all the second emperor to readily persecute Christians (the other being Nero). He demanded emperor worship, and was actually called by many a "beast". He had a statue erected of himself in Ephesus, and was considered by many to be Nero back from the dead, hence the beast that was, is not, and will be, the beast that went into the pit, and was coming back out.

It is the line of kings in Revelation 17, and the correlation of the other facts of Domitian's reign to Revelation 13 that securely identify Domitian as the beast of Revelation. As we begin to bring these facts into focus, we see more clearly that the seals and trumpets of Revelation, leading up to chapter 11 are all pointing to the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of Rome. This becomes more clear as we look at the details, but it should be enough to accept it on a general timeline, once we establish Domitian's reign ending in 96 AD as Revelation 13. Further, Revelation 12's flight of the woman into the desert describes perfectly what happened to the first church. On heeding Jesus' warnings about Jerusalem surrounded by armies, they fled to a city called Pella, and were saved from the Great Tribulation. The dragon, satan, hated them, but they were helped and protected.

Reading on, in Revelation 14, we read of the 144,000 once again, and they are called the firstfruits. Indeed, after the persecution of Domitian ended at his death in 96 AD, it was at this time that the first generation of the church was just about done in passing the torch onto the next generation. Those first believers were all falling asleep, having known the first apostles, and now, the seed was passed onto the next generation. Towards the end of this chapter, we read of one of the other great tragedies of the Jewish People. As the first destruction of the first Jewish Revolt of 70 AD was culminated in Revelation 11, so the Second Jewish revolt is seen in the imagery of the Wine Press of His Wrath. A false Messiah led the people, and their last stand was in the city of Betar, just outside the city. When it fell, over 500,000 Jews were slaughtered by the Romans, and the people were dispersed and scattered, banned from Jerusalem. Of that time, the Jewish Talmud records the following phrase, "Horses sank up until their nostrils and the rivers of blood lifted up rocks weighing forty se'ah and flowed into the sea where its stain was noticeable for a distance of four mil.", nearly a direct quote from what was prophesied in Revelation 14:20, other than the specific distance (various explanations could be given for the exact discrepancy in the distance, for perhaps they were indicating different things, but still, the similarity is hard to ignore).

Following this time, Rome still ruled over the land, and Christians experienced ten periods of distinct persecution at the hands of Roman Emperors, according to Foxxe's book of Martyrs. But, the time of the justice of God had come about, finally, in Revelation 15, and we see that the bowls of wrath intended to break the scourge of the Daniel 2 statue were revealed. This was the purpose of these plagues, to break the power of Rome, and, indeed, in what history calls the crisis of the third century, these bowls were poured out from 250 AD to 271 AD, beginning with the plague of Cyprian and ending with Rome divided into three warring factions, as Revelation 16:19 foretold. Some unity was restored, and Rome managed to continue for another two hundred years, but the Principate was never restored.

From here, we look forward to the final breaking of the Spiritual power of Rome. The power of the demonic kingdom was finally broken when it's head, it's emperor, was converted to Christianity. Constantine became Christian, and ruled the empire, making Christianity legal for the first time in 313 AD with the Edict of Milan. This involved the overthrow of the Spiritual powers of Rome, and ended the cycle of persecution against the church. As Foxxe's book of martyrs describes, it so established the peace of Christianity that it would be another thousand years until a martyr was recorded. If this doesn't tell us where we are headed, I don't know what will.

In the time of Constantine, coins were even minted, depicting him riding atop the dragon which had been cast down. This is the time when Revelation describes the dragon as being bound for a thousand years. Indeed, the murderer himself was imprisoned, and would not be allowed to deceive the nations for another thousand years. Looking historically, we see that this is the time when there were no longer any great beasts ruling over the hearts of men. That is, the beasts of Daniel 7, while allowed to exist, no longer had the dominion to exert their influence over the entire world. Though this was called the "Dark Ages", this was in reference to the "light of Rome", which, if that is light, I want darkness—a beastly light for sure. It was in this time that the church, and God's Kingdom, became a great mountain and filled the entire Earth. This is Revelation 20:1-6.

Finally, the persecution resumed, from the church, against John Wickliffe, in 1371. Shortly after that, in the beginning of the 1400's a man named John Huss was burned at the stake. By 1522, Martin Luther was posting His 95 theses to the door. The renaissance, and its rebellion and pride of man, began divorcing knowledge from the Word of God, and the church became the blame for more and more of society's ills. Since then, we have seen the slow progression of civilization, eroding moral foundation and rightness of society, the blaming of the church, and the villainization of everything of righteousness and the Gospel and of God.

This then, is exactly where we are, and is the answer to the above question. We are in the time of Revelation 20:7-10, the time of the dragon's deception of the nations, to bring them together in hatred to destroy the camp of the saints, the city He loves. This will bring about the events of Ezekiel 38 and 39, ending in the ultimate redemption of the nation of Israel.

After that, after a span of at least seven years, but the day and hour are unknown and could be much longer, will come the Second Coming, the Great White Throne or the Throne of His Glory, and the end of this world. Behold, a New Heaven and a New Earth! He makes all things new!

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