

Understanding "The Revelation"

Part 1

Revelation 1:1-10

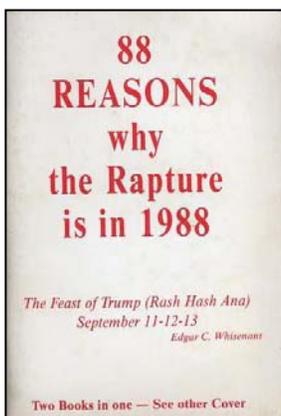


For the next two weeks we are going to take a break from the book of Acts and give an overview of the book of Revelation. The vivid imagery and dramatic message of Revelation have long captivated the attention of Christendom, although most of the interest is based on a radical misunderstanding of the very nature and purpose of the book. As church historian [Philip Schaff](#) noted over ninety years ago, *"The literature of the Apocalypse, especially in English, is immense, but mostly impository (Impository preaching is preaching which seeks to take a theme for the sermon and impose it on the text) rather than expository, and hence worthless or even mischievous, because confounding and misleading."*



The publication by [Edgar C. Whisenant](#) is an example of the misleading nature of literature on the Apocalypse. Six million copies of his work caused quite a stir among evangelicals in the summer and fall of 1988. Mr. Whisenant laboriously

demonstrated why Christ would return to the earth in September, 1988. Regional news reports noted that a number of Christians took his message so seriously that they quit their jobs in anticipation of Christ's imminent return. I called to order a book from a major Christian book outlet only to be told by a recording that the employees had the day off to spend with their families before the Lord returned. Needless to say, they all came back to work disappointed that the Lord didn't show. Let me say that Mr. Whisenant got something right. He believed the Lord would return on the [Feast of Trumpets](#). He was just about 2,000 to late.



The "end of the world" frenzy of the 19th century has spawned many groups such as the [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#) (the Mormons), the [Jehovah's Witnesses](#), the [Christadelphians](#), and countless other "last days" groups. In recent times, the "frenzy" has continued with the teachings of interpreters like [Marshall Applewhite](#) (Heaven's Gate cult leader). This "frenzy" continues to survive today. Just this past Tuesday, the Boston Globe, in "[Police say man with weapons cache was preparing for 'Armageddon'](#)", reported, *"A Manchester-by-the-Sea man arrested for stockpiling weapons and ammunition in his home allegedly told police he was preparing for Armageddon."*

Gregory D. Girard, 45, was arrested Tuesday night for allegedly storing approximately 20 weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition."

This "frenzy" continues to survive because of modern misconceptions about the **purpose** of the prophetic events in Revelation and the **time frame** for their occurrence, which was the first century.

The sad thing about all this confusion is that the clear purpose of the book of Revelation was/is to **reveal**, not to conceal and confuse. Revelation is the most "Biblical" book in the Bible since John quotes hundreds of passages from the First Testament, often with subtle allusions to obscure religious rituals of the Hebrew people. In order to understand Revelation, we need to know

the Bible backward and forward. We need to be willing to work and think.

Let me add here that I believe the John referred to in the Revelation, is not the Apostle John, one of the twelve. Instead I think the internal evidence supports John Eleazar (also known as **Lazarus**), who Jesus raised from the dead. It is my position that Lazarus wrote the Fourth Gospel and also wrote the Johannine Epistles and Revelation, which explains their similarities with the Gospel. (Click [HERE](#) (pdf) or [HERE](#) (audio) for a complete analysis of 4th Gospel authorship) That being said, I will simply refer to him as John throughout the rest of this message.

Paul instructs us to:

do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.

(1 Thessalonians 5:20-22 NASB)

The word “*examine*” is from the Greek word *dokimazo* which is a technical word for testing money to determine whether or not it is counterfeit. We are to test **all** things; the majority of believers don't test anything so they live by their **moods** and not by their **minds**.

As we study the book of Revelation you must be willing to think, you need to set your emotions and traditions aside, and carefully and closely study the Word of God. The book of Revelation is nothing less than inspired revelation from God and deserves our thoughtful attention.

Before we can study the text of Revelation, three questions require our thoughtful consideration:

1. **When was it written?**
2. **What is the proper approach?**
3. **What is its theme?**

The most important issue that confronts the interpreter of Revelation is the **date** that it was written. Two views compete for validity: the late date view (AD 95-96) which is the current evangelical opinion and the early date view (AD 65-66). The early date view says that **Revelation speaks of the birth pangs of the Kingdom, the beginning of Church history**. The late date view allows for a wide variety of interpretations; it views the book as the end of the kingdom and of Church history. Does Revelation speak of a looming great tribulation which will bring worldwide chaos upon the scene of contemporary history? Or did it inform the first century Christians of grave and trying times that they would face which would demonstrate that Christianity could weather the storms? This is a very practical matter.

The late date view comes exclusively from **external** evidence based on a statement made by **Irenaeus** (A.D. 120-202). Irenaeus is the only source for this late dating of Revelation; all other sources are based on him. There are other early writers whose statements indicate that John wrote Revelation much earlier. Our safest course, therefore, is to study the Revelation itself to see what **internal evidence** it presents regarding the date of its writing.

The text of Revelation provides a self-witness for the date it was written.

Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. ²"Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

(Revelation 11:1-2 NASB)

These verses refer to a temple standing in a city called the “**holy city**”. Based upon Hebrew Scriptures, we can surmise that a Christian Jew such as John would have had the historical Jerusalem in mind when he spoke of the holy city.

Awake, awake, Clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; Clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; For the uncircumcised and the unclean Will no longer come into you. (Isaiah 52:1 NASB)

Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem, but the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while nine-tenths remained in the other cities. (Nehemiah 11:1 NASB)

For further identification of this city, Revelation 11:8 tells us:



And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. (Revelation 11:8 NASB)

This city is the site of our Lord's crucifixion; this can only be the historical Jerusalem. What temple stood in Jerusalem? Obviously the Jewish temple which was ordained of God, known as Herod's Temple. [Herod the Great](#) came to power in 37 B.C. and determined that he would please his Jewish subjects and impress the Romans with his kingly qualities by making the Jerusalem Temple bigger and better than it had ever been.

This reference to the temple must be the historical structure for three reasons. First of all, it was located in Jerusalem. Secondly,

according to [Revelation 11:2](#) it was to be under attack for 42 months. Nero commissioned [Flavian Vespasian](#), a Roman general, to engage Israel in war in February A.D. 67. He actually entered the Promised Land and engaged in battle that spring so that the Jewish war with Rome lasted from spring A.D. 67 until the temple fell in August A.D. 70, forty-two months later. Luke 21:20 contains Jesus' prophecy regarding the destruction of the temple:

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. (Luke 21:20 NASB)

The time from Revelation 11 fits with what history tells us of the Jewish war. Finally, the structure of Revelation 11:1-2 parallels Jesus' statement in His Olivet discourse found in [Luke 21:20-24](#). In [Luke 21:5-7](#) the disciples point to the temple and ask about its future. Jesus tells them it will soon be destroyed, stone by stone. In Luke 21:24 He speaks in terms which are echoed in Revelation 11:2. These two passages speak of the same event, the destruction of Jerusalem.

When was Revelation written? Is the late date view or the early date view correct? We know from historical and archaeological evidence that the temple was destroyed in August of 70 A.D. If this temple was still standing when John wrote, he must have written before 70 A.D.

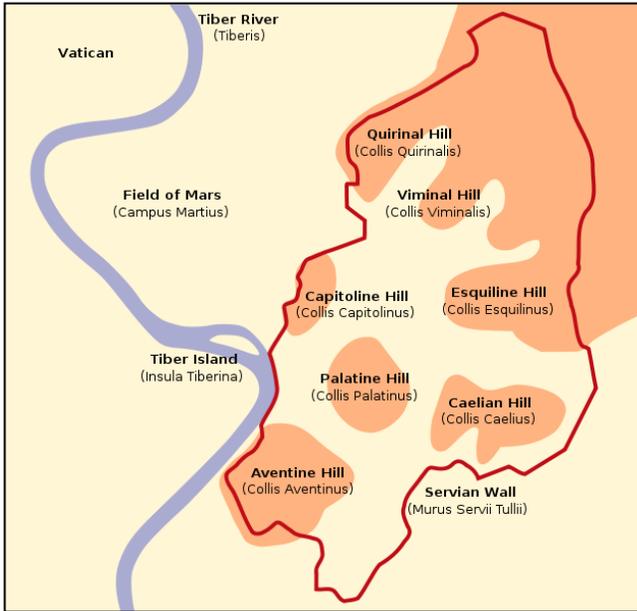
Revelation 17 is the second major piece of internal evidence for the early date view of Revelation. In Revelation 17 a vision of the seven-headed beast is recorded. This vision offers clear evidence that Revelation was recorded before the death of [Nero Caesar](#). We know that Nero committed suicide on June 9, 68A.D.

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality." And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly. (Revelation 17:1-6 NASB)

"Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, (Revelation 17:9 NASB)

Verses 1, 3, and 6 of Revelation describe a vision, and verse nine gives us clues to the meaning of the vision. Almost all scholars

recognize that the seven mountains of Revelation 17:9 represent the [seven hills of Rome](#). John points out that the wise one will understand; the recipients of this letter lived under the rule of Rome which was universally distinguished by its seven hills. How could the recipients of this letter who lived in the seven historical churches of Asia Minor under Roman imperial rule understand anything else by this geological reference?



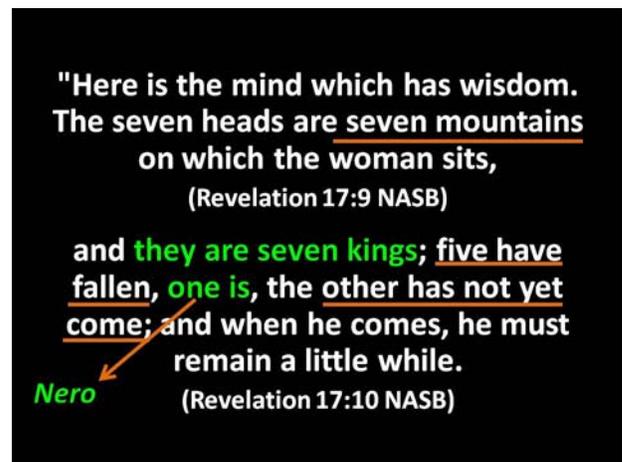
and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. (Revelation 17:10 NASB)

Here we see that the seven heads also represent a political situation: *"They are seven kings."* We also see here how the seven heads also correspond to the line of the Caesars. *"Five have fallen"* (past tense): The first five Caesars were **Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius**. *"One is"*, (present tense): **Nero**, the sixth Caesar, was on the throne as John was writing the Revelation. Nero reigned from October 54 A.D. until June 68 A.D., when he committed suicide because his empire was in civil war. *"the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while."* (Future tense): **Galba**, the seventh Caesar, reigned for less than 7 months (June, 68 A.D. to January, 69 A.D.).

In [Revelation 17:7](#) the angel says, *"Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery."* In verses nine and ten, the vision is explained. The seven heads refer to an **historical place**, Rome, and the **political scene**, Nero's reign. Revelation must have been written before Nero committed suicide in 68 A.D. The internal evidence points clearly to the early date view.

The second question which is key to understanding Revelation is, "What is the proper **approach** to the book of Revelation?" There are four basic views:

1. Historicist
2. Idealist
3. Futurist
4. Preterist



Each view provides a different interpretation of the book as a whole.

The **historicists** view Revelation as a panorama of church history from the apostolic era until the final future return of Jesus Christ. The different judgment scenes are applied to different historical events. This school is always in revision as history unfolds.

The **idealists** hold that Revelation is not to be taken in reference to any specific events at all; it is an expression of those basic principles on which God acts throughout history. The Revelation is thus a theological poem setting forth the ageless struggle between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. This view denies any specific historical fulfillment of events in Revelation in the past or future.

The **futurist** view sees the prophecies of Revelation, particularly after [Revelation 4:1](#), as set in the distant future from John's time. This view understands that Revelation deals with the ultimate historical outcome of world and/or church history. This is undeniably the most popular view today due to the influence of [Dispensationalism](#) which came into being during the nineteenth century, about 160 years ago.

There are two fundamental Dispensationalist teachings: **God has two differing peoples**, Israel and the Church who have differing promises, different destinies, and different purposes; **eschatology** is the second distinctive of Dispensationalism. They teach that someday **soon**, (it's always soon) Christ will return to the earth invisibly and snatch away all the Christians—[the](#)

[rapture](#). After God has removed the Church, He will go back to dealing with Israel. There will be a seven year period called the tribulation in which many Jews will be saved. At the end of the tribulation Christ will return and inaugurate the Millennium. At the end of the Millennium there will be a rebellion and Christ will come and the eternal state will begin (I count three comings). The entire scheme of Dispensationalist eschatology, though popular in recent years, has no roots in historic Christian interpretation of the Scriptures. This view is held by most end time cults, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Armstrong's World Wide Church of God.

Then we have the preterist view which is divided into the **partial** preterist and **full** preterist camps. The partial preterist understands that most, but not all of the prophecies in Revelation have already been fulfilled. They believe that all of the book of Revelation has been fulfilled up to chapter 20. They see us as now being in the millennium of chapter 20. I was in the partial preterist camp for 7 years.

The **full preterist** (or consistent preterist) understands that **all** of the prophecies in Revelation have already been fulfilled. The full preterist sees us as now in the [New Heaven and Earth](#) of chapter 21 and 22. We obviously don't see the [New Heaven and Earth](#) as a physical utopia but as a spiritual reality. It is the New Covenant. Revelation prophesies on issues events beginning with John's own day and from our perspective these events are in the distant past, hence the designation [preterist](#) from the Latin word for **past**.

There are evangelical adherents who interpret Revelation based on each of these schools but most of the Church holds to either the **futurist** or the **partial preterist** view. We will look at Revelation from the **full preterist** view which I believe is the only consistent view. Most people are futurist and have never even have heard of the preterist view.

Most commentators of Revelation violate the basic hermeneutical principle of [audience relevance](#) which seeks to discover what the original readers understood a passage to mean. The concern of the evangelical interpreter is to understand the grammar of a passage in light of the historical circumstances and context of the original audience. **Who** was Revelation written to? It was written to seven historical churches.

At least three audience factors in Revelation emphasize the original audience and their circumstances; these three factors move us toward the preterist position. First of all, Revelation 1:4 clearly states that John wrote to particular historical individual churches that existed in his day:

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, (Revelation 1:4 NASB)

In Revelation 1:11 he names those churches:

saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." (Revelation 1:11 NASB)

John was not writing a panoramic perspective—he was writing to historical churches. Chapters two and three contain letters to each of these churches and deal with their specific circumstances.

Secondly, John wrote to these churches in order to be understood. John fully intended that his work be a revelation (Greek: apokalopsis), which means to uncover or disclose. He didn't write to obscure the truth but to reveal it. Revelation 1:3 tells us that he expected his audience to hear with understanding so that they might apply the principles. He says to all seven of the churches, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Finally, in Revelation 1:9, John said:

I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. (Revelation 1:9 NASB)

John was a companion with his audience in the tribulation. John and the seven churches are all in the tribulation together as he writes.

Revelation's contemporary expectation together with the factors of audience relevance argue strongly for a preterist view of Revelation. In [Revelation 1:1](#) John specifically states that the prophecies of Revelation would begin to take place in a very short time.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, (Revelation 1:1 NASB)

He emphasized this truth in a variety of ways through language. He carefully varies the manner of his expressions as if to avoid any potential confusion on the matter. The Greek word translated “soon” in Revelation 1:1 is from the Greek word *tachos*. According to Arndt and Gingrich Lexicon, *tachos* is used in the LXX and certain non-canonical writings to mean speed, quickness, swiftness, haste. John uses the same word in [Revelation 2:16](#); [3:11](#); [22:6,7,12,20](#). John also uses the Greek word *eggus*:

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 NASB)

Which is translated here as “near” it is also used in Revelation 22:10. This term *speaks of temporal nearness* and John uses it to bracket the book. The third Greek word is *mello*; it is translated “about to” in Revelation 1:19 & 3:10.

Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. (Revelation 1:19 NASB)

The phrase, “*the things which will take place after these things*” is literally “*the things which are about to occur*” and in 3:10, “*which shall come upon all the world*” is literally “*is about to come upon the whole world [oikoumene]*.” If we apply the principle of audience relevance, **what would the original readers have thought when they read this?** John strategically places these words at the introduction and conclusion of the book. John was telling the seven churches to expect these things at any moment.

Some try to redefine these terms to fit their theology. One Dispensational writer explains the use of *tachos* in Revelation 1:1 this way: “The idea is not that the event may occur soon, but that when it does, it will be sudden”. What consolation would this have offered to those persecuted saints? Interpreting this passage to mean that Jesus will come rapidly some two or three thousand years in the future mocks their historical circumstances. Revelation hails the advent of Jesus as a relief; the original audience would not have been consoled to hear that once He started to come, in a couple thousand years, He would come quickly. How does this author use his definition of *tachos* in:

But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly [tacheōs], so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. (Philippians 2:19 NASB)

Does this mean that whenever Timothy does come to them he will come running?

A major objection to the preterist view is the issue of Christ second coming. In several of these passages reference is made to Christ's coming (Revelation 2:16, 3:11):

And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.” (Revelation 22:7 NASB)

“*Behold I am coming quickly*” resounds in these verses. Did Jesus Christ come in the first century? I believe that He did. Just as he said he would.

The partial preterists say that these verses in Revelation only refer to His coming in **judgement upon Israel**, and not to his second advent. The Revelation truly does speak of his coming in judgment on Israel. The theme verse says,

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. (Revelation 1:7 NASB)

This is reminiscent of First Testament cloud comings, when God came in judgment.

He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind; (Psalms 104:3 NASB)

The oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and is about to come to Egypt; The

idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them. (Isaiah 19:1 NASB)

We know from chapter 20 that God used the Assyrians as instruments of His wrath on Egypt, yet it says, *"The LORD is riding on a swift cloud..., Egypt will tremble at His presence."* God came to Egypt. Did He physically come to Egypt? No, God is a Spirit. How did He "come" to Egypt? He came in judgment. His presence was made known in judgment. But it was the Assyrians who were literally present.

[Psalm 18:7-14](#) and [Joel 2:1-2](#) also speak of cloud comings. Christ's coming spoken of in Revelation 1:7 is a judgment coming which focuses upon first century Israel:

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. (Revelation 1:7 NASB)

He is coming upon *"those who pierced Him."* That refers to Israel. As a consequence of His coming in judgment, *"all the tribes of the earth [ge] (or land) will mourn over Him"*. Earth is translated from the Greek word *ghay (or ge)* and it means: *"soil, country, earth, ground, land, world."*

"The tribes of the land" is a familiar designation for Israel. The Jews crucified Jesus and they were punished for it:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:36 NASB)

Jesus told the Jewish leaders that they would personally witness the judgment coming.

But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." (Matthew 26:63-64 NASB)

The [destruction of Jerusalem](#) evidenced Jesus' coming in the clouds for that historical group of people. But are we to see it only as a coming in judgment on Israel? The full preterist, or consistent preterist, sees this judgment coming on Israel as the second advent of Christ. Jesus said that he would come in the lifetime of his disciples not just to judge Israel but: he said he would come in the glory of His father, with His angels, to reward every man.

"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." (Matthew 16:27-28 NASB)

"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 NASB)

At Christ's coming he was to judge the wicked **and** reward the righteous, and it was to happen **quickly**. In the parable of the tares in Matthew 13, we see that the judgment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous happen at the same time.

'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn."'" (Matthew 13:30 NASB)

We see here that not only are the tares burned in judgment, a picture of the destruction of Jerusalem, but the righteous are **gathered** into the Father's barn.

Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. "So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit

lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (Matthew 13:36-43 NASB)

The partial preterists say this **gathering** will happen at a future second coming which would actually be the third coming. But the Scriptures teach that it happens at the same time as the judgment of Jerusalem. At the end of the Old Covenant world.

The Scriptures also teach that both the righteous and the wicked dead will be resurrected on the same day. We see in 1 Thessalonians that the dead in Christ will rise on the day of his return:

and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. (1 Thessalonians 4:6 NASB)

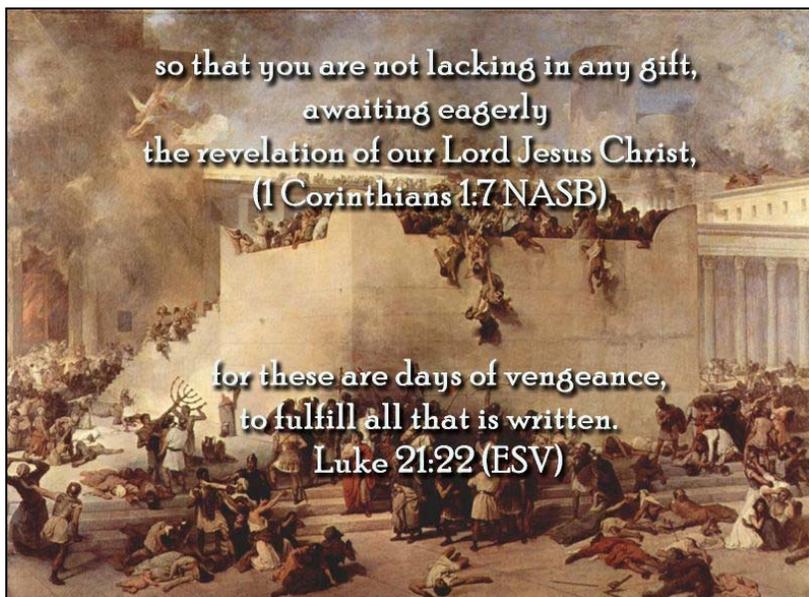
This resurrection is described by John as being on the **"last day,"** referring to the last day of Old Covenant Israel.

"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:40 NASB)

This day of resurrection is also reserved for the wicked according to John:

"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28-29 NASB)

The time of this resurrection was not some far distant time over two thousand years away. The time had arrived in that generation.



"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. (John 5:25 NASB)

We could conclude that the gathering and the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked will occur at the same "last day", when the Lord Jesus Christ was to come again. The **coming of the Lord in the destruction of Jerusalem was the second coming**, and it happened in the **first century**. His coming to judge the wicked and gather the saints was to be a comfort to the first century believers, God would give them rest at his coming.

For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed--for our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 NASB)

He tells them that this second coming is not only to bring judgment but it is also to be a gathering of the saints.

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, (2 Thessalonians 2:1 NASB)

In [Matthew 24:29-31](#) Jesus predicted his coming to judge Israel and to gather together the saints in that generation (the first century generation). In [1Thessalonians 4:16-17](#), Paul spoke of the coming of the Lord to gather the saints. We need to ask ourselves a question, "how many comings of the Lord, with his angels, in fire, in power and glory, to gather the saints, are there in the New Testament? There is only **one**, and it happened in A.D. 70.

The moderate or inconsistent preterist believes in two second comings of Christ, one in A.D. 70 to judge Israel and then a physical, final coming of Christ still in our future. This means that they are forced to believe (Matthew 5:17-18) we are still under the Old Covenant Law because it was to be in effect until heaven and earth pass away, which was speaking of Old Covenant Israel. Now that's a mouthful!

There is no biblical evidence for a [third coming](#). The only coming that Jesus spoke about was to come to **that generation**, it was to come quickly, soon, shortly and it was at hand. Listen how John, under the inspiration of Holy Spirit, ends the book of Revelation:

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. "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book." (Revelation 22:6-7 NASB)

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 NASB)

"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 NASB)

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. (Revelation 22:20-21 NASB)

How could he have stressed more clearly that he was coming soon? The [destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.](#) was a major apologetic point in the first century because Jesus clearly said that people of that generation would see his coming in the judgment of Old Covenant Israel at the end of the age. And John expected **all these events** to take place **soon** after he had written.

It is my opinion that the full preterist approach is the best choice for interpreting Revelation in light of original relevance. Revelation was written to the seven Churches of Asia Minor to tell them of things that would happen soon, soon to them, not soon to us two thousand years later. To them the book was a prophecy of near future events. To us it is history, it tells us of events that happened two thousand years ago.

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