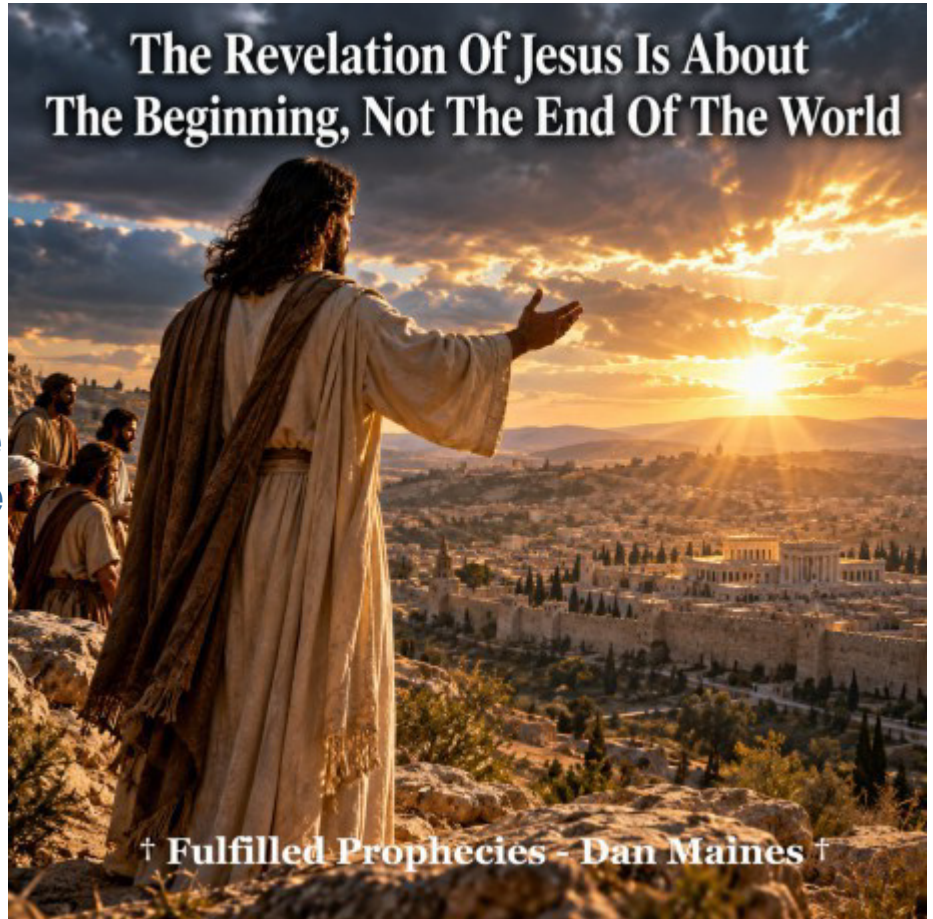


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The Revelation Of Jesus Is About The Beginning, Not The End Of The World



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Revelation isn't a book about the end of planet Earth. It's the revelation of Jesus Christ, the judgment of the old covenant world, and the full establishment of the new covenant order.

† The book begins by telling its original readers that the events must shortly come to pass and that the time was near. Those statements establish the time frame of the prophecy before any symbol is interpreted.

† Revelation moves from an old creation under judgment to a new creation in Christ. It ends with the New Jerusalem, the dwelling of God with His people, the river of life, the tree of life, and the nations receiving healing.

† This isn't the destruction of God's physical creation. It's the completion of one covenant age and the revealed reality of another, the kingdom of Jesus Christ that has no end (Luke 1:32-33).

Revelation 1:1-3

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, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

† Revelation identifies itself as the revelation of Jesus Christ. Its focus is Christ, His kingdom, His judgment, and the fulfillment of God's covenant purposes.

† John didn't tell his first-century readers that these things would happen thousands of years later. He said they must shortly take place.

† He reinforced that statement by saying the time was near. The original audience was expected to hear, understand, and keep the words because fulfillment was approaching (Revelation 22:6-7).

† Any interpretation that moves the central events thousands of years beyond John's audience has to deal honestly with the time statements placed at both the beginning and end of the book (Revelation 22:10).

Revelation 3:12

The one who overcomes, 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.

† Before Revelation describes the New Jerusalem in its closing chapters, Jesus had already promised His first-century believers that they would bear the name of that city.

† The New Jerusalem isn't presented merely as a city waiting at the end of physical history. It represents God's covenant people in union with Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem to which believers have come (Hebrews 12:22-24).

† Paul likewise identified the Jerusalem above as free and as the mother of God's people (Galatians 4:26). Revelation develops that same covenant reality.

Revelation 11:8

And their dead bodies will lie on the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

† Revelation itself identifies the great city by telling us where the Lord was crucified. Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem.

† Calling that city Sodom and Egypt is covenant judgment language. Jerusalem had become spiritually identified with the enemies from whom God had once delivered His people.

† Jesus had already announced judgment upon Jerusalem and said that all the righteous blood being charged against that generation would come upon it (Matthew 23:34-36).

† Revelation's judgment isn't disconnected from Jesus' warnings. It develops the same first-century judgment that Jesus said would come upon His generation (Matthew 24:34).

Revelation 18:20

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.

† The judgment of the harlot concerned the blood of God's apostles and prophets. Jesus had already charged Jerusalem with killing the prophets and persecuting those sent to her (Matthew 23:37).

† Revelation describes the harlot as drunk with the blood of the

saints and witnesses of Jesus (Revelation 17:6). Jesus placed responsibility for that persecution upon the Jerusalem of His generation (Luke 13:33-35).

† Her fall wasn't the end of the physical world. It was covenant judgment upon the persecuting city and the removal of the old order that opposed Christ and His people.

Revelation 19:6-7

Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let's rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has prepared herself."

† Revelation doesn't simply move toward destruction. It moves toward marriage, kingdom, victory, and covenant fulfillment.

† The judgment of the harlot is followed by the marriage of the Lamb. The unfaithful covenant city falls, while the bride of Christ is revealed in glory.

† This is why Revelation is about a beginning as much as it is about an ending. The old covenant order passes away, while the completed new covenant order stands in Christ (Hebrews 8:13).

† Jesus didn't establish a temporary kingdom waiting to disappear with planet Earth. His kingdom has no end (Daniel 7:13-14).

Revelation 21:1-3

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

† Notice the direction. The New Jerusalem comes down out of

heaven. The story isn't about God's people abandoning the earth. It's about God dwelling with His people.

† The new heaven and new earth describe the new covenant creation in which righteousness dwells and God's people live in His presence.

† Isaiah had already connected the new heavens and new earth with continuing generations, people building houses, planting vineyards, having descendants, and nations coming to worship God (Isaiah 65:17-25; 66:22-23).

† Revelation presents the bride as the holy city. This is covenant language describing God's redeemed people, not the replacement of the physical universe with another planet.

Revelation 21:22-24

I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illuminated it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

† Revelation ends without a physical temple because God's dwelling isn't centered in a building. God and the Lamb are its temple.

† The nations still exist and walk by the light of the city. Kings of the earth bring their glory into it. That doesn't describe the end of human history or the destruction of planet Earth.

† The imagery describes the worldwide light and reign of Christ flowing from the completed new covenant reality (Isaiah 60:1-3).

† The Bible's story reaches its covenant goal, God dwelling with His people through Jesus Christ.

Revelation 22:1-2

And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

† Revelation ends with life flowing outward, not with creation

disappearing.

† The tree of life appears again, showing that what was lost in the opening chapters of Genesis reaches its covenant fulfillment through Christ.

† The nations receive healing from the tree's leaves. Healing presupposes people outside the city who may come to its light and receive its blessings.

† Revelation therefore brings the biblical story from Eden to the New Jerusalem, from separation to access, and from death to life in Christ (John 10:10).

Revelation 22:14-17

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life, and may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral persons, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you of these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires, take the water of life without cost.

† This passage makes it especially difficult to interpret Revelation's ending as the end of the physical world. There are people outside the city while the invitation to enter remains open.

† The Spirit and the bride continue saying, Come. The water of life remains available. People who thirst are invited to drink freely.

† That's the world in which we live today. The city stands, the river flows, the tree gives life, and the gospel invitation continues.

† Revelation doesn't leave humanity staring at the ruins of the universe. It leaves the bride inviting the nations to come to Christ.

Revelation 22:6-7

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 His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

† Revelation closes with the same time frame with which it opened. The things revealed to John were shortly to take place.

† Jesus said He was coming quickly. That promise had meaning to the churches that originally received this prophecy.

† The judgment coming upon the old covenant world wasn't the termination of human existence. It brought the prophetic covenant drama to its appointed conclusion and openly established the new covenant age in its completed form.

† Revelation begins with things that must shortly take place and ends with the same declaration. We shouldn't stretch shortly and quickly into thousands of years.

Historical References

† Josephus described Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70, including famine, internal violence, the Roman siege, the burning of the temple, and the devastation of the city. His account provides important historical background for understanding the kind of judgment Jesus had announced against Jerusalem.

† Josephus also described extraordinary signs surrounding the period of Jerusalem's fall, including phenomena associated with the temple and the heavens. His account shows how catastrophic and unforgettable those years were to the people who experienced them.

† Eusebius later recorded the tradition that believers in Jerusalem departed before the war and went to Pella. This corresponds closely with Jesus' warning that His disciples should flee when they recognized the approaching judgment (Luke 21:20-22).

† These historical witnesses don't establish biblical doctrine, Scripture does. They do, however, show that Jerusalem

experienced a devastating first-century judgment consistent with the historical setting described by Jesus and Revelation.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We aren't waiting for God to destroy the planet so His kingdom can begin. Jesus Christ reigns now, and His kingdom continues to increase through the gospel.

† We aren't standing outside the New Jerusalem waiting for it to descend someday. Believers have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-24).

† We are God's dwelling place through the Spirit. God's purpose has always been to dwell with His people, and that purpose has reached its fulfillment in Christ (Ephesians 2:19-22).

† Revelation gives believers hope, not fear of the destruction of planet Earth. The Lamb won, the persecuting city was judged, the bride was revealed, and the kingdom remains.

† The Bible begins with a garden, a river, and the tree of life. Revelation closes with a city, a river, and the tree of life. That's not the destruction of God's purpose. It's the fulfillment of it.

† The end of Revelation is therefore also a beginning, the continuing new covenant world in which the Spirit and the bride still say, Come.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Is Revelation describing the end of planet Earth?

A: No. Revelation identifies its events as things that must shortly take place and repeatedly connects its judgment with realities belonging to John's first-century audience (Revelation 1:1-3; 22:6-10).

Q: What ended in Revelation?

A: The old covenant order reached its final historical judgment, centered in Jerusalem and the temple, while the new covenant order in Christ stood complete (Matthew 23:36-38; Hebrews 8:13).

Q: Why does Revelation describe a new heaven and new earth?

A: This language comes from the prophets and describes God's new covenant creation, where His people live in His presence and righteousness dwells (Isaiah 65:17-25; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13).

Q: If Revelation describes the end of history, why are nations still present?

A: Revelation describes nations walking by the city's light, receiving healing, and being invited to take the water of life freely (Revelation 21:24; 22:2, 17). The gospel mission continues.

Q: Are believers waiting to enter the heavenly Jerusalem?

A: No. Hebrews says believers have already come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-24).

Q: What is the central message of Revelation for us today?

A: Jesus Christ reigns. His enemies were judged, His covenant promises were fulfilled, His bride stands in His presence, and the invitation of the gospel continues to the nations (Revelation 19:6-7; 22:17).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Revelation 1:1-3; Revelation 3:12; Revelation 11:8; Revelation 18:20; Revelation 19:6-7; Revelation 21:1-3; Revelation 21:22-24; Revelation 22:1-2; Revelation 22:6-7; Revelation 22:14-17

† Historical writers: Josephus, The Wars of the Jews; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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