Fulfilled Prophecies

From "This Generation" To "These Things Must Soon Take Place"



By Dan Maines

From "This Generation" To "These Things Must Soon Take Place"

Introduction

† From the words of Jesus in the Gospels to the final chapter of Revelation, the New Testament repeatedly declares that the fulfillment of prophecy was near, approaching, and expected within the lifetime of the first-century believers.

† Jesus said this generation. Paul said the ends of the ages had come. James said the Judge was standing at the door. Peter said the end of all things was near. John said it was the last

hour. Revelation declared that the things written in the book must soon take place (Matthew 24:34; 1 Corinthians 10:11; James 5:9; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 John 2:18; Revelation 1:1).
† These statements weren't spoken to people living thousands of years later. They were addressed to people who were living, listening, reading, and preparing for the approaching judgment upon Old Covenant Israel (Luke 21:20-22; Hebrews 8:13).
† The question isn't whether these statements sound urgent to us today. The question is what they meant to the people who originally received them (Matthew 24:34; Revelation 1:3).
† When we follow these statements in their historical setting, we discover one consistent message. The Old Covenant age was approaching its conclusion, and the promised kingdom of Christ was being fully established through the events culminating in AD 70 (Daniel 9:26-27; Hebrews 12:28).
† The time statements weren't mistakes, exaggerations, or promises postponed for thousands of years. They were declarations of an approaching fulfillment that Jesus and His apostles expected within their generation (Matthew 16:27-28; Revelation 22:10).

Jesus Said Some Standing There Would See His Coming
Matthew 16:27-28
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.
† Jesus identified the people who would witness His coming. Some standing before Him would still be alive when the Son of Man came in His kingdom (Matthew 16:28).
† The statement about rewarding each person according to his deeds connects this coming with judgment, not merely an ordinary demonstration of His power (Revelation 22:12).
† Jesus didn't say that people living thousands of years later would witness this event. He specifically identified some of His

own listeners as those who would remain alive (Mark 9:1).
† From the fulfilled perspective, this coming was the covenantal manifestation of Christ's royal authority and judgment, culminating in Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70 (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:30).

The Disciples Wouldn't Finish Before He Came
Matthew 10:23
But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.
† Jesus connected His coming with the mission and persecution of His disciples among the cities of Israel (Matthew 10:16-23).
† The disciples were told to flee from one city to another because persecution would accompany their proclamation of the kingdom (Matthew 10:17-23).
† Jesus placed His coming within the historical setting of their mission, not within an undefined generation thousands of years later (Matthew 10:23).
† This agrees with His later declaration that His generation would witness the fulfillment of everything He described concerning Jerusalem's judgment (Luke 21:20-32).

Jesus Identified The Generation
Matthew 24:34
Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.
† Jesus gave His disciples a definite time limitation. The generation then living wouldn't pass away before the events He described took place (Matthew 24:1-34).
† The expression this generation consistently identified the people living during Jesus' earthly ministry when He condemned the unbelief and wickedness of His contemporaries (Matthew 11:16; 12:41-42; 23:36).
† Jesus had already declared that Jerusalem would be held accountable for the blood of the righteous and that judgment would come upon that generation (Matthew 23:34-36).

† The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in AD 70 occurred approximately forty years after Jesus' ministry, within the generation He addressed (Matthew 24:1-2, 34).
† Moving this generation into our future changes the natural meaning of Jesus' words and separates the prophecy from its original audience (Matthew 23:36; 24:34).

Mark Confirmed The Same Time Limitation
Mark 13:30
Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.
† Mark recorded the same promise Jesus gave in Matthew. The events would occur before that generation passed away (Mark 13:1-30).
† The prophecy began with Jesus announcing the destruction of the magnificent temple buildings standing before His disciples (Mark 13:1-2).
† Jesus described persecution, false messiahs, wars, tribulation, and the approaching judgment before declaring the generation in which these things would occur (Mark 13:5-30).
† Matthew and Mark weren't describing two unrelated judgments separated by thousands of years. They recorded the same teaching concerning the approaching end of Jerusalem's covenantal age (Matthew 24:1-34; Mark 13:1-30).

Luke Identified Jerusalem And The Days Of Vengeance
Luke 21:20-22, 32
But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.
because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.
Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.
† Luke identified the approaching judgment with Jerusalem surrounded by armies. The disciples were given a recognizable historical warning (Luke 21:20-21).
† Jesus instructed those in Judea to flee to the mountains when

the armies approached. This was a warning to people who could physically escape the threatened city (Luke 21:20-21).
† Jesus called these the days of vengeance, connecting Jerusalem's destruction with the fulfillment of the prophetic judgments written against covenant unfaithfulness (Deuteronomy 28:49-68; Daniel 9:26-27).
† Luke repeated the same generational limitation recorded by Matthew and Mark. The fulfillment belonged to the generation Jesus addressed (Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32).
† The Roman destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in AD 70 corresponds to the historical judgment Jesus described (Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24).
† The prophecy concerned the end of the Old Covenant order centered upon Jerusalem, not the destruction of planet Earth (Hebrews 8:13; 12:26-28).

Peter Declared The Last Days Had Arrived
Acts 2:16-17
but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:
'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHESY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS;
† On Pentecost, Peter didn't announce that the last days would begin thousands of years later. He declared that the events taking place before his audience fulfilled Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:14-17).
† The pouring out of the Holy Spirit demonstrated that the promised last-days events were already unfolding among the first-century believers (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21).
† Peter connected the outpouring of the Spirit with the approaching day of the Lord and the promise of salvation to those who called upon His name (Acts 2:17-21).
† The last days were the closing period of the Old Covenant age, during which the promised Messiah had appeared and the New Covenant was being established (Hebrews 1:1-2; 9:26).

† The apostles weren't waiting for the last days to begin. They were already living in them (Acts 2:16-17; Hebrews 1:2).

Paul Said The Day Was Near
Romans 13:11-12
Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.
The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.
† Paul told the Roman believers that the appointed hour had already arrived and that the approaching day was near (Romans 13:11-12).
† His language expressed an immediate expectation for those receiving his letter, not an event that would remain unfulfilled for thousands of years (Romans 13:11-12).
† The approaching day fits the transition from the fading Old Covenant order into the fully established New Covenant kingdom (Hebrews 8:13; 12:28).
† Paul encouraged believers to live faithfully because they were approaching the fulfillment of God's redemptive promises in Christ (Romans 13:11-14).

The Ends Of The Ages Had Already Come
1 Corinthians 10:11
Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
† Paul didn't say the ends of the ages would arrive thousands of years after his readers died. He declared that they had already come upon the believers receiving his letter (1 Corinthians 10:11).
† Paul compared Israel's wilderness experiences with the circumstances facing the first-century church during the covenantal transition (1 Corinthians 10:1-11).
† The expression ends of the ages points to the culmination of God's redemptive purposes in Christ, not the termination of the

physical universe (Hebrews 9:26).
† The first-century believers were witnessing the conclusion of the age governed by the Mosaic covenant and the establishment of the promised New Covenant order (Hebrews 8:6-13).
† Paul's words agree with Jesus' declaration that the generation then living would witness the fulfillment of the approaching judgment (Matthew 24:34).

Paul Said The Lord Was Near
Philippians 4:5
Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.
† Paul encouraged the Philippian believers to demonstrate gentleness because the Lord was near (Philippians 4:4-5).
† The statement carried immediate significance for the believers who originally received the letter (Philippians 4:5).
† Paul consistently presented the approaching fulfillment of God's promises as a reason for faithfulness, perseverance, and godly conduct (Romans 13:11-14; Philippians 4:4-9).
† The nearness of Christ's judgment and kingdom vindication fits the first-century expectation expressed throughout the apostolic writings (Matthew 16:27-28; James 5:8-9).

Hebrews Declared The Consummation Of The Ages
Hebrews 9:26
Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.
† Hebrews identifies Christ's sacrificial appearance with the consummation of the ages. The writer located this fulfillment in the time of Christ's earthly ministry and sacrifice (Hebrews 9:26).
† The end of the ages wasn't the destruction of the physical heavens and earth. It concerned the fulfillment of the sacrificial system through the once-for-all offering of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:11-14, 26).

† The Old Covenant priesthood, sacrifices, and temple ceremonies had reached their intended fulfillment in Christ (Hebrews 7:11-28; 10:1-18).
† The covenant established through Moses was becoming obsolete and was ready to disappear as the New Covenant replaced its former administration (Hebrews 8:13).
† The removal of Jerusalem's temple in AD 70 publicly demonstrated the passing of the Old Covenant order whose sacrifices Christ had already fulfilled (Matthew 24:1-2; Hebrews 10:11-18).

Hebrews Said He Wouldn't Delay
Hebrews 10:37
FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.
† The writer encouraged suffering believers with the promise that the coming One would arrive in a very little while (Hebrews 10:32-39).
† The statement specifically rejected the idea of an indefinite delay. The promised coming was presented as approaching the original readers (Hebrews 10:37).
† The believers were instructed to endure because their promised deliverance and vindication were drawing near (Hebrews 10:35-39).
† From the fulfilled perspective, this coming belongs to the same first-century judgment Jesus announced against Jerusalem (Matthew 24:30-34).
† The language of imminence must be understood according to the historical circumstances of the people who originally received the promise (Hebrews 10:32-39).

James Said The Judge Was Standing At The Door
James 5:8-9
You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.
Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing

right at the door.
† James told suffering believers that the coming of the Lord was near and that the Judge was already standing at the door (James 5:7-9).
† His words weren't describing a judgment that would remain thousands of years away. They were intended to strengthen believers facing persecution and injustice in their own time (James 5:1-9).
† The expression standing at the door communicates the immediate approach of judgment, not a distant event without a definite historical setting (James 5:9).
† James' declaration agrees with Jesus' warning that judgment would come upon the generation responsible for rejecting God's messengers (Matthew 23:34-36).
† The approaching judgment would vindicate the faithful and bring the Old Covenant persecuting order to its appointed conclusion (Matthew 23:35-38; Hebrews 8:13).

Peter Said The End Of All Things Was Near
1 Peter 4:7, 17
The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.
For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
† Peter didn't say the end of all things was thousands of years away. He told his first-century readers that it was near (1 Peter 4:7).
† The context concerns believers suffering persecution and being tested as judgment approached (1 Peter 4:12-19).
† Peter declared that the time for judgment had arrived, beginning with God's household (1 Peter 4:17).
† From the fulfilled perspective, the end concerned the passing of the Old Covenant age and its temple-centered order, not the destruction of the planet (Matthew 24:1-3; Hebrews 8:13).
† Peter's warning agrees with the other apostolic declarations that the final covenantal judgment was approaching their

generation (James 5:8-9; Hebrews 10:37).

John Said It Was The Last Hour
1 John 2:18
Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.
† John didn't say the last hour would begin thousands of years later. He declared that it was already the last hour when he wrote to the believers (1 John 2:18).
† John identified the appearance of many antichrists as evidence that the last hour had arrived (1 John 2:18-19).
† These opponents were already active during the apostolic period, demonstrating that John's warning concerned circumstances his readers were experiencing (1 John 2:18-22).
† The last hour fits the closing period of the Old Covenant age, when opposition to Christ intensified before Jerusalem's judgment (Matthew 24:9-13; 1 John 2:18).
† John's statement agrees with Peter's declaration that the last days had arrived and Paul's announcement that the ends of the ages had come (Acts 2:16-17; 1 Corinthians 10:11).

Revelation Opened With Things That Must Soon Take Place
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,
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 begins with two unmistakable time statements. The things revealed must soon take place, and the time was near (Revelation 1:1-3).
† These statements establish the time frame for the prophecy before the visions of judgment, Babylon, the beast, and the New Jerusalem are introduced (Revelation 1:1-3).

† The message was addressed to seven actual churches in Asia Minor, whose members were expected to read, hear, and obey the prophecy (Revelation 1:4, 11).
† The words soon and near carried meaning for those first-century believers. They weren't meaningless expressions that could be stretched across thousands of years (Revelation 1:1-3).
† The early-date interpretation of Revelation places its writing before AD 70 and understands its judgments as describing the approaching destruction of the Old Covenant order (Matthew 24:34; Revelation 11:1-2).
† This interpretation preserves the connection between Jesus' generational promise and Revelation's repeated declarations of imminent fulfillment (Matthew 24:34; Revelation 1:1-3).

Revelation Closed With The Same Promise
Revelation 22:6, 10, 12, 20
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 he said to me, Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.
Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.
He who testifies to these things says, Yes, I am coming quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.
† Revelation ends exactly as it begins, declaring that the things revealed must soon take place (Revelation 1:1; 22:6).
† John was specifically instructed not to seal the prophecy because the time was near. The message was intended to be understood and acted upon by its original readers (Revelation 22:10).
† This contrasts with Daniel, who was instructed to seal his prophetic words because their fulfillment belonged to a later appointed time (Daniel 12:4, 9).
† Jesus repeated that He was coming quickly, reinforcing the

urgency already established in the opening chapter (Revelation 1:1-3; 22:7, 12, 20).
† The promise of reward according to each person's deeds connects Revelation's closing declaration with Jesus' earlier promise that some standing before Him would live to see His coming in His kingdom (Matthew 16:27-28; Revelation 22:12).
† From this fulfilled perspective, the judgment announced in Revelation reached its covenantal fulfillment in AD 70, when Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed (Matthew 24:1-34; Revelation 18:20-24).
† The book's opening and closing time statements provide a consistent framework for understanding the prophecy within its first-century historical setting (Revelation 1:1-3; 22:6-20).

Historical References
† Flavius Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian who witnessed the Jewish-Roman War, recorded the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in The Jewish War, especially Books V and VI.
† Josephus described the suffering, famine, internal violence, burning of the temple, and devastation that accompanied Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70.
† His account provides historical evidence for the catastrophe Jesus described when He warned that Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies (Luke 21:20-24).
† Tacitus, the Roman historian, described the Roman campaign against Jerusalem during the reign of Vespasian in Histories, Book V.
† Tacitus provides an independent Roman historical perspective on the conflict that culminated in Jerusalem's destruction.
† Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, recorded a tradition that believers in Jerusalem had been instructed to leave the city and settle in Pella before the war, in Ecclesiastical History, Book III, Chapter 5.
† This tradition is consistent with Jesus' instruction that His followers should flee when they recognized the approaching danger (Luke 21:20-21).

† These historical writers confirm the reality of Jerusalem's first-century destruction. Their accounts don't independently establish every prophetic interpretation, but they provide important historical context for the fulfillment perspective.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We must respect the original audience of Scripture. When Jesus addressed this generation, we shouldn't automatically transfer His words to a generation living thousands of years later (Matthew 24:34).

† When Paul said the ends of the ages had come, we should recognize that he was speaking to believers living during the first-century covenantal transition (1 Corinthians 10:11).

† When James said the Judge was standing at the door, we should understand the urgency of his message to the suffering believers who originally received it (James 5:8-9).

† When Peter said the end of all things was near, we shouldn't assume he was predicting the destruction of the physical universe in our future (1 Peter 4:7; Hebrews 8:13).

† When John said it was the last hour, we should recognize that he was identifying the circumstances of his own generation (1 John 2:18).

† When Revelation declared that its prophecies must soon take place, we should honor the time frame given to the original churches (Revelation 1:1-3; 22:6-10).

† We aren't living in the last days of the Old Covenant. We live under the accomplished New Covenant established through the blood of Jesus Christ (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:15).

† We aren't waiting for Christ to establish His kingdom. He has received His kingdom, and believers have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God (Daniel 7:13-14; Hebrews 12:22-28).

† We aren't waiting for the Old Covenant temple to disappear. Christ has fulfilled its sacrificial purpose and provided permanent access to the Father (Hebrews 10:19-22; Ephesians 2:18).

† We aren't waiting for the New Jerusalem to descend in a

future destruction of planet Earth. Through Christ, believers belong to the Jerusalem above and enjoy the blessings of the New Covenant (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-23; Revelation 21:2-3).
† The fulfillment of prophecy doesn't diminish our hope. It establishes our confidence that Jesus kept His promises and that His kingdom cannot be shaken (Matthew 24:34-35; Hebrews 12:28).
† Our responsibility today is to proclaim the completed work of Christ, live faithfully in His kingdom, and share the gospel with those who need His salvation (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 2:8-10).
† Jesus didn't fail to keep His time statements. The fulfilled perspective recognizes that His words were trustworthy, His promises were accomplished, and His kingdom remains forever (Luke 21:32-33; Hebrews 12:28).

Q & A Appendix
Q: What did Jesus mean by this generation?
A: He identified the generation living during His earthly ministry as the generation that would witness the events He described concerning Jerusalem's judgment (Matthew 23:36; 24:34).
Q: Did Jesus promise that some of His listeners would live to see His coming?
A: Yes. Jesus declared that some standing before Him wouldn't taste death before seeing the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Matthew 16:27-28).
Q: Were the apostles already living in the last days?
A: Yes. Peter identified Pentecost with Joel's last-days prophecy, and John declared that it was already the last hour (Acts 2:16-17; 1 John 2:18).
Q: What did Paul mean when he said the ends of the ages had come?
A: He was describing the culmination of the former covenantal ages through Christ and the transition into the New Covenant order (1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 9:26).
Q: Did Peter predict the destruction of planet Earth?

A: From the fulfilled perspective, Peter's statement concerned the approaching end of the Old Covenant order, consistent with the judgment Jesus announced against Jerusalem (1 Peter 4:7, 17; Matthew 24:1-34).
Q: Why did Revelation repeatedly say the time was near?
A: Because its original readers were being warned about events approaching their own historical generation (Revelation 1:1-3; 22:6-10).
Q: Why was John told not to seal Revelation?
A: Because the time was near, unlike Daniel's prophecy, which was sealed for a later appointed time (Daniel 12:4, 9; Revelation 22:10).
Q: Did all these time statements point toward AD 70?
A: The fulfilled perspective understands them as a consistent witness to the first-century culmination of the Old Covenant age, with Jerusalem's destruction marking its decisive historical conclusion (Matthew 24:34; Hebrews 8:13; Revelation 1:1-3).
Q: Does fulfilled prophecy mean Jesus no longer reigns?
A: No. Jesus reigns in His everlasting kingdom, and believers already belong to the heavenly Jerusalem and the kingdom that cannot be shaken (Daniel 7:13-14; Hebrews 12:22-28).
Q: What should Christians do now that these prophecies have been fulfilled?
A: We should live faithfully under the New Covenant, proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ, and rejoice that God's promises have been accomplished in Him (2 Corinthians 1:20; Hebrews 10:19-22).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †
© Fulfilled Prophecies - Dan Maines.

Source Index
† Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 10:23; Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:20-22, 32; Acts 2:16-17; Romans 13:11-12; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Philippians 4:5; Hebrews 9:26; Hebrews 10:37; James 5:8-9; 1 Peter 4:7, 17; 1 John 2:18; Revelation

1:1, 3; Revelation 22:6, 10, 12, 20.
† Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books V-VI; Tacitus, Histories, Book V; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book III, Chapter 5.

Share on Facebook

Links

Facebook Link

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1349070089314462/posts/2166942407527222/

Fulfilled Prophecies https://www.facebook.com/groups/1349070089314462/

Dan Maines

https://www.facebook.com/groups/1349070089314462/user/100001027365819/

You may share this article freely without permission as long as you include credit to Dan Maines and/or a link to the Fulfilled Prophecies Group.