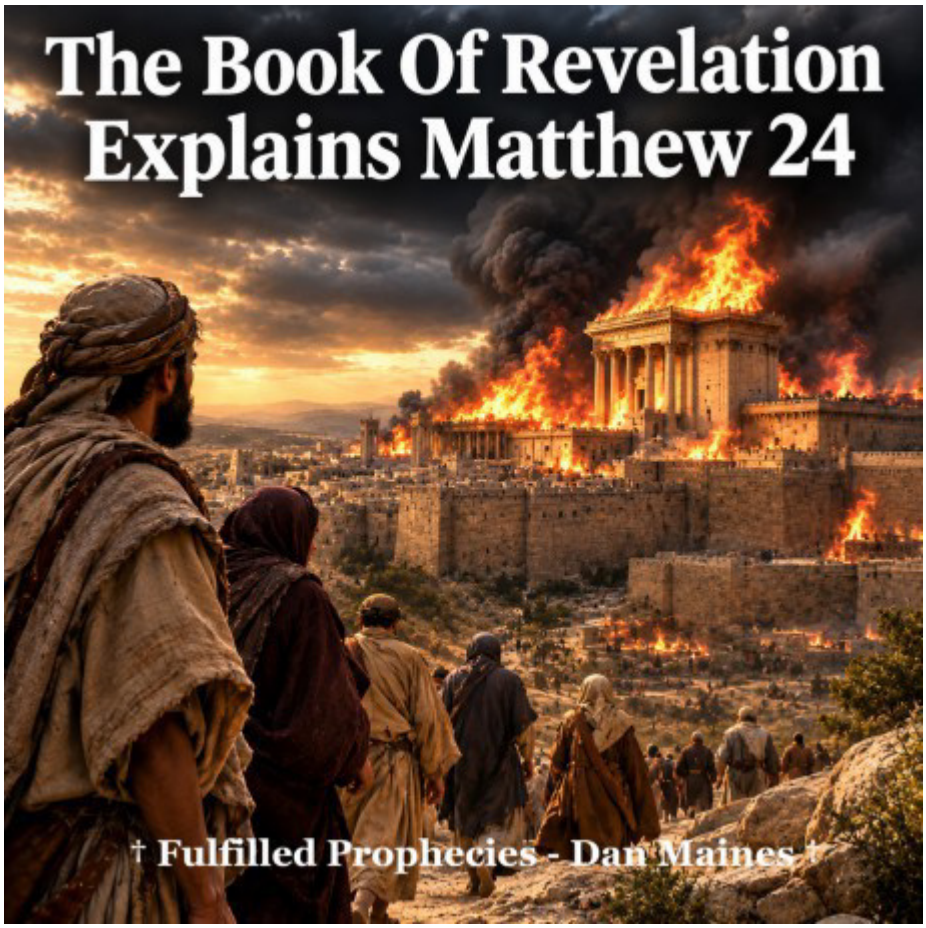
Fulfilled Prophecies

The Book Of Revelation Explains Matthew 24



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† The Book of Revelation isn't a separate prophecy about the end of the physical world. It's the unveiling of the judgment Jesus had already described to His disciples in Matthew 24. When we begin with the Olivet Discourse, Revelation becomes much easier to understand.

† Jesus spoke plainly about the destruction of Jerusalem, the coming tribulation, the signs in heaven, His coming in judgment, and the end of the age. John later received a vision describing

these same events through prophetic symbols. Both accounts concern the closing years of the Old Covenant age and the judgment that culminated in AD 70.
† The mistake many make is beginning with Revelation, interpreting its symbols as future worldwide disasters, and then forcing Matthew 24 to agree with those interpretations. We should do the opposite. Jesus' explanation to His disciples establishes the historical setting, the audience, and the timing. Revelation expands upon what Jesus had already revealed.
† The most important question isn't what these prophecies might mean to our generation. It's what Jesus told His own generation would happen, and whether Scripture places their fulfillment within the time He specified (Matthew 23:36; Luke 21:32).

Matthew 24:1-3
Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down. As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?
† The entire discussion began with Jesus' announcement that the temple would be destroyed. His disciples weren't asking about the destruction of the planet. They wanted to know when the temple would fall and how that event related to His coming and the end of the age (Mark 13:1-4).
† The age in question was the Old Covenant age, represented by the temple, priesthood, sacrifices, and Mosaic system. Hebrews describes that covenant as becoming obsolete and ready to disappear (Hebrews 8:13).
† Revelation must be interpreted within this same covenantal setting. Jesus had identified the coming destruction, and John would later describe its judgment through visions of seals, trumpets, bowls, and the fall of the great city (Revelation 6:1-17;

16:1-21; 18:1-24).

Matthew 24:6-8
You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pains.
† Jesus warned His disciples about disturbances that would precede Jerusalem's destruction. These signs weren't instructions for Christians thousands of years later to identify a future end of the world (Luke 21:9-11).
† Revelation's opening seals describe conquest, warfare, famine, and death. The imagery parallels the conditions Jesus described as the beginning of birth pains (Revelation 6:1-8).
† The Jewish revolt beginning in AD 66, along with the violence and instability surrounding the Roman Empire, provides the historical setting for these judgments. The signs belong to the same first-century crisis, not an endlessly repeating prophetic calendar (Matthew 24:34).

Revelation 6:3-6
When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come. And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that people would kill one another; and a large sword was given to him. When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come. I looked, and behold, a black horse, and the one who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine.
† The red horse represents warfare and the removal of peace. The black horse represents scarcity and economic distress. These correspond to the wars and famines Jesus said His

disciples would witness (Matthew 24:6-7).
† John wasn't introducing a different age of prophecy. He was presenting in symbolic form the conditions Jesus had already described before Jerusalem's fall (Luke 21:10-11).
† Josephus describes terrible famine, internal fighting, and desperate conditions during Jerusalem's siege. His historical account demonstrates how closely the events of AD 70 resemble the judgments portrayed in these passages.

Matthew 24:15-16
Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.
† Jesus gave His disciples a recognizable warning and a practical instruction. When the threatened desolation approached, believers in Judea were to flee. This wasn't a worldwide command to future Christians (Daniel 9:26-27).
† The instruction required a first-century setting. People in Judea could escape to the mountains, while Christians living thousands of years later in other nations couldn't obey this warning in its original historical circumstances (Mark 13:14-18).
† Luke's parallel account explains the approaching desolation by identifying Jerusalem surrounded by armies. This connection is essential when interpreting the judgments and warnings in Revelation (Luke 21:20-22).

Luke 21:20-22
But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.
† Luke removes any uncertainty about the geographical focus. Jesus was speaking about Jerusalem and the approaching judgment upon the city that had rejected Him (Luke 19:41-44).

† The days of vengeance were the fulfillment of covenant judgments previously announced in the Law and the Prophets. Jerusalem's destruction wasn't an isolated military tragedy. It marked the public and historical removal of the Old Covenant order (Deuteronomy 28:49-57; Hebrews 8:13).
† Revelation describes the same covenantal judgment through the language of plagues, blood, fire, and desolation. These images draw upon earlier judgments against covenant unfaithfulness (Revelation 16:1-21).
† The opportunity to flee also confirms that Jesus wasn't describing the destruction of the entire physical universe. There would be survivors, places of refuge, and life continuing after Jerusalem's fall (Matthew 24:16-20).

Matthew 24:21-22
For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. And if those days had not been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.
† The great tribulation was connected directly to the desolation of Jerusalem. Jesus didn't separate these events by thousands of years. He described one approaching judgment within the lifetime of His hearers (Matthew 24:15-16, 34).
† Daniel had already connected an unparalleled time of distress with the deliverance of God's people and the end of the appointed period. Jesus applied this prophetic framework to the approaching crisis (Daniel 12:1, 7).
† Revelation describes intense persecution, suffering, and judgment against the persecuting power. These visions expand upon the tribulation Jesus had already announced (Revelation 7:14; 13:5-10).
† The preservation of the elect demonstrates that God's purpose wasn't the extinction of humanity. It was judgment upon the covenant order that had reached its appointed end (Matthew 24:22).

Matthew 24:29-30
But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.
† Jesus used the prophetic language of heavenly disturbances to describe the collapse of an established covenantal order. The Old Testament used similar language when announcing judgment upon nations and kingdoms (Isaiah 13:9-10; Ezekiel 32:7-8).
† The coming on the clouds draws upon Daniel's vision of the Son of Man receiving dominion and a kingdom. It expresses divine authority and royal vindication, not necessarily a physical descent to the earth (Daniel 7:13-14).
† Jesus connected these events with the tribulation He had just described. The word immediately doesn't permit a separation of thousands of years between Jerusalem's destruction and the prophetic coming He announced (Matthew 24:21, 29).
† Revelation uses the same cosmic imagery because it describes the same covenantal upheaval and the vindication of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:7; 6:12-17).

Revelation 6:12-14
I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.
† John repeats the heavenly imagery Jesus used in Matthew 24. The darkened sun, altered moon, falling stars, and shaking heavens aren't unrelated prophecies. They belong to the same biblical language of judgment (Matthew 24:29).

† Isaiah used comparable imagery to announce Babylon's downfall. The prophetic meaning was the collapse of a ruling order under divine judgment, not the literal disappearance of the physical universe (Isaiah 13:9-13).
† Revelation's sixth seal therefore fits the judgment Jesus placed immediately after the tribulation. The symbols communicate the magnitude of the covenantal transformation taking place (Hebrews 12:26-28).
† If Matthew 24 provides the framework, we don't need to transform Revelation into a prediction of astronomical destruction in our future.

Matthew 23:35-36
so that upon you will fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.
† Jesus identified the generation responsible for the accumulated guilt of persecuting God's messengers. He placed the approaching judgment upon His own contemporaries (Luke 11:49-51).
† This statement is crucial for understanding Revelation's great city. The judgment wasn't directed against an unidentified modern nation. It concerned the city and covenantal leadership Jesus had already condemned (Matthew 23:37-38).
† Revelation identifies the guilty city through its responsibility for the blood of God's servants and through the location where the Lord was crucified (Revelation 11:8; 18:24).

Revelation 11:8
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.
† John identifies the great city by the place where Jesus was crucified. That location was Jerusalem. The symbolic names Sodom and Egypt describe its spiritual corruption and bondage

(Luke 13:33; Galatians 4:25).
† This identification provides an important connection between Revelation and Matthew 24. Jesus announced Jerusalem's judgment, and Revelation describes the great city under judgment (Matthew 23:37-38; 24:2).
† The symbolic identification also explains why Revelation can use the language of Babylon for a city other than ancient Babylon. The name represents covenantal corruption and opposition to God's people (Revelation 17:5-6).

Revelation 18:24
And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.
† The accusation against Babylon corresponds to Jesus' accusation against Jerusalem. Both passages describe responsibility for the blood of the prophets and God's faithful servants (Matthew 23:35-37).
† Jesus didn't leave the timing uncertain. He declared that the accumulated judgment would fall upon His generation. Revelation describes that same bloodguilt reaching its appointed judgment (Luke 11:50-51).
† Identifying Babylon as covenant-breaking Jerusalem brings the historical setting, prophetic accusations, and judgment imagery together without requiring a future worldwide religious or political system (Revelation 17:6; 18:20).

Matthew 24:34
Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.
† This is the controlling time statement for the entire Olivet Discourse. Jesus placed the fulfillment of all these things within the generation then living (Matthew 23:36).
† The phrase all these things includes the events He had just described, the tribulation, heavenly signs, and His coming in judgment. We can't remove the most dramatic events from His stated time frame without changing the meaning of His declaration (Matthew 24:29-33).

† Revelation must agree with Jesus' time statement. Its visions don't establish a new timetable that contradicts the Lord's own words (Revelation 1:1-3).
† The events culminating in Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70 fall within the generation Jesus addressed. This is the historical foundation of the fulfilled perspective.

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 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 the same urgency found in Matthew 24. John was told that the revealed events must soon take place and that the time was near (Matthew 24:34).
† These statements were meaningful to the original seven churches. They weren't told that the fulfillment would begin thousands of years after their deaths (Revelation 1:4, 11).
† The opening of Revelation confirms that its message belongs to the approaching first-century judgment. Jesus' prophecy and John's vision share the same historical horizon (Luke 21:32).

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 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 closes by repeating the urgency announced in its opening chapter. The events must soon take place, and Jesus declares that He is coming quickly (Revelation 1:1-3).
† This corresponds directly with the time limitation Jesus gave His disciples. His coming in judgment belonged to their generation, not an indefinite future generation (Matthew 24:34).

† The consistency between the opening and closing of Revelation confirms that its original audience was expected to understand the prophecy as approaching fulfillment (Revelation 22:10).
† When Matthew 24 establishes the setting and Revelation supplies the prophetic imagery, both testify to the completion of the Old Covenant age and the vindication of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:26; 12:28).

Historical References
† Flavius Josephus, writing in The Jewish War, Books 2, 5, and 6, describes the Jewish revolt, internal conflict, famine, Roman siege, and destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. His account provides historical evidence for the conditions Jesus warned about.
† Josephus records that Jerusalem suffered terrible violence from within while Roman armies surrounded the city. His descriptions of starvation and destruction closely resemble the conditions associated with the great tribulation.
† Eusebius, in Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5, preserves an early Christian tradition that believers in Jerusalem were instructed to leave and settle in Pella before the city's destruction. This tradition corresponds to Jesus' warning to flee Judea (Matthew 24:16).
† Tacitus, in Histories, Book 5, describes the Roman campaign against Jerusalem and the circumstances surrounding the Jewish revolt. His account independently confirms the historical reality of the conflict.
† These writers don't establish the meaning of prophecy. Scripture does that. Their testimony helps document the historical circumstances surrounding the first-century fulfillment.

How It Applies To Us Today
† We don't need to live in fear of Revelation's seals, trumpets, bowls, or the destruction of Babylon as events still waiting to happen. From the fulfilled perspective, these judgments belonged to the closing years of the Old Covenant age

(Matthew 24:34; Revelation 1:1-3).
† We aren't waiting for another great tribulation, another destruction of Jerusalem's temple, or another covenantal Day of the Lord. Jesus accomplished what He promised within the generation He addressed (Luke 21:22, 32).
† We now belong to the kingdom that cannot be shaken. Our relationship with God isn't dependent upon an earthly temple, priesthood, or sacrificial system (Hebrews 12:22-28; Ephesians 2:18-22).
† Revelation remains valuable because it reveals Christ's victory, His faithfulness to His promises, and the establishment of the New Covenant order. Its fulfillment doesn't diminish its importance. It confirms the reliability of God's Word (Revelation 21:1-5).
† The church is now God's dwelling place through the Spirit. We're citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and we proclaim the finished work of Jesus Christ rather than waiting for the Old Covenant age to end again (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-23).
† Our responsibility is to understand Scripture within its original audience and historical setting, then apply its enduring truths to our lives today (2 Timothy 2:15).

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why should Matthew 24 be used to interpret Revelation?
A: Because Jesus first explained the approaching judgment, its signs, its geographical setting, and its timing. Revelation expands upon these events through prophetic visions (Matthew 24:1-34; Revelation 1:1-3).

Q: Were the wars, famines, and earthquakes in Matthew 24 the same kinds of judgments pictured in Revelation?
A: Yes. The seals portray conditions corresponding to those Jesus described as preceding Jerusalem's destruction (Matthew 24:6-8; Revelation 6:1-8).

Q: Was the great tribulation a worldwide event still awaiting fulfillment?
A: No. Jesus connected it with Jerusalem's approaching desolation and instructed those in Judea to flee. Its fulfillment belongs to the first-century judgment (Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-22).

Q: Did the darkened sun and falling stars mean the physical universe would be destroyed?
A: No. The prophets used cosmic imagery to describe the overthrow of kingdoms and established orders. Jesus and John used that same prophetic language (Isaiah 13:9-13; Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:12-14).

Q: Why identify Babylon in Revelation with Jerusalem?
A: Revelation identifies the great city as the place where Jesus was crucified and condemns Babylon for the blood of the prophets. These descriptions correspond to Jesus' accusations against Jerusalem (Matthew 23:35-37; Revelation 11:8; 18:24).

Q: What does this generation mean in Matthew 24:34?
A: It refers to the generation Jesus was addressing. He declared that all the events He had described would take place before that generation passed away (Matthew 23:36; 24:34).

Q: Doesn't Revelation describe events that must happen in our future?
A: Revelation repeatedly states that its events must soon take place and that the time was near. Those declarations were addressed to its original first-century audience (Revelation 1:1-3; 22:6-10).

Q: What does Revelation mean for Christians today if its prophecies were fulfilled?
A: It confirms Jesus' victory, the fulfillment of His promises, and our present place in His unshakable kingdom. We live in the blessings of the New Covenant rather than awaiting the

destruction of the Old Covenant order (Hebrews 12:22-28; Revelation 21:1-5).

Conclusion

† Matthew 24 provides the historical foundation, and Revelation reveals the prophetic details. Jesus announced Jerusalem's coming destruction, described the signs preceding it, warned His disciples to flee, and declared that all these things would happen within their generation (Matthew 24:1-34).

† John later described the same approaching judgment through seals, trumpets, bowls, cosmic disturbances, and the fall of the great city. The repeated language, shared themes, and time statements connect these prophecies to the same first-century fulfillment (Revelation 1:1-3; 6:12-14; 18:24).

† The Book of Revelation doesn't move Matthew 24 into our future. It confirms and expands upon the judgment Jesus had already announced.

† The temple fell, the Old Covenant age ended, and Christ's kingdom was vindicated. The prophecy was fulfilled, and God's promises proved faithful. We aren't waiting for these events to begin. We're living under the New Covenant that Jesus established (Hebrews 8:6-13; 12:22-28).

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

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Source Index

† Matthew 24:1-3, 6-8, 15-16, 21-22, 29-30, 34; Luke 21:20-22; Revelation 6:3-6, 12-14; Matthew 23:35-36; Revelation 11:8; 18:24; 1:1-3; 22:6-7.

† Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, Books 2, 5, 6; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5.

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