

Fulfilled Prophecies

[Home](#)

>

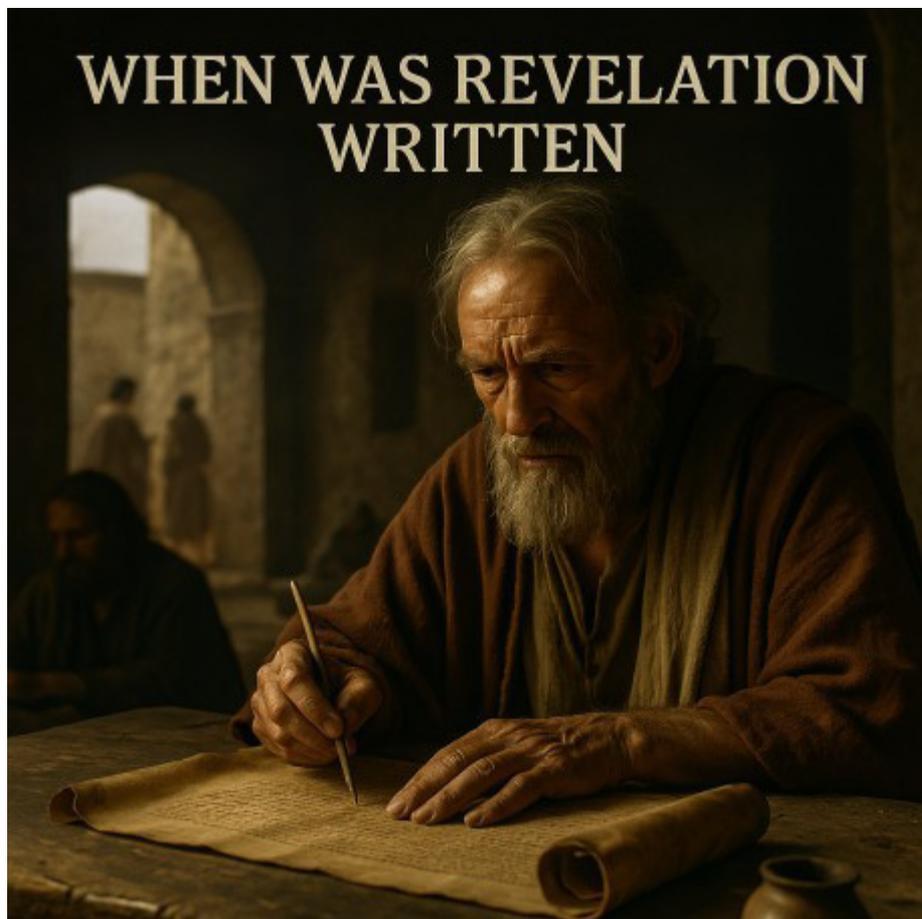
[W](#)

>

[Share on Facebook](#)

[FACEBOOK LINK](#)

When Was Revelation Written



By Dan Maines

When Was Revelation Written

† **Revelation 1:1-3** opens with the words, "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... for the time is near." From the start, John tells his audience that what he saw concerned their generation. The repeated emphasis on "soon" and "near" rules out a prophecy meant for thousands of years later.

† The book closes the same way: "Behold, I am coming quickly"

(Revelation 22:7). The urgency frames the entire message and points to a first-century fulfillment.

† Revelation 22:10 repeats the call, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near." Daniel was told to seal his prophecy because fulfillment was far off (Daniel 12:4), but John is told not to seal it, showing the events were imminent.

† **Revelation 11:1-2** shows John told to measure the temple of God while the outer court is given to the nations for forty-two months. This requires a temple still standing, because the outer court is to be trampled by the nations for a specific period. The Jerusalem temple was destroyed in AD 70. If John saw a functioning temple, the vision came before that destruction.

† The forty-two months match the three-and-a-half year siege of Jerusalem recorded by Josephus, perfectly aligning with a date in the late 60s AD.

† Revelation 17:10 describes the beast as a sequence of Roman emperors: "Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come." Counting the Caesars from Julius places Nero as the sixth, the one who "is" when John wrote.

† Revelation was urgent for and relevant to the seven churches before AD 70. If the temple had already fallen the warnings would not have been urgent at all. Revelation 1:1 says the things "must soon take place," and John repeats that "the time is near" (1:3, 22:10).

† John says he shares "the tribulation" with the churches (Revelation 1:9). He was living the events, not predicting something thousands of years away. Revelation 2:13 mentions the martyrdom of Antipas, which history places during Nero's reign (54-68).

† John was exiled to Patmos by Nero. Nero died in AD 68. The earliest Syriac copy of Revelation includes an introduction stating that John was exiled by Nero.

† Early Christian testimony supports this.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that John returned from exile "after the death of the tyrant," which many early Christians identified as Nero, not Domitian.

† The Muratorian fragment, one of the earliest canonical lists, places John's visions during Nero's reign.

† The Syriac Peshitta title for Revelation states it was written "in the reign of Nero Caesar."

† Other early sources, including Epiphanius and Theophylact, preserve traditions connecting the visions to the time before Jerusalem's fall.

† Many claim Irenaeus placed the vision under Domitian around AD 96, but the wording can just as easily refer to Domitius—Nero's full name was Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus. Early writers like Clement of Alexandria also identify the "tyrant" of John's exile as Nero.

† Roman historians confirm that Nero, not Domitian, began the first empire-wide persecution of Christians. Tacitus and Suetonius both describe Nero's brutality, but there is no reliable Roman record of Domitian exiling Christians to Patmos. This supports the view that John's banishment happened under Nero.

† Revelation's time statements are consistent from start to finish. Along with 1:1 and 22:10, Jesus says, "I am coming quickly" (3:11; 22:12). The repetition leaves no room for a delay of thousands of years.

† Some argue the temple in Revelation 11 is only symbolic. Yet John is told to measure its courts and to note that the outer court will be trampled for forty-two months. This precise description fits the literal siege of Jerusalem too exactly to dismiss as mere metaphor.

† Internal evidence strengthens this case.

† The number of the beast, 666, matches the Hebrew gematria

for "Neron Caesar." Some manuscripts even read 616, which fits the Latin spelling.

† Revelation 13 portrays a beast whose persecution matches Nero's reign of terror, when Christians were hunted and executed.

† The harlot city is called "Babylon" and is described as the city where the Lord was crucified (Revelation 11:8), unmistakably identifying Jerusalem.

† Judaizers were still active when John wrote (Revelation 2:9; 3:9). After Jerusalem's destruction their influence disappeared, so a date of 96 AD makes no sense.

† Laodicea is addressed in Revelation, yet an earthquake leveled the city in AD 65. It was rebuilt, but this fits far better with a letter written before 70 than decades later.

† John was told he "must prophesy again before many peoples and nations and tongues and kings" (Revelation 10:11). If he were over ninety in AD 96, as tradition claims, it's unlikely he could have traveled widely.

† The political background of the late 60s fits perfectly.

† The Jewish revolt began in AD 66. Rome's armies surrounded Jerusalem, fulfilling Jesus' warning in Luke 21:20.

† Civil war erupted after Nero's suicide in AD 68, a "year of four emperors," reflecting Revelation's imagery of heads and horns on the beast.

† This chaos matches the visions of upheaval and changing rulers in Revelation far better than the relative stability of Domitian's later reign.

† Advocates of a late date point to Irenaeus' statement that the Apocalypse "was seen near the end of Domitian's reign." But the Greek text is ambiguous and can mean that the vision itself, not John, was "seen" long ago.

† Even if Irenaeus meant Domitian, his testimony is one generation removed and conflicts with multiple earlier witnesses and the internal evidence of the book.

† Jerusalem fits the description of "Babylon the Great," drunk with the blood of prophets and saints (Revelation 17:6; 18:24). Jesus identified Jerusalem as the city that killed the prophets (Matthew 23:29-38). This judgment came in AD 70 exactly as He foretold.

† The early date explains why Revelation speaks to "the things which must soon take place." It assures the seven churches of Asia Minor that God's judgment on Jerusalem and vindication of the faithful were at hand.

† It shows why Revelation devotes so much to the temple, the city, and the land, because those were the very arenas of the coming judgment.

† Recognizing the early date also frees us from endless speculation about future fulfillments and calls us to focus on the kingdom Christ has already established.

† Domitian's reign (81-96 AD) was marked by relative stability and no empire-wide persecution of Christians. There is no Roman record of a broad campaign of exile during his rule, further weakening the late-date claim.

† John's Gospel offers another clue. In John 5:2 he writes, "Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes." He uses the present tense—"there is"—which indicates the city and its landmarks were still standing, pointing to a date before AD 70 for his writings.

† All these lines of evidence—scriptural time statements, the standing temple, the count of Roman emperors, early church testimony, and the historical record—converge on a single conclusion. Revelation was written during the reign of Nero, just before Jerusalem's destruction. Every major witness, internal and external, confirms this timing.

How it applies to us today

† Knowing Revelation was written before AD 70 confirms that its visions spoke first to John's contemporaries and to the destruction of Jerusalem, not to events thousands of years later.

† It strengthens our confidence that Christ kept His promises and came in judgment when He said He would.

† We stand in the unshakable kingdom He established, seeing that every word He spoke proved true.

† Our task is to live as faithful witnesses, assured that God's timing is perfect and His word never fails.

† Recognizing the early date also frees us from endless speculation about future fulfillments and calls us to focus on the kingdom Christ has already established.

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

Source Index

† Revelation 1:1-3, 1:9, 2:9, 2:13, 3:9, 3:11, 10:11, 11:1-2, 11:8, 17:6, 17:10, 18:24, 22:7, 22:10, 22:12; Daniel 12:4; Luke 21:20; Matthew 23:29-38; John 5:2

† Josephus, Jewish War; Tacitus; Suetonius; Clement of Alexandria; Muratorian fragment; Syriac Peshitta introduction; Epiphanius; Theophylact

† Early Roman history of the year of four emperors and the Neronian persecution

[Share on Facebook](#)

Links

[Facebook Link](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1349070089314462/posts/1834858570735609/>

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.