

Revelation: Gotta Pick a Date

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1. Knowing how soon the writing of Revelation occurred after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus changes the meaning. Did it occur before or after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70?
2. John was on the Island of Patmos when the writing occurred (Rev.1:9), does that help?

An Early and Late Date Comparison	
AD 67	AD 97
References to persecution would be what occurred when King Nero was persecuting Christians (AD 54-68)	References to persecution would be what occurred when King Domitian was persecuting Christians (AD 81-96)
References in the book to Jerusalem would be to the real, literal and physical city where Christ died—providing certainty of place and people and time	If written after Jerusalem was destroyed in AD70, then references in the book to Jerusalem must be to something like Jerusalem, leaving us guessing
The real Jerusalem Temple was still standing and everyone hearing the book in John’s day would be aware of it with no assumptions about it being needed	The references to real events occurring in the Jerusalem Temple have led some to assume a similar future temple would need to be constructed
John would be a 65-year-old author	John would be a 95-year-old author
First Generation believers and unbelievers living at the time of Christ’s crucifixion are the original audience: Matt. 24:1-34; Rev.1:7	Second Generation Christians and churches would be the primary audience distancing the book from a Matt.24:1-34 association

The Date of the writing
changes the interpretation!

The Rationale for the Early Date (Around AD 67):

1) **The King in 17:9-10 is discernably Nero not Domitian:**

The “sixth king” of Revelation 17:10 is still reigning from Rome at the time of the writing (“five have fallen”). The Roman Emperors of that era were numbered as follows:

- *First*, Julius Caesar (49-44 BC), who was assassinated followed by civil war
- *Second*, Augustus (31 BC-AD 14),
- *Third*, Tiberius (AD 14-37),
- *Fourth*, Gaius (AD 37-41),
- *Fifth*, Claudius (AD 41-54; since he is the 5th Roman Emperor compare him to “**five fallen**” in **Rev. 17:10**),
- ***Sixth, Nero*** (AD 55-68, the reigning emperor is Nero, the text refers to him as, “**one is.**” It would have been understood that Nero was the sixth king and the one reigning when John wrote Revelation. This also associates Nero with other passages and makes them plain (6:2; 13:1-18; 17:1-13), and

- *Seventh*, Galba (June, AD 68-January, AD 69, compare this emperor to “a little while” in **Rev.17:10** since he reigned only six months. The history of these seven kings is not just coincidence.

2) **The city in 11:8 (and Matt. 27:53) is definitely a real place and not an assumed similar future place:**

3) **The Temple in 11:1-2 would have been one of the last places John and Jesus visited together:**

- Note the first generation language in **Luke 21:24**.

4) **An Expectation of “soon destruction” for an apostate church is a reasonable conclusion to the Bible (1:1, 3, 19; 2:16; 3:10; 6:10-11; 22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20):**

- Note no spiritual guessing!

5) **A close audience configuration in the book of Revelation (1:7) is consistent with the other 65 books of the Bible:**

God’s normal pattern of revelation in the Bible is with clarity and certainty!

What we get with the early AD 67 date:

- The “great city” is not a mystery but the historical Jerusalem that contained the temple Jesus had promised to destroy.
- The Kings in chapter 17 all have real names and are historical realities that perfectly fulfill the prophecies of Daniel.
- The words “soon” and “near” really mean soon and near and don’t need any complicated or convoluted explanation (1:1,3; 3:11).
- The average believer can have confidence in interpretation without needing “experts” to provide dreams and suggestions of interpretations.
- The primary audience receives wonderful instruction and comfort in a difficult time of persecution.
- We join with the view of over 130 notable scholars that Dr. Ken Gentry lists in his book, *Before Jerusalem Fell*. Men like Edersheim, Schaff, Adams, Sproul, DeMar, Bahnsen, Chilton, Russell and Bass.

What we get with a late AD 97 date:

- An uncertain audience—second generation and beyond.
- Uncertain Interpretations with many preachers and church members left speculating one thing and then another.
- Uncertain believers heavily dependent upon experts whom claim to have broken the Revelation code of understanding.
- An uncertain church instead of a greatly comforted and instructed church as with the rest of the scriptures.
- Ugly frustrations as church members fight over views of who is correct and who is wrong demonstrating their pride and loyalties to people who have taught differently than what others teach.

Summary of the book of Revelation: God reveals his rejection of Israel as his unfaithful old covenant bride of harlotry. He judges her with the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and he replaces her with a new bride, the New Covenant Church of Jesus Christ. God promises protection for his church in the great tribulation and judgment of Israel (1:9-20; 2:10; 3:10; 7:14; Matt. 24:21, 34). By the time John is writing the book of Revelation the great tribulation was already in process (1:9; 7:13-14) and the final judgment on the unrepentant Jewish people was soon.