

1. **Introduction:** Though significantly different models are used to interpret Revelation, all orthodox Christians affirm the Nicene Creed's words: Jesus Christ "*will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.*"
  - Differences in views about End Times are truly significant, leading to profoundly different ways of understanding Scripture, the church, and the way to live a life that pleases God. Each view claims to be to be the true interpretation of Scripture.
  - Interpretative models for Revelation are heavily impacted by whether Revelation is assumed to have been written before or after 70 AD.
  - Recent studies strongly indicate revelation was written a few years before 70 AD, about 65 – 68 (**Redating the New Testament**, John A. T. Robinson, 1976, 2000).
  - Robinson observes, "*One of the oddest facts about the New Testament is that what on any showing would appear to be the single most datable and climactic event of the period - the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, and with it the collapse of institutional Judaism based on the temple - is never once mentioned as a past fact.*" (underline emphasis added). This is an indication Revelation was likely written before 70 AD.
  - Other early-date supporters: (1.) **Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament (The Evidence for Early Composition)**, Johanthan Bernier, Baker Academic, 2022. (2.) **The Early Date of Revelation**, Robert Hillegonds, Victorious Hope Publishing, 2016.
  - The date of writing is important. If Revelation was written before destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, much but not all fits the overwhelming disaster in Jerusalem and Judea beginning in 66 AD and culminating in the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
2. **Prediction of Temple's Destruction:** A few days before His crucifixion (33 AD) Jesus, in the Olivet Discourse (Mt 24; Mk 13; Lk 21), said about the Temple "***Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.***"
  - The Olivet Discourse (Mk 13) is given in the context of the events of Mk 12 and 13.
  - Jesus said, the destruction of the Temple would occur before a generation(40 years) had passed. Rome's destruction of the Temple in 70 AD fits that picture. The Temple's destruction marked the end of the age of Jewish Temple Worship. Everything was changed for pious Jews. No sacrifices, no celebration of "Passover" in Jerusalem.
3. **The Olivet Discourse from Mark 13:** Jesus, in private, told the disciples about the coming destruction of the Temple as well as "further-in-the-future" End-Times events.
  - The context of the Olivet Discourse (Mk 13) is the events of Mk 12 and 13.
4. **Context from Mk 12 and 13:** On Monday after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Sunday, Jesus cleansed the Temple of commercial enterprises (money changers, sellers of sacrificial animals, etc.) significantly irritating the Priests and other Temple officials.
  - On Tuesday, He spent most of the day in the Temple dealing with irate officials who were attempting to catch Him saying something that would enable them to arrest Him.

- Late that afternoon, Jesus and disciples left the Temple by the Eastern Gate and went to the Mount of Olives which overlooks the Temple. From there, as they looked back at the Temple, Jesus taught them what became known as the Olivet Discourse.
5. **Mark 13:1-2**: *And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!”<sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”*
- Why did Jesus respond to the comment about the majesty of the Temple in this way?
  - From the tenor of the entire discourse, it seems Jesus is training His disciples to prepare them for His death and the events and difficulties they must face.
  - Upon reaching the Mount of Olives, which was about 300 feet higher than the city, they sat down and looked back at the Temple.
6. **Mark 13:3-4**: *And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,<sup>4</sup> “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?”*
- Oddly, the disciples do not ask how the Temple would be destroyed. They seemingly couldn’t conceive of a near-time destruction of the Temple. Thinking its destruction would signal End Times, they asked when it would happen and what would be the signs.
  - In the next few days, the disciples will experience a severe disruption in their lives.
  - That disruption that will begin with the arrest of Jesus but will not end with His death and resurrection. Persecution will become a daily part of their life..
  - The severity of the disruptions in life that they will experience is emphasized by the prediction that the beloved, magnificent Temple they have just left will be destroyed.
  - The Temple was a majestic symbol of Israel and its God. Jews came from all over the Empire to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem. The Temple was the only place where sacrifices to God were made. Would God allow His Temple to be destroyed?
  - Jesus’ disciples knew the Temple intimately. Jesus stating it would be destroyed shocked them all. Jesus had been in many contentious interactions with the Temple rulers.
  - Was Jesus angry? The different Temple groups were typically at odds with one another, but they were now united in opposition to Jesus with increasing desire to be rid of Him.
  - Temple activities were overseen by the Priests. They permitted money-changers and animal merchants in the outer courtyard of the Temple. Having animals in the courtyard was a loud, messy, and smelly (but profitable) business.
  - Visitors from distant areas could not bring their own animals, so availability of animals for sacrifice was viewed as a necessity. Only Temple Shekels were permitted to be used in the Temple. Money-changers supplied (for a fee) the Temple-Shekels needed.
  - Jesus saw money-changing and animal-selling activities as perversions of the Temples’ purpose of worship, so He drove them out of the Temple.

- The Priests were not at all pleased by this disruption of activities they had approved. To them, this was another example of Jesus interfering.
- Jesus' successful ministry and His opposition to the rulers made them increasingly anxious to rid themselves of the trouble-maker.
- The disciples were certainly aware of such issues and perhaps were concerned about effects of the friction Jesus was causing. Their comments about the magnificent Temple could have been an attempt to get Jesus' thinking positively about the Temple.
- Temple destroyed? Unthinkable! Why would God allow such a thing to happen?
- They had not yet grasped that God's Temple in the coming era would be the hearts of His people. The death and resurrection of Jesus would usher in a "new covenant" age.
- When Babylon destroyed the first Temple in 586 BC, the effect was devastating on all Israel. It was a time of national judgment, destruction, and exile.
- Will the same sort of catastrophe result if Herod's Temple is destroyed? If so, what will become of Israel and the Jews?

7. **Herod's Temple:** The magnificence of Herod's Temple was breathtaking. In about 20 BC, Herod began a reconstruction of the Temple complex. He tore down the existing Temple and built a new one, increasing the size of the Temple courtyards from about 17 acres to about 36 acres. Retaining walls about 16 feet thick were built to the south and west to hold fill that would make the new area level with the old.

- Enormous limestone blocks were used, especially in the retaining walls. The largest stones weighed over 600 tons. Marble and gold were used lavishly in the Temple itself.
- The new Temple itself was completed in about 1 ½ years.
- Construction of courtyard buildings took longer but was mostly complete in about 8 years. Some finishing work continued until 63 AD.
- The Temple was 150 feet high. Portions of its walls were covered with gold. From a distance, the white limestone of the Temple was so bright that it gave the illusion of snow. The roof was cedar beams covered with gold.
- It was huge and strong. Jesus said it would all be destroyed. How was that possible?
- How could such a huge structure that was so well-protected by city walls be destroyed?
- It did take a massive effort, but, in 70 AD. the Romans destroyed the Temple and city.

8. **The Roman/Jewish War Begins:** In 66 AD, the Jews revolted against the Romans with initial success. In the spring of 67, Nero sent an army under Vespasian to deal with them. Vespasian began to subdue the rest of Judea before attacking Jerusalem.

- Nero was an evil man. The Roman senator, Vindex, supported by Galba who would soon become Emperor, rebelled against Nero. Nero was declared a public enemy and condemned to death in absentia. He fled Rome, and on 9 June AD 68 committed suicide.
- His death sparked a brief Roman civil war known as the Year of the Four Emperors.

- Turmoil and upset came to the Empire. The next year there were 4 Emperors - Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian. When Vespasian became Emperor, his son Titus continued the Jewish war. He completed subduing most of Judea. Next, Jerusalem.

9. **The Siege of Jerusalem**: In April of 70 AD, four legions (about 20,000 men) under Titus began the siege of Jerusalem, surrounding the city and using siege engines.

- Just before the siege began, many visiting Jews entered Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.
- Rome built a containing wall around the city and no one was allowed to leave.
- The city was overloaded with people, causing food shortages and eventually starvation.
- In August, a sustained assault broke a way into the city. The Temple was burned and
- At that point, about 1 million Jews had been killed in the war, 77,000 taken as slaves.
- Temple artifacts were taken to Rome and displayed in Titus' victory parade.
- The Emperor Vespasian ordered the city walls and the Temple to be pulled down except for the 3 highest wall towers and the western wall of the city.
- Some large stones in the Temple retaining walls were left in place (in the west wall).
- No mortar was used between the stones in the Temple complex. When the Temple burned, gold on the walls melted and ran into crevices between the smooth-cut stones.
- Later, to get the gold, the stones were pulled apart.
- Israel ceased to exist as a nation. Jews were forbidden to rebuild Jerusalem. Years later, Rome renamed the area Syria Palestina.

10. **Next Time**: Jesus comments on End-Times.