

Time Frame for Applying the Visions in Revelation

- “To show His bondservants the things which must shortly take place” (1:1). The short time frame is repeated at the beginning and end of the book (1:1, 1:3, 22:6, 22:7, 22:10, 22:12, 22:20).
 - The portion from 20:7 – 22:5 are clearly set apart by John as beyond the “shortly” time frame.
 - Many cite 2 Peter 3:8, “With the Lord, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.” But, this reasoning has several problems:
 - The context of the citation extends from 3:1 – 13. The specific point of 3:8 is that God is patient, allowing time for the more stubborn to see their error and repent. The thought continues through verse 9. The context does not address the point that God might give time references that could mean anything.
 - The event about which God is being patient is Judgment (3:10).
 - Making the claim that the time frames of the Scriptures are not to be understood as written causes several significant problems:
 - No multiplier or modifier of the Biblical time frames is in the Scriptures. Without a rubric for understanding time references, they become indeterminable. Curiously, those who invoke this time-frame adjustment generally have a multiplier that points to their near futures. Writers have been doing this for many centuries. Obviously, all of them have been wrong since we are still here.
 - Those who have found their own time-frame modifier imply that God was unable to be clear without human help. A human interpreter becomes necessary for anyone to make sense of the passage.
 - Daniel 9:2 recounts that Daniel read Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10) and concluded that the seventy-year desolation of Jerusalem had expired. Daniel had a literal view of that time frame.
 - Other time frames are more figurative, such as the Seventy Weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24 – 27. Although literal weeks are unlikely, the various sections of the 70 weeks are roughly proportional to how they occurred in history.
 - Jesus predicted that He would rise from the dead on the third day. No figurative time frame is suggested.
 - In every Old Testament prediction that involved a time frame, all of them have been understood as literal or, if figurative, proportional.
 - The days of creation are implied to be 24-hour days (an evening and a morning).
- The locations of the various catastrophes described in Revelation are described in several ways:
 - Great Tribulation: Some make a distinction between catastrophes termed a “tribulation” versus those termed a “great tribulation.”
 - Jesus described a “great tribulation” in Matthew 24:21 and specified that it would happen before the generation of His day passed away (24:34). The Luke account uses fewer figures of speech and plainer language, but lacks the word, “tribulation” (Luke 21:5 – 32).

- An uncountable multitude (Revelation 7:9) washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (7:14) after coming out of the “great tribulation.” A time scale is not given other than it is part of what was revealed under the sixth seal.
 - A great tribulation was predicted for those of the church in Thyatira who followed the false prophetess Jezebel (Revelation 2:22).
 - Other references to tribulation on earth are found in Acts 14:22, Romans 5:3, Romans 8:35, Romans 12:12, 2 Corinthians 1:4, 2 Corinthians 7:4, and 1 Thessalonians 3:4. The horrors of Judgment on the unbeliever are also called a tribulation in Romans 2:9 – 10 and 2 Thessalonians 1:6.
 - John considered himself to be in a period of tribulation (Revelation 1:9).
- The location of most of the devastation is describe in various ways in Revelation:
 - (11:8) “Where also our Lord was crucified.”
 - (16:6) “They have shed the blood of saints and prophets.”
 - (17:6) “Drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs.”
 - (18:20) “Rejoice over her, O heaven and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her.”
 - (18:24) “In her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all who were slain on the earth.”
 - (19:2) “He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.”
 - (14:3, 16:19, 17:5, 18:2, 10, 21) Babylon had been in ruins for nearly six centuries when Revelation was written, so the references in Revelation must be figurative. The line, “Where also our Lord was crucified” (11:8), limits the possibilities. Peter previously had used Babylon to describe Jerusalem (1 Peter 5:13).
- In chapters 11 and 12, a period of 3.5 years (42 months, 1260 days) is used several times to refer to the devastation of the Temple by Gentiles. Since God put an end to prophets right after this (as predicted in Zechariah 13:2 and Daniel 9:24), we have no confirmation from an inspired writer concerning to what to apply this. However, the Jewish Revolt of 67 – 70 AD lasted that long and resulted in monumental destruction.
- The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, which occurred in 70 AD, were the last events in the Bible which were predicted and for which signs were given (Daniel 9:25, Matthew 24:1 – 34, Luke 21:5 – 32). The only specific event after that time that is described in the New Testament is Judgment, for which no signs will be given, but rather will come as a thief in the night (Matthew 24:35 – 51, 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11, 2 Peter 3:3 – 12).
- Some teach that an event called the Rapture will occur before Judgment. This teaching originated in 1830. Every Scripture cited in its defense, from a variety of places in the Bible, is taken out of context. All of the variations on this doctrine require that Satan still be “lord of the earth” and that Jesus to set up His kingdom at the time of the Rapture. However:
 - Paul considered himself and his audience to be in the kingdom (Colossians 1:13).
 - John considered himself and his audience to be in the kingdom (Revelation 1:9).
 - After His ascension, Jesus announced Himself to be ruler over all the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5, 2:27)
 - No Scripture describes Jesus ever setting foot on earth after His ascension.