

Introduction:

1. Historians can tell when something was written based on the things contained in it.
 - a. If they find a letter written by Abraham Lincoln, and it mentions the Emancipation Proclamation having been enacted, it is obvious that it was written AFTER that event.
 - b. However, if they find a letter written by Lincoln that mentions the same thing as something he is considering, then it is obvious that it was written BEFORE that event.
 - c. If it contained discussion of events, then obviously those events had already happened, which helps the historian to date it.
2. The same thing is true of the Bible.
 - a. The historical records of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther were all written after the events recorded in them had happened.
 - i. Some may have been written over a long period of time, but each section was written after the events recorded in them had already occurred.
 - ii. That is the way historical books are written: after the events have happened.
 - b. With the prophetic books of the Bible, we can know that they were written BEFORE the events they prophesy took place.
 - i. If the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon in 586 BC is prophesied, then we can know without any doubt that it was written BEFORE 586 BC.
 - ii. If the Northern kingdom of Israel is mentioned as still existing, we know it was written BEFORE 721 BC when they were taken into captivity by Assyria.
3. You may wonder, what does this have to do with the book of Revelation?
 - a. The time period in which Revelation was written is a hotly debated subject, both in the church and in denominations as well.
 - b. You may wonder, does it really matter?
 - i. Some say, "so long as we agree it is inspired and it was written by the apostle John during his lifetime, does it really matter when it was written?"
 - ii. The answer is: Yes, it actually matters.
 - c. Why does it matter?
 - i. Because some of the dates proposed for the book contradict Old Testament prophecies about the end of miracles.
 - ii. Because the New Testament places the finalization of Scripture and the end of miracles at the same time.
 - iii. Because some of the dates proposed contradict information within the book of Revelation.
 - iv. Because the date in which it was written affects the interpretation of the book.
4. There are three main views as to the date in which Revelation was written:
 - a. During the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96).
 - b. During the reign of Vespasian (AD 69-79).
 - c. During the reign of Nero (AD 54-68).
5. Today, our goal will be to look at the evidence and see which one of these is correct.
 - a. It should be noted from the outset that each of these views relies on different evidence.
 - i. One view relies almost exclusively on non-Biblical evidence and supposition.

- ii. One view relies almost exclusively on their interpretation of one passage within the book (and that interpretation is not held by anyone outside of this group).
 - iii. One view relies almost exclusively on the evidence within the Bible and within the book of Revelation.
6. Today, we will consider various forms of Biblical evidence which will let us know when the book of Revelation was written.
- a. We will not be dealing with supposition.
 - b. We will not be dealing with a unique interpretation to prove the date.
 - c. We will be dealing with biblical evidence and taking whichever view the evidence demands.
- I. I Corinthians 13:8-10 – The Completion of Scriptures/the Completion of Miracles.
- a. Miracles are supernatural things, done by humans, through the power of God.
 - i. Prophecies.
 - ii. Tongues.
 - iii. Knowledge (supernatural knowledge, like Christ promised the apostles in Luke 12:11-12).
 - b. All of these things, according to Paul, would "fail," "cease," and "vanish away" (I Corinthians 13:8).
 - i. All of these miracles were called "in part" or "partial" (I Corinthians 13:9).
 - ii. They are contrasted with the "complete" or "perfect" (I Corinthians 13:10).
 - iii. When "that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part [miracles] shall be done away" (I Corinthians 13:10).
 - c. "That which is perfect" refers to the completed will of God.
 - i. It is called "that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2).
 - ii. It is called "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25).
 - iii. It is the written New Testament Scriptures.
 - iv. Thus, when the final book of the New Testament was written, miracles would come to an end.
 - d. Why is this important?
 - i. If we can know when miracles ended, then by Biblical statement, we can know when the New Testament was completed.
 - ii. Can we know when miracles ended?
- II. Zechariah 13:1-3 – I will cause the prophets to pass out of the land.
- a. Zechariah gives a prophecy of the death of Jesus Christ in 12:10 (they shall look upon me whom they have pierced – John 19:34-37).
 - b. Zechariah gives a prophecy of spiritual cleansing opened to the inhabitants of Jerusalem just 5 verses later in 13:1 (fulfilled in Acts 2).
 - c. Zechariah gives a prophecy of the abandonment of Jesus by His disciples in 13:7 (smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered – Matthew 26:31).
 - d. Zechariah gives a prophecy of God Himself leading the nations against Jerusalem, destroying the city (Zechariah 14:1-2).
 - e. In the midst of these prophecies, Zechariah records God saying, "I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land" (Zechariah 13:2).
 - i. Sometime in the period between the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem by foreign nations (led by God), God would cause prophecy to cease.

- ii. I Corinthians 13:8-10 told us that prophecy would end when the written word (the New Testament) was completed.
 - iii. Therefore, the New Testament was completed sometime between the death of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem by foreign nations, led by God (this took place when the Roman Empire destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70).
 - iv. But there's more...
- III. Micah 7:15 – I will do marvelous things according to the days of the coming out of Egypt.
- a. Micah 7:18-19 speaks of a time when God would forgive the sins of the Jews ("our iniquities" – v 19) and the Gentiles ("their sins" – v 19).
 - i. This could only refer to the time of the gospel, which is to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Gentile) (Romans 1:16-17).
 - b. Micah 7:20 speaks of the time when God would fulfill His promise to Abraham and Jacob.
 - i. "In thy seed, all nations of the earth will be blessed" (to Abraham - Genesis 22:18, to Jacob - Genesis 28:14).
 - ii. Galatians 3:14-16 lets us know this is fulfilled to both the Jews and Gentiles in Christ Jesus.
 - iii. Therefore, the time spoken of in this section of Micah is the time of the church.
 - c. Micah 7:15 says that God will do "marvelous things" "according to the days of the coming out of Egypt."
 - i. What marvelous things did God do when they were coming out of Egypt?
 1. The Ten Plagues (miracles)
 2. Crossing the Red Sea (miracle)
 3. Water from a rock (miracle)
 4. Etc...
 - ii. How long were they coming out of Egypt?
 1. They were considered to be "coming out of Egypt" until they entered the Promised Land, 40 years later.
 2. See also Hebrews 3:9-10.
 - iii. According to many, this verse is a prophecy that miracles in the church would last 40 years.
 1. Guy N. Woods stated this a few times in a debate with a Pentecostal named Franklin.
 2. This passage alone may not be as conclusive, considering that it is possible God is saying that it is "like the days when you were coming out of Egypt" instead of "according to the days [time period]..."
 3. But it is quite interesting that Pentecost, being in AD 30, with 40 years added to it, places you at AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed...just like is mentioned in Zechariah 13-14.
- IV. Joel 2:28-32/Acts 2:16-21 – In the last days, I will pour out from My Spirit...
- a. Chapter 1 describes a locust plague that God sent against Judah.
 - i. It was accompanied with famine, drought, and fires (1:11-12, 19-20).
 - ii. The priests were told to call the people to the house of Jehovah (the temple in Jerusalem) to cry to God (1:14).
 - b. Joel 2:1-11 describes the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah.

- i. It is called a day of darkness and gloominess (2:2).
 - ii. Prophetic language is used to describe the overthrow of the nation (2:10).
 - 1. The earth shall quake.
 - 2. The heavens shall tremble.
 - 3. The sun and moon will be dark.
 - 4. The stars will not shine.
 - iii. It is important to understand that it is Jerusalem's destruction that has been described throughout this book.
- c. Joel 2:28-32 is a prophecy of events in the first century, as shown by Peter's quotation of it in Acts 2:16-ff.
- i. After the Jews heard the apostles speaking in tongues (a miracle), Peter said, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," and then he quotes this section of Scripture (read Acts 2:17-21).
 - ii. It begins with, "and it shall come to pass in the last days..."
 - 1. The entirety of Joel dealt with judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem up to Joel 3:2.
 - 2. "The last days" in this passage is not speaking about the gospel age, or the Christian dispensation.
 - 3. "The last days," using the context of Joel (and as we will see in a minute, the context of Peter's sermon) is a reference to the last days of the Jewish nation and Judaism.
 - 4. Miracles (I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh...prophecy...visions... dreams – Acts 2:17-19), according to this prophecy, were to take place in the last days of Judah and Jerusalem.
 - a. This usage of the term "the last days" to refer to the end of Judah and Jerusalem is common in the Old Testament.
 - b. Isaiah 2:1-4 uses the same language.
 - c. Micah 3:12-4:2 also uses the same language, both of which specifically say it is the last days of Judah and Jerusalem.
 - d. If miracles are to take place in the last days of Judah and Jerusalem, when do you think they might end?
 - iii. The prophecy then goes on to give those prophetic descriptions that describe the overthrow of a nation (Acts 2:19-20).
 - 1. Wonders in heaven
 - 2. Blood, fire, vapour of smoke
 - 3. Sun to darkness
 - 4. Moon to blood.
 - 5. So the prophecy of miracles in the last days of the Jewish system ends with a prophecy of the overthrow of a nation.
 - a. The only nation whose overthrow is described in Joel is Jerusalem/Judah.
 - b. The only nation whose overthrow was anywhere in the near future that was of any consequence to the Jews was Judah/Jerusalem.
 - iv. The prophecy of Joel speaks of the "great and notable day of the Lord" (Acts 2:20).

1. The phrase "the day of the Lord" always, 100% of the time in the Old Testament refers to a day of judgment against someone.
 - a. Most frequently, in the Old Testament, it described judgment against God's chosen people, the Israelites.
2. This day of judgment is connected with the overthrow of a nation (same sentence).
 - a. This day of judgment is against the Jewish nation.
- v. The prophecy, immediately after describing the overthrow of a nation, and God's judgment coming in the last days of Judah/Jerusalem, says, "and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).
 1. If you were just told that prophecy about the final days of your nation were about to be fulfilled, and that it was going to be overthrown, and God was going to bring judgment upon it, what would you think when the next words are "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"?
 2. Saved from what?
 - a. Saved from the coming destruction that the Jewish nation was going to experience.
 - b. The Jewish nation was going to be destroyed in AD 70.
 - c. The miracles were promised by God through Joel IN THIS TIME PERIOD:
 - i. The last days of Judah and Jerusalem.
 - ii. Before the day of judgment brought upon Jerusalem and Judah by God.
- vi. But just so we can make it a little more clear, let's go to the end of Peter's sermon.
 1. Acts 2:40 – and with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying "save yourselves from this untoward generation."
 - a. This generation.
 - b. Jesus said, in Matthew 24:34, that "this generation" would not pass until all these things (the destruction of Jerusalem, 24:1-34) were fulfilled.
 - c. Jesus, in Matthew 23:34-36, said that Jerusalem would be held accountable for the blood of the apostles and prophets, and that "all these things shall come upon **this generation**."
 - d. It was THAT generation that Jesus and Peter both spoke about that would be destroyed, and the only way to save themselves was to turn to Jesus as the Savior.
- d. So, Zechariah says miracles would pass from the land sometime between the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem.
- e. Micah appears to limit miracles in the church to 40 years (conveniently enough, covering the same time period as Zechariah).
- f. Joel says miracles would take place in the last days of Judah and Jerusalem before God judges and overthrows them (again, the exact same time period).
 - i. Taking these things into consideration, we have Old Testament prophecies which state miracles would cease by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

- ii. Since this is true, then we can know for sure that no book of the Bible was written after that time, based on I Corinthians 13:8-10.
- g. But let's now look at evidence within Revelation itself.
- V. Revelation 1:1, 3, 22:6, 10 – things which must shortly come to pass.
 - a. As we discussed last week, the book of Revelation clearly states that the events contained within its 22 chapters were going to happen very soon.
 - b. "The time is at hand" means it was very near.
 - c. We saw that when the word translated "shortly" is used elsewhere in the New Testament, it means something imminent, not generations away.
 - i. Paul was told to get "quickly" [same word in Greek] out of Jerusalem (Acts 22:18).
 - ii. Paul told Timothy he knew he was about to die, and therefore to "come shortly" [same word in Greek] to him with his cloak and parchments (II Timothy 4:6-9).
 - iii. So, the things described in Revelation were things which were about to happen.
 - d. OK, so how does this help us prove when it was written?
- VI. Revelation 11:8 – events were going to happen "where also our Lord was crucified."
 - a. We won't get in to the events which are happening in this chapter, but John is very clear to say that some of the events would take place in the city where our Lord was crucified.
 - b. So, it ought to be simple enough to determine what city is under consideration.
 - i. Luke 13:33 – Jesus says, "I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."
 - ii. Jesus was tried and condemned and murdered in the city of Jerusalem.
 - c. Regardless of what we want to interpret the events to be, John is very clear to tell us that some events in Revelation (which were about to happen) would take place in Jerusalem.
 - d. This proves beyond any reasonable doubt that Jerusalem was still in existence when the book was written.
 - i. You can't have events take place in "the great city" when the "great city" doesn't exist anymore.

Conclusion:

1. There are other things we could look at which would also prove that Revelation was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, but we will save that for next week when we look at the purpose of the book of Revelation, what it is describing.
2. Let it be known that the Old Testament prophesied miracles would cease prior to the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - a. Let it also be known that the apostle Paul said the completed New Testament writings would happen before miracles ceased.
 - b. Therefore, the Bible teaches that the completed New Testament writings were all finished prior to AD 70.
 - i. This includes the book of Revelation.
 - ii. Therefore, this book could not have been written during the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96).
 - iii. Therefore this book could not have been written during the reign of Vespasian (AD 69-79).
 - iv. Therefore, this book was written during the reign of Nero (AD 54-68).

3. Also, every one of you needs to realize what we have done today:
 - a. We have proven—FROM THE BIBLE—when the book of Revelation was written.
 - b. We have not looked at any evidence outside of the Bible from uninspired men, because when the Bible says something, it doesn't matter what uninspired men say or think to the contrary.
 - c. Most commentaries on Revelation will quote church fathers, church traditions and stories, and opinions of other so-called "scholars" in an effort to prove that the book of Revelation was written near the end of the first century (AD 95-96), but they offer no proof from the biblical text itself.
4. When you discuss a Bible topic, do not EVER settle for "well I think" or "my opinion is this..."
 - a. People have settled for a "I think" mentality in regards to salvation.
 - i. I think all you have to do is invite Jesus into your heart (though the concept is not taught ANYWHERE in Scriptures).
 - ii. I think all you have to do is say the sinner's prayer (though the concept is not taught ANYWHERE in Scriptures).
 - iii. I think all you have to do is have faith, nothing else (though the concept is not taught ANYWHERE in Scriptures).
 - b. Instead, we must be people who demand, "I want to know what the BIBLE says about it!"
 - c. The Bible says you must hear the word of God (Acts 2:22).
 - d. The Bible says you must have faith (Hebrews 11:6), but not faith only (James 2:24).
 - e. The Bible says you must repent of your sins (Acts 2:38).
 - f. The Bible says you must confess Christ (Romans 10:10).
 - g. The Bible says you must be baptized (Acts 22:16).
 - h. The Bible says you must continue to stand fast in the Lord (I Thessalonians 3:8), or in other words be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).