



According to the Bible, When Was the Writing of the New Testament Completed?

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Introduction

Many critics might argue that the time question itself is an absurdity as the Bible is just a collection of written works by different authors who could not possibly have known when the last one would be penned. Therefore, they could not have provided that information, especially within the content of the writings themselves.

But, they err in their judgment because the Bible is in truth a Holy Spirit inspired book. Before the first writer picked up his pen to write, God already knew when the last one would lay it down, having written the last word. This study starts from the premise that the importance and timing of the New Testament's completion was so critical to the final 'fulfillment phase' of the Old Testament prophecies that God purposely ensured that enough information would be included within their pages for the question to be answered.

Regretfully, some critics, perhaps even while claiming to believe in the inspiration of the Bible, would prefer to put their trust in ancient uninspired historians, which explains why they believe Matthew, John, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John and Revelation to have been written between AD 85-95. Misplaced trust also accounts for many Bible verse misinterpretations and why some people believe that miracles and other spiritual gifts are still in use today.

If God had not told us when the writing of the New Testament was completed, we might feel justified in consulting the ancient uninspired historians. But since He has indeed provided that answer, we must confess to having no justification at all. Therefore, we must hold fast to what God has said and totally repudiate the answers of all those who disagree.

The purpose of this essay is not to provide all the answers to every related question on the topic, but only to establish one fact proven by Scripture — the actual time of completion for the New Testament. It assumes that the readers will already have a basic knowledge of both Old and New Testament prophecies, especially those found in Daniel and Revelation.

The Mystery of God

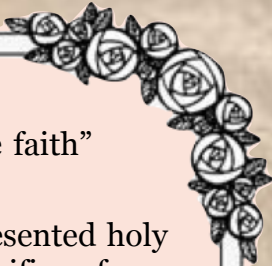
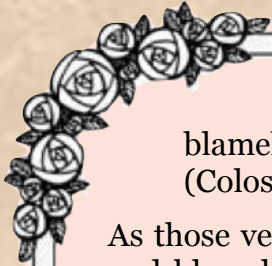
Before the foundation of the world God chose us in Him, and His will was that we should be holy and blameless before Him (Ephesians 1:4). As the following verse indicates, the purpose of His will was so that we, being in that upright spiritual state, would then be suitable for adoption as His sons. And having become sons, we would be members of His household, citizens of His kingdom and heirs to eternal life (Job 1:1-8; Ephesians 2:19-20).

"In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:4-10 ESV).

Also according to that verse, our adoption would be made possible *through* Jesus Christ, which means through the agency or intervention of Jesus Christ, an action which took place when God sent Him to be a sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

"And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and



blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith” (Colossians 1:19-23 ESV).

As those verses affirm, the continuance of our faith will result in us being presented holy and blameless before Him. God’s will and purpose for us, including the specifics of our reconciliation through Christ, were well-hidden throughout the ages, only being mentioned from time to time in the form of visions and prophecies requiring divine interpretation.

The apostle Peter wrote about those prophets and their prophecies:

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.”

“It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look” (1 Peter 1:10-12 ESV).

The apostle Paul commented on the same mystery that has now been disclosed:

“Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ!” (Romans 16:25-27 ESV).

The “mystery” which Paul said “was kept secret for long ages” and was made known to all nations through the prophetic writings to bring about the obedience of faith was literally called the “mystery of God” in the New Testament (Ephesians 1:4; Revelation 10:7 ESV) and was precisely defined in the book of Ephesians as:

“God’s will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him” (Ephesians 1:9-10 ESV).

Men set forth their wills in legal documents while they live, and after death the executors of their estates manage the distribution of their assets. But God set forth His will in Christ because “the Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand” (John 3:34-36 ESV). While speaking to the multitude, Jesus said,

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day” (John 6:38-40 ESV).

These verses make it clear that the mystery of God refers to His will and plan for mankind to be redeemed through Jesus Christ in order for them to become adoptable as His sons. To give all things into the Son’s hand meant that Christ was given the authority to carry out that plan. It was a plan with objectives and sub-objectives which, when fully implemented, would result in the complete setting up of God’s kingdom and the proclamation of the Way of salvation through Jesus Christ for the fullness of time.

It was in view of the approaching time when the last objective in God’s plan would be accomplished that the prophet John wrote, “the mystery of God would be fulfilled” (Revelation 10:7, 14:6 ESV). The word “fulfilled” was used because prophecies are fulfilled.



The Mystery of God in Prophecy

When the King of Babylon had a dream about four kingdoms, the prophet Daniel stood before him to interpret it (603-602 BC). It was revealed at that time that three more kingdoms would arise after the Babylonian one, those being the Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman kingdoms. After describing the fourth, Daniel finished the interpretation by saying,

“And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever” (Daniel 2:44 ESV).

The eternal kingdom which God would set up during the days of the Roman Empire was the same one which Jesus Christ now rules over with the scepter of uprightness and which those who are being saved are transferred to (Psalm 45:6; Daniel 7:13-14; Luke 1:32-33; John 18:36-37; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 1:8; Revelation 5:9-10; Revelation 19:16).

Sixty-five years after the king’s dream, while Daniel was in prayer to God on behalf of himself and his people, the one called Gabriel, whom the prophet had previously seen in a vision, came to give him insight and understanding. These are his words:

“Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place” (Daniel 9:24 ESV).

This verse and the three which follow it (Daniel 9:24-27) comprise what is referred to as the “seventy-week decree.” The first verse, with its six bullet-style objectives, is actually a six-point action-plan for fulfilling the mystery of God, while the last three provide an overview of the decree’s beginning and ending, as well as specifically state the week in which the Messiah would come. Each one was equal to a little more than seven years.

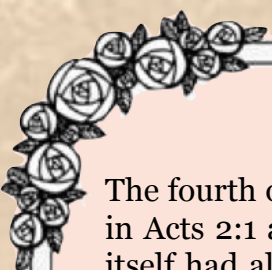
Together, they concerned the Jewish nation and the holy city, Jerusalem, and in them God revealed to Daniel that a time frame had been established for the coming of the Messiah and the setting up of His kingdom. Crucially, everything in the decree, whether specified or necessarily implied, would take place and be finished by the end of the seventy weeks.

According to God’s messenger, those weeks would begin when a decree had been issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and they would end in a desolation of war, with the complete destruction of the city and sanctuary taking place once again. Historically, that destruction took place at the hands of the Roman army under General Titus in AD 70, meaning the seventy weeks also came to an end at that time.

Overview of God’s Plan Set Forth in Christ

An examination of Daniel 9:24 shows that God’s plan for the fullness of time consists of the six stated objectives which can be divided into two distinct groups: a primary group where the first three objectives would be accomplished together, and a secondary group where the last three would be accomplished individually.

The first three objectives — “to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity” — were accomplished during the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and resulted in the complete setting up of God’s kingdom with Jesus sitting at the right hand of Power as both King and High Priest, having ransomed with His blood “people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,” and “made them a kingdom and priests to our God” (Luke 19:11-27; Revelation 5:9-10 ESV). It was the kingdom that would never be destroyed.



The fourth objective — “to bring in everlasting righteousness” — began to be accomplished in Acts 2:1 and was finally completed in Revelation 10:1-2. Although the eternal kingdom itself had already been completely set up, it would take one with the faith of Abraham to obtain citizenship in it (Romans 4:20-25).

The everlasting righteousness which was to be brought in was the same one that was explained in Romans 4:1-25 and Hebrews 4:17-19, and preached throughout the Roman Empire. It was referred to as the Way of righteousness which leads to eternal life (Acts 24:14 ESV; Romans 5:21, 6:19 ESV; 2 Peter 2:21 ESV). And, it was during the accomplishment of this objective that the mystery of God was completely revealed to the apostles and prophets and then written down in the form of the New Testament to bring about the obedience of faith (Romans 16:25-27 ESV).

For about twenty years after the first writings began to appear, as illustrated by Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, they were used together with spiritual gifts not only to bring about a knowledge of God and His everlasting righteousness, but also to teach the principles of godly living regardless of the learner’s former spiritual background. Yet, the gifts were never meant to be permanent. To the church in Corinth Paul wrote,

“As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away” (1 Corinthians 13:8-10 ESV).

In those rather cryptic verses, at the same time that Paul was saying that spiritual gifts were a temporary means to partially reveal God’s word, he was also implying that there was a permanent means already under development which would have the ability to reveal the whole mystery of God to mankind throughout their existence on earth. It would be perfect, meaning that it would be perfect for the fullness of time. Of course, that was in reference to the completed New Testament Scriptures.

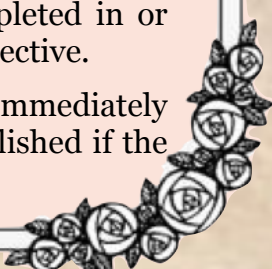
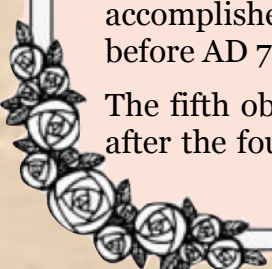
Once completed, the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge would all immediately pass away, which meant that they would no longer be needed, or even available. No Scriptures state or imply that the gifts would end only after those who possessed them had died.

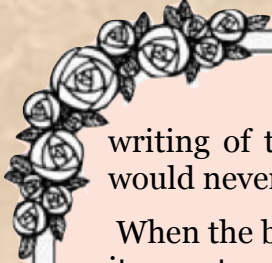
Though this part of the plan only had one objective, it must have had a number of sub-objectives, being defined as steps to be taken or goals to be reached to complete the main objective. That means that the fourth objective would be completed simultaneously with the completion of its last sub-objective — most likely, the writing of the book of Revelation.

Therefore, in reference to the “premise of importance and timing” statement mentioned earlier, the importance of the completed New Testament Scriptures was that they enabled the perpetual proclamation of the eternal gospel throughout the fullness of time without further intervention by the Holy Spirit in the form of miracles and other spiritual gifts.

As for timing, in the same way that the destruction of the temple in AD 70 should be thought of as a historical marker to precisely indicate when the shattering of the power of the holy people came to an end (Daniel 12:7 ESV), so too should the time of completion of the New Testament be thought of as a historical marker to precisely indicate when the fourth objective had been accomplished, during which the mystery of God was completely revealed. Since the seventy weeks came to an end in AD 70 after all six objectives had been accomplished, then the writing of the New Testament must have been completed in or before AD 70, having been written during the accomplishment of the fourth objective.

The fifth objective — “to seal both vision and prophet” — was accomplished immediately after the fourth objective was completed. But, it would not have been accomplished if the





writing of the New Testament had still been in progress. Had that happened, mankind would never know whether God's plan set forth in Christ had been completely carried out.

When the building of a house is finished, the workers take away the tools that were used in its construction. In the same way, when the fourth objective had been accomplished, God removed the tools that had been used to do that work as well. The offices of the apostles and prophets, spiritual gifts, and the inspiration to write Scripture were all tools. (1 Corinthians 12:1-11 ESV) The fifth objective not only removed those tools, but also effectively set in place a guarantee from God that no future inspired writings would be forthcoming. At that point, the completed New Testament stood alone as the sole repository of truth for God's will concerning the salvation of mankind.

The sixth objective — “to anoint a Most Holy place” — had to do with the old covenant becoming obsolete and finally vanishing away, having been officially replaced with the new covenant. The temple in Jerusalem is where the high priest had offered animal sacrifices for sins on behalf of himself and his people, while the holy places in heaven is where Jesus now ministers as High Priest and “appears in the presence of God for us,” having been “manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:24).

“Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man” (Hebrews 8:1-2 ESV).

“In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:13 ESV).

Notice that the writer of Hebrews did not say, “had vanished away,” but rather “is ready to vanish away.” And yet, Jesus was already serving as High Priest, being a minister in the holy places. That's because Jesus was High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. If He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all (Hebrews 7:21, 8:4).

Just as the tabernacle in the wilderness had to be anointed before God's glory would fill it, so too did the one in heaven have to be anointed (Exodus 40:34-35). It is suspected that the act of anointing the Most Holy place in heaven formally showed that the old covenant Law of Moses with its animal sacrifices had finally vanished away. This objective was accomplished “in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel.”

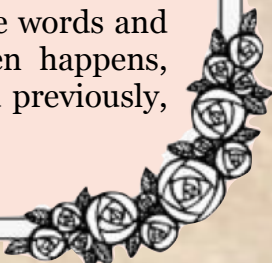
Someone might ask, “How can one be sure that God's plan actually did consist of the six objectives found in Daniel 9:24?” In other words, “Was the mystery of God truly fulfilled through the accomplishment of those six objectives?” The next sections address this issue.

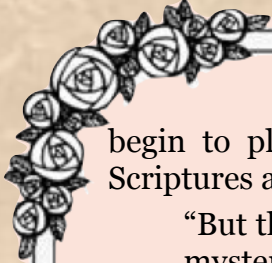
The Mystery of God in the Book of Revelation

The events of the tenth chapter took place in the days of the trumpet call sounded by the sixth angel, meaning after it had been sounded but before the “woe” statement appearing in Revelation 11:14, signaling the end of those days. The first verse of this chapter reads,

“Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. He had a little scroll open in his hand” (Revelation 10:1-2a ESV).

At first, it appears that there are no Scriptures which will help to interpret the words and imagery used in this chapter, but that is just a misperception. As it often happens, seemingly unrelated Scriptures, which may not have been so well understood previously,





begin to play a more meaningful role as knowledge about them increases. Two such Scriptures are Daniel 9:24 and Revelation 10:7. Both are key to understanding this chapter.

“But that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets” (Revelation 10:7 ESV).

The phrase “in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded” looks forward in time and means that the mystery would be fulfilled after the seventh trumpet had sounded (Revelation 11:15 ESV). The phrases “the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets” means that the last of the mystery of God prophecies would come to pass exactly as they had been foretold. Since the focus here is on the fulfillment of God’s plan, this study again turns its attention to the seventy-week decree where that plan, in the form of the six objectives, is found (Daniel 9:24).

All reasoning proceeds by comparison, and the use of syllogisms was regarded for centuries as the only sure instrument for reasoning. Since Revelation 10:7 was written using reported speech, these syllogisms use direct quotes to increase understandability:

First Syllogism:

Major Premise: The mystery of God will be fulfilled when the last objective is accomplished (Daniel 9:24).

Minor Premise: The last objective will be accomplished when the Most Holy place is anointed (Daniel 9:24).

Conclusion: Therefore, the mystery of God will be fulfilled when the Most Holy place is anointed.

Second Syllogism:

Major Premise: The mystery of God will be fulfilled in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel (Revelation 10:7).

Minor Premise: The mystery of God will be fulfilled when the Most Holy place is anointed (Daniel 9:24).

Conclusion: Therefore, the Most Holy place will be anointed in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel.

Even if a person had never read the book of Revelation, these syllogisms, if valid, would inform them of when the Most Holy place would be anointed. But in a book of signs, symbols and imagery, how can one recognize whether or not that has happened? Here is a comparison account from the Old Testament when the tabernacle was anointed by Moses.

God instructed Moses to anoint the tabernacle and all its furnishings:

“You shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils and the basin and its stand” (Exodus 26:34, 30:25-28; 40:9-10 ESV).

Moses did all that God had commanded him to do:

“Now on the day that Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed it and consecrated it with all its furnishings, and the altar and all its utensils; he anointed them and consecrated them also” (Numbers 7:1 NASB).

After the tabernacle was anointed, the glory of the Lord filled it.

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the

cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34-35 ESV).

Note that the glory of God filled the tabernacle after it had been anointed, and not before. Did anything similar happen in Revelation? Keep in mind that the days of the seventh trumpet include not only Revelation 11:15b-19, but also Revelation 15:1-16:21.

The temple in heaven is first mentioned in Revelation 11:19, and then again in Revelation 15:5-8 after the three-chapter visionary flashback (Revelation 12-14).

“Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail” (Hebrews 9:8; Revelation 11:19 ESV).

“And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished” (Revelation 15:7-8 ESV).

The comparison account of Moses is similar enough to John's account that if one has the ability to understand the first, then they should be able to correctly understand the second. It is believed that the opening of God's temple, permitting the ark of His covenant to be seen in the Most Holy Place, either indicates the time when the anointing was taking place or immediately after it had taken place. However, the indisputable fact that the anointing *had* indeed occurred is unmistakably confirmed by the sanctuary in heaven being filled with smoke from the glory of God and His power, and no one could enter the sanctuary.

Explaining the Syllogistic Process and Conclusion

A syllogism was formulated based on the theory that Daniel 9:24 was a six-point action plan for fulfilling the mystery of God. Its theoretical conclusion was that the mystery of God would be fulfilled when the Most Holy place was anointed. A second syllogism was then formulated to determine whether that theoretical conclusion would logically fit the prophetic time window stated in Revelation 10:7.

First: Both syllogisms are logically valid and build a highly structured, interconnected prophetic matrix. By placing them side by side, a powerful two-tier logical argument has been created where the conclusion of one actively feeds into or verifies the other.

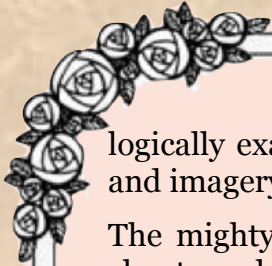
Second: When we look at both arguments together, we can see exactly how they correlate chronologically and identity-wise:

- Syllogism 1 establishes a Cause-and-Effect Chain: It proves that anointing the Most Holy place is the ultimate catalyst because it fulfills the last objective, which in turn fulfills the mystery of God.
- Syllogism 2 establishes a Temporal Identity: It locks that exact moment of fulfillment to a specific prophetic window — the days of the seventh angel's trumpet call.

An examination of Revelation was conducted which then revealed that the Most Holy place was indeed anointed during that prophetic window, thereby removing any doubts about the reliability of either syllogism. Together, the two syllogisms prove that the objectives of Daniel 9:24 actually do comprise a six-point action-plan for fulfilling the mystery of God.

Syllogistic Conclusion Supported by Signs, Symbols and Imagery

Since it is now known for certain that the writing of the entire New Testament was completed in or before AD 70, this fact-based information enables the expositor to more



logically examine, within the context of established truth, the meaning of signs, symbols and imagery used in Revelation 10:1-11.

The mighty angel's presence with the open book from the beginning to the end of the chapter, plus the fact that Revelation 10:7 is linked to the objectives of Daniel 9:24, is convincing evidence that there may be more verses in the chapter which are also linked to those objectives. Moreover, since there were three events which took place in succession — the appearance of the book, the sounding of the thunders, and the fulfillment of the mystery — then logically, since the last event was related to the last objective in God's plan set forth in Christ, perhaps the first two were related to the previous objectives.

For these reasons, it is asserted that the episode of the mighty angel coming down out of heaven with the book symbolized that the writing of the New Testament had been completed and that the fourth objective of God's plan — “to bring in everlasting righteousness” — had also been accomplished. The mighty angel in Revelation 10:1-11 may have symbolized the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writing of the Scriptures.

The assertion that the little book symbolized the completion of the New Testament is supported by the following verses, specifically Revelation 10:2b-4.

“And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded” (Revelation 10:2b-3 ESV).

The words of the prophet Amos help us to realize that this section is about prophecy.

“For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets. The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?” (Amos 3:7-8 ESV).

They also cause us to think that perhaps in the words of this little book God is revealing to His bondservants, through the prophet John, what He is about to do. That certainly harmonizes with Revelation 22:6.

John said that when the seven thunders had sounded, he was about to write, but then he heard a voice from heaven saying,

“Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down” (Revelation 10:4 ESV).

With the New Testament being complete, God would no longer provide instructions and guidance through visions and prophets. In these two verses the readers are witnessing the accomplishment of the fifth objective — “to seal both vision and prophet” — and the passing away of spiritual gifts forever, just as Paul had written. Unlike in Daniel 12:9, it wasn't just the prophecy's meaning that was being sealed, but here it was also the prophet himself in that John was not even permitted to write the words of the prophecy down.

In this section it has been shown that the signs, symbols and imagery used in Revelation 10:1-7 agree with what has already been proven through syllogistic reasoning. That is, the mystery of God was indeed fulfilled by the accomplishment of the six objectives contained in God's seventy-week decree (Daniel 9:24-27; Revelation 10:7).

Final Thoughts and Conclusion

Undeniably, this study has proven from the Bible, an inspired source, that the writing of the entire New Testament was completed in or before AD 70. If anyone continues to claim that some of the Holy Spirit inspired books of the Bible were indeed written after AD 70 — they are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God.