

# When will John's Apocalypse begin to be fulfilled?

In the first verses of John's Apocalypsis, or Revelation, the words "soon" and "near" appear in English translations. Also in the English translation, "King James 2000", the words "shortly" and "for the time is at hand" appear in these verses. In the German translation (Schlachter 2000), on the other hand, the correct word is 'rasch' or 'quickly', but this word can also be translated as agile, lively, but also as abrupt, hasty. In other translations it is "bal" or "in Kürze". In the Russian translation (Современный русский перевод), however, the Greek word „tachos" is translated by the word „вскоре" and this is the word soon, or also coming soon. The Slovak translation translates the word "tachos" as "onedlho" (coming soon), while the Polish translation translates it as "wkrótce" (coming soon).

This gives the impression that the Revelation John received at the end of the first century was meant to prophesy for a time soon after John wrote it. However, nearly two thousand years have passed and the events described in the book of John have not happened in scope or purpose, and the kingdom of God has not yet come in the form and power described in the book's conclusion. Christians deal with this fact in different ways. For example, in the ecumenical translation, at the beginning of the preface to the book of Revelation, the commentary section says this:

„ ... The Revelation of John was written as a timely challenge to the times of the late 1st and early 2nd Christian centuries. It cannot be removed from this historical framework. It is not, therefore, coded specific information for the future, but a figurative experience of faith which, in a difficult situation, reveals anew the prospect of Christ's victory. ... "

This can be answered again by God's word in Isaiah 55:10-11; and in Amos 3:7;

*"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it ... Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, unless he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets."*

It does not follow from any of God's words or the verses quoted that God would have something written down that has no specific meaning, even if it refers to the distant future.

Nor is there any attempt to date the coming of God's kingdom somewhere in our near future. Several such attempts have failed (Adventists expecting the second coming of Jesus in 1843; Jehovah's Witnesses 1914+70s to 1980s). The question of why it is written at the beginning of the book that the revelation will be fulfilled soon and that the time is near is therefore still unanswered.

The Greek word translated soon is the word „tachos" = (τάχος, ους, τό [tachos] speed ?? ἐν τάχει quickly, without delay, soon). In Revelation the word is translated „soon", and in the Acts of the Apostles, however, it is translated in several places by „quickly" (Acts 12:7; 22:18; 25:4).

The Greek word καιρός, οὔ, ὁ [kajros] time (a period of time, a moment of time), (an opportune, convenient) time, opportunity, could be translated, depending on the context, e.g., "the opportune time is near.

Why is it important to know which translation is correct? Because it makes a big difference whether you translate the original with "*what is about to happen*" or "*what is about to happen quickly*". If we also take into account that in the text of Rev. 1:3, the word kajros can be translated "*for the time is at hand*", we see that the beginning of Revelation can be understood to mean that the prophecy will be fulfilled quickly, immediately at the appropriate time.

We can therefore answer the opening question by saying that John's apocalypse will be fulfilled quickly, without delay, when the time is opportune. Does this remind you of the story of the Knights of Blanik, who are said to ride out of Mount Blanik when the country is at its worst? The resemblance is entirely coincidental, because by careful examination of Bible prophecy we have the opportunity to learn the details of what that opportune time is to look like. The old story doesn't give us that chance. There have been and, Lord Jesus willing, will be other studies on other details of the end-time Babylonian epoch.

May the grace of God be with us.