

# The Problem of Imminence in the Book of Revelation

## Introduction

*“The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him to show his servants what must happen soon and which he made known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bears witness to the Word of God and the Witness of Jesus of all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and take to heart what is written in it, for the time is near”* (Rev 1,1-3).

In this opening passage of the Book of Revelation, it is clearly stated that the book is about events that must happen ‘soon’,<sup>1</sup> and that the time of their fulfillment is ‘near’. The imminence of these events is reaffirmed clearly at the end of the text (22,6.10). Furthermore, both at the beginning and at the end of the book, the events that are expected to happen ‘soon’ are directly linked to the Second Coming of Christ, which is also expected ‘soon’ (Rev 1,7; 22,7.12.20). There could hardly be a more emphatic way for the author to express his nearness to Christ’s Second Coming at the end of history, and yet more than 1900 years have passed since he wrote this, and we are still waiting. This enormous gap between what is written and what has actually happened has created a difficult problem for interpreters and readers. From the opening verses above, David Aune notes that “The phrase (...), ‘for the time is near’, provides reason for listening to and obeying John’s revelatory book”.<sup>2</sup> So, if this is not the case, we are justified in asking why we should read it. It is a problem that lies at the root of one’s whole approach to the Book of Revelation. Before offering a novel solution to this problem, it is useful to summarize some of the more common ways of explaining or understanding it.

## Modern interpretations

Perhaps the most common way of interpreting the nearness of the events prophesied in Revelation is by understanding it literally: the text is assumed to refer to events that followed soon after the author wrote the book at the end of the first century CE. This approach assumes that the author was addressing his message wholly and entirely to the Church of his time.<sup>3</sup> In this way, it strongly supports the Preterist interpretation of the Book of Revelation,<sup>4</sup> which identifies the persecutions prophesied in the text with the persecutions of the Early Church at the hands of the Roman Imperial authorities. In fact, the passages emphasizing the nearness of the end are often cited as textual support for the Preterist interpretation, which is held by a majority of modern scholars. Some scholars assert the extreme view that all the events prophesied in Revelation were completely fulfilled in the

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek word for ‘soon’ can also mean ‘quickly’. However, we take ‘soon’ to be the more accurate translation for the happening of these events, because we are told the time for their fulfillment is ‘near’. This sense of imminence is missed if ‘quickly’ is used, since ‘quickly’ may only describe the rapidity of the events and not their temporal proximity.

<sup>2</sup> David E.Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, WBC 52A, Dallas: Word Books, 1997, 21.

<sup>3</sup> This assumption resonates with the basic assumption of the historical-critical method, which is the most widely used modern method for interpreting Scripture. It is an assumption that restricts the principal meaning of Revelation to the situation that prevailed at the time it was written. In fact, it is actually in the making of this assumption that the limits of the historical-critical method become evident, as recognized by the Pontifical Biblical Commission: “To be sure, the classic use of the historical-critical method reveals its limitations. It restricts itself to a search for the meaning of a biblical text within the historical circumstances that gave rise to it and is not concerned with other possibilities of meaning which have been revealed at later stages of the biblical revelation and history of the Church” (*The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993, I A 4, p.80). We must seriously reconsider whether this assumption is justified in the interpretation of a book like Revelation, whose scope embraces such a vast horizon – nothing less than the complete fulfillment of the entire mystery of God at the end of time (cf. Rev 10,7).

<sup>4</sup> Also called the ‘contemporary-historical interpretation’ by some scholars.

history of the Early Church.<sup>5</sup> Others hold a more moderate view by claiming that although the main part of the text was fulfilled in the times of the Early Church, a small part remains unfulfilled—the so-called ‘eschatological excess’, which includes the Second Coming of Christ at the end of history.<sup>6</sup>

Either way, by assuming that the primary message of this book was addressed to the Early Church, this interpretation relegates the text of Revelation to history and implies that it has only a secondary value for the present and future. The very same passages that stress the imminence of the end are then used to oppose the interpretation of the main part of the book as a prophecy of events that will be fulfilled in the future, at the end of history.<sup>7</sup> One commentator ruefully writes, “It is difficult to accept this view, because the book speaks so emphatically of matters which ‘must shortly happen’ and looks for the return of Jesus in the very near future”.<sup>8</sup>

Many of those scholars who hold the moderate Preterist view, in which a small eschatological part of the prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, concede that the author was mistaken to write these events would happen ‘soon’, or that the Second Coming would take place ‘promptly’. So, another popular way of dealing with the problem of imminence is to admit, simply, that the author was wrong. M. Eugene Boring, for example, suggests that the situation of distress and persecution experienced by the Early Church brought about a revival of the conviction that the end was near. By stating this conviction so emphatically in his text, the author of Revelation succeeded in exhorting the faithful to be steadfast under their persecution by the Roman authorities, even though he later turned out to be wrong. Boring notes “Just as John accepted a flat earth with corners as the spatial framework within which he expressed his message (cf. 7:1), so he accepted a world shortly to come to an end as its temporal framework. As he was wrong in the one case, so he was wrong in the other”.<sup>9</sup> Another scholar simply remarks: “John, like other apocalyptic thinkers, was wrong in tying the events of his day so closely to the end of the world”.<sup>10</sup>

Other scholars make the same observation but are reluctant to say that the author was wrong, preferring instead to say that he was employing a traditional way of exhorting steadfastness during times of crisis. For example, Beasley-Murray sees this ‘prophetic perspective’, which he also calls a ‘fore-shortened’ or ‘telescopic’ view of history, as a characteristic of many Old and New Testament prophets, for whom “the judgments of God in history are consistently viewed as precursors of his ultimate intervention for the establishment of his sovereignty”.<sup>11</sup> He goes on to give the following examples; “Observe how Isaiah sets the coming of God’s promised deliverance and sovereignty in the context of the overthrow of the Assyrian empire, Isa. 7-9, 10-11; Habakkuk, as following on the destruction of Babylon, Hab. 2:2f.; Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Deutero-Isaiah, as the concomitant of the end of the Babylonian exile, Jer. 29:31, Ezek. 26, Isa. 49, 51; Haggai as following the building of the temple, Hag. 2; and the New Testament writers simply as in the near future,

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<sup>5</sup> E.g., G.B. Caird, “On Deciphering the Book of Revelation”, *The Expository Times*, 74, (1962-3) 13-15; 51-53; 82-84; 103-5; P. Ariel Alvarez Valdés, «Quand les prophéties de l’Apocalypse s’accompliront-elles?» *La Terre Sainte* (Monthly Journal of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land), Sept-Oct 2003, 251-56.

<sup>6</sup> “Thus John’s prophecy was remarkably fulfilled, but not by the coming of the kingdom. It retains, as it were, an unfulfilled, eschatological excess.” Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, Cambridge: CUP, 1993, 152.

<sup>7</sup> The Futurist approach.

<sup>8</sup> T.F. Glasson, *The Revelation of John*, Cambridge: CUP 1965, 11; also P. Ariel Alvarez Valdés «Le livre assurait aux lecteurs du premier siècle que ces événements allaient se produire promptement. Nous devons les croire et abandonner l’idée que c’est à notre époque que surviendront ces événements», in «Quand les prophéties de l’Apocalypse s’accompliront-elles?», *La Terre Sainte*, Sept-Oct 2003, 252.

<sup>9</sup> M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, Louisville, Ky: John Knox Press, 1989, 73.

<sup>10</sup> Mitchell G. Reddish, *Revelation*, Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing Inc., 2001, 32-33.

<sup>11</sup> G.R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, NCB, London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott 1974, 52-3, 47. See also George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972, 22.

Rom. 13:11f.; I C. 7:29f., Heb. 10:37, I Pet. 4:7, Jas 5:8.” So, the prophetic perspective, which the author uses like many others before him, can be understood as a legitimate technique for supporting the faithful during times of trial, by reminding them of the ultimate aims and purposes of the God they serve. At other times, too, a keen expectation of the end-time can be beneficial for the authentic life of faith in God, by helping to increase awareness of the divine will and resist temptation to sin. Indeed, it has recently been proposed that the author’s emphasis on the imminence of the end-time in Revelation was a rhetorical strategy to appeal to the emotions of fear and confidence.<sup>12</sup>

Neither has it escaped the attention of the scholars that, in the words of Boring, “This emphasis on the nearness of the end is not a peculiarity of Revelation. That the end of history is near in the writer’s own time is a constituent part of apocalyptic thought (...); thus it appears not only in Revelation but in other apocalypses, in and out of the Bible”.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, it appears in so many passages of the New Testament that it would be fair to say that the Early Church adopted the apocalyptic notion that they were living very near to the end-time.<sup>14</sup> The Resurrection of Jesus was interpreted as the ‘first fruits’ of the eschatological resurrection, soon to be followed by the remainder of the harvest at the end of the age (cf. 1Cor 15,20). Coherence and consistency with the rest of the New Testament, and with the apocalyptic tradition, would therefore go a long way to explain the author’s emphasis on the imminence of the end.<sup>15</sup>

In relation to the Old Testament Scriptures, the emphasis on imminence in the Book of Revelation contrasts with corresponding passages in the Book of Daniel. In Daniel, the author is told to “shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end” (Dan 12,4; cf. 12,9), and “seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future” (Dan 8,26), whereas the author of Revelation is told “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near” (Rev 22,10). The implication is that, in contrast to the situation at the time of Daniel, the advent of the Messiah has brought near the eschatological consummation of all things. Therefore, the emphasis on the imminence of the end-time in Revelation can also be understood as way of highlighting the contrast between the situation before and after the advent of Jesus Christ, on the aspect of ‘inaugurated fulfillment’ in particular.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, there are two studies on the problem of imminence in the Book of Revelation that lead us to a new way of understanding it. The first is Bauckham’s observation that while there is considerable emphasis in the text on the imminence of the end-time, there are also substantial delays: “However, eschatological delay is as much a feature of Revelation as eschatological imminence. It is written into the structure of the book. From the moment the martyrs cry, ‘How long?’ and are told to wait a little while longer (6:10-11), the reader—and more especially, the hearer of an oral performance of Revelation—becomes conscious of the tension of imminence and delay, as the End is constantly approached but not definitively reached”.<sup>17</sup> By means of this weaving of imminence and delay, the nearness of the end-time is sustained throughout the text, in a way that realistically reflects the historical situation in the first century, after it became clear that the Lord’s Parousia would be delayed.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> David A. Desilva, “The Strategic Arousal of Emotions in the Apocalypse of John: A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of the Oracles to the seven Churches”, *New Testament Studies*, 54.1 (2008), 90-114 (esp. 99-100).

<sup>13</sup> Boring, *Revelation*, 70.

<sup>14</sup> Boring, *Revelation*, 70, gives the following references as examples: Matt 4:17; 10:23; 16:28; 24:34,44; Mark 1:15; 9:1; 13:28-30; Luke 9:27; 12:40; 18:8; 21:25-32; Rom 13:11-12; 16:20; I Cor 7:25-31; 15:52; Phil 3:20-21; 4:5; I Thess 1:9-10, 4: 13-18; James 5: 7-9; I Peter 4:7; 1 John 2:18.

<sup>15</sup> So Robert Mounce *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT series, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1977, 65.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. G.K.Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1999, 182.

<sup>17</sup> Bauckham, *Theology*, 157-59. Curiously, though, in the analysis that follows, Bauckham does not refer to the long and highly significant ‘delay’ of one thousand years (Rev 20,1-8).

<sup>18</sup> When the end failed to arrive, the majority of faithful did not abandon or reject the prediction of the end-time as a mistake. Instead, the delay was explained in such a way that the faithful could continue living in imminent

The second observation is that of Schüssler Fiorenza, who affirms that the author was not only serious about the nearness of the end, but that he also consistently records his point of view as only a ‘short time’ before: “The author of Rev. is, indeed, aware of time, but he knows only a “short time” before the eschaton”.<sup>19</sup> This feature of the text is so prominent that she lists it as one of the three major themes determining the composition and eschatological orientation of the text: “By the use of apocalyptic, mythological, and historical materials and by the application of traditional eschatological schemata John qualifies the present time as the “short time” before the end. He knows that the end and the Coming of Christ are imminent, but he is also aware that until then only a short but definite time must elapse”.<sup>20</sup> The author’s recurrent emphasis on being only a ‘short time’ before the critical events (e.g., Rev 6,11; 12,12, 14,6; 17,10; 20,3) brings us back to the question of where, in time, does he see himself.

### **A new interpretation of end-time imminence in Revelation**

The remaining part of this article outlines a new interpretation for the author’s emphasis of the nearness of the end-time—an interpretation that pays special attention to the presence of the author on earth, for the renewal of his prophetic vocation, just before the sound of the seventh trumpet (Rev 10,7-11; 11,15-19).

The first task is to define precisely which ‘time’ St. John is referring to when he writes that “the time is near” (Rev 1,3; 22,10). It is clearly linked to the Parousia, as we noted above, but the use of the same distinctive word for ‘appointed time’ (ὁ καιρός) later in the text (Rev 11,18) shows precisely what this involves. Here, the heavenly chorus praises God because: “the nations were angry and your anger has come, and also the time (ὁ καιρός) for the dead to be judged, and to give the reward to your servants the prophets and to the saints, and to them that fear your name, and to the small and the great, and to destroy those who are destroying the earth” (Rev 11,18). Evidently, ‘the time’ refers principally to the final judgment, when the dead will be raised (Rev 20,11-15), the destroyers condemned and the servants of God rewarded with the realization of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21–22). This meaning of the word in reference to final Judgment is consistent with its use elsewhere in the Scripture (cf. Dan 7,22; Lk 21,8 Mk ,15; Mt 8,29; 1Cor 4,5) and early Christian writings (*Didache* 16.2).<sup>21</sup> So when the author announces that “the time is near”, there should be no doubt that he is referring to the realization of all the events prophesied in his book, right up to the end.

It should not escape our notice, though, that among the prophesied events is the period of a thousand years—a period of partial fulfillment during which Christ and his saints reign on the earth (Rev 20,4-6). The author was clearly aware that this period of a thousand years had to pass before the end, but he nevertheless wrote that the end was near. So, there is no question of the author making a simple mistake about the imminence of the end, because he himself had prophesied a delay of the order of a thousand years. We return, therefore, to ask how he could say that the time of the consummation of all things is ‘near’ and that the events at the end of the thousand years will happen ‘soon’? There are two ways of answering this question:

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expectation of the end. For a thorough look at the ways this delay was justified, in Jewish and Christian writings, see Richard Bauckham’s Tyndale Biblical Theology Lecture (1979) published in *The Tyndale Bulletin*, 31 (1980) 3-36.

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1985, 46.

<sup>20</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Justice and Judgment*, 49. She demonstrates how the whole composition of the text is organized by three main themes: the Christian community as the already established kingdom of God and Christ in heaven and on earth, the imminent expectation of the eschatological fulfilment of this kingdom from the point of view of being only short time before (cf. Rev 6,9-11); and the ultimate fulfilment of the kingdom of God and Christ through their judgment on this world (op. cit. 46-56).

<sup>21</sup> Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 21.

1. The present time of the author is the time of writing, which is at the beginning of the thousand-year period. However, according to Psalm 90,4 “a thousand years in your sight [Lord] are like a day” and so, from a divine point of view, a thousand years is only a short period of time. Speaking from the divine point of view, then, the author is justified in saying that the ‘end is near’, even though it may take a thousand years, or more, from a human point of view. This response is supported by the almost identical use of Psalm 90,4 at 2 Peter 3,8-9, in a passage that was specifically written to explain the delay of the final Judgment and the complete fulfillment of God’s promises.
  
2. The present time of the author is toward the end of the thousand-year period, shortly before the final events take place. In this case, the author is speaking from the point of view of the renewal of his prophetic vocation, which is placed in the text between the sixth and seventh trumpet blasts (Rev 10,7-11). Since the sounding of the seventh trumpet announces the time for the consummation of all things, without further delay (Rev 10,7; 11,15-18), then John is quite literally accurate in saying that, from this point of view, the end is near and that the prophesied events will happen soon. This view is supported by the fact that the chain of reception of the “Revelation of Jesus Christ”, outlined in the opening verses of the book (Rev 1,1-3),<sup>22</sup> in the passage stating that the end is imminent, seems to converge specifically on this account of the author’s prophetic commission (Rev 10,1-11). It is here that we read the description of the author receiving “the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him” (Rev 1,1; cf. 5,7), from the hand of the Lord’s angel (Rev 1,1; cf. 10,8-10). Since this passage forms the introduction to the mission of the two witnesses (Rev 11,3-13), who will publicly announce John’s prophecy,<sup>23</sup> then the author’s present time is identified here with the public announcement of his prophecy by the two witnesses. And since the mission of the two witnesses takes place immediately before the brief, 42-month reign of the ultimate antagonist of Christ and his saints—the ‘Beast from the sea’ described in Rev 13—this interpretation matches the author’s self-orientation during the reign of the sixth king, in “five kings have fallen, one is [now], the other has not yet come, and whenever he comes he must remain for just a short time” (Rev 17,10): the author’s point of view—his ‘now’—is just before the full and final end-historical manifestation of the Beast, which is exactly the time of the announcement of his prophecy by the two witnesses.<sup>24</sup>

In this way, the particular structure of Revelation leads us to understand the author’s point of view—his present time—in two different ways: the first is the time of writing at the start of the thousand-year period, and the second is the time of the public announcement of

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<sup>22</sup> I.e., the transmission of the Revelation from God to Jesus Christ, then to his angel, and then finally to John the prophet (Rev 1,1-3).

<sup>23</sup> This is inferred from the fact that their mission forms the continuation of the author’s commission to ‘prophesy again’ (Rev 10,8-11). In the words of one commentator “they come forward in response to the prophetic calling addressed to the seer”, Pierre Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John*, English trans. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2001, 349. And again: “Rev.10 reports a prophetic calling which is then fulfilled in the ministry of the 2 witnesses/prophets of chapter 11” (op. cit. 88).

<sup>24</sup> The 1260-day mission of the two witnesses is brought to an end by the Beast (Rev 11,7), at the start of his 42-month reign (13,5). At the end of his 42-month reign, the Beast is removed from power by Christ’s return, or Parousia, at the end of history (17,14). To be consistent with the details in the text, the 1260-day mission of the two witnesses (Rev 11,3) must precede the 42-month reign of the Beast, which is to say that the two time periods should be considered as consecutive, with the period of 1260 days preceding that of the 42 months. For a full explanation of this, see ‘The Timing of Their Mission’ in the following article: [https://www.academia.edu/84648587/The\\_Two\\_Witnesses\\_in\\_the\\_Book\\_of\\_Revelation](https://www.academia.edu/84648587/The_Two_Witnesses_in_the_Book_of_Revelation). The arguments for the identity of the Beast of Rev 11,7 with that of ch. 17, and between this Beast and the Beast of ch. 13, have been set out clearly by Adela Yarbro Collins in *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, (2001) 170-72.

his prophecy by the two witnesses, which takes place towards the end of the thousand years. It is quite possible that the author has been deliberately ambiguous, with the purpose of sustaining the imminent expectation of the final consummation—the time is near—throughout the thousand-year period of partial fulfillment, while being aware that a relatively long delay was inevitable. Either way, whether from the point of view of writing, or of announcement, the author was justified in warning us that “the time is near”, and that the contents of his prophecy will ‘soon’ be fulfilled.

Having said that, though, there is no doubt that he is more literally accurate, from the human point of view, when he places himself at the moment of the announcement of his prophecy by the two witnesses, for this will take place just before the short, end-historical reign of the Beast. On the basis of this finding, we can be sure that a large part of the prophecy of Revelation has not yet been fulfilled, especially the part about the two witnesses in chapter 11 and the events in the prophecy they will have to announce.

## Implications

This new perspective on the present time of the Book of Revelation—the time when the book comes into its own and is widely accepted and understood—has certain important implications for the interpretation of the text. Perhaps the most evident corollary is that the prophecy of this book is going to be publicly announced and that the two prophets who are divinely appointed for this mission are, in fact, two real people. They are not ‘symbols’, as many modern scholars like to insist. Since no such mission has ever been recorded in history then we must conclude that this event, as well as the events that the two witnesses will prophecy, is to be expected in the future.<sup>25</sup>

So, although the Book of Revelation was certainly addressed to the Early Church, who faithfully preserved the text for its transmission down through the ages, its central message was not principally for her.<sup>26</sup> The intended audience of that message is the Church at the end of history, to whom it will be made known, at the appointed time, by the two witnesses or prophets described in chapter 11. At that time, the author is presented as having an active role to perform, which is described metaphorically as the measuring of the inner court of the temple (Rev 11,1-2). Without entering into the specific meaning of this task,<sup>27</sup> it is sufficient to note that it implies the spiritual presence of the author at the time of the public announcement of his prophecy by the two witnesses, which is ‘soon’ to be followed the Second Coming. This should recall Christ’s enigmatic prophecy affirming that the author of the fourth Gospel will ‘remain’ until Christ’s Second Coming, and strongly supports the identification of the author of that Gospel with the seer of Revelation (Jn 21,20-23).<sup>28</sup>

With the intended audience of Revelation as the Church at the end of history, the reader is asked to consider the end-time realistically as a future crisis, and to regard the mission of the two witnesses as one of its more evident warning signs. The shift towards the literal and future fulfillment of this mission favours the Futurist interpretation of Revelation above all the other interpretive approaches (Preterist, Historicist and Idealist). Since these two

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<sup>25</sup> For arguments against the symbolical, and in favour of the literal interpretation, see [https://www.academia.edu/84648587/The\\_Two\\_Witnesses\\_in\\_the\\_Book\\_of\\_Revelation](https://www.academia.edu/84648587/The_Two_Witnesses_in_the_Book_of_Revelation) .

<sup>26</sup> This conclusion is substantially supported by the history of the reception and interpretation of the text. A renowned Cambridge scholar, Henry Barclay Swete, summed it up by saying that “no book in the New Testament with so good a record was so long in gaining general acceptance.” *The Apocalypse of St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction Notes and Indices*, London: Macmillan and Co, 1906, cxiii (see cii – cxiv for a full summary). The fact that the Book of Revelation was not accepted into the Canon of the Eastern Church until at least the 7th century CE is impossible to reconcile with the Preterist view that it was primarily intended for the Church of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. Not by coincidence the central message is found at the centre of the book.

<sup>27</sup> For the details see: [https://www.academia.edu/84648587/The\\_Two\\_Witnesses\\_in\\_the\\_Book\\_of\\_Revelation](https://www.academia.edu/84648587/The_Two_Witnesses_in_the_Book_of_Revelation) .

<sup>28</sup> A fact which has been doubted by scholars and churchmen, ever since the apostolic authorship of Revelation was negated by Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria (c. 250 AD), in a lost work published by Eusebius, in *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VII, 25.

witnesses will be the authentic interpreters and announcers of the prophecy, the puzzled reader need not struggle beyond his means to understand the full meaning of the text, since this will be revealed at the appointed time. Study and contemplation of the text is profitable in every age and merits a divine blessing (Rev 1,3; 22,7), but no attempt should be made to force a meaning on the text which is clearly inappropriate to its future context at the end of history. Finally, since the empowerment of the two witnesses really does mean that the time of complete fulfillment is 'near', and that the Second Coming is 'soon', we should not be waiting for a further delay of one thousand years following the two witnesses or the Second Coming.<sup>29</sup> So the thousand-year period of Christ's rule with his saints is best understood in the amillennialist mode, as the era of the Church between Christ's Ascension and his Second Coming, however long that may last.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> As expected by the Post-millennialists and the Premillennialists respectively.

<sup>30</sup> For more arguments in support of the amillennialist approach, please see:  
[https://www.academia.edu/78868602/The Millennium and the Mystery of Iniquity](https://www.academia.edu/78868602/The_Millennium_and_the_Mystery_of_Iniquity) .