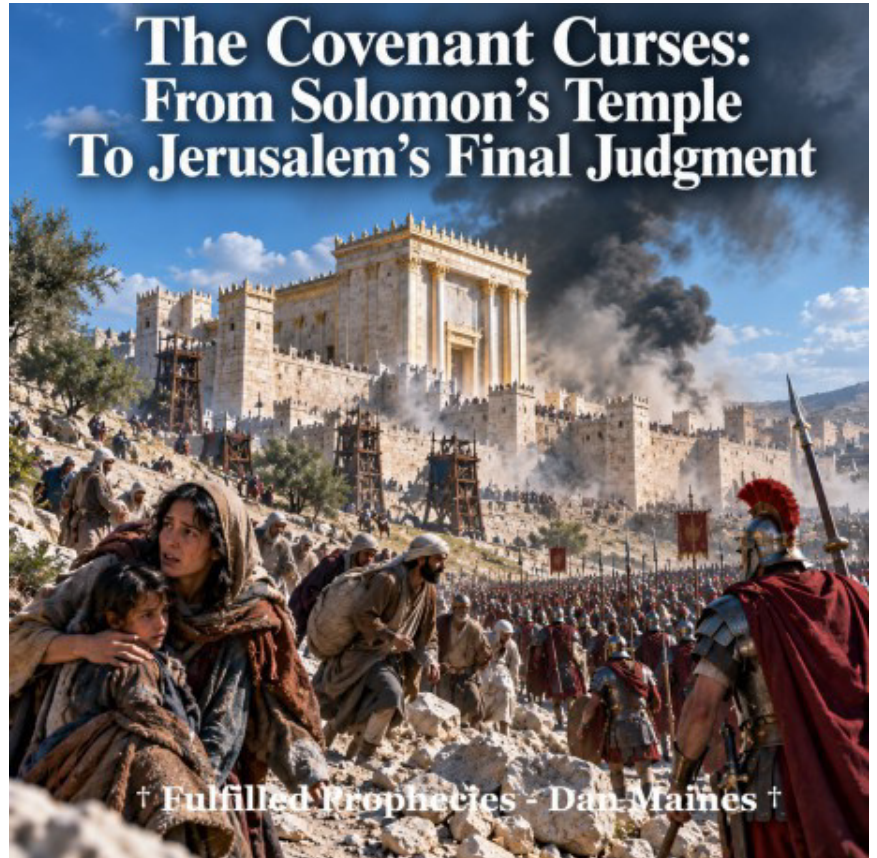


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The Covenant Curses: From Solomon's Temple To Jerusalem's Final Judgment



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Introduction

† Revelation didn't introduce a new kind of judgment. Its plagues, famine, sword, pestilence, siege, bloodshed, destruction, and desolation come directly from the covenant judgment language God had already given Israel in the Law. When Israel broke the covenant, God had already stated what the consequences would be.

† This pattern is essential for understanding both temple destructions.

Solomon's temple wasn't destroyed by Babylon because Jerusalem simply suffered an unfortunate military defeat. Judah had violated the covenant, rejected God's messengers, practiced idolatry, and filled Jerusalem with wickedness. Babylon became the historical instrument through which the covenant curses were administered.

† The same covenant framework reaches its climactic expression in the first century. Jesus identified Jerusalem as the city responsible for shedding the blood of the prophets, declared that judgment would fall upon that generation, and announced the destruction of the temple (Matthew 23:34-38; 24:1-2, 34).

† Revelation therefore shouldn't be separated from Deuteronomy, Leviticus, the prophets, Jesus' warnings, or Israel's covenant history. Revelation presents the final administration of covenant judgment against the city that rejected the prophets and ultimately crucified her Messiah.

Deuteronomy 28:15

But it shall come about, if you do not obey the Lord your God, to be careful to follow all His commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

† The covenant curses weren't random disasters. They were judicial penalties attached to Israel's covenant. Blessing followed covenant faithfulness, while covenant rebellion brought covenant judgment.

† This explains why later biblical judgments against Jerusalem repeatedly use the language of the Law. The prophets weren't inventing new punishments. They were announcing the enforcement of penalties already written into Israel's covenant (Jeremiah 11:6-8; Daniel 9:11-14).

† Revelation follows the same pattern. Its judgments are presented as righteous acts of God against covenant rebellion, bloodshed, idolatry, and rejection of His servants (Revelation 16:5-7; 18:20).

Leviticus 26:23-25

And if by these things you do not learn your lesson regarding Me, but you show hostility toward Me, then I in turn will show hostility toward you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins. I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the

covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send a plague among you, so that you will be handed over to the enemy.

† Notice the expression vengeance of the covenant. This wasn't ordinary warfare. Sword, pestilence, siege, and defeat were covenant sanctions.

† Revelation uses these same categories. The sword, death, famine, and destructive judgments aren't disconnected apocalyptic inventions. They belong to an established biblical vocabulary of covenant judgment (Ezekiel 5:12, 17; 14:21).

† This continuity helps explain Revelation's imagery. John expected readers who knew Israel's Scriptures to recognize the language. The judgments of Revelation echo the covenant curses because covenant accountability stands behind the judgment.

Deuteronomy 28:49-52

The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down; a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation with a defiant attitude, who will have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young. Furthermore, it will eat the offspring of your herd and the produce of your ground until you are destroyed; a nation that will leave you no grain, new wine, or oil, nor the newborn of your cattle or the young of your flock, until they have eliminated you. And it will besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land, and it will besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the Lord your God has given you.

† Deuteronomy specifically describes an invading nation, siege, collapsing defenses, famine, and destruction. These covenant sanctions formed the background for later judgments upon Jerusalem.

† They were experienced in the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, and Jesus later used the same covenant pattern when He warned first-century Jerusalem that armies would surround the city and that its enemies would tear it down (Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24).

† Jesus didn't describe an unrelated tragedy. He announced another covenant judgment upon Jerusalem, this time against the generation that rejected Him.

Deuteronomy 28:53

Then you will eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters whom the Lord your God has given you, during the siege and the hardship by which your enemy will oppress you.

† One of the most horrifying covenant curses was famine so severe during siege that normal human bonds would collapse. This wasn't symbolic language without historical precedent. Scripture records its fulfillment during earlier judgments upon Israel and Judah (2 Kings 6:28-29; Lamentations 4:10).

† Josephus later described terrible famine during the Roman siege of Jerusalem, including the infamous account of a woman named Mary who, driven by starvation, killed and ate her own child.

† The similarity isn't accidental. The Roman siege followed the same covenant judgment pattern established in Deuteronomy and demonstrated previously in Israel's history.

Leviticus 26:27-29

Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I for My part will punish you seven times for your sins. Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons, and you will eat the flesh of your daughters.

† Leviticus confirms the same pattern. Persistent covenant rebellion intensified covenant judgment.

† The repeated language of multiplied judgment in Leviticus also helps us understand the escalating character of judgment throughout Revelation. Warning follows warning, judgment follows judgment, yet rebellion continues (Revelation 9:20-21; 16:9-11).

† Revelation is saturated with the language and structure of Israel's covenant Scriptures. It shouldn't be interpreted as though John suddenly abandoned that biblical framework.

Leviticus 26:31-33

I will turn your cities into ruins as well and make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas. And I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled at it. You, however, I will scatter among the nations, and I will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become ruins.

† God specifically warned that covenant rebellion could result in devastated cities and a desolated sanctuary. That makes the destruction of the temple covenantally significant.

† Solomon's temple wasn't immune because it was God's sanctuary. Jeremiah confronted the false confidence of those who believed possession of the temple guaranteed their security while they continued breaking the covenant (Jeremiah 7:4-14).

† The same mistake appeared again in the first century. The physical temple couldn't protect a generation that rejected God's Son. Jesus pronounced its desolation and declared that not one stone would be left upon another (Matthew 23:38; 24:2).

2 Chronicles 36:15-21

Yet the Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against His people, until there was no remedy. So He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or frail; He handed them all over to him. He brought all the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and his officers, to Babylon. Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its fortified buildings with fire and destroyed all its valuable articles. He took into exile those who had escaped from the sword to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept the Sabbath until seventy years were complete.

† Scripture itself interprets the Babylonian destruction covenantally. God sent His messengers, the people rejected them, judgment became unavoidable, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the temple was burned.

† This becomes extremely important when we come to Jesus. He accused first-century Jerusalem of following the same pattern, persecuting and killing God's messengers, and He said that all these

things would come upon this generation (Matthew 23:29-36).

† The parallel is powerful. Before Solomon's temple fell, God sent prophets and the people rejected them. Before the second temple fell, God sent His Son, apostles, prophets, and messengers, and Jerusalem rejected them. The second destruction wasn't meaningless history. It was the climactic covenant judgment Jesus Himself announced.

Revelation 6:7-8

When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come!" I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and the one who sat on it had the name Death, and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, and famine, and plague, and by the wild animals of the earth.

† Sword, famine, death, and beasts should immediately remind a Bible reader of the covenant judgments already found in the Law and the prophets (Ezekiel 14:21).

† Revelation isn't giving us an entirely new judgment vocabulary. John draws upon categories that God had repeatedly used when judging covenant rebellion.

† Once this Old Testament foundation is recognized, Revelation becomes far more coherent. Its judgments belong to the same covenant story running from the Law through the prophets and into the first century.

Revelation 11:1-2

Then there was given to me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. Leave out the courtyard which is outside the temple and do not measure it, because it has been given to the nations; and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

† John sees the temple, the altar, worshipers, the holy city, and nations trampling that city. This language naturally belongs within Jerusalem's covenant setting.

† Jesus had already warned that Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies and trampled underfoot by the nations (Luke 21:20-24).

† Revelation's judgment upon the holy city therefore fits the judgment

Jesus announced against Jerusalem. The temple's destruction wasn't a disconnected historical footnote after the cross. It stood within the covenant judgment Jesus said would fall upon His generation.

Revelation 11:8

And their dead bodies will lie on the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

† Revelation gives us a decisive geographical and covenant marker, the great city is identified as where their Lord was crucified.

† Calling the city Sodom and Egypt is covenant lawsuit language. Jerusalem had previously been compared with Sodom because of covenant corruption (Isaiah 1:9-10; Jeremiah 23:14).

† John isn't describing literal ancient Sodom or literal Egypt. He uses Israel's prophetic vocabulary to identify the covenant condition of the city where Jesus was crucified.

Revelation 18:8

For this reason in one day her plagues will come, plague and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

† Once again we find plague, death, famine, and burning. These are familiar covenant judgment themes, not foreign concepts suddenly introduced at the end of the Bible.

† Jerusalem had already experienced destruction by fire when Solomon's temple was destroyed. That earlier judgment provides a biblical pattern for understanding another covenantally condemned city facing destruction after rejecting God's messengers.

† Revelation presents judgment as deliberate and judicial. God isn't merely predicting political turmoil. He is judging covenant rebellion and vindicating His servants.

Revelation 18:20

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.

† This verse brings the issue directly to God's apostles and prophets. The city is judged in connection with what had been done to God's

messengers.

† Jesus had already placed that responsibility upon Jerusalem when He said that prophets, wise men, and scribes would be persecuted and killed, and that the accumulated righteous blood would come upon that generation (Matthew 23:34-36).

† Revelation isn't detached from Jesus' warning. It shows the administration of the judgment He had already announced.

Revelation 19:1-2

After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God, because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great prostitute who was corrupting the earth with her sexual immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her."

† Revelation's judgment culminates in the vindication of God's servants. The blood that had been shed demanded covenant justice.

† This matches Jesus' declaration that Jerusalem was accountable for the righteous blood shed upon the land and that judgment would come upon His generation (Matthew 23:35-36).

† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 therefore shouldn't be reduced to an unfortunate historical event that happened to the Jewish people. Jesus had specifically announced the coming judgment, identified its covenant causes, described Jerusalem surrounded by armies, and placed its fulfillment within that generation (Luke 21:20-22, 32).

† Just as Babylon administered covenant judgment when Solomon's temple was destroyed, Rome became the historical instrument through which the judgment announced by Jesus was administered against Jerusalem and the second temple.

Historical References

† Josephus, an eyewitness to the Jewish-Roman War, described famine, internal violence, slaughter, fire, and the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. His history provides remarkable external testimony to conditions corresponding to the covenant curse pattern recorded in Scripture.

† Josephus also recorded the terrible account of Mary during the

siege, whose starvation became so severe that she killed and ate her child. That event closely resembles the siege curses prescribed centuries earlier in the Law.

† Tacitus described the Roman campaign against Jerusalem and the city's destruction within the broader history of the Jewish war.

† Eusebius later connected Jerusalem's catastrophe with the judgment that followed the rejection of Christ and recorded the tradition that believers in Jerusalem escaped before the city's destruction.

† These historical writers don't establish the doctrine, Scripture does. Their testimony is valuable because it shows that the siege, famine, warfare, destruction, and burning described in the historical record correspond strikingly with the covenant judgment framework already established in Scripture.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We shouldn't read Revelation as though the first sixty-five books of the Bible don't exist. Revelation is deeply rooted in the Law, the prophets, Israel's covenant history, and the words of Jesus.

† The destruction of Solomon's temple teaches us how covenant judgment worked. God warned His covenant people, sent His messengers, endured their rebellion, and finally administered the judgment He had prescribed.

† The destruction of the second temple follows that same recognizable pattern, but with even greater covenant significance. Jerusalem didn't merely reject another prophet, it rejected the Messiah and persecuted those He sent.

† Jesus said, For these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled (Luke 21:22). That statement directly connects Jerusalem's coming destruction with what had already been written.

† The continuity is difficult to miss once Scripture is allowed to interpret Scripture. Deuteronomy gives the curses. Leviticus gives the curses. The prophets apply those curses. Solomon's temple falls under those curses. Jesus announces covenant judgment upon His generation. Revelation presents those same judgment patterns, and Jerusalem and the second temple fall exactly as Jesus said.

† AD 70 wasn't an embarrassing historical interruption in the biblical story. It was the covenantal conclusion of an age and the public vindication of Christ's prophetic warnings.

† We now live under the completed work of Christ in the New Covenant kingdom. Our confidence isn't in an earthly city, physical temple, or national covenant. God's dwelling is with His people, and His kingdom isn't dependent upon rebuilding what Christ brought to fulfillment (Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 21:2-3).

Q & A Appendix

Q: Were the judgments in Revelation completely new judgments?

A: No. Revelation repeatedly uses the established biblical language of sword, famine, pestilence, death, siege, bloodshed, fire, and desolation found throughout Israel's covenant Scriptures (Ezekiel 5:12, 17; 14:21).

Q: Was the destruction of Solomon's temple simply a military event?

A: No. Scripture explicitly presents it as divine judgment following persistent covenant rebellion and rejection of God's messengers (Jeremiah 7:12-14; Daniel 9:11-14).

Q: Why is Solomon's temple destruction important for understanding AD 70?

A: It establishes the covenant pattern. Rebellion brought warnings, rejection of God's messengers brought increasing judgment, and persistent covenant violation ultimately resulted in siege, destruction of Jerusalem, and destruction of the sanctuary. Jesus applied that same pattern to His own generation (Matthew 23:34-38; 24:1-2, 34).

Q: Did Jesus connect Jerusalem's coming destruction with Old Testament prophecy?

A: Yes. While describing Jerusalem surrounded by armies, Jesus said, For these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled (Luke 21:20-22).

Q: Why does Revelation describe the judged city as responsible for the blood of God's servants?

A: Because bloodguilt was central to the covenant lawsuit against

Jerusalem. Jesus said the righteous blood would be charged against that generation, and Revelation portrays the judged city as responsible for the blood of God's servants (Matthew 23:35-36; Revelation 18:24).

Q: Was AD 70 merely an unfortunate historical event for the Jewish people?

A: No. Jesus specifically foretold Jerusalem's siege and destruction and said it would occur within that generation. Revelation presents the administration of judgment using the same covenant curse language that had governed Israel's earlier judgments (Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24, 32).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Deuteronomy 28:15, 49-53; Leviticus 26:23-25, 27-29, 31-33; 2 Chronicles 36:15-21; Revelation 6:7-8; Revelation 11:1-2, 8; Revelation 18:8, 20; Revelation 19:1-2

† Historical writers: Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Books 2-3

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