

Did John Live Beyond AD 70?

By Ed Stevens -- for *Then and Now* podcast -- June-July 2011

INTRODUCTION

- A. Futurists assert that Apostle John remained alive on earth until AD 96. They use early Christian writers to support this tradition.
- B. If John did live almost to the end of the first century, it poses numerous problems for Preterism.
- C. First, we need to examine the historical evidence for the tradition, to see how reliable it is.
- D. Then we need to respond to all the problems that futurists have posed against us, on the basis of that tradition.
- E. Lastly, we will show that John did not live beyond AD 70, using both historical and biblical evidence.
- F. There are four major sections in this study:
 - 1. State the Futurist Tradition
 - 2. Explain the Preterist Problems that come from that tradition
 - 3. Show the earlier historical evidence for the death of John before AD 70
 - 4. Show the Biblical evidence for the death of John before AD 70

I. Here is the Traditional (Futurist) View of John's Longevity:

- A. Roman Catholic Tradition (quoted from *The Catholic Encyclopedia*):

"The Christian writers of the second and third centuries testify to us as a tradition universally recognized and doubted by no one that the Apostle and Evangelist John lived in Asia Minor in the last decades of the first century."

[Fonck L. Transcribed by Michael Little. "St. John the Evangelist." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume VIII Copyright © 1910 by Robert Appleton Company Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight Nihil Obstat, October 1, 1910. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor Imprimatur. John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York]

- B. Premillennial Futurist Tradition: (quotes from Mark Hitchcock and Hugh Lawlor)

Apostle John lived after AD 70 into the reign of Nerva (AD 96-98). According to Mark Hitchcock (*The End Times Controversy*, pp. 126-128), the earliest support for this idea comes from *Hegesippus* (AD 165) and *Irenaeus* (AD 180). Eusebius (AD 300-340) mentions *Hegesippus* twice as being one of his sources for information about the early church. Eusebius also drew material from *Irenaeus*, who supposedly was a student of Polycarp (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* V.20.4-8).
- C. Hugh Lawlor (quoted by Hitchcock) believes that the *Memoirs* of *Hegesippus* (written ca. 165-175) was the main source for the following statements of Eusebius:

After Domitian had reigned fifteen years, Nerva succeeded. The sentences of Domitian were annulled, and the Roman Senate decreed the return of those who had been unjustly banished and the restoration of their property. ...At that time, too, the story of the ancient

Christians relates that the apostle John, after his banishment to the island, took up his abode at Ephesus. [Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.20.8-9]

D. The five volume work of Irenaeus entitled, *Against Heresies*, which began to appear about AD 180, contains the following statement about Apostle John:

...if it were necessary that his name [Antichrist] should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For *it* [can be translated either *he* or *it*] was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign. [Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.30.3, cf. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.18.3 and 5.8.6]

E. Depending on how this text is translated (*he* or *it*), it can either be referring to John himself being seen, or to the book of Revelation being "seen" and written down. Either way, it implies that John himself was thought to have still been alive "towards the end of Domitian's reign."

Ken Gentry and others have made a good grammatical-historical-contextual case that Irenaeus was referring to Apostle John being seen at that time, NOT the book of Revelation (see *Before Jerusalem Fell*. Revised edition, 1998, pp. 41-109, esp. pp. 92-93, 103ff). This preserves the early date of the book of Revelation, but still allows John to have lived beyond AD 70 and perhaps written some of his other books after AD 70. Since Gentry does not believe the Parousia, Resurrection, and Judgment occurred in AD 70, he naturally has no problem believing John lived beyond AD 70. However, he also notes that there are statements from Papias which "provide for those who hold to the Apostolic authorship of Revelation strong external evidence for a pre-A.D. 70 composition of Revelation." What he means is this: If John died before AD 70, then his books (incl. the book of Revelation) were obviously written before that. The point we do not want to miss is that if it can be proven that John died before AD 70, then the early date of all his books becomes indisputable. In other words, all we need to do in order to establish the early date of all of John's writings (including the book of Revelation), is to prove that John died before AD 70. However, we will need something more reliable than external fallible testimony to prove that. What we need is scripture, and we will provide that later in this study.

F. Several writers have questioned **which Domitian** was referred to here by Irenaeus, especially since Nero's family name was Domitius. We will look at this later also. First, I want to focus on the problems that this longevity tradition creates for Preterists.

II. Futurist Tradition Poses Significant Problems for Preterism:

A. Essential for Futurism to have John still alive after AD 70:

- It is absolutely critical for futurists to believe that John remained alive after AD 70, because their late date for John's books depends on it. They know that if John died in the Neronian persecution before AD 70, like Paul and Peter did, their late date for Revelation is impossible.

- They also know that if they can show that any **one of John's books was written after AD 70**, our whole preterist case is crushed. So, there is both a defensive and offensive reason for their insistence that John lived beyond AD 70.
 - Futurists know there can be no historical proof for the pre-70 date of all of John's writings, if John lived after AD 70. If he was still around afterwards, then he could easily have written some of his books then. This really puts a heavy burden of proof on the Preterist. It means that the external historical evidence is weighted in favor of the futurists, and that the internal biblical evidence is all we have to support the early date.
 - The only thing that would remove the burden from us completely, and utterly crush the futurist case at the same time, would be if we could show that John died before AD 70.
- B. All the Futurists need is for one NT book to have been written after AD 70 --
- So if John remained alive on earth for twenty-five years beyond AD 70, there is no way we can prove that he could not have **written at least one of his books after AD 70**. And the same thing goes for any of the other apostles who wrote NT books. This, in fact, is the very argument that liberal scholars use to prove the late date of several NT books.
 - There would be no other purpose in keeping any of the inspired apostles around after AD 70 if they were not going to **continue teaching and writing by inspiration**. If any of them were still around, then they still had the gift of inspiration and were still able to teach and write by inspiration, and their post-70 writings would be canonical. This means that if John was still around after AD 70, then any of his canonical books could have been written after AD 70.
- C. Note the weakness of John A. T. Robinson's argument for the early date of all NT books:
- John A. T. Robinson reminds us in his book, *Redating the New Testament*, that none of the NT books **mention AD 70 as a past event**, as surely they would if they were written after that date.
 - However, the futurists see that as an **argument from silence**, which proves nothing.
- D. Liberals also take advantage of the longevity of John to attack his inspiration:
- Liberal critics use his longevity after AD 70 to prove the book of Revelation (and other NT prophetic statements) were written *ex eventu* (after the event) as supposed predictions, thus denying their inspiration.
 - Liberals then negate the force of Robinson's argument by saying that if John lived beyond AD 70, then he **wrote the book of Revelation ex eventu** as a "prediction after the fact."
 - Again, the only way to defeat the futurist arguments for apostles continuing to write by inspiration after AD 70, and the liberal arguments of prophecies written after the event, is to show that John must have died before AD 70.
- E. Helps the Roman Catholic Apostolic Succession argument:
- The **Roman Catholics** use the longevity of John to justify their **apostolic succession** idea, alleging that there was an unbroken chain of bishops with the same gifts and authority that the apostles had. If Apostle John indeed lived beyond AD 70, we have no easy way of proving them wrong.
 - However, when we realize that the Roman Catholics have misunderstood the whole book of Revelation and almost all other New Testament eschatological texts, it should not

surprise us to see them misunderstanding a few facts of history surrounding the life of John. Many Protestant writers have shown how the Roman Catholics either invented or encouraged some of the spurious traditions about the apostles in order to buttress their papal power structure.

- Bob Thiel, Ph.D., a former Roman Catholic, gives an example of this: "...*The Roman Catholics suggest that by mentioning Babylon, that John is only referring to the Roman state.*" [Quoted from the article, "The Apostle John, often called John the Evangelist" by Church of God (COG) writer, Bob Thiel, Ph.D. (former Roman Catholic), which was found on 6/28/11 at the following website: <http://www.cogwriter.com/john.htm>]
- The Romanists used that idea to prove that Peter must have been in Rome (not Jerusalem) when he was martyred (based on the 1 Pet. 5:13 reference to "Babylon" and his statement in 2 Peter that his "departure was at hand"). Then they reconstructed history to agree with their assumed interpretation of the book of Revelation. Any competing or contradictory facts were suppressed. "To the victor goes the spoils." "Might makes right." The winners re-write the history books. Historical revisionism at its finest.

F. Affects the **Canonization** issue -- allows Barnabas and Clement to be canonical:

- The longevity of John affects our canonization views as well. We know **Barnabas** had apostolic hands laid upon him. Were his writings inspired? What about **Clement** or **Hermas**? Did they have apostolic hands laid on them?
- According to Roman Catholic tradition, Clement had apostolic hands (Peter) laid on him. That could make both Barnabas and Clement inspired and canonical.
- You see, the reason why we preterists have had such a hard time nailing down all these issues, is because we have **compromised with the futurists on the lifespan** of Apostle John. That one compromise has **eviscerated our apologetic** on numerous issues.

G. The **Gift of inspiration** continued (**irrevocable**) beyond AD 70. Futurist Charismatics use this argument to prove that all the gifts continued past AD 70:

- Futurist Charismatics frequently remind us of Romans 11:29, which says "***the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.***" Throughout the Old Testament, when God called a prophet, priest, or king, anointed him, and conferred upon him the gift of that office, it remained upon him until his death (unless he grieved the Spirit like King Saul did). It is like supreme court judges today. They remain on the court until they either retire or die. It cannot be revoked from them, except for radical misconduct. Futurists say this means that John must have retained his gift of inspiration until he died, therefore it is impossible to prove that John lost his gift of inspiration at AD 70, and that the charismata ceased in AD 70.
- In fact, the Charismatics use the longevity of John as proof that the gift of inspiration (along with all the other charismata) could not have ceased at AD 70. If John was still around, then he **still had the gift of inspiration** and could still write and speak by inspiration, and **could still lay hands on others and impart the gifts** to them. Therefore, **the gift of inspiration did not cease at AD 70**. And, if the gift of inspiration was still around, then all the other gifts had to still be around as well.
- The apostles were able to impart the gifts by laying on the hands. Some futurists argue that this included the **gift of inspiration**, since Luke, Mark, and Jude were not of the original twelve, but they apparently had the gift of inspiration. This means that in at least

three cases, the gift of inspiration was passed on by the laying on of the apostles' hands. This means that if any of the apostles were still around after AD 70, they could have laid hands on some other Christians and imparted any of the gifts to them, including the gift of inspiration. If John still had the gift of inspiration after AD 70, he could easily have written more inspired books after AD 70.

- And even if it could somehow be proved that the gift of inspiration did cease at AD 70, it still would not mean that John was somehow stripped of all the knowledge and experience that he had acquired up to that point. John had written the book of Revelation, and had penned the words in 1 John 2 which refers to the *imminent return* of Christ and the *world passing away*, and that it was *the last hour*. He would have remembered all that, and would have known that it had been fulfilled, and would have been able to correct the futurist ideas that began to be taught after AD 70.

H. Where did Papias, Polycarp, and Ignatius get their futurist ideas?

- If John was still around after AD 70, he would have remembered what all the NT writings had taught, and would have known that the Parousia had come, along with the resurrection and judgment. There would have been others who survived AD 70, who would have known about the Parousia as well.
- There would have been no reason for them to keep quiet about the occurrence of the Parousia, especially in view of new Christians coming into the faith unaware of the Parousia and thinking that it was still future. Surely the apostles and other pre-70 saints would have spoke up and set the record straight. There would at least have been some uninspired traditions (if not inspired scripture) coming from them stating that the Parousia had occurred. If they were still around afterwards, they would not have let the post-70 Christians continue believing and teaching that the Parousia was still future. Apostle John would have had just as much right to write uninspired tradition as any of the other post-70 writers. Why didn't he inform the others about the Parousia?
- Case in point: *Papias, Polycarp, and Ignatius*. These three post-70 writers (early second century) stated repeatedly that the Parousia, Resurrection and Judgment were still future. Yet according to tradition, they were taught by some of John's disciples (who should have known about the past Parousia). If the longevity of John is true, there is a good chance that all three of these writers (*Papias*-Hierapolis, *Polycarp*-Smyrna, and *Ignatius* in Antioch) would have known John personally and heard him teach. How could John let them teach futurism right under his nose and claim that they got it from him (or from his immediate disciples)?
- This particular argument from the futurists really bothers me. I have lost sleep over it. It ought to deeply bother all Preterists. Dr. Charles Hill, in his chapter in Mathison's book (*When Shall These Things Be*, pp. 63-119) calls this problem the "nemesis of history." It is not just a problem for rapture preterists. It is a critical problem for all preterists. So, it does not help our cause to compromise with the futurists on the longevity of John. It is like manufacturing ammunition for our enemy to shoot back at us.
- The reason why John still being around after AD 70 is so troubling for us preterists, is because of his failure to correct all the other confusion, ecclesiastical aberrations, and doctrinal falsehoods that began to appear in the late first and early second century. It is not just eschatological errors. There are several other doctrinal deviations that abruptly appeared at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century. If John was still

around, he should have been speaking out against that false teaching, and bringing them back to the pattern of teaching that the apostles gave us in their NT writings. If John was still around, we would have to assume that he was still inspired, and therefore still able to write and speak out authoritatively against the errors that were appearing. The failure of John and all the other pre-70 saints to speak out against all this confusion and doctrinal deviations is extremely troubling. It discredits them, and reflects adversely upon their integrity and faithfulness. If the Apostle John was still around until the beginning of the second century, he should have set the record straight. His silence at this critical moment drives futurists to wonder whether the Parousia actually occurred. If really occurred, and he knew it occurred, why is he so silent about it, especially when some of his disciples were teaching that it was still future? Can he have been so confused himself, that he did not even realize that the Parousia had occurred?

I. Did John Fail to Recognize that the Parousia Had Occurred?

- The idea that John lived through the Parousia, and knew that the Resurrection and Judgment had taken place, but failed to inform his post-70 disciples in Ephesus and nearby Hierapolis and Smyrna, creates a monstrous historical problem for preterists.
- It makes us wonder whether John himself (the inspired writer of the book of Revelation) even realized that the Parousia had occurred!
- If John the apostle was still around and saw no value in explaining or even mentioning the incredible fulfillments of his book of Revelation, why should we? Was it because he didn't understand the fulfillments, or was it simply because he did not see Christ at His Parousia, and consequently did not know that the Parousia had occurred? If he didn't see the Parousia, then he would not have understood the fulfillment, and would not have been able to claim or explain the fulfillment. But is that an acceptable explanation for us preterists? How many of us would be comfortable with that? I surely would not.
- Is it even conceivable that the inspired Apostle John (who wrote the book of Revelation saying his return was imminent) would not even know about the occurrence of the Parousia afterwards? In 1 John 2:18, 28 and 3:2 he indicates that they would know it when Christ returned, and would see it happen, and would not shrink away from Him when He appeared, and would experience a bodily change when they saw Him. Well, did they see and experience those things? Or, did even John the apostle fail to "recognize the time of His visitation" the same way the Jews failed to recognize His first coming? John was supposed to be sitting on a throne judging the twelve tribes after Christ's return (Matt. 19:28), not meandering about the Ephesian countryside muttering gentle platitudes about "love one another" (as the Roman Catholics would have us believe). There is something desperately wrong with this picture.
- If John remained on earth after AD 70, he would surely have recognized the fulfillments and said something about it. His silence is incriminating and discrediting.
- I think we are now beginning to get an inkling of the enormity of this problem.
- The only way for us to neutralize all of these futurist arguments is to show that John died a martyr's death in the Neronian persecution before the Parousia. Fortunately, there is both historical and biblical evidence to support that thesis.

- J. Summary of the Problems:** (Date of Revelation and all NT books; Liberal attack on inspiration; Roman Catholic Apostolic Succession; Canonicity of some non-canonical writings; Gift of Inspiration & Charismata Continued implying more writings afterwards; John did not correct the futurist ideas of Papias, Polycarp, and Ignatius; Integrity of John as he failed to recognize the fulfillments and correct the futurists and other false teachers, Patristics, Pneumatology)
- The futurists see our inconsistency, and take full advantage of it. They know that as long as we agree that John lived beyond AD 70, we have no way of proving them wrong.
 - It would be nice if we could find some good clear historical testimony at the mouth of two or more reliable first century witnesses to finally set the record straight.
 - We do have some earlier second century testimony, found in Papias, but it is not much better than Irenaeus or Hegesippus, being only 50 years earlier, and no more reliable.
 - Truly, the longevity of John beyond AD 70 poses some very sticky problems for the Preterist. The easy way around these problems is to see that John was martyred during the Neronic persecution (AD 64), just like Peter and Paul were. And we will get to the Biblical evidence for that later on. First, I want to look at the historical evidence.

III. Historical Evidence Reveals Problems for the Futurist Tradition:

A. Tradition **misunderstood the reference to Nero as Domitian:**

- Some later church historians questioned which “Domitian” was referred to by Irenaeus in connection with the persecution of Christians. Foy Wallace (*The Book of Revelation*, pp. 23-28) and Kenneth Gentry (*BJF*) both mention several scholars who suggest that **Irenaeus was referring to Nero** when he said that John was still alive toward the end of the reign of “Domitianou.” This is an adjective form of Domitius (Nero’s family name) and not the noun form of Domitian’s name (which would instead be “Domitianikos”). If it was a reference to “Domitian” it would most likely follow the form of proper names which had the definite article. Since Irenaeus does not use the definite article, it would seem more likely that he is referring to a family name (Domitius) rather than to the more formal imperial name. [*Antiq* 20:149-150 (20.8.1)]; cf. Gentry *BJF*, p. 49 note 16, and *Beast of Revelation*, pp. 14-15.
- Nero’s original name was **Lucius Domitius Aenobarbus**. He was well-born into one of the most powerful families in the Roman republic, the Domitii Aenobarbi family. [From the book, *Nero Reality and Legend*, by B. H. Warmington, Copyright 1969. p. 13] It was this family name (Domitii) that is possibly referenced in later historians when they talk about the persecution of Christians under Domitian. It seems likely that they misunderstood the reference and applied it to the Flavian emperor (Domitian) instead of to Nero (family of Domitii).
- This created confusion concerning *when* John was exiled to Patmos. Since the tradition said John was exiled by “Domitian,” they assumed it was the son of Vespasian, not Nero. So those statements about John living until the reign of Domitian may have reference to **Nero (Domitius)** and not to the later Domitian. This becomes significantly more probable when we see references to this “Domitian” being the “**Tyrant**,” a term which was most often used in reference to Nero. Here is what **Foy Wallace** says about this in his commentary on the Book of Revelation:

“...facts which are stated with authority and clarity by [Milton S.] Terry, an accomplished scholar, are corroborated with the same indubitable and historical evidence by MacDonald in *The Life and Writings of John*. This together with the statement of the scholarly Robert Young that *Sulpicius, Orosius, and others* [e.g., Irenaeus], had stupidly mistaken the reference to Domitius (Nero) for Domitian, and that ‘succeeding writers have fallen into the same blunder,’ has created so much divergence of opinion and confusion...” [Foy Wallace, *The Book of Revelation*, p. 26]

- On the basis of all this evidence and the argumentation from Wallace and Gentry, it seems appropriate to conclude that **Irenaeus was not aware that the name "Domitianou" was a reference to Nero**. Since we do not know for sure from which sources Hegesippus and Irenaeus were drawing, it is hard to know whether the mistake was made in the original source, or by Hegesippus and Irenaeus. My guess is the latter.

B. There were **two different Johns** mentioned by the early writers:

The tradition about there being two different “Domitians” (one of them Nero) is not the only evidence against John’s longevity on the earth beyond AD 70. There are other patristic statements suggesting that there were **two different “Johns”** in Ephesus. Eusebius seemed quite certain there was another **“John the Elder”** who was confused with **“John the apostle.”** (see Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 7, Chapter 25, and other references to two different Johns). Ken Gentry deals with this in his book (BJF).

C. The second revolt of **Bar Kochba was confused with the revolt in AD 66 --**

There is another complicating factor in all this. The Jews staged another short-lived revolt during the reign of Hadrian, under the leadership of Rabbi Akiba and Bar Kochba (AD 135-138). It was quickly crushed and Jerusalem was rebuilt as a pagan city with the new name, Aelia Capitolina, and made off-limits to all Jews. However, some later Christian historians seem to confuse the two revolts (AD 70 versus AD 135). This throws a monkey-wrench into the gearworks of the historians who are trying to sort all this out. Similar confusion of two different world wars has occurred in recent historical writings, where events of the first war (1917) were attributed to the second war (1945), and vice versa. That kind of thing appears to be involved here in the writers of the late first and early second centuries, and may also explain how Hegesippus and Irenaeus could be so confused.

D. So the historical evidence is confused and contradictory. Futurists and Preterists both have serious historical problems to deal with. Plus, they both have significant historical evidence on their side. However, since the burden of proof rests upon the Preterist, we need to have the *better* and *earlier* evidence. And we do have it: **the early second century writer Papias**.

- The two futurists (Mark Hitchcock and Hugh Lawlor) mentioned above, have claimed that **Hegesippus and Irenaeus**, who wrote a hundred years after AD 70, are the **earliest evidence for the longevity of Apostle John**.
- They have also admitted that most (if not all) of the later writers based their case on Hegesippus and Irenaeus. But with no reliable eyewitness testimony from the late first

century to back them up, it means that the testimony of Hegesippus and Irenaeus is limited in value.

- And the point must not be missed that **external historical tradition is ALL the futurists have** on their side. **They have no scripture** which explicitly states that John would live and remain beyond AD 70. **Their whole case rests on historical tradition**, which is **later than Papias**.
- Hegesippus and Irenaeus appear to be unclear about whether it was John that was seen in Domitian's day, or whether it was the book of Revelation. Nor did they have a clue what the mark of the beast symbolized. Eusebius says that they mention two different Johns, and were not sure which of them actually wrote the Apocalypse. Therefore, it is hard to place much weight on their confused and ambiguous testimony.
- Hitchcock and Lawlor **do not seem to be aware of Papias**, who wrote fifty years before Hegesippus and Irenaeus. Papias was a contemporary of Polycarp, Justin, and Ignatius, and his statements contradict the evidence of both Hegesippus and Irenaeus.
- So in the historical arena, they are pitting **late second** century evidence against our **early second** century evidence. However, neither of us have any reliable evidence from the **late first century**. But at least we have the earlier evidence, and earlier is usually better.
- The problem with all this second century tradition about Papias is that it is not consistent, not even within the testimony that is attributed to him. One reader of Papias says he believed one thing, while another reader says he taught something different. There is no consensus among those who quote Papias. The actual quotes that we have from his works appear to be genuine quotes from him, and are somewhat useful. But the later writers seem to put words in his mouth and make more of his relationship with Apostle John than Papias does himself. In fact, the later writers paint a picture of Papias that is inconsistent with the picture that Papias paints for us. If we went through all the things that every writer says about Papias and selected only the things that fit our own image of what happened to Apostle John, we could easily construct an image that would not be consistent with other stories that Papias supposedly told about John. So, the fragments of Papias are not very dependable, except in those areas where it is clear that he is being quoted accurately. Since he was a chiliast (i.e., literal millennial paradise on earth), and according to Eusebius, "a man of very little intelligence" (Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 3.39.13), we cannot place much weight even on his actual quoted writings.
- So, earlier is still not good enough to prove anything. Only Biblical evidence can do that.
- Human tradition is only useful if it is at the mouth of two or more reliable contemporary witnesses, and even then it cannot stand against Scripture. *Biblical evidence always trumps historical evidence.*
- When there is a conflict between historical testimony and scripture, we have the obligation to check our interpretations of Scripture to make sure that is not where the conflict resides. In some cases, it is merely our misinterpretation of scripture which created the conflict, so that when it is rightly understood, scripture harmonizes with history. But in all cases, when Scripture is rightly understood, and there is still a conflict with historical tradition, *Scripture always triumphs over tradition.*
- Which kind of evidence would be acceptable as proof that the Parousia occurred in AD 70? A tradition from the late second century, or a prophecy in inspired Scripture? That is the situation here. To settle this issue, we **MUST** have inspired scripture.

- And fortunately, **Papias** pointed straight to that Biblical evidence when he alluded to the statements of Jesus in Matthew 20 and Mark 10.
- **Notice what PAPIAS says here about the death of John:**

Pap. 5:5 Papias says in his **second** book that **John the Theologian and James his brother were killed by Jews**.

Pap. 6:3 For **Papias**, the bishop of Hierapolis, who had seen him with his own eyes, claims in the **second** book of the *Sayings of the Lord* that **John was killed by Jews**, thus clearly fulfilling, together with his brother, Christ's prophecy concerning them and their own confession and agreement about this.

Pap. 6:4 For when the Lord said to them, "**Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?**" and **they eagerly assented and agreed**, he said: "**You will drink my cup** and will be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized."

Pap. 6:5 **And this is to be expected, for it is impossible for God to lie.**

Pap. 6:6 Moreover the encyclopedic **Origen** also affirms in his interpretation of the Gospel according to Matthew that **John was martyred**, indicating that he had learned this from the successors of the apostles.

- **Papias** claimed that **John was killed by the Jews**, evidently at a time when they still had the ability and opportunity to do so. This would point to the Neronic persecution (AD 64), until it was cut short by the outbreak of the Jewish revolt (AD 66). It would not have been easy for them to do much against Christians after the war began, and especially not after the war ended.
- The Jews had no political or judicial power to kill anyone after 70. It clearly points to a time before 70 when the Jews would have had the **authority, opportunity, and means** by which to do it. The **Neronic persecution** fits that description well, since that is when the Jews were in their most powerful position against the Christians.
- As we look at the Biblical evidence in Matthew 20, Mark 10, and John 21, we will notice that it points unambiguously toward the conclusion that Apostle John must have died in the Neronic persecution before the Parousia.

IV. Scripture Proves That John Died Before the Parousia:

- A. We preterists have struggled to counter the futurist arguments for the longevity of John.
 - Even Gentry struggled with this, and had to admit that the evidence is inconclusive on both sides. But maybe he was looking in the wrong places (Patristics), when the solution was right there in scripture all along.
 - Some of the commentaries that I have read on this (which are futurist) seem to be aware of the Biblical evidence, but either **ignore it** or **explain it away** in favor of the traditions which fit their theological systems better. But this is letting tradition trump scripture -- not a safe nor wise course to follow. Scripture trumps tradition every time.
- B. The death of John before AD 70 would absolutely clinch the pre-70 date of all the Johannine writings. And it would completely negate all the other objections that futurists have raised against the preterist view using John's supposed longevity beyond AD 70.

- C. I need to note here that I have changed my position regarding the reason why John was no longer around after AD 70. In my rapture book, I took the position that John was not around after AD 70 *because he was raptured*. Those who were raptured did not experience physical death, but were simply CHANGED into their new immortal bodies as they were caught up to be with Christ in the unseen spiritual realm. Thus, if John was still alive at the time of the Parousia, he would not have died (experienced the death of his physical body). He would simply have been changed and snatched away to be with Christ. However, that is no longer the position I hold in regard to John.
- D. My settled position now is that John was no longer around after AD 70 because he was killed in the Neronian persecution (AD 64), not because he was raptured. John suffered martyrdom before the Parousia and did not live and remain until the Parousia, nor afterwards. Therefore, he was not raptured. It was the words of Papias and other later church fathers which alerted me to the probability that John suffered martyrdom before the Parousia. Papias pointed to Matthew 20 and Mark 10. These two texts are far more convincing than his tradition, because they come from infallible inspired Scripture.

Matthew 20:22-23 and Mark 10:38-39

- E. **Matt. 20:22-23 and Mark 10:38-39** -- These texts mention the occasion when the two sons of Zebedee (James and John) came to Jesus and requested that He seat them on his right and left sides when He came into His Kingdom Glory at the Parousia. Notice the wording here:

Matt 20:22-23 --

"drink **THE CUP THAT I AM ABOUT TO DRINK**"
 "MY CUP you [both] shall drink"

Mark 10:38-39 --

"drink **THE CUP THAT I DRINK**"
 "be baptized with **THE BAPTISM** with which **I AM BAPTIZED**"
 "**THE CUP THAT I DRINK** you [both] shall drink"
 "you [both] shall be baptized with **THE BAPTISM with which I AM BAPTIZED**"

- Jesus asked **both** of them if they were able to drink the cup of martyrdom that he was about to drink. They **both** replied that they were able. Then Jesus said to **both** of them (James and John) that they would **both** drink the cup of martyrdom. This means **both** James and John would die before Christ returned. We know James was killed by Herod Agrippa I in AD 44 (Acts 12:2). When was John killed?
- If James and John were only going to drink a generic cup (which could be either death or persecution), why does Jesus say that they would drink His particular cup, the [same] cup that He was about to drink? Sounds pretty specific to me. I do not see much wiggle room here. By the time John wrote his gospel (AD 61), it would have been crystal clear what cup it was that both Jesus and his brother James had drank (death). Even if the words of Jesus here may have some ambiguity, all doubt is removed by the historical

deaths of Jesus and James. I do not see how John could have had much doubt about it in AD 61 when he wrote his gospel. That is why he contested the rumor about his "not dying" before the Parousia (John 21:23). He had to at least suspect that he would "drink the same cup" that his brother James drank, which was "the [same] cup" Jesus drank.

- We need to put ourselves in John's shoes and ask these questions:
 1. Why does Jesus say repetitively in Matthew's account, "My cup" and "the [same] cup that I am about to drink"?
 2. Why does Jesus say twice in Mark's account, "the cup that I drink"?
 3. What cup did Jesus and James both drink? (death obviously)?
 4. How can it mean anything else but martyrdom?
- This forces us to ask: Did John drink that same cup? Jesus said he would. Do we believe Jesus, or are we going to let human tradition trump scripture? The choice really is that simple:
 - Like the Jews who **invalidated the Word of God** by their traditions (Matt. 15:3-9)
 - Like **Credalists** who would rather let Jesus be a false prophet than change creeds.
- We also need to grasp the underlying context of Matt 20:23 (parallel in Mk 10:39). Pay close attention to what the mother of James and John requested from Jesus: "Command that **in Your kingdom** these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left" [Matt 20:21]. "Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, **in Your glory**" [Mk 10:37]
- How do we understand these two phrases ("in your kingdom" and "in your glory") in the context of His previous teaching? Note the following boldfaced underlined texts:
- In the preceding context leading up to this story in Matt 20:20-23, as well as in the general teaching of Jesus, we can discern what James and John were referring to when they used these two phrases ("in your kingdom" and "in your glory"). Note the boldfaced words in the texts below:

[Matt. 16:27-28] "For the Son of Man is going to **come in the glory** of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds. Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man **coming in His kingdom.**"

[Matt 19:28] "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, **in the regeneration** when the Son of Man will **sit on His glorious throne**, you also shall **sit upon twelve thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

[Luke 21:27-31] "Then they will see the **son of man coming in ... great glory** ... your redemption is drawing near... when you see these things happening, recognize that the **kingdom of God is near.**

[Luke 22:28-30] "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has **granted Me a kingdom**, I grant you that you may **eat and drink at My table in My kingdom**, and you will **sit on thrones** judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Luke 23:42 And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You **come in Your kingdom!**"

- *Bible Knowledge Commentary* on Matt 20:20-23 -- "Jesus' recent discussion about "the renewal of all things" (19:28) prompted the following incident. The mother of James and John came to Jesus with her two sons and bowed before Him. When Jesus inquired what her request was, she asked that her two sons might be granted places of favor in His kingdom, one seated at His right hand and one at His left. Perhaps she had heard Jesus say His disciples would be seated on thrones (19:28), and she, with typical motherly pride, felt her sons deserved the two best locations."
- In the previous context (Matt. 19:28), Jesus had already mentioned His return to fully establish His Kingdom and take his seat on His glorious throne, and judge the twelve tribes. He would seat the twelve apostles on thrones at his side to judge the twelve tribes. This appears to be referring to His three and a half year Parousia when he literally judged the twelve tribes, but it could also include the eternal phase of His Kingdom after the Parousia.
- James and John were not only asking to sit on thrones alongside Christ, which they had already been promised (Matt 19:28 and Lk 22:30), but specifically wanted to be on the thrones closest to Jesus, on his immediate right and left sides. When Jesus came in glory with His angels in AD 66 to begin His three and a half year presence to judge the twelve tribes, that is when the twelve disciples were given their thrones at His side. It was this glorious coming and glorious reign in the unseen heavenly realm that they were thinking of when they asked to be on his right and left.
- If John or any of the twelve remained on earth after the Parousia, why didn't they say something about the twelve thrones (Matt 19:28) and their reigning on those thrones, and their judging the twelve tribes, and eating at His table in His Kingdom (Lk 22:30), and dwelling in the prepared dwelling places (John 14:3)?
- This seems all the more difficult to explain, especially in view of John's command in 1 Jn 2:28 to "not shrink away from Christ in shame at His Parousia." This implies that those who lived and remained until the time of the Parousia would SEE Christ appear (Gk. *phanerothe*), and were commanded not to shrink away from Him, but rather confidently draw near to Him. This necessarily implies that the saints still alive at the time of the Parousia would know that He had come, because they would see Him appear and they would draw near to Him. It would be an experiential event. They would not miss it.
- This means that the Parousia occurred within their awareness and experience. Therefore, their silence afterward is problematic, since it means that they would have heard later Christians after AD 70 claiming that the Parousia was still future. They knew it had occurred, but for some reason they did not speak up and set the record straight. Silence in that case makes futurists question whether the Parousia really happened, since the post-70 saints do not seem to show any awareness of it having occurred. Either they did not experience it and know it happened, or all those who saw it and experienced it were taken off the earth, and were no longer around to tell the story. There really is no other reasonable option.
- If they had still been around after AD 70 they would have mentioned the fulfillments that had just occurred, especially if Apostle John was one of the ones still around. John literally "wrote the book" on AD 70 (the Book of Revelation). For him to have been around afterwards and not mention the fulfillments of the book he had written is more than a "documentation problem." It would raise serious objections against his integrity

as an inspired apostle and a true prophet. The full weight of this problem needs to be felt by Preterists. We have brushed it off, ignored it, and waved our magic hyper-spiritualizing wand over it, but we have never faced it honestly and seriously until now. The rapture certainly appears to be a big part of the solution.

- How could John be sitting on one of the twelve thrones and judging the twelve tribes without even knowing that he was doing it? And if he was aware of it, how could he remain silent about it in view of Papias and others who were claiming that the Parousia was still future? How could John in Ephesus let Papias in nearby Hierapolis promote chiliasm right under his nose and claim that he got it from John or some of his hearers? If John was aware of the Parousia having occurred, he should have spoke out against Papias and set the record straight saying, "You did not get that chiliastic nonsense from me. Christ has already come. I was there, I saw it."
- At least in John's case, he did not speak up and correct the false teaching because he was no longer around after AD 70. He had died in the Neronic persecution, just like Jesus had predicted here in Matt. 20 and Mark 10.
- So all the historical problems we mentioned in section two instantly vaporize in light of this Biblical evidence that John died before the Parousia.
- In the last chapter of John's gospel he negates the rumor that was circulating about his remaining alive until the rapture and thus escaping the experience of physical death (John 21:20-23). He evidently remembered what Jesus had said to him (Matt. 20 and Mk. 10) and the death of his brother James (Acts 12:2), so he challenged the rumor that he would remain alive until Christ returned to receive them to Himself (John 14:3).

John 21:21-23

F. **John 21:21-23** -- So Peter seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If I want him to **remain until I come**, what *is that* to you? You follow Me!" Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would **not die**; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but *only*, "If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you?"

- Some preterists object to the idea of John's death in the Neronic persecution before AD 70, because they do not see the problems that are created for all preterists if John remained alive on earth after AD 70. One of the biblical texts they use against the idea of John's death before the Parousia is John 21:21-23.
- They understand the text like this: "Jesus did not say that I would never die, he only said that I would remain alive until the Parousia. Then sometime after the Parousia I will eventually die."
- However, when we look at the text more closely, it becomes apparent that Jesus was not at all affirming his longevity up to and beyond the Parousia. Quite the opposite. The rumor that was circulated assumed that John was going to live until the Parousia, at which time his body would be changed, and he would be taken up to be with Christ without having to experience physical death. That is why they thought he would *never die*.

- It is that concept that John is alluding to here. John was aware of the rapture. He had personally heard Jesus teach it on at least four occasions, one of which is mentioned right here in John's own gospel seven chapters earlier: Matt 13:30-43 (gather the wheat into my barn); Matt. 19:28 (sit on twelve thrones), Matt 24:31 (gather together the elect), and John 14:3 (receive you to myself). He knew what the rumor meant when it suggested that he would never die.
- So, John is saying in net effect: "Jesus did not promise that I would remain alive until the Parousia and thus escape physical death. He merely told Peter that it was none of his business what was going to happen to me. Jesus did not indicate either way what was going to happen to me. There are no guarantees here."
- Peter could easily have remembered what Jesus had said to the two sons of Zebedee in Matthew 20 and Mark 10 (especially since tradition says that Peter dictated the gospel to Mark). If Peter had that "drink the cup" martyrdom idea in his memory when he asked Jesus what was going to happen to John, it would explain why Jesus said what He did to Peter. Jesus knew Peter was thinking that John was going to suffer martyrdom also, and was trying to get Jesus to confirm it. But Jesus refused to confirm it either way. He told Peter to mind his own business and keep his thoughts focused on his own destiny, not on others.
- We need to remember what Matthew 20 has already taught us: In the case of both Jesus and James, drinking the cup was indeed death. Therefore, we would have to assume that John would have remembered that statement ("drink the cup") and considered the likelihood that he would die before the Parousia. There was not much chance that it meant only suffering, persecution, or exile. In the case of Jesus and his own brother, it had meant death. So he would have had that possibility clearly in mind as he countered the rumor that he was going to remain until the Parousia and therefore "never die." He clearly knew that there was indeed a possibility that he could die before the Parousia, and that Jesus had not definitely promised that he would remain alive until the Parousia.
- Otherwise, if John did not think "drinking the cup" included the possibility of death, he would not have quibbled with the rumor. By the time John wrote this (AD 60-62), he already knew what "drinking the cup" meant in the case of Jesus and his own brother James who had been killed in AD 44. There had been plenty of time for John to contemplate the meaning of "drinking the cup." When he challenged the rumor, it tells us something about his concept of "drinking the cup." He must have thought there was a strong possibility of death, or he would not have debunked the rumor. Now let's look at the John 21 text:

[John 21:21-23] So Peter seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If I want him to **remain until I come**, what is that to you? You follow Me!" Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple **would not die**; yet Jesus did not say to him that he **would not die**, but only, "If I want him to **remain until I come**, what is that to you?"

- Notice that “the brethren” somehow jumped to the conclusion that John would not die, based on their assumption that John would remain alive until Christ returned. They evidently thought that living until the Parousia meant that John would not have to experience physical death. It appears that in their thinking, the phrase “**remain until I come**” was equivalent to saying that “**he would not die.**” The first idea (remain until I come) implies the second (would not die). If a saint remained alive until the second coming, he would never suffer physical death because he would be taken up to be with the Lord. His body would be changed at the Parousia and thus would not have to die physically. [This idea was first suggested to me via email in Feb. 2010 by my good friend *Alan Allison* in Washington state. I have found other commentaries that take a similar approach.]
- Also, notice that there are no other options under consideration in this context, except *martyrdom* beforehand (in Peter’s case) or *remaining alive* until the Lord’s coming. Those were the only two options that a Christian in that first generation before the Parousia had open to him. The idea of John’s living beyond the Parousia and dying several years after the Lord’s return does not seem to have been a possibility in the minds of “the brethren.” The reason I say that is because they jumped to the conclusion that he would *not die* when they heard that he might remain alive until the Parousia. If they had believed that some of them might live beyond the Parousia and die later, they could never have jumped to the conclusion that John would never die. It was either die before the Parousia, or remain alive until the Parousia (at which time their bodies would be changed and taken up to be with Christ).
- As soon as John heard about this rumor, he raised an objection to it. He noted that Jesus did not guarantee that he would not die, but rather that it was none of Peter’s business what would happen to John. John probably remembered what Jesus had said to him and his brother James (back in Matt. 20:20-28) about drinking the same cup of martyrdom that Jesus had just drunk a few days before this post-resurrection encounter in John 21. John now knew what this cup would be. And by the time John wrote this gospel account (in AD 60-62) his brother James had already drank that same cup of martyrdom that Jesus had promised to both James and John. So, it is easy to see why John objected to the rumor that was floating around about his never dying. He set the record straight. Jesus did not promise him that he would remain alive until the Parousia.
- It is easy to see now why those *brethren* circulated the rumor. They had heard the apostles talk about the rapture (gathering, receiving). The apostles had given them many expectations about what would happen at the Parousia. Paul’s epistles had clearly indicated that those who live and remain until the Parousia would *not have to die*. The apostles got all this teaching from Christ Himself. Jesus told the twelve that they would be “received up to be with Him” when He came again (John 14:3). They would be seated on twelve thrones with Christ to judge the twelve tribes (Matt. 19:28). The elect would be gathered by the angels (Matt. 24:31). The good wheat would be gathered into the barn by the angels at the end of the age (Matt. 13: 30-43). And these things would be experienced by both the living and the resurrected dead. The living would see it.

- Notice what else the apostles taught the first century saints that they could expect to see, hear, and experience at the Parousia:

Rescued From the Coming Wrath:

- 1 Thess. 5:23 -- ...may your **whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved** blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. [NKJV]
- 1 Thess. 1:10 ...wait for His Son from heaven... who **rescues us** from the wrath to come.
- 1 Thess. 5:9-10 -- "...God has not appointed us to wrath, but for **obtaining salvation ...** and to await His Son from Heaven ... the One **delivering us from the coming wrath.**"
- 2 Thess. 1:7-10 ...**give relief to you** who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire... when He comes to be **glorified in His saints** on that day, and **to be marveled at among all who have believed...**

Bodily Change:

- 1 Cor. 15:37-38 ...that which you sow [the seed], **you do not sow the body which is to be ... But God gives it [the seed] a body** just as He wished, and **to each of the seeds a body of its own.**
- 1 Cor. 15:51-53 -- ...we will **not all sleep** [die], but **we will all be changed**, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the **trumpet will sound**, and the dead ones [plural] will be raised imperishable, and **we will be changed. ...put on the imperishable...put on immortality.**
- 2 Cor. 5:2-4 ...**in this house** we groan, longing to be **clothed with our dwelling from heaven**, inasmuch as we, having **put it on**, will not be found naked. ... **in this tent**, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be **unclothed but to be [clothed upon]**, so that what is **mortal will be swallowed up by life.** [cf. Weymouth and NIV]
- 1 John 3:2 ...We know that when He appears, **we will be like Him...**
- Phil. 3:20-21 ...eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will **transform our lowly body** that it may be **conformed to His glorious body...** [NKJV]
- Rom. 8:18-25 ...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory** that is about to be [Gr. mello] **revealed to us.** For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for **the revealing** of the sons of God... for our **adoption as sons, the redemption of our body...**
- 1 Thess. 5:23 -- ...may your whole spirit, soul, **and body be preserved** blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. [NKJV]

Caught Up:

- 1 Thess. 4:16-17 -- For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with **a shout**, with the **voice of the archangel** and with the **trumpet of God**, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then **we who are alive and remain** will be **caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**
- Matt. 24:30-31 -- ...they will **see the Son of Man coming** on the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a **great trumpet** and they will **gather together His elect**

John 14:3 -- ...I will come again and **receive you to Myself**, that **where I am, there you may be also**.

2 Thess. 2:1 ...the Parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ and **our gathering together to Him**

Presented To Christ: (not shrink away, but draw near to Him)

2 Cor. 4:14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and **will present us with you**.

1 Jn. 2:28 ...abide in Him so that **when He appears** we may **have confidence** and **not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming...**

Luke 21:36 -- ...that you may have strength to **escape** all these things that are about to take place, and to **stand before the Son of Man**.

Jude 1:24 -- ...**stand in the presence of His glory** blameless with **great joy**

1 Thess. 2:19 ...**in the presence** of our Lord Jesus **at His Parousia**

Col. 1:22-23 yet He has now reconciled you... in order to **present you before Him** holy and blameless and beyond reproach — if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel...

Glorify Him and Marvel at Him:

2 Thess. 1:7-10 ...the Lord Jesus will be **revealed** from heaven with His mighty angels... when He comes to be **glorified** in His saints on that day, and to be **marveled at among all who have believed...**

1 Pet. 1:7 so that the proof of your faith ... may be found to **result in praise and glory and honor** at the revelation of Jesus Christ

1 Pet. 4:13 -- but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, **keep on rejoicing**, so that also at the revelation of His glory **you may rejoice with exultation**.

Rewarded by Christ for their Faithfulness: (Judged and Rewarded)

Matt. 19:28-29 -- ...you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, **you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel**. And everyone who has [forfeited property or relationships] for My name's sake, **will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life**.

2 Tim. 4:8 in the future there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will **award to...** all who have loved His appearing.

Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, is **revealed**, then you also will be **revealed with Him in glory**.

1 Pet. 5:1-6 -- ...partaker also of **the glory that is about to be** [Gr. mello] **revealed...** when the Chief Shepherd appears you will **receive the unfading crown of glory... exalt you** at the proper time

Rom. 8:17-23 ...if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be **glorified with Him**. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory that is about to be** [Gr. mello] **revealed to us**. ...**the revealing of the sons of God**. ...creation itself also will be **set free from its slavery to corruption** into the **freedom of the glory of the children of God**. ...we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our **adoption as sons**, the **redemption of our body**.

1 Pet. 1:13 -- Therefore, **prepare your minds** for action, **keep sober** in spirit, **fix your hope completely** on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Enter Into the Kingdom and Eternal Life (Remain with Him):

1 Thess. 4:16-17 -- For the Lord Himself will **descend from heaven** ...caught up together with them in the clouds to **meet the Lord in the air**. And so **we will always be with the Lord.**”

Jude 1:21 -- ...waiting anxiously for ... **eternal life**.

Matt. 5:20 “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not **enter the kingdom of heaven**.

Matt. 25:21 “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; **enter into the joy of your master.**’

Matt. 7:21 “ Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will **enter the kingdom of heaven**, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.

Matt. 18:3 and said, “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not **enter the kingdom of heaven**.

Mark 9:43 “ If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to **enter life** crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire,

Mark 9:47 “ If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to **enter the kingdom of God** with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell,

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “ Through many tribulations we must **enter the kingdom of God.**”

Rev. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may **enter by the gates into the city**.

- **Conclusion:** In view of all these expectations, it seems reasonable to suggest that the brethren (John 21:23) who circulated the rumor about John "never dying" were thinking about the bodily change that would occur to all those saints who remained alive until the Parousia. Their bodies would be changed from mortal to immortal without having to experience physical death. Since they thought Jesus had promised John to remain alive until His return, they assumed therefore that John would *never die*. Apostle John challenged those assumptions and debunked their rumor. He remembered what Jesus had told him about drinking the cup (Matt. 20:20-23). He knew there was a good chance that he would die a martyr's death before the Parousia.
- Apostle John did not live and remain beyond AD 70 like futurist tradition suggests. We have combined Biblical and Historical evidence here to show that John died in the Neronian persecution, just as Jesus predicted He would.
- If you wish to read more about the rapture event at the Parousia, I would recommend getting my book, *Expectations Demand a First Century Rapture*. It is available for order at the IPA website: <http://preterist.org>
- If you are interested in more details about the writing of John's books, his exile on Patmos, his release to live in Ephesus, and many other things like that about all the New Testament books, I would highly recommend getting my historical reconstruction book, *First Century Events in Chronological Order*. It is available at the IPA website as well.

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Historical References for the life of Apostle John (Article on John the Apostle found in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*) -- "Early tradition connects John with Ephesus and mentions his continuing in life until the time of Trajan (Irenaeus, Adv. haer., ii.22, 5 (Eusebius, HE, v.24); iii. I, 1; v.30, 3; v.33, 4; Clement in Eusebius, HE, iii.23, 5-19; Polycrates in Eusebius, HE, iii.31, 3; v.24, 3; Justin, Dialogue, lxxxii; compare Rev 1:1,4,9; 22:8; Jn 21:22,23,14; 19:35). He died probably about the end of the 1st century. There is another but less well-attested tradition of martyrdom based chiefly on the De Boor fragment of Papias (Texte u. Unters., 1888), a Syriac Martyrology of the 4th century (Wright, Jour. of Sacred Lit., 1865-66, VIII, 56 ff, 423 ff), the Codex Coislinianus 305 of Georgius Hamartolus. This tradition, it is thought, finds confirmation in Mk 10:35-40; Mt 20:20-23 (compare Bousset, Theologische Rundschau, 1905, 225 ff, 277 ff). During the closing years of his life John wrote the Revelation, the Fourth Gospel and the three Epistles."