

The Apocalypse

Part 1

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The Apocalypse — its mere mention sends images of hell on earth flashing through the minds of many. Thoughts arise of *the Antichrist, 666, the mark of the beast, and the false prophet*. A period is seen when there is great upheaval lashing out at mankind and lasting three and a half to seven years, during which time Satan will exert subtle, then tyrannical rule over the inhabitants of the earth. This is assumed to be with the aid of his infamous henchman, *the antichrist*. Some believe that only a small remnant of faithful Christians, perhaps 144,000, will be saved from these impending wars, imprisonments, executions, earthquakes, poison water, plagues, and famine.

These await the *blessed hope* of being whisked away into the heavens by the rapture, a doctrine that began to be espoused by John Nelson Darby of the Plymouth Brethren in 1827.

When people teach or write on the subject of *the Apocalypse*, most often any or all the above come to the forefront, not to mention *Babylon the great, the great whore, falling stars, deadly locusts with the stings of scorpions, huge hailstones that sink ships, the battle of Armageddon, and, of course, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse*. Due to misunderstanding the book of Revelation, these images have become icons of terror and disaster to an incalculable number around the world, and they have been very instrumental in selling books and movies, as well as filling church buildings. Although a useful tool for enterprising man, these views have no value or basis in the realm of truth.

Such misunderstanding has helped to shape the thinking of the masses throughout the ages, and this has not only been with Christians, but with people of the secular world as well. With this misguided mind-set, they are prone to use these images to describe calamities all over the world. For over 1900 years they have had a fascination over the book of Revelation; but it's been with veiled eyes which has produced this ongoing saga that is misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misrepresented. They have missed it by a wide margin, to say the least.

One misconception held by some, however, is quite different from the above scenarios. It is that the book of Revelation has nothing to do with us, is of little importance, and has no relevance for us today. It's considered to be nothing more than a piece of first-century cryptic writing. For instance, several years ago, I was in conversation with a minister of one of the larger churches in town, and I asked him what he might see in a particular verse in the book of Revelation. Without hesitation, he responded: "I neither read nor teach from that book. For there's something wrong with a guy who has a nightmare, writes it down, and then sends it all over the country as if his delusions were some special revelation from God. No, I don't give that book any

credence at all. Frankly, I am amazed that it was included in the canon of the Bible." To say the least, that ended any discussion along spiritual or religious lines of any sort, so I changed direction and my next question was: "Hey, what about those Vikings? Think they have a chance at the Super Bowl?" So much for attempting to engaged in a productive conversation with the carnal mind, especially when it is a religious one.

Another belief is that this *encrypted book of Revelation* laid out point by point what would proceed thereafter. Countless interpreters, the learned and unlearned alike, have thrown their hats into that ring with attempts to *decode* those hidden mysteries.

Frankly, I can relate to how this could happen. You see, I for one, threw my hat into that same wide ring as well. I suppose that I had not been saved from the world and myself more than three months when I set out to start a Bible study with the pastor and deacons of the little Southern Baptist Church we were attending. This would be a groundbreaking quest that no others could rival or challenge. My plan was to draw out, verse by verse, all the hidden meanings of every verse in the book of Revelation,. I remember standing before the congregation and saying: "By knowing the scriptures as well as we do, we can solve the mysteries of this book. In doing so, we can put our findings in print and get a book published to share with the world. Not only that, the sale of the book will bring in money for our church." My, oh my! Such was the proud thought of the carnal mind, especially a young carnal mind. But praise God, that venture never got off the ground, and I guess you know that to be true; for you never saw that aspiring *apocalyptic* work, "*The Book of Revelation Solved*," on the book shelves of Bible books stores across the country. Funny! I can't imagine why. We were a Bible church, knew the Scriptures, and had the solid foundation of our denomination's doctrines as a guide to follow. I know many of you can relate, and this is not being critical, but truthful, and to say, even that was necessary in my life. Yet, our Father would not have us to remain there. He called us onward to the living Way in Him and for His purpose at the end of this age, of which, we are very thankful.

Notwithstanding, the belief that *Revelation* was written as an encrypted book that laid out in detail what was to follow has been mostly from a historical perspective rather than spiritual revelation and/or by rightly dividing the word of truth. With this skewed perspective, they invariably draw together all the major world events over the last 2000 years and try to fit them into their traditional beliefs. The fact is, this is not even good science, much less the avenue to truth.

Of course, there are others who *unravel*, supposedly, *the mystery of the Apocalypse* in a more literal way, saying that it is a handbook for predicting the cataclysmic events that will bring the final wrath of an angry God upon all the rebellious in the world, then to conclude His fierce, unmitigated judgment upon the world by consuming it and the heavens in blazing fire.

Regardless of their convincing graphs, long charts, and compelling *logic*, the claims from the early church to the present that the book of Revelation nails down the events, places, and time periods of the end have **all failed**. Please note, they have **ALL**

FAILED — every last one of them! Their track record is not good at all. They have placed last in every race. Their batting average has been a flat zero. They have all missed it. Things are just not developing the way the end-time prognosticators have projected them to be. But do these failures upon failures stop them from their folly. By no means! They are not even slowed down, and if so, it is only to hurriedly revise their charts and continue on, over and over, time and time again with **the same end — failure**. Benjamin Franklin said this of such repetition: "*Insanity is doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results.*" Want to be insane? Keep it up!

Philosopher, poet, literary, and cultural critic George Santayana said it this way: "*Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,*" and the predictions of *the Apocalypse, the end of the world, Armageddon, the antichrist, 666*, et al, have been repeated time and again for thousands of years! That which we have seen repeated in churches, politics, wars, and society over the past 100 years alone should be strong evidence that the above maxim is true. Moreover, these views, declarations, and prophetic predictions have not been going on over the past 100 years alone, or even since the early church. They go much farther back than the first century. According to *Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts* (1979): "An Assyrian clay tablet dating to approximately 2800 BC was unearthed bearing the words '**Our earth is degenerate in these latter days. There are signs that the world is speedily coming to an end. Bribery and corruption are common.'**" This is one of the earliest examples of the perception of moral decay in society being interpreted as a sign of the imminent end."

Brethren, that was more than 4,800 years ago! It was being said then, it continued being said down through the ages, and it is still being said today! Nothing has changed! Man is man! So let every man be a liar, but God be true!

It is clear that not many have learned from the past, and it is the same old story of Chicken Little — "*The sky is falling, the sky is falling,*" i.e., — "***The Apocalypse is coming, the Apocalypse is coming;***" and they add, "Is God ever mad!" Rubbish! If it wasn't so outlandish it would be humorous. But such is nothing but pure rubbish! And that is putting it mildly.

What, then, is *the Apocalypse*, if it is none of the above? In order to answer this, it would help to understand more clearly the meaning of the word.

The Greek word for *apocalypse* is *apokalupsis*. We can see that *apocalypse* is not English in its origin, and rightly so; for it is a transliteration, and transliterations are not true translations. When a word is transliterated, one or two letters are changed to make it look and sound like the new language. For example: *cherub* from the Hebrew *keruwb* (imaginary figure); *Christ* is the transliteration of the Greek word *Christos* (anointed); *paradise* is the transliteration of the Greek word *paradeisos* (a park); *seraphim* is a transliteration of the Hebrew word *sawrafim* (burners, or burning fire). And likewise with *apocalypse* and *apokalupsis*, (disclosure, take off the cover, unveil, lay open what has been veiled or covered up).

intense anticipation." *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. It is to crane the neck, waiting for and anxiously expecting something that is about to happen. That is what Paul says creation is doing. It is eagerly awaiting this surpassing event toward which the world is longing, and has been longing for since the expulsion from the beautiful Park of Paradise.

Another translation captures the essence of these words and Paul's intent: "For all creation, gazing eagerly as if with **outstretched neck, is waiting and longing** to see **the manifestation of the sons of God.**" *Weymouth New Testament*.

The world is earnestly looking and waiting for this unveiling to come, which is the same as the one that is commonly known as **THE BOOK OF REVELATION! THE REVELATION OF SAINT JOHN THE DIVINE! THE APOCALYPSE!**

People are not at all apprehensive when they read about being *enlightened* (apokalupsis) by the Spirit of the Lord. They are not overly concerned when the subject comes up about the sons of God being *revealed* (apokalupsis); but when they read about **THE APOCALYPSE** of Jesus Christ, some turn pale and anxiety grips their souls.

Before continuing, we should understand that *the book of Revelation is NOT the revelation of Saint John the divine*, as mentioned above. Although those things he wrote were revealed to him, they were revelations, they were uncovered, he saw the signs of those things which had been veiled from time immemorial — **IT WAS NOT HIS REVELATION!** The verse is clear about this: "**THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, which God gave UNTO HIM**, to show unto his servants things which must shortly *shortly* (Grk. *en-thchos, in haste, with speed*) come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." *Revelation 1:1*.

It is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him! That which lay in the secret chambers of darkness, totally veiled from view, was given to Him, not to John. The revelation was given to Jesus Christ, but it was shown to His servants and signified to John by Him to whom it was given.

Unknown to most, holy things commonly abide in darkness. They live there. They are at home there. And they are pleased to remain there until their apocalypse. It is not that they love darkness; but darkness is a realm wherein mysteries are wrought and glories come forth. Let me say, the darkness of death and hell have been many a man's portion, and out of that darkness has come life and liberty, humility, justice, righteousness, and perfection.

Isaiah knew something of this holiness and darkness that are relative one to the other. He wrote: "Verily thou art **a God that HIDEST THYSELF**, O God of Israel, the Saviour." *Isaiah 45:15*. And the Psalmist adds to the thought: "**He made DARKNESS HIS SECRET PLACE; his pavilion round about him were DARK WATERS AND THICK CLOUDS...**" *Psalm 18:11*.

The question is, how can the one who is light be in darkness; for being light, wherever He is must be light. When light appears, most assuredly, things light up in its presence. Moreover, we know that "...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **1 John 1:5**. Darkness is always destroyed in the presence of light. So how can God, Jesus, or the Sons of God be in darkness? In one respect, the answer is simple. It has to do with perception. **To a blind man, everyone is in darkness**; but to those who are not blind, everyone is in the light to them. Therefore, to people's natural perspective, God is hidden. To them He is in darkness. No matter how hard they strain their eyes or stretch their necks, all they see is darkness.

Jesus said, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, **he hath declared him.** **John 1:18**.

No man has ever seen God; but if you have seen the Son you have seen the Father; because the Son has declared Him, brought Him into view, unfolded for the first time that which His Father was. This is what had been *given* and *revealed* to Him. Those things that His Father had *given* and *unveiled* to Him were His life, His holiness, His nature, His Love, His mercy, His grace, His power, His authority, His Majesty! His Father gave and manifested to Jesus everything that He was, and that manifestation was ***an Apocalypse!***

The Apocalypse was the unveiling of Jesus Christ at that time as a single man in the image and likeness of God, and soon, we pray very soon, it will be the unveiling of Jesus Christ as a corporate man in the express image and likeness of God. And as you surely know by now, unless you are a Pharisee, there is nothing to fear. The thought of it should cause everyone who is not threatened by the light of truth to stand on tiptoe, with outstretched necks, and craning heads anxiously anticipating His appearing. His ***Apocalypse***, His glorious display of majesty, power, and love to the world!

That's what ***the Apocalypse and the book of the Apocalypse*** is all about! The entire message of ***the book of Revelation*** will be missed if Jesus Christ is not seen to be unveiled in all the glorified reality that His Father gave to Him, and not as a gift or divine impartation, **but by birth.**

Of necessity, the *revelation/apocalypse* of Jesus Christ also includes His body, the sons of God that Paul spoke of in Romans 8:19; for how can His head be unveiled and not His body along with it? When Michelangelo unveiled his sculpture of David, did he remove only a little napkin that covered the head while leaving the body veiled? Obviously not! The people in Florence earnestly expected and waited while he chiseled and chipped away at the marble block where a perfect form lay hidden. It was in darkness within the stone and behind the veil, waiting to be discovered. The image was revealed first, ever so slowly, to only its creator behind the thin veil of cloth. And once its maker was pleased with the exact image he desired, his workmanship could be unveiled to all. It was after it was finished in reality, not in mental concept, that the entire veil fell to the ground, and the whole work of art was revealed at the same time, both the head and body. Christ, the Head, cannot be unveiled without His body.

*We are his body and members in particular, **1 Corinthians 12:27.** We are bone of His Bone and flesh of His Flesh, spirit of His Spirit. Everything that He is, we are! We were created and hidden in Him in the Beginning, and we will be revealed together with Him in the End. *The Apocalypse* is about Jesus Christ being manifested in His body. And surely this is no great surprise; for we have been told that "**When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.**" **Colossians 3:4.***

In closing, let me candidly ask. Do any of you want to see Jesus when He appears? Of course you do! We all do. But let me also ask, will you see Him by taking a transatlantic, *Feast of Trumpets* flight to Jerusalem, and then be driven by bus to the Mount of Olives after MSNBC heralds His arrival? Or will you see Him in His body? In His body, of course! For Jesus is to be seen where His body is seen.

As this revelation comes to its glorious conclusion, our Lord in every aspect of His being: His life, His authority, His majesty, His power, and more will be unveiled, seen, and experienced by all the people of the world and of all the ages!

*At this time, we do not know what we will be; but we know this, when **reality breaks forth**, we will **manifest His likeness**, for we will see Him as He is! **1 John 3:2.** This is a sure word, brethren! His appearing in His body is going to break open every door of darkness and come forth in brilliant reality of being like Him! Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you *at the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ!**

To be continued...

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