

The Time of the End – Part Four
A Series on the Book of Revelation
June 13th, 2010

Adapted from Arlen Chitwood's Book; Presented by Jeanne Alley

Revelation 1:9-13a

9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, 11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." 12 And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man...

1). We can see that John, the author of the Book of Revelation, was on the Isle of Patmos when he was given this vision. Patmos is an island in the Aegean Sea, which is a northern branch of the Mediterranean Sea, lying between Greece and Turkey. He states that he was on this Isle for a specifically stated purpose: "because of the Word of God," and "because of the testimony of Jesus Christ."

a) John, the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23), was the one whom God had chosen to receive and record "the revelation ["the unveiling"] of Jesus Christ" (v. 1), which is further described in verses two and nine as "the word of God" and "the testimony of Jesus Christ." And what is being stated here is that John had been taken to the Isle of Patmos *for this specific purpose*.

b) The Isle of Patmos was about ten miles long and six miles wide, and there was a penal colony on this island in John's day. The existence of this penal colony has given rise to a widely-held teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to this island by a Roman ruler because of his proclamation of the Word of God (usually understood as Domitian [who ruled from 81 A.D. to 96 A.D.]; and this Roman ruler is cited because of the widely accepted late date for the writing of the Book of Revelation).

c) The beginning of this teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to the Isle of Patmos can be traced back to the late 2nd, early 3rd century, a century or more after the Book of Revelation had been written. This was taught by several of the early Church fathers during this time (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius all taught this).

And this same teaching has been passed down, taught through the centuries, and carried into modern times.

d) However, this teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to the Isle of Patmos though has no basis in fact (in other words, there is no empirical data stating it as fact). It appears to be strictly tradition, undoubtedly arising from (and continuing to be widely accepted down through the centuries) because of a misunderstanding of the stated purpose for John being on this island: that he was *on this island* (most often interpreted as “he was *imprisoned* on this island”) because of the Word of God (interpreted as “for preaching the Word of Jesus”), and because of the testimony of Jesus Christ.” There is another way to view this, which would keep us directly in the context of the Book, rather than speculating on unsubstantiated historical events.

2). Reading that John was on this island “*because of the Word*” takes us back to Revelation 1:1-2, where we read what was previously stated concerning the *content* of the book. John was on the Isle of Patmos for a purpose which he himself provides, as the Spirit moved him to write. He was there “because of” the revelation (*the unveiling*) of Jesus Christ, which is declared to be “the word of God” and “the testimony of Jesus Christ” (v. 2; cf. John 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:10b, 13).

a) So we can understand that John was on Patmos in order to receive and record God bringing to completion all that He desires man to know and understand concerning His Son – “the revelation [‘the unveiling’] of Jesus Christ.”

3). This wouldn’t be too unusual a way to understand the context here, because God seems to have an affinity for taking individuals (whom He has chosen) to isolated or out-of-the-way places to receive His revelation. Moses wrote the Pentateuch while in the desert; David wrote a number of Psalms while out in the hills being pursued by Saul; Ezekiel wrote from a place of exile, from Babylon; and Paul was seemingly taken to a place in Arabia to receive the revelation of the mystery, while later writing epistles from prisons.

a) So it should not be thought strange at all to see God removing John from surroundings which the outside world offered, and taking him to the remote Isle of Patmos to receive the capstone for all Scripture. In fact, something of this nature should be thought of far more as expected rather than strange.

4). Revelation 1:10 reads, “**I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day ...**” It should literally read, “*I became in spirit on the Lord’s day...*” Most people interpret this to mean that John was focused on spiritual things on a specified day of the week (the seventh day, which people equate to the Lord’s day [of the week]) and was then given a vision to write down. This is not the case at all. The phrase “the Lord’s day,” or “the day of the

Lord,” is always only used to refer to the same time period that we’re talking about in this series – the time of the end, the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

a) The only accurate way to understand John being “in spirit on the Lord’s day” is to see that he was removed *in spirit* from the Isle of Patmos and moved forward in time to witness events occurring in the day of the Lord. John was moved forward to a time at the end of the present dispensation.

b) We can further see that John’s was removed from the Isle of Patmos *into heaven*, because of the things that he immediately sees and records. Those things being a vision of the Son of Man (Christ), dressed as Judge and performing this role at what we see being the Judgment Seat of Christ.

c) Chapter four [vv. 1, 2] actually depicts the same scene again, only it adds information concerning what John saw. So whether this was an actual bodily removal or a removal by means of visions is unrevealed and immaterial to the literality of and teachings drawn from the subject matter at hand [cf. Dan. 7:1, 2; 8:1, 2; 10:1].) John still sees what he sees – actual events – no matter where his physical body is.

5). John, once removed from the Isle of Patmos into heaven, was shown things which would occur relative to the Church (judgment, with a view to the impending Messianic Era) and corresponding things relative to the transfer of the government of the earth from angels to man (chapters 1 - 4; cf. Heb. 2:5). And he was then shown things preparatory to the redemption of the inheritance, which had to do with both heavenly and earthly spheres of the kingdom about to exist under Christ, His co-heirs, Israel, and the nations (chapter 5).

a) John was then moved farther forward in time, into and through seven subsequent years (Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week, the Tribulation). And he was shown things which would transpire on earth relative to Israel and the nations during and immediately following these seven years (chapters 6 - 19).

b) And during this time of seven years that John sees, not only would “the inheritance” be redeemed through judgment (the judgments of the Tribulation) but “the bride” previously determined at the judgment seat would become the Son’s wife, allowing the Son to be in a position to reign.

c) Just to remind us at this point, God has established matters in the beginning concerning man ruling in the stead of Satan and his angels: mankind cannot reign apart from a marriage relationship –

Genesis 1:27-28

27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 2:18

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

d) The man and woman must reign together, seated on the throne as one complete being (cf. Eph. 5:25-31; Heb. 2:5-10).

6). Because of this, God's Son *today* is not in a position to assume the sceptre and reign. So any type of teaching in Christianity today that speaks of Christ currently acting as our King is in error. He must have a wife *first*, to ascend the throne with Him, a wife which, in the antitype of Eve in Gen. 2, is not only part of His body but will complete Him. And the Son will not possess a wife in the manner seen in the type until the end of the coming Tribulation [cf. Ruth 3, 4].

a) A knowledge of this fact is *key* to understanding the offer of the kingdom of the heavens. Knowing this will address, resolve, and put to rest widely-held false teachings concerning a present existence of some type mystery form of the kingdom in which the Son is presently reigning (or even that the Son is already seated on David's throne within this purported mystery form of the kingdom).

b) The preceding may sound strange to those properly instructed in things pertaining to the kingdom [cf. Matt. 13:52]. And so it should. Strange though or not, all of the preceding is widely held in Christian circles today, even taught in numerous Bible schools and seminaries. But the one Biblical fact concerning the necessity of the man and the woman ascending the throne together will, alone, show the fallacy of such teachings, for Christ does not presently have a wife to ascend the throne with Him.

c) Additionally, we know that there are two anointed Kings in relation to the earth today - Christ and Satan - as there were two anointed kings in Israel during the days of David and Saul. But scripturally we understand that only One can *hold the sceptre* at any given time.

7) A brief review - In the type, Saul held the sceptre until he was put down (God removed his anointing *first*, but was allowed to rule until the proper time) and his

crown taken and given to David. Only then did David and his faithful men take the sceptre and reign in Israel [cf. I Sam. 31:1-6; II Sam. 1:4-10; 5:3].

a) And that is how it is in the antitype. Satan's anointing was removed, but he continues to hold the sceptre until he is put down and his crown taken and given to Christ. Only then will Christ and His faithful co-heirs take the sceptre and reign over the earth.

8) Now going back to John and his being given this vision -

a) John was moved into the future to see actual events and record them. He was able to see and record events of the Tribulation, and he was even moved forward past that, extending into the Messianic Era itself (chapter 20a).

b) And even after that, revelation continues with John being shown events which will occur at the end of the Messianic Era relative to Satan, his angels, and his followers among men on earth, along with the judgment of the unsaved dead (chapter 20b).

c) And that which John was shown doesn't stop with events at the end of the Messianic Era. Rather, John was moved even farther forward in time and shown things having to do with the eternal ages beyond the Messianic Era, when man will hold the sceptre relative to a rule extending beyond this earth, out into the universe itself (chs. 21, 22).

9) Scripturally speaking, a person being moved into another time and place and being shown events occurring during this future time, in this place, is not something new. We actually see this same thing happen to Ezekiel, whilst in the Babylonian captivity. He was moved not only to another location (to Jerusalem) but was moved both back in time and forward in time -

Ezekiel 8:1-8

1 And it came about in the sixth year, on the fifth day of the sixth month, as I was sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell on me there. 2 Then I looked, and behold, a likeness as the appearance of a man; from His loins and downward there was the appearance of fire, and from His loins and upward the appearance of brightness, like the appearance of glowing metal. 3 And He stretched out the form of a hand and caught me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the idol of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy, was located. 4 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the appearance which I saw in the plain. 5 Then He said to me, "Son of man, raise your eyes, now, toward the north." So I raised my eyes toward

the north, and behold, to the north of the altar gate was this idol of jealousy at the entrance. 6 And He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations which the house of Israel are committing here, that I should be far from My sanctuary? But yet you will see still greater abominations." 7 Then He brought me to the entrance of the court, and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall. 8 And He said to me, "Son of man, now dig through the wall." So I dug through the wall, and behold, an entrance.

And so this continues through the next couple of chapters.

a) Ezekiel, through visions, was removed from Babylon, placed in Jerusalem, and shown things which had occurred both before the captivity and which were yet to occur (Ezek. 8-11).

b) The captivity took place in stages, beginning about 605 B.C., but the Glory did not depart until almost twenty years later, in 586 B.C.

c) Ezekiel had been among the early captives transported to Babylon, and it was around the middle of this period (about 595 B.C.) when the Spirit entered into Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2), began showing him things (2:3ff), "lifted" him "up between the earth and the heaven," and carried him "in the visions of God to Jerusalem" (8:3).

d) Ezekiel, at first, was moved back in time, allowing him to see the abominations existing among the Jewish people which had resulted in the captivity. Then he was moved forward in time, allowing him to see the end result – the Jewish people not only in captivity but the resulting departure of the Glory (chs. 8-11).

10) "Time," rather than being a constant, is relative. Not only is this revealed in Scripture, but man has been allowed to discover and see this even in his secular science. This is part of the theory of relativity which Albert Einstein (a Jew) was allowed to discover and demonstrate through the science of mathematics (showing a small part of that which God had previously established through His unchangeable laws in physics and mathematics).

a) And, if God so chooses (which He has done at times), He can take a man, place him in another location, and move him either back in time or forward in time in that location. Man can't operate in this sphere, but the One Who designed and created all of this can.

b) Then, within the scope of God doing this, one thing which guarantees the future occurrence of that seen throughout the Book of Revelation is the fact that, in one

respect, all of that seen in this book has already occurred. And changes can't take place in that which has already occurred.

FOR FURTHER READING LATER TODAY, AND DISCUSSION TONIGHT:

11) We need to spend a little bit more time on this phrase “the Lord’s Day [the day of the Lord].” In relation to the earth, Man’s Day will last for 6,000 years – extending from the creation of man to the end of the Tribulation. Then, when Man’s Day has been brought to a close, the Lord’s Day will begin. This is relative *to the earth*.

a) Moving outside the earth, though, a person would move outside the bounds of Man’s Day and move into a day which has always existed – the Lord’s Day. If man is removed from the earth at any time during Man’s Day he finds himself in the Lord’s Day. Man’s Day and the Lord’s Day cannot run concurrently on earth. Man’s Day, in this respect, has to run its course and be brought to a close before the Lord’s Day can begin on earth. (I will show this on a diagram tonight.)

b) It is commonly taught that either all or part of the coming Tribulation (Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week [Dan. 9:24-27], the last seven years of Man’s Day) forms the beginning of the Lord’s Day. Such a teaching has Man’s Day and the Lord’s Day existing at the same time on earth during the last seven years of Man’s Day. Not only is this not possible, and not only is this not taught anywhere in Scripture, but Scripture teaches just the opposite relative to the timing of the beginning of the Lord’s Day on earth.

c) In the Book of Joel, following the Day of the Lord being introduced in connection with judgment befalling the nations (1:15; 2:1), the timing of the beginning of the Day of the Lord is seen. In Joel 2:27-3:21, the beginning of Day of the Lord on earth is clearly seen to be following Christ’s return to the earth at the end of Daniel’s Seventieth Week, after Man’s Day has run its course. Joel’s prophecy, in actuality, cannot be understood after any other fashion.

d) A place where many go seeking to show that the last seven years of Man’s Day, Daniel’s Seventieth Week, is referred to in Scripture as the Day of the Lord is I Thess. 5:2-4. They seek to make these verses relate to the unsaved remaining on earth following the removal of the Church, seen at the end of the preceding chapter [vv. 13-18]. But, understanding these verses both contextually and in the light of other Scripture [e.g., Joel’s prophecy], it is quite evident that this cannot be the case. These verses,

continuing from the previous chapter, have to do with Christians removed from Man's Day and placed in the Lord's Day at the end of the present dispensation.

e) Also, many seek to do this same thing with Rev. 1:10, saying that John was removed into heaven and shown events of the Tribulation, which they relate to the mention of the Lord's Day in this verse. Such individuals seek to teach that the Lord's Day in chapter one relates to events of the Tribulation, beginning in chapter six.

But exactly the same thing can be said here that was said about the incorrect understanding of I Thess. 5:2-4. Contextually, and in the light of other Scripture [again ref. Joel's prophecy], neither can be understood as they are often taught.

f) Revelation 1:10, contextually, has to do with Christians removed from the earth at the end of the present dispensation and placed in the Lord's Day, for this is the scene presented in the verses immediately following [vv. 11-20]. Events of the Tribulation seen beginning in chapter six do not occur during the Lord's Day. Rather, they occur during the last seven years of Man's Day.

g) That "the Lord's day" couldn't refer to time on earth during the Tribulation is shown another way in the book. John was removed into the Lord's Day before the Tribulation began on earth; and, if the Lord's Day is understood correctly, John would have remained in the Lord's Day, in heaven, not only when moved through time covering the Tribulation but also when moved through time beyond the Tribulation into the Millennium.

12) John being removed from the earth into heaven foreshadows the removal of the Church at the end of the dispensation. Not only was he removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day, but a trumpet is seen connected with this removal in both Rev. 1:10 and Rev. 4:1, where the same scene is repeated (we will be discussing this in future weeks). And this is in complete keeping with I Thess. 4:13-5:9, where Christians are removed from the earth in connection with a trumpet (4:16), being removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day (5:2-4).

a) John, through his experiences, depicting the Church being removed into heaven at the end of the dispensation, then relates things about the appearance of the Church in Christ's presence in that day. John sees "seven golden candlesticks," and in the midst of

the seven candlesticks he sees Christ in all His Glory, described as One Whose “countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” (v. 16); or, as previously described by Paul when He saw Christ enswathed in this same covering of Glory, as he traveled from Jerusalem to Damascus: “above the brightness of the [‘midday’] sun” (Acts 26:13).

b) The “seven candlesticks” are stated to be the seven Churches. The number “seven” is one of five numbers used in Scripture to show completeness in one form or another (the others are three, ten, twelve, and forty). The number “seven” shows the completeness of that which is in view, and this is a number used particularly concerning the judgments seen occurring throughout a large part of the book beginning in chapter six. There are seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials, showing God’s complete judgment upon Israel and the nations during this period. This is what it will take (God’s complete judgment, occurring in the manner presented in this book) to bring Israel to the place of repentance, which will, in turn, allow numerous necessary events to occur prior to the ushering in of the Messianic Era.

c) All seven Churches seen in Christ’s presence at this time depict the complete Church being removed from the earth at the time of the rapture. The Church in Philadelphia (which had kept the word of Christ’s patience, i.e. *faithful*) and the Church in Laodicea (which is described as wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, i.e. *unfaithful*) are both seen in Christ’s presence together following the rapture, both awaiting the same thing – judgment, with a view to the Messianic Era.

d) It is widely but erroneously taught that only the *faithful* part of the Church will be removed at the time of the rapture (an event which those teaching along these lines usually see occurring before the Tribulation), with the remaining Christians left behind to go through either part or all of the Tribulation (as to whether it is part or all depends on who is doing the teaching; this false teaching takes numerous forms).

e) As any corruption of Biblical doctrine, erroneous teachings concerning the rapture emanate from a failure to begin with the Old Testament types and properly understand these types in the light of their New Testament antitypes. Beginning with the types and progressing in a correct manner from that point, it would not be possible to teach a selective-type rapture from Scripture.

f) And the same would be true of any Biblical doctrine, actually. One has to begin with the Old Testament types, properly understand these types, and then move on into the New Testament antitypes and see the proper relationship between the types and the antitypes. If Christians would do this, there would be far more uniformity of interpretation of Scripture throughout Christianity.

g) God has interwoven types throughout Biblical history for an evident reason. They are there to help man properly understand the antitypes. And any Christian ignoring the types is not only failing to study Scripture after the manner in which God structured His Word but he is doing this to his own peril and to the peril of any to whom he might minister.

h) The importance of correctly studying Scripture after the fashion in which it has been structured cannot be overemphasized.

And there we end it....

Until next week.