

The Time of the End – A Series on the Book of Revelation

Part Three ½

(A Review of Parts One – Three)

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1). The title of this series, "The Time of the End," is an expression taken from the Book of Daniel (8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9), which refers specifically to the *Time of the End of Man's Day*. This "Time of the End" is a time yet future, when the Jewish people, and all Gentiles left on the earth subsequent to the removal of the Church, will pass through the last seven years of this age. The Time of the End is also the final "week" in Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy. The Time of the End includes all the events that encompass the Second Coming of Jesus Christ – from His leaving His Father's right hand, to Him setting His feet on the Mount of Olives, to all events that lead into (but do not include) the Messianic Era, the Lord's Day, the Millennial Kingdom.

Today we're going to review the first 7 verses from the Book of Revelation –

Revelation 1:1-8

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants-- things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near. 4 John to the seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne: 5 And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

2). The word "Revelation" (v. 1) is a translation of the Greek word 'apokalupsis,' which means to "disclose," "reveal," "uncover." And this word, along with its verb form (apokalupto), are together used forty-five times in the New Testament in passages such as –

Romans 16:25

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation [apokalupto] of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith

1Corinthians 2:9

But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed [apokalupto] them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

Galatians 1:11

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation [apokalupto] of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:6

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation [apokalupto] of Jesus Christ;

The "revelation" mentioned in each of these verses is not referencing something that *we cannot know*. In fact, you'll see that God specifically states that He has shown and opened up and clarified what it is that He deems a "revelation." In other words, the word "revelation" means that we CAN, and we SHOULD, be able to come into a complete understanding of what it is that God is revealing.

b) The "mystery," which *had been kept secret*, is now *revealed* and made known to us. And this mystery has numerous facets that are explained throughout the Scriptures. For example, there is:

- the "mystery" of the kingdom [Mark 4:11; 'mysteries' in Matt. 13:11; Luke 8:10],
- the "mystery" of Israel's blindness [Rom. 11:25],
- the "mystery" of the rapture of the Church [I Cor. 15:51],
- the "mystery" revealed to Paul [Eph. 3:3],
- the "mystery" of Christ [Eph. 3:4],
- the "mystery" of Christ and the Church [Eph. 5:32],
- the "mystery" of God [Col. 2:2],

- the “mystery” of iniquity [II Thess. 2:7],
- the “mystery” of the faith [I Tim. 3:9],
- the “mystery” of godliness [I Tim. 3:16],
- and the “mystery” of the woman and the beast [Rev. 17:7].

Every mention of the word “mystery” pertains to some facet of Jesus Christ. And every facet of Jesus Christ is revealed to us through the Scriptures.

3). So, the Book of Revelation, the Apokalupsis, the “Apocalypse,” is about a disclosure, an uncovering, an unveiling of that which the Father had previously given to and would accomplish through His Son. And that which the Father had previously given to and would accomplish through His Son is seen in both Old and New Testament Scripture as “all things” –

John 16:15

"All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

Colossians 1:16

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Hebrews 1:1

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds...

a) Then, more directly, and in the words of the book itself, that being made known pertains to a revelation of the Son Himself. This book is an opening up of that which relates all that the Father has given to and would accomplish through His Son, revealed through a revelation of the Son Himself.

b) Which is really simply a revelation of, a disclosing and unveiling of, the Word of God Itself –

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- Jesus is the Word - He is the exact perfect COMPLETE embodiment of the Old Testament. And that is why it is impossible to find something in the New Testament that isn't in the Old. The Old is as complete as Christ; the New just *reveals* this to us through the filter of the Cross and the Resurrection.
- And notice in John 1:14 that they "beheld His [the Word that became flesh] glory" - referencing the time of the transfiguration. The glory pertained to the kingdom glory. Reference back to Hebrews Chapter 1.

4) And now back to Revelation -

And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

a) The word "signified" in Revelation 1:1 is a translation of the Greek word *semaino*, which is the verb form of the word for "sign" (*semeion*). The Apostle John introduced, opened up, and developed matters in his gospel account through signs. And in the Book of Revelation, matters are introduced, opened up, and developed in a similar manner - no coincidence that they have the same author.

John 20:30

Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

- b) Remember the signs we studied from the Book of John-
- The wedding feast on the THIRD DAY (which was also the SEVENTH DAY)
 - A nobleman's son healed on the SEVENTH hour.
 - A man healed of his sickness, which he had for 38 years. The healing took place at a Feast of the Jews, which was the SEVENTH day.
 - The multitude of people are fed by Jesus, through miraculous provision.

- Jesus calms the winds that were frightening the disciples while in the boat (3 ½ miles out from the land). Once the sea was calmed, and Jesus was received into the boat, the boat was on the land.
- A man who was blind from birth is healed on the SEVENTH day.
- Jesus leaves on the THIRD day to heal a sick man. When He brings him back to life, he had been dead for FOUR days.
- Jesus is resurrected on the THIRD day.

c) This structure of ‘signs’ in the Gospel of John is the same structure that he uses in Revelation - words and images that illustrate another truth other than the direct, literal meaning of the words used. This is crucial to understand as we embark on our study of the Book of Revelation.

5). And note in Revelation 1:1 that this revelation of Jesus Christ is given to John by an angel of the Lord. As we mentioned before, angelic ministry comprises a major facet of how God has structured the Book of Revelation, and the use of angelic ministry comprises a major facet of how God interacts with man. We see throughout the Scriptures that He uses angels to administer His plans and purposes to and through man, over and over and over again.

a) This is the same thought – that of God using angels to administer His message – that is seen in Revelation 1:4 –

John to the seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne:

The “seven” spirits symbolize the whole of the angels used in the giving of the Revelation (seven being a number of completion; spirits being angels). Angels play a huge part in the Book of Revelation, as we will see.

6). Moving on in Revelation..

Revelation 1:5

And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

a). This revelation- “unveiling”- is from Jesus Christ Himself, who is described using three specific characteristics. Notice the emphasis created with these specific traits: faithful witness = obedient One who did all that His Father said, which makes Him

qualified to speak of the things which are being shown, and share this with us; “first begotten” = which has to do with a firstborn Son, which speaks directly to rulership relative to the Father, and “prince of the kings of the earth,” which points directly again to the aspect of Ruler & Authority.

b). And then we are told that He “washed us from our sins in his own blood,” which literally means a “loosing” rather than a cleansing or washing. What is being pointed out here is that *everything* surrounding the Christ coming into the world (Who is the “Lamb of God”) begins with **redemption**, which is a “loosing” from sin. This “losing from sin” is with a view to ultimately bringing fallen man back into the position where he can realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning – “...let them have dominion [‘let them rule’]” (Gen. 1:26-28).

7). And then it is pointed out in Rev. 1:6, in connection to what was just said in vv. 1-5 (which, we just saw, emphasized the angels administering God’s plans, the blessing to be had in keeping what is revealed, and the Son’s specific traits that made Him the center of these plans, all relative to the final unveiling of the end events of this age) –

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

a). As John continues to share with us how this “unveiling” came to him, specifically through angels, and through the Son, and how this revelation is regarding the unveiling of the mystery of the age, he points out *man’s* place in sharing in all of this by using a description that points directly to us sharing in this rulership – “kings” and “priests.”

And then he adds an “Amen,” which appears to close off that thought (vv. 1-6).

8). Revelation 1:7

Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

a). Although in verse 7 here we can see a definite literal future point in time, when Christ literally returns to the earth in the exact way that He left, what is encompassed in v. 7 has to do with more than just Christ’s return immediately following the Tribulation. What we will see is that Christ’s Second Coming encompasses events surrounding the removal of the Church preceding the Tribulation, AND also events surrounding Israel and the nations following the Tribulation. And even though these two events are separated by 7 years of time, they both are in reference to Christ’s Second Coming. Failing to understand *the singular sense* of Christ’s return as presented in Scripture can

sometimes lead into a false teaching surrounding the timing of the removal of the Church.

b). Scripture deals with Christ's coming as a whole gambit of time and events, but deals with His return as *one coming* or *one return*. So we, too, must view it in this way, rather than seeing it as two comings or two returns, as is often taught.

9). The Son seen returning "with clouds" in Rev. 1:7 may very well be a dual metaphorical reference to both *Deity* and *angels*. "Clouds" are sometimes used in Scripture in connection with Deity -

Exodus 13:21

And the LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

Psalm 104:3

He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind...

Isaiah 14:14

'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

1 Corinthians 10:1

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea...

a). And the reference to "clouds" surrounding the Coming of Jesus could very well include *the myriads of angels* (i.e., clouds of angels, connected with Deity, with their actions being the Lord's actions, as we have seen previously).

b) One erroneous teaching that is believed by many today is the idea that Christians will return back to the earth with Christ at the end of the Tribulation. This is based on the following verse from Revelation -

Revelation 19:14:

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

c) Some expositors seek to limit this reference to Christians alone, and others seek to see a reference to not only Christians but to angels as well. Both of these interpretations present the following problems:

1. Any time those returning with Christ are identified, they are *always identified as angels*, sometimes referred to as “holy ones” [cf. Deut. 33:2; Matt. 16:27; Jude 14].

2. Biblical typology would show the fallacy of the teaching that Christians [still Christ’s bride at this time, about to become His wife] will return to the earth with Christ. As seen in Biblical typology, Christ’s bride will not be with Him when He returns to the earth to deal with His brethren in the antitype of that seen in the accounts of Joseph and Moses. Moses’ wife returning part way with him may show Christ’s bride also returning part way with Him, but remaining in the New Jerusalem above the earth while Christ, accompanied by angels, returns on to the earth to deal with Israel and the nations.

d) Later we will deal with the fact that Christ’s bride, having previously been revealed through decisions and determinations at the judgment seat (Rev. 1b-3), *will not become His wife until the completion of all the judgments revealed by the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll in Rev. 5*. And these judgments will not be complete until Christ returns and overthrows Gentile world power, seen in Rev. 19:11-21. The marriage of Christ and His bride are part and parcel with these judgments.

e) Another thing concerning the fallacy of the teaching that the Church returns to the earth with Christ is simply that Christ’s bride in that day would not be described as “the armies which were in heaven,” as seen in Rev. 19:14. This is a description used of *angels*, never of a bride or wife.

10) Concerning Rev. 1:7 where we read “*and every eye shall see him,*” let’s note that following the “rapture” and resurrection of all Christians from the Earth, Scripture makes it clear that ALL Christians WILL SEE Christ. Additionally, all of those surviving the judgments of the Tribulation, among the nations of the earth, will see Him at the completion of His return *following* the Tribulation. And of course ALL of Israel will have to see Him as well, following His return to the earth. Even all of the unsaved will have to see Him at some point, but not until the Millennium is over (at the Great White Throne Judgment).

a) People have taken this phrase “every eye shall see him” to mean that EVERY person, EVERYWHERE, will see Christ’s return at the EXACT SAME TIME, exactly at the point in time when He returns to earth. And many seek to envision how this will occur, seeing it perhaps occurring via TV or internet, or other similar means. But all the speculation is unnecessary. “Every eye” may not necessarily see Christ as some may

think of *at the exact time of His return at the end of the Tribulation*. He will indeed return to a point in the Middle East (to the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem), and as we know, individuals of the earth at that time will be residing at various places worldwide. BUT, as we mentioned, every eye will see Christ at one point or another... no one will escape from having that encounter.

11). Then in the middle of Rev. 1:7, Israel is specifically singled out from among the nations of the earth by the phrase, "they also who pierced him." Israel is of course the one who pierced Him by crucifying Him. And if *every single Jew* still alive and on the earth does not see Him at the exact time of His return, that is immaterial for they will see Him at later points in time, and that still keeps us within a correct interpretation of the verse.

a) Something often overlooked in connection with Israel and the nations seeing Christ at the time of His return is the fact that Israel will be regathered into their land, from a worldwide dispersion, *before* Gentile world power is destroyed (with Christ being the One who will destroy it).

b) Revelation 1:7 states that "all shall wail" when Christ returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation, when He returns to the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, to this land inhabited and controlled by the Gentiles (not to a land inhabited and controlled by the Jews). But at this time (when He physically returns to the earth), He will not immediately overthrow Gentile world power. Instead, His actions will be directed first and foremost toward His brethren, the Jewish people.

c) In accord with the order of that foreshadowed by three of the seven Jewish festivals in Leviticus chapter 23 -- Passover, First fruits, and Pentecost -- the national conversion (Passover), resurrection (Firstfruits), and the regathering of the Jewish people (Pentecost) will then have to occur. Israel has *slain the Lamb*, but the nation has yet *to apply the blood*, which they will do in that day when Christ returns to the earth; *the resurrection* of multiplied millions of Old Testament saints will then occur, followed by *the regathering* of the Jewish people back to the land, with the resurrected dead returning with the dispersed living.

d) Then, once the Jewish people have been regathered back to their land in their repentant state, Christ will deal with the Gentile nations. Gentile world power will be completely destroyed, and the sceptre will then be given to the one nation -- God's firstborn son -- whom God recognizes as *the only nation, among all the nations, possessing the rights of the firstborn* (possessing kingly, priestly, and double portion rights). Then, the Gentile nations will not only be subservient to Israel but will be blessed through Israel.

e) The Jewish people, in that coming day, when they see their Messiah at the time of His return and realize what the nation did at the time of Messiah's first appearance (rejected and crucified their Messiah), are going to be troubled beyond a degree which words can really express. They are going to be as Joseph's brethren at the time Joseph revealed himself to them ("agitated," or "inwardly trembling"), or as Paul when Christ revealed Himself to him as he traveled from Jerusalem to Damascus ("afraid" and "astonished").

f) Note Zechariah's description of their reaction to Christ's presence in that day:

Zechariah 12:11a, 12a; cf. v. 10).

"In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem [a reference to the Jewish people]... And the land [again, a reference to the Jewish people] shall mourn, every family apart..."

g) Matters will then continue exactly as seen in the types. As Joseph brought his brethren into a state where they went forth proclaiming "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 45:26), Christ is going to bring His brethren into a state where they will go forth proclaiming "Jesus is yet alive, and He is governor over the entire earth." Or, as seen in Paul's conversion and his carrying this message throughout the Gentile world of that day, Israel will do exactly the same thing in that coming day.

h) And that completes the review of the first 7 verses of the Book of Revelation, and next week (or the week after, perhaps), we will be looking at verses 8 and 9, and will specifically pay closer attention to the author, John, and *where* and *when* he received this revelation.