

THE HEAVENLY CALLING

consider . . . Jesus

Heb. 3:1

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The Time of the End

Part I

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (I)

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (Rev. 1:1-3).

The title of this series, "The Time of the End," is an expression taken from Dan. 8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9, referring, in this book, specifically to a future time which the Jewish people will pass through at the end of Man's Day, immediately before and at the time when "the Sun of righteousness" arises "with healing in his wings" (cf. Dan. 12:1-13; Mal 4:1, 2). This time is shown in the Book of Daniel to encompass events during *the last seven years of Man's Day* (the final seven years in Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy) and lead into *the Messianic Era, the Lord's Day*, which follows (cf. Dan. 2:40-45; 7:7-14, 23-28; 8:9-14, 23-25; 9:24-27; 11:21-45).

The Book of Revelation, paralleling the Book of Daniel in this respect, deals centrally with events during this same future time, ending, as well, in the Messianic Era. The Book of Revelation though deals not only with Israel (covering the same time and a number of the same events seen in parts of the

Book of Daniel [occurring during "the time of the end"]) but this book also includes God's end-time dealings with the Church as well.

In this respect, matters surrounding the Church are introduced and dealt with *first* in the Book of Revelation (chs. 1-4). And in the chronological sequence through which events in the book move, *God deals with the Church first, for a revealed reason:*

The bride *must be removed from the body* (which will occur following decisions and determinations at the judgment seat) *prior to events* surrounding two things: 1) *the redemption of the inheritance* (chs. 5-18), and 2) *the bride becoming Christ's wife* (chs. 6-19a). And these two things will occur *simultaneously* through God's judgment upon the earth-dwellers (Israel and the nations, following the removal of the Church) during the final seven years of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy (chs. 6-18).

(For additional information on the preceding — the redemption of the inheritance and the revealed bride [revealed at the judgment seat] becoming Christ's wife — refer to the editor's book, RUTH, Chs. 8-10.)

Then, at the end of the Book of Revelation, matters are projected out into the ages beyond the Messianic Era (chs. 21, 22). Scripture has very little to say about that which occurred prior to Man's Day, and it has very little to say about that which will occur following the Messianic Era. But Scripture does reveal enough about events which occurred preceding Man's Day and events which will occur following the

Messianic Era to allow man to piece the whole of the matter together.

God has revealed the necessary information which will allow man to know and understand why he was created in God's image, after His likeness, at a particular time in history. And, through this revelation, man can know and understand why the fall occurred and why God provided redemption following the fall (which, beginning with man's creation, all center around *regality* — *having to do with the government of the earth* — *to be realized during the seventh day, the seventh millennium, the Messianic Era*).

And man can also know and understand that God has far-reaching plans for the individual created in His image, after His likeness. Man's destiny beyond the Messianic Era, clearly revealed at the end of the Book of Revelation, is to have a part *in the government of the universe itself*.

(For information on the government of the earth and the universe, past, present, and future — which includes angels and man — refer to the editor's book, THE MOST HIGH RULETH.)

An Unveiling

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 Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 2:10; Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3, 5; I Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13.

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 the Son (cf. John 3:34, 35; 5:20-22; 7:16; 8:28). And that which the

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Father had previously given to His Son is seen in both Old and New Testament Scripture as “all things” (cf. Gen. 24:36; 25:5; John 16:15).

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 the Son, revealed through the Son*.

According to John 1:1, 14, the incarnation was simply the Word (the Old Testament Scriptures) becoming flesh. There is the written Word (which is living [Heb. 4:12]), and there is the living Word (which is the written Word, inseparably connected with the Father, made flesh).

The Book of Revelation is thus an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures *through a person, through the Word which became flesh*. And the thought of an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures extending to and including an opening up of the New Testament Scriptures as well is unnecessary, for there is nothing in the New that cannot be found, after some fashion, in the Old. If there were, there could not be *the necessary corresponding completeness* between the written Word and the living Word at a time before the New Testament even began to be penned.

The New Testament, *at any point, of necessity*, can only have to do with revelation which can be seen as having an Old Testament base. Revelation in the New Testament *must* bear the same inseparable connection with the Word made flesh as revelation in the Old Testament bears.

Thus, the existence of the Word made flesh preceding the existence of the New Testament clearly relates the truth of the matter concerning the content of the New Testament. The New can only be *an opening up and revealing of that previously seen in the Old*. To state or think otherwise is to connect the Word made flesh with one Testament and disconnect Him from the other — *an impossibility*.

In short, *the Old Testament is complete in and of itself*, the Word made flesh incorporates *this same completeness*, and the New Testament adds *nothing per se* to this completeness. Any supposed sub-

sequent addition would be impossible, for *this would be adding to that which God had already deemed complete through the incarnation, the Word being made flesh*.

The preceding is why Christ, shortly after His resurrection, began at “Moses and all the prophets” (an expression covering the whole of the O.T.) when He appeared to and began *making Himself known* to two disciples traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31). The living Word, using the written Word, began putting together different facets of *a word picture pertaining to Himself*. And He could have gone to *any part of the Old Testament* to accomplish the matter, for *the whole of the Old Testament* was about Him.

Through this means, those being addressed would be able to see one (the word picture) alongside the other (the Word made flesh). And, comparing the two, they would be able to come into an understanding of not only *the identity of the One in their midst* but an understanding of *that which had occurred in Jerusalem during the past several days as well*.

This is the manner in which God has put matters together in His Word, making Himself, His plans, and His purposes known to man. And this is why the Son — God manifest in the flesh, the Word made flesh — undertook matters after exactly the same fashion when making Himself, His plans, and His purposes known to two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day of His resurrection. Then the same thing is seen when He appeared to the Eleven (with Thomas absent) in Jerusalem a short time later (Luke 24:36-45; John 20:19-29).

And this is the manner in which the Book of Revelation *must* be studied. Since it is an unveiling of the living Word, it is equally an unveiling of the inseparable Old Testament Scriptures. Thus, there is really *only one way* a person can come into a proper and correct understanding of the various things opened up and revealed in this book, which, of course, would be equally true of any other portion of Scripture.

(For a more comprehensive study of the preceding, refer to Ch. IV “The Word Made Flesh,” in the editor’s book, SIGNS IN JOHN’S GOSPEL.)

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The Lamp Broadcast, Inc.

2629 Wyandotte Way
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Internet web site address:

www.lampbroadcast.org

E-mail: alchitwood@icnet.net

Arlen L. Chitwood . . . Editor

*All unsigned articles are
written by the editor.*

1) Sent and Signified...

The word “signified” 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*.

God, throughout His revelation to man, shows an affinity for the use of *types, numbers, signs, metaphors* and *parables* to make Himself, His plans, and His purposes known. And this must be recognized, else man will find himself failing to go beyond the simple letter of Scripture (cf. II Cor. 3:6-4:6).

Man, for example, will find himself understanding *Biblical history* but failing to understand the God-designed *typical significance* of that history. Or if *numbers, signs, metaphors* or *parables* are used — which they often are — he will fail to understand the God-designed significance of these as well.

At the very outset, God makes it clear that the Book of Revelation has been structured in *a particular manner*, closely related to the manner in which John was led by the Spirit to structure his gospel. The Gospel of John was built around eight signs which Jesus had previously performed during His earthly ministry, and these signs were recorded and directed to the Jewish people during the time of the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel (which occurred between 33 AD and about 62 AD).

And the Book of Revelation — dealing largely with the Jewish people once again (exclusively in chs. 6-18, covering time and events in Daniel’s Seventieth Week) — uses the verb form of the word

for “sign” at the very outset to reveal the manner in which the book has been structured.

To understand how the word *semaino*, translated “signified,” is used introducing the Book of Revelation, note how John uses this same word three times in his gospel, in John 12:33; 18:32; 21:19. The context leading into each verse provides an illustrative statement which allows that stated in the verse to be understood. Note the first of these three usages, within context:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

This he said, signifying [from *semaino*] what death he should die” (vv. 32, 33).

Aside from Rev. 1:1 and the three verses in John’s gospel, the only other usages of the word *semaino* in the New Testament are in Acts 11:28; 25:27. And the same thought is set forth through the use of the word in these two passages, though the illustrative statement is inferred in the first usage.

Thus, “signified,” a translation of *semaino*, has to do with making something known through a manner which carries the reader from a somewhat indirect means to a direct means, from an illustrative statement to an explanatory statement. And this is seen accomplished in the Book of Revelation centrally through the use of numerous numbers and metaphors, though other illustrative means are used as well. And all illustrative means are, they would have to be, in line with the meaning of the word *semaino* and the manner in which this word is used elsewhere in the New Testament.

2) Through His Angel unto His Servant John

God’s use of angels and angelic ministry comprises another major facet of the Book of Revelation, forming another key to coming into a proper understanding of the book. God uses angels in all facets of His activities as He governs a universe from a place which Scripture locates by direction and through the use of a superlative — “the uttermost parts of the north” (Isa. 14:13, ASV).

This place is located at a northernmost point, north of the earth. And this place in relation to the earth would be located more specifically north of

Jerusalem; and more specifically yet, this place would be located north of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem; and even more specifically yet, this place would be located north of the brazen altar in the courtyard of the Temple located on the Temple Mount.

The brazen altar is where the sacrifices took place — “on the side of the altar northward before the Lord.” And sacrifices occurring at this brazen altar occupied center-stage in Scripture in exactly the same respect that Christ’s sacrifice at Calvary occupies center-stage in Scripture, for the former foreshadows the latter, with God requiring *death and shed blood* throughout (Lev. 1:11; cf. Job 26:7; Psa. 75:6, 7; Heb. 9:22).

(Note in this respect that the place Christ was crucified, outside the city [John 19:20; Heb. 13:12], would have had to be located *directly north of the place where the brazen altar once stood* — two unknown locations today [though the approximate, but not exact, location of the brazen altar on the Temple Mount could be known].

Regardless of claims, no one can go to Bethlehem or Jerusalem today and be directed to the exact places where Christ was born, died, or was buried and raised from the dead. There are traditional sites, but matters cannot move beyond tradition. And the reason for that would be evident.

First, man doesn’t need to go to these sites. The written Word, which provides all of the God-designed word pictures about the living Word, is complete and sufficient in and of itself; and, second, if man could go to and be assured that he was at one of these three locations, he would undoubtedly do exactly the same thing (and possibly more) that he has already done with the traditional sites, detracting from that which God deems important, that which is complete and sufficient in and of itself.)

All angels in God’s universal kingdom either rule provinces in the kingdom (e.g., the earth is one such province) or have some other type connection with the rulership of the different provinces. That is to say, all activity of angels within the kingdom of God would have to be activity somehow connected with God’s universal rule within this kingdom.

In this respect, all angels would have

some part in this rule, whether directly or indirectly. Some angels would *rule as heads of state* (ruling over provinces, as Satan presently rules over the earth); other angels would *rule under them* (as angels presently rule under Satan); others would hold *positions as watchers and holy ones* (as seen in Dan. 4); others would occupy *positions surrounding God’s throne* (as seen in Rev. 4, 5, 7); and others would comprise *the armies of heaven* (as seen in the camp of Israel in the Old Testament, or as seen among those who will accompany Christ when He returns to the earth [cf. II Kings 6:17; Matt. 24:31; II Thess. 1:7; Rev. 19:14]).

Though God appeared in Moses’ presence and acted directly, God used angels when giving the Law (Acts 7:53; cf. Deut. 33:2; Psa. 68:17; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2). And something very similar occurred when John “was in the isle called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9b). The Son acted directly in the revelation of Himself to John, as the Father had previously acted directly in that made known to Moses at Sinai (cf. Ex. 19:3ff; Rev. 1:10ff). But, though direct intervention occurred by both the Father and the Son at these different times, angelic ministry was also involved. And in both instances a kingdom was in view — the Old Testament theocracy, and the theocracy yet to exist.

Blessed Is He...

The Book of Revelation is the only book in Scripture containing a specific statement at the beginning of the book relative to blessings awaiting the one *hearing, reading, and keeping* the things stated in the book (v. 3). However, though this is the only book which opens with a statement of this nature, the same thing would have to be true of any portion of Scripture. Such a thought could not be confined to just the Book of Revelation but would have to be true concerning Scripture as a whole, for the whole of Scripture presents one complete picture, through numerous word pictures, of all facets of the person and work of Jesus Christ. And one part cannot really be placed above another part in this respect. The Book of Revela-

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tion simply cannot be separated in this manner from the whole of Scripture, for this book is about the whole of Scripture (cf. Psa. 12:6; 138:2; II Tim. 3:15-17).

The Book of Revelation brings all previous revelation together in an apex, with the “mystery of God” being brought to a completed state in this book (Rev. 10:7). And that would possibly account for this statement being found in the Book of Revelation alone, though not really restricted in application to this book alone.

(Numerous things in the New Testament are referred to through the use of the word “mystery.” 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].

The word “mystery” is a translation [more of an Anglicized form] of the Greek word *mysterion*. The word, as it is used in Scripture, has to do with that which cannot be explained by man, requiring an opening up through Divine means. The word has to do with something revealed in the Old Testament, which is later more fully opened up and developed in the New Testament. Apart from Divine revelation in the Old Testament, man couldn’t know about the mystery in the first place; then, apart from Divine revelation in the New Testament, the mystery would not be opened up and further revealed.

In the preceding respect, a mystery, contrary to common teaching and thought in certain circles, cannot be something completely new, separate

from and unknown in the Old Testament. The fallacy behind that type reasoning has previously been discussed in this article. There is nothing in the New that is not in the Old, else, as previously stated, the Word made flesh before the New was penned would have to be separated from the New.)

“The mystery of God” in Rev. 10:7 — the revelation of God, which began with Gen. 1:1 — has, at this point in the book, been opened up and fully revealed through a revelation of the Son (Rev. 1:1ff; cf. Col. 2:2, ASV, “...the mystery of God, even Christ”). And the completion of God’s revelation surrounding this mystery can occur at this mid-point in the book for the same reason that “the kingdom of the world” can become that “of our Lord, and of his Christ” in Rev. 11:15 (ASV), at this mid-point in the book as well.

In both instances (Rev. 10:7; 11:15) the seventh trumpet has sounded, signaling a completion of God’s judgments upon the earth-dwellers. And a completion of these judgments can be seen at this point in the book (depicted by both verses) because, as the seven trumpets are contained within the seventh seal of the seven-sealed scroll seen in chapters five and six, the seven vials of wrath about to be poured out are contained in the seventh trumpet.

This is why, in chapter five, a search is made *only* for One worthy to open the seven seals, with nothing stated about a sounding of the seven trumpets or a pouring out of the seven vials. Since the seven trumpets are contained in the seventh seal (Rev. 8:1, 2), and the seven vials are contained in the seventh trumpet (Rev. 10:1-11; 15:1-16:17), the whole of God’s judgments in chapters six through eighteen are encompassed within the seven seals. Thus, the search in chapter five is *only* for One worthy to open the seven seals.

And it is within a book where everything is brought to an apex — where Old Testament Scripture concerning God, Gentile world power, and Israel

is opened up and fully revealed — that the Spirit, through John, began the book through calling attention to the blessings reserved for those reading, hearing, and keeping those things contained in the book.

The thought of reading and hearing would need no clarification, but the thought of keeping would. For example, how is a person to keep parts of the book relating to judgment, etc.? The word translated “keep,” *tereo* in the Greek text, does normally mean “to keep.” However, as in any language, context will often determine and govern different ways that a word is used and is to be understood. And such would be the case with *tereo* in Rev. 1:3.

The word, for example, is used in Matt. 23:3; 28:20 more in the sense of “observe,” as translated in the KJV and NASB. And the word, contextually, is used in a similar sense in Rev. 1:3 — “observe” or “give heed” (ref. NASB). In this apex of revelation, where Old Testament Scripture is opened up and revealed, blessings have been promised for those who read, hear, and observe or give heed to the things being made known to and recorded by John.

And the text goes on to provide a reason, stating, “for the time is at hand.”

“At hand” is the same expression used in Matt. 3:2; 4:17 when John and Jesus announced the kingdom of the heavens as being “at hand.” *The Messianic King was present in Israel’s midst, with an offer of the kingdom, contingent on the nation’s repentance.* Thus, the announcement of the kingdom could be made in this manner.

And something very similar is seen in Rev. 1:3. *The full revelation of the Son, from the Old Testament Scriptures, is about to occur, with Israel being brought to the place of repentance, and with the Son then taking the sceptre and reigning.* Thus, the same expression, “at hand,” could only aptly describe the circumstances and time.

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