

MS221

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE APOCALYPSE OR THE DAY OF THE LORD

by John C. Ribbens

No proper understanding or interpretation of the book of Revelation is possible apart from recognizing two major premises. First, the Day of the Lord follows after the Day of Christ. Since Christ's Day (John 8:56) has not yet come to fruition, the Day of the Lord belongs to the future. Second, the entire book of Revelation, except the first nine verses and the last two chapters, belongs to the Day of the Lord. The grandeur of that day and the manifest display of His almighty power exceeds every conceivable description by mortal men. The true character of this Day of the Lord is derived from the fact that prior to its inception, mankind will have lived for over five centuries under the manifest Kingdom of God. This time duration is based in part on the fact that "seventy weeks" or 490 years are determined upon the people of Israel. During this period, every condition of blessing outlined in Daniel 9:24 will have been fulfilled. Those who insist that the references to "the messiah" in Daniel 9:25-26 pertain to Christ, fail to understand that the prophet spoke of David, the future ruler of Israel in the Day of Christ. As of today, Acts 2:29 states that, "**David is now both dead and buried.**" But Scripture declares, "**They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them**" (Jer. 30:9).

"For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel" (Jer. 33:17). The future reign of David is positively linked to the fulfillment of Isaiah 9:6-7 when, "The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" will sit "upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever, the zeal of the Lord will perform this. These things belong to the Day of Christ and will precede the Day of the Lord and thus the Millennium also.

Prior to the Day of the Lord, mankind will have lived for 500 years during which time God will produce a company of nations who have enjoyed the direct benefits of the judgments of God, "**For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness**" (Isa. 26:9). This enormous work of the Holy Spirit will provide billions of men who have successfully been schooled in an understanding of what sin, righteousness and judgment are in the sight of God. It is based on the important and future work of the comforter (paraclete) who, "**when he is come, will enlighten the world of sin, and of righteousness and judgment**" (John 16:7-11). The world has never yet enjoyed this experience, and it will succeed. Men, who will have long been privileged to learn about the character and judgments of God, will advance to a position which qualifies them for continued growth and development during the 1000-year personal reign of Jesus Christ on this earth. No previous human experience; no schooling in the educational institutions of Man's Day; no record of past achievements; no scientific, humanitarian, philosophical or religious achievements will qualify him for life in the great Millennium. Society as we know it today, with its vast social, economic, governmental and political programs, will offer no advantage to men as they approach the Day of the Lord. Every human institution, all governments and nations will be transformed as requisite to the continuation of life in the Day of the Lord. The memory of hostile conditions, the existence of evil men and seducers will have long been forgotten. Transgressors will have been cut-off and destroyed, the wicked perished, but "those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit (enjoy an allotment or have a portion in) the earth" (psalm 37:1, 9, 11, 17, 20, 22). All knowledge involving the proliferation of the instruments of warfare, and the supporting military institutions will have long ceased to exist.

Under heaven's government there will be peace, God-directed learning experiences, the enjoyment of perfect health and the knowledge of God's judgments which result in a company of people who qualify to advance into God's next great school of spiritual development and learning.

Every prerequisite to living upon the earth during the reign of Christ will have been met because of the burgeoning success of divine government. This is because God says, **I will put My Spirit upon Him and he shall shew judgment to the nations, . . . A bruised reed shall He not break,**

and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory, and in His name shall the nations trust (Matt. 12:18-21).

The character of the book of Revelation has been greatly maligned by some men who falsely contend that so much of it is negative, so much of it is persecution, so much of it is murder, so much of it is being put to death, and so much of it is bad for mankind. By these slanderous statements they have vilified the character of the book of Revelation. This assessment of the Apocalypse is absolutely false and a satanic perversion of the truth. The fact that the Day of the Lord describes scenes of God's wrath outpoured, as in Revelation 6, is but a prelude to the days of vengeance spoken of in Isaiah 34:8, 61:2; 66:24; and in 2 Thessalonians 1:8. This "great day of wrath" (Rev. 6:7) is both symbolic and literal language which underscores what the nations can expect who have rebelled against God. Once the restraints are lifted, men will be free to exercise their attitudes in regard to God's judgments and toward the nation of Israel. It is the lifting of these restraints that is symbolized in the breaking of the first four seals by the Lamb of God (Rev. 6). And this leads to the manifest Day of the Lord, when He shows His power, might, rule and authority in many ways.

It should be recognized that the bulk of the events and activities revealed between Revelation 1:10 and 20:3 will occur within a relatively short period of time, not much longer than seven years, commonly referred to as Daniel's 70th week. I find it incredible to believe that the events occurring in this period define the character of the Day of the Lord. I find it more ludicrous to believe that the burden of the book of Revelation was fulfilled during the Roman occupation of and ultimate destruction of the city of Jerusalem in the 68-70 AD time frame. The Day of the Lord comes with the most extraordinary display of power and authority the world has ever witnessed. Following five centuries of enjoying peace, perfect health and spiritual prosperity including the eradication of wars and violence in the earth comes the mention and rumors of wars. Nations rebel against the Lord and against His annointed (a reference to David's throne in the Kingdom) saying, "**Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away the cords from us**" (Psa. 2:2-3). This action is nothing more than the nations seeking to cast off the divine restraint that God imposed upon them at the inception of the manifest Kingdom of God. These restraints are simply not in the world today. How does God respond to these arrogant rulers of the earth? Scripture says, "**He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision**" (Psa. 2:4).

He ridicules them with scorn in their vain attempt to distance themselves from the controls of divine government. This flagrant abdication of responsible action leads up to the day of vengeance in which God pours out His wrath upon dissident nations. God responds, **Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give the heathen (nations) for thine inheritance** (Psalm 2:6-8). God does not relinquish control of the nations. The "uttermost parts of the earth" remain His possession. **"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel"** (Psa. 2:9). The connection between Psalm 2:9 and Revelation 2:26-27 is clear.

In Revelation 19:11-16, here, at length, we have the actual apocalypse of the Messiah. We see Him coming forth in all His power, might and glory. He is not named, but He is described by those attributes which suit His action. In this final confrontation the Bible says, **"The armies which are in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure"** (Rev. 19:14). These armies are no mere symbols, since they take their place in direct opposition to the satanic armies. In viewing this apocalyptic scene John said, **And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army** (Rev. 19: 19). The final outcome of this engagement is shown in Revelation 19:20-21 where Christ is victorious and the beast and the false prophet are destroyed along with the satanic armies.

These events mark the conclusion of the vengeance of the Lord. There is also an event which is related to the Day of the Lord in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 and marks it as that time, When the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from (as a result of) the glory of His power. This is not the description of any imminent experience for mankind today. It marks God's actions taken at the parousia of Jesus Christ. There will be no universal annihilation of men, but rather a process of elimination for a small minority of men and nations who have refused the blazing light of God's manifest kingdom.

The conclusion of these events lead to that important declaration, **The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of**

His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. 11:15). The phrase, "for ever and ever" does not express mere timeless duration, but the ultimate reign of Christ in relation to the eons of the eons (aiona ton aionan). These eons signify God flowing out in divine government in and through His saints.

We have the record of Revelation 11:16-17 which says, **The four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned.** This will demonstrate conclusively to all mankind that the Lord Jesus Christ is, The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; who alone hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting (1 Tim. 6:15-16). The full realization of His enormous majesty will be seen in the Day of the Lord. But first is the manifest Kingdom of God, a time of divine government leading to the Day of the Lord. These works of God introduce the Millennium, the 1000-year reign of Christ.

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