

## Forward by the Author

As is the case with many people the book of the Revelation used to be a complete mystery to me. The way I looked at it, other people had studied the book and I could just ride off of their observations. Why should I bother with studying the book myself when there were so many scholars who had spent lifetimes in the pursuit of the truth of end time events?

Prior to my conversion apocalyptic movies and sermons frightened me more than I can say. I thought about the judgments and the plagues mentioned in the book of Revelation and I feared knowing deep inside of myself that I was on the wrong side of the fence. The way I saw it I would be front row, center at the Great White Throne judgment and God's fierce countenance would mandate my destiny in the lake of fire.

Then by the grace of Jesus Christ I was saved at the age of twenty-three. I immediately went from one side of the fence to the other and I could see how wrong I had been about God. He was not just some sort of cosmic landlord that would evict me from my life at a whim. God was a loving father who rejoiced over me when I returned from my prodigal ways.

Even though I understood this wonderful difference, still some of this fear about apocalyptic events accompanied me into my Christian walk. I always tried to avoid the book of Revelation during my daily devotional Bible reading focusing more on the books and scriptures that I deemed more "uplifting". Little did I know how literally uplifting the book of Revelation could be.

I was soon to find out that the carnal mind could never truly understand the Spirit of God. One day I was feeling especially adventurous and set my mind to studying and really understanding the book of Revelation for myself. I started to read it through, but by the time I finished the book I was more

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confused than ever. I then realized that I had forgotten something very important. I had set my mind to study and I had forgotten to invite the Ruach Spirit of the Living God to study with me. I prayed, “Lord, I really know nothing about the book of Revelation, but it was you who wrote the book and you know it better than anyone. Could you please help me to understand what it is I am reading?” As I sat there for a moment in silent contemplation I abruptly got the answer to my prayer.

The only way I can begin to describe this encounter is that it was as if God had downloaded directly into my spirit a compressed mega-file full of His instructions. Although God’s instructions were in my spirit my carnal mind still could not grasp the truths contained in this mega-file. There was far too much information for me to process all at once. I once again began to read the Revelation and it was as if slowly piece by piece God started unveiling the gift that He had given me.

One of the first things that God showed me was that the seven seals were opened during the age of the Church, or the age of grace. I give my reasoning for this in chapter six The Seven Seals. All we need to ask ourselves is, “Has this happened yet?”

Another important aspect of the unveiling that God showed me was that there is an order to the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation can and must be studied in the order given by God through His angels. It’s as if God placed an anchor in time when Jesus went to the Father to take His rightful position at the right hand of God. Then God put another anchor in time when the New Jerusalem descends. Strung between these two anchors is a timeline and hanging on this line are the seven seals the seven trumpets and the seven plagues in that order. These events are markers so to speak of where we are on this line of end-time events. This space of time is unknown to us here on the earth and even to Jesus Himself. We do know however that the great tribulation

will last seven years and then Jesus will return. After that we know that the millennium will last for one thousand years and then Satan will be finally and forever destroyed in the lake of fire. What we don't know is how long it will take for the seven seals to be opened by Jesus. We can know generally on this line where we are by once again asking the question, "Has this happened yet?"

Interspersed between these markers are various parenthetical passages. It is important to note exactly where each parenthetical passage lies between the markers. For example, the Great hosts of Christians who are seen in heaven before the throne are seen standing there between the opening of the sixth seal and the seventh seal. This group is the first of three groups of Christians seen in heaven between three different markers and in three different locations in heaven. The second and third group of Christians are seen between the seventh trumpet marker and the first bowl plague marker. The second group is the 144,000 Jewish believers and they are seen on the heavenly Mount Zion prior to the great harvest. These 144,000 Jewish believers had been separated from the rest of the Christians and left on the earth for the first three and a half years of the great tribulation as a witness for Christ. The last group of Tribulation Saints is seen standing next to the glassy sea mixed with fire. They are seen after the great harvest and after the angel calls for the perseverance of the Saints in Revelation 14:12-13.

In this study I have followed the order of Revelation precisely and you will see that it does make sense to follow the order of John's vision. I urge each and every one of you though to seek God and study the book of Revelation in the light of His counsel. You will be blessed as you embark upon this course of study. You have God's Word for it in Revelation 1:3, "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." And then again at the end of the vision in Revelation 22:7, "Behold, I come quickly:

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blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

I do not claim to know everything there is to know about end-time events. My mind is still carnal and sometimes the transition from my spirit to my thoughts is incomplete until I pray it thorough or until God confirms his Word through another scripture. I have at times retraced my path to start anew as the Spirit leads me. What I have searched out here is but the beginning of what God has placed in my Spirit. I hope that as you read on you too can see God's hand in this matter. I do not believe that any one man other than Jesus Christ Himself has all the answers. But we all must walk in the light of the Spirit as He leads us and I encourage you to search out the matter for yourselves.

My prayer for you is that, as you read on you will be blessed with a special knowledge of God and His desires for your life. I pray too that as you endeavor to know better the Word of God, that you also will better know the God of the Word.