

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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Uncovering Biblical Mysteries

The final book of the Bible is titled, “The Revelation of John.” The word “revelation” (*apokalupsis*) means “an uncovering, a revelation, N. T.” (Liddell Scott 99). Arndt and Gingrich define revelation as a “disclosure [to expose or uncover]” (see also Moulton 42). The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines the word as “disclosures from God of the secrets of the heavenly world...” (Vol. 4; pp. 172). Revelation thereby falls into a category of literature known as apocalyptic (pertaining to prophetic disclosure). Other Bible books written in the apocalyptic style of Revelation are Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. The book of Revelation discloses is “*The things which must shortly come to pass*” (Rev. 1:1, 19) and the things that “*are*” currently taking place (Rev. 1:19). The four above mentioned Apocalyptic writings separate themselves from other prophetic Bible books in that they disclose divine revelation by means of symbolic. John, the author of Revelation, uses various numbers, symbolisms, and imagery to unveil the previous unknown. John speaks of seven churches, a dragon, beast coming up out of the sea having ten horns, and the great harlot that sits on a beast with seven heads and ten horns. Similarly, Daniel saw four great beasts coming out of the sea in a vision (Dan. 7:1ff). Ezekiel saw a valley of dry bones in a divine vision (Ezek. 37:1ff). Zechariah discloses eight apocalyptic visions by divine revelation as well (see Zech. 1-6). The challenge of all Bible students is to properly identify the meaning behind these disclosed visions that use symbolism and imagery.

The Right Approach to Understanding Apocalyptic Literature

About twenty five non-canonical apocalyptic style literature books have been discovered. Our Bibles; however, reveal three apocalyptic books (as mentioned above) with small bits of this style of writing found in a few other canonical books. As the word apocalyptic is defined above we immediately note that God intended for His readers to understand what is written; i.e., the veiled information is disclosed. The student of

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please do come back at your every opportunity!

Baptisms!

Sara Witherspoon was baptized into Christ this past Sunday evening and **Shaun Hall** was baptized last Wednesday. We pray for the spiritual growth of both these young Christians as they diligently labor in the kingdom of God for years to come.

Please keep the following members in your prayers:

Cindy Gray will be having surgery on her shoulder tomorrow (May 11). Keep her in your daily prayers.

Women's Bible Study:

The women's Bible study continues every other week. The next class will be Friday May 22nd at 12:00 Noon. The class meets at the church building with Kasey Robertson doing the teaching.

Website Update:

We now have the class notes for Job and Judges on the church web site.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

God's word approaches all divine revelation with the confidence of understanding, knowing, and practicing its principles (see John 8:32; I Cor. 14:33). When one sets out to read and understand Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and the book of Revelation he is challenged to call upon all previous Bible knowledge of principles and terminology. A proper understanding of these books, like any other Bible book, takes an approach of respect for God's authorized word. We cannot be guilty of assigning meanings to passages that neither the context nor the entirety of the Word of God supports. Apocalyptic style writing is difficult to understand not impossible. Apocalyptic literature ought to be approached no different than any other book in the Bible. We know God intends for us to understand it. It is up to us to put the time and extreme effort into knowing its truths.

Why Does God Reveal His Truths Through Veiled Language?

The answer to this question can be found in the words of Jesus at Matthew 13:10ff. Jesus' disciples had asked him why he spoke in parables and he answered, "*Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given...*" (Matt. 13:11). The text reveals the fact that some had no true interest in God's mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Those who are interested will "*desire to see*" the meanings of these Biblical mysteries (Matt. 13:17). While apocalyptic and parable styles of writing are somewhat different the principle remains equal. Mysteries are being revealed and those who desire to know will find the meaning.

A word on Inspiration

The author of Hebrews tells us that God communicated His message to man in "*divers manners*" (Heb. 1:1). Prophets of God saw divine visions and had divine dreams wherein God disclosed to the world His plans (see Obed. 1:1; Joel 2:28ff; Amos 1:1). John and Ezekiel were "*in the Spirit*" when they were shown their apocalyptic visions (Rev. 1:10; Ezek. 37:1). Zechariah and Daniel saw by visions God's revelations (Zech. 1:7ff; Dan. 7:1; 8:1; etc.). Nehemiah writes, "*Yet many years didst thou bear with them, and testified against them by thy Spirit through thy prophets*" (Neh. 9:30 / cf. Ezek. 1:3; 11:4-7). The Apostle Peter tells us that God "*moved*" men to speak divine revelation by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21). The Holy Spirit "*entered into*" (Ezek. 2:1-2) and "*fell upon*" (Ezek. 11:5) men causing them to know and speak the mysteries of God. The Bible is clear. God's objective is to reveal to man His will so that there would remain no mysteries when it comes to our salvation. Whether one encounters apocalyptic, parabolic, or difficult text in general while studying the Bible always be aware that God intends for you and I to know these truths (Eph. 3:3-4).

C. Robertson

John

The Cost of Man's Redemption

The Bible reveals a law that demands man's sinless perfection (I Jn. 3:4). What is it that motivates us to strive for such perfection? Sometimes we think of heaven and hell. Other times we think of the immediate consequences of sin. Another issue that ought to cause us to not sin is the thought of what it cost to be forgiven. Jesus Christ redeemed man from the consequence of sin by laying down his life upon the cross (Matt. 26:26). Redemption is the price that was paid for man to be forgiven of sins committed against God's sovereign law (Eph. 1:7). Let us examine that high price that was paid for the forgiveness of man's sins.

- I. The price of man's forgives was known before the world was created:**
 - A. God foreordained a blood sacrifice (Eph. 1:3-7).
 - B. The Prophets foretold of its occurrence (Isa. 53).
 - C. Jesus was not a robot in this plan to redeem man (Lk. 22:39-46).
- II. The price of man's forgiveness was paid willingly and Lovingly (Jn. 15:13):**
 - A. Man's amazingly hateful and ungrateful response (Lk. 23:13-25; Matt. 27:24-32).
 - B. The price for man's sin is paid (Matt. 27:).
 - C. A six hour horror show of shock an awe (see Lk. 23:47-48)
- III. Interesting Considerations:**
 - A. No amount of riches man may obtain on this earth can buy redemption (Ps. 49 all).
 - B. Humility alone will bring one to the blood of Christ (Isa. 57:15-16).

Conclusion:

When the same people multitudes of people heard Peter proclaim to them, "Ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up... God hath made him both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom ye crucified" they were terrified (see Acts 2:22-24, 36). We often sing the song, "I'm the One" (Hymns for Worship pp. 604) in memory of our Lord's sacrifice and our part in his death. When I sin it is as though I'm one of those who shouted "Crucify him, Crucify him." I am likened unto the one who "made his cross so high... stood and watched him die... WHAT HAVE I DONE?" The cost for my redemption was a high price. Jesus died for me yet he also has been raised from the grave for us all!