

THE APOCALYPSE OF JESUS CHRIST

There are few things so fundamentally back to front and upside down, as mankind's general perception of the 'Apocalypse'. In the ears of the world, and sadly most of the professing church, the mere word itself is enough to send foreboding shivers down one's spine, conjuring up visions of nuclear war, famine, dread riders on horseback, and all manner of natural disasters, leading to the end of the world, or at least the destruction of most of it. Indeed, there is a whole genre of fiction labelled 'post-apocalyptic', where a bedraggled, grey humanity muddles through the ashes of past atrocities.

The supreme irony in the horrific visions of this apocalypse, is that this very apocalypse itself is the most hopeful, joyful, glorious reality that we have been given. It is the very hope of all mankind, and is the sign, not of the end of the world, but the end of the age, and leads to a greater new epoch. Could mankind but know it, it is the next grand event in the ever-unfolding plan of God in Christ.

AN UNCOVERING

The Greek word apocalypse is a compound word, consisting of *apo*, meaning 'away' and *kalupto*, meaning 'to cover'. So the simplest meaning is taking a cover away, or an uncovering. When applied to the last book of the scriptures, it gives us another perspective on revelation, as we must ask where is Christ hidden, that He must be revealed, and where is He covered, that He must be made manifest? The answer to this is found in Romans 8:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;²¹ because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Romans 8:18-21)

This revelation of the sons of God is not some kind of self-glorification, but rather the revelation of Jesus Christ within His body. The sons are revealed because the Son is revealed in them and through them:

For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:3-4)

The revelation and uncovering to come, will be an outshining of that which is already within, which has been brought to perfection. It is the seed of Christ growing up into the tree of life, as we see at the end of the book, when the true church is shown in symbolic form in the city of New Jerusalem:

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:2)

THE VEIL AND THE TEMPLE

This revelation of Christ is also typified by a veil being taken away, in the manner that the veil of the temple was rent when He died upon the cross:

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised (Matthew 27: 50-52)

This temple itself was a symbol and a foreshadowing of the people of God, both on an individual and corporate level. For the glory of God is within, in the most holy place of our spirit, yet veiled by our flesh. Christ has torn away this veil, that the glory of God might be manifest. Paul speaks of this mystery also in his second letter to the saints at Corinth:

Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— ¹³ unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. ¹⁵ But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶ Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:12-18)

It is not just the saints who have the veil taken away, for in the fullness of time this veil will be removed from every face:

⁶ And in this mountain

The LORD of hosts will make for all people

A feast of choice pieces,

A feast of wines on the lees,

Of fat things full of marrow,

Of well-refined wines on the lees.

⁷ And He will destroy on this mountain

The surface of the covering cast over all people,

And the veil that is spread over all nations.

⁸ He will swallow up death forever,

And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces (Isaiah 25:6-8)

It is in the age to come that the residue of mankind, who have not yet known the Lord, will begin to “go up on the mountain” which is the kingdom of God, to learn His ways, and begin to see the glory of Christ with unveiled faces. This was also prefigured by the mount of transfiguration, when the three apostles went up with the Christ, to see Him unveiled in glory:

Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹ As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. ³⁰ And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, ³¹ who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³² But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. ³³ Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said.

³⁴ While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” ³⁶ When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen. (Luke 9:28-36)

Truly, the apostles saw the revelation of Jesus Christ – the reality of who He really is, with the veil of the flesh that Jesus took upon Himself drawn aside for those sublime moments! This was a prophetic moment also, speaking of the time at the end of the age when those who have climbed the holy mount shall be part of the continued unveiling of the Lord. Isaiah presents the vision of that time, full of awe and wonder, as Christ arises in His people:

Arise, shine;

For your light has come!

And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.

² **For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,**

And deep darkness the people;

But the LORD will arise over you,

And His glory will be seen upon you.

³ **The Gentiles shall come to your light,**

And kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isaiah 60:1-3)

Truly there is a day dawning when the glory of God in Christ is going to rise within and upon His people in such power, that all nations shall be drawn unto that great manifestation!

CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL

This revelation of Jesus Christ takes place on both a corporate and an individual level, as each individual living stone is refined into the image of Christ, making up part of the whole temple, which is built as a corporate dwelling place for the divine Father who dwells in each heart.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the

head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

There is great wonder to this process. Sometimes when we hear “revelation” it is easy for us to perceive it as a download of facts and information – we seek more, we learn more, we know more, and so forth. But, though there is always an element of this in knowing God, and in His Son being revealed, these are mere framing materials for the glorious picture. For truly, a *person* is being revealed, and there is a sense of mystery to this akin to staring up at the night sky. If one could see every star at once, one might have a kind of revelation of the universe, yet one that could not necessarily be condensed into dry facts. In the same way, there is an important, central element of this revelation of our Lord, that is based upon a mysterious, transcendent knowing that is too marvelous to utter. With loved ones upon the earth, we know them for far greater reasons than knowledge of their birthdays, hobbies, and other facts. It is a vital connection that words often fall short of enshrining.

...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19)

The deepest aspects of this revelation, on a personal level, are intimate, infinite, and sublime. For we begin to see and understand the outshining of Jesus Christ from the most holy place within our spirit, and perceive our connection to Him, and the power of His life in and through us, in all of its marvelous reality. On a corporate level, there is a day coming when the invisible realities of this revelation shall be manifest through the true temple of God, which we are, and spill out into reality, as light bursting forth into darkness:

For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:5-6)

Truly, Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, and His light shall one day shine in fullness through a multi-membered body, diffusing His light to every corner of this sin-stricken planet. For the answer to a world in darkness, is not the right politicians and policies, a strong military or economy, or even a successful and showy church system, but rather the light of the glory of God, whose divine rays come from the hidden realm of spirit, and flood into this world through the portals of His chosen ones, as an interface between the visible and invisible. And again, this is not a self-glorification, a contemptuous elitism, or a hierarchical expression, but rather the first fruits of what our Father is going to do with every human who ever lived, an example and promise of man conformed to the image of His only begotten Son!

The scriptures begin with a beginning, and end with a new beginning. In the same way God created the heavens and the earth, and made a paradise with a man of clay in His image, and a tree of life therein, so shall He make a new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells, with a man of Spirit, even Jesus Christ, in His image, who has become a tree of life to all

creation. Adam and Jesus Christ are the only two men, with everyone having been born into the sin of Adam, and everyone destined to be made new in Christ. This revelation, this *apocalypse*, shall begin with a first fruits, a remnant, but shall in due course swallow up even death itself in the complete victory of our God in His Son Jesus. For this reason, we can turn away from the fleshly myths and fairytales of the apocalypse, and look with sure hope towards the horizon, knowing that the light of God has already dawned, and is shining brighter and brighter until all things are full of the same radiance.

**But the path of the just is like the shining sun,
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. (Proverbs 4:18)**

Amen!