

GEMS OF TRUTH

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FROM THE EDITOR

Without a doubt REVELATION has been more misused above any book of the Bible. I'm currently reading a Commentary which goes into detail about all the popular schools of interpretation since the beginning of the Christian era. It makes the most sense of all to me to look for the deep spiritual import of this book the same as I do the rest of Scripture. In all cases the letter [the literal] kills while the Spirit gives life (2 Corinthians 3:6). Revelation doesn't teach anything new or different than the rest of the Bible but it teaches the same timeless truths in highly symbolic, apocalyptic

language which we also find in the Olivet sermon of Jesus (see Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21). I find it interesting that instead of the Apostle John having an Olivet sermon chapter in his gospel he expands these themes more fully in an entire book. I agree with those commentators who see Revelation as an expansion of this amazing sermon of Jesus. The way Revelation reinforces the essential message of the entire Bible gives us the most effective key to unlock its treasures. Those who interpret Revelation as though it were teaching something totally new are destined for much disappointment as has been proven repeatedly over the centuries.

May you be blessed as you consider some of the GEMS that I share with you from this book which has helped to encourage and nurture me in my faith journey for the past 60 years. I'm not attempting to be systematic in what I share but simply to write out some of insights that come to me. I encourage all to prayerfully seek for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as they consider the depth of this marvelous letter. I would like to hear from my readers. Should I share more from this book in future GEMS OF TRUTH? Let me know what you think. I've tried to make this issue shorter at the suggestion of readers.

If you wish to be on my email list to receive **GEMS OF TRUTH** in **PDF** format or send some comments contact me as below:

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MADE KINGS AND PRIESTS



Revelation 1:5-6 New King James Version (NKJV)

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own

blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Right at the beginning the apostle points us to Jesus our Savior who is indeed over every ruler on this earth. He has washed us from our sins in His blood which means by His life for the life is in the blood (see Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11, 14; Deuteronomy 12:23). The atonement of Jesus, His sacrifice on the cross, followed by His resurrection and ascension impart to us a new life which continually cleanses us from all of our wrong deeds and thoughts. In the incarnation of Jesus a whole new era of life began and new opportunities are now open (see Revelation 3:7-8). We now live under the New Covenant which is life giving all the way. We are made “kings and priests to His God and Father” which means that the dominion which we thought we lost is revealed anew to us in so many precious ways by using symbolisms with deep and wonderful meaning for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear (see Revelation 2:7 which is found at the end of the message to all seven churches). Revelation is an “unveiling” as it opens to our eyes the treasures that we have in the Kingdom of God. What a perspective from which to view this precious book! TD

THE LAKE OF FIRE



The term “lake of fire” is used in Revelation 19:20 and 20:10, 14, 15. Take some time and read these verses while praying for enlightenment about their spiritual import. They speak of torment forever and ever with burning fire and brimstone--a very grim picture indeed even for the most vivid imagination. In the end the devil, the beast, the false prophet together with all those who worship the beast, all those whose names were not found written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, death, and even hell itself are cast into this lake. There is no room for any kind of iniquity to escape

this fate. All of it must be burned up totally.

Some folks apply this in a very literal way but I would like to suggest a much deeper spiritual sense in which we might look at the “lake of fire which burns forever and ever.” Throughout the Bible fire is used repeatedly as a symbol for both purification and cleansing as well as for spiritual empowerment. Remember the “tongues of fire” on the Day of Pentecost? They were both purifying and empowering. A very simple concordance study will quickly show how fire is used as a symbol in Scripture. Before we can be empowered to reach our full spiritual potential we must be cleansed of what holds us back, our self-centered, ego based ways of thinking and acting. All of us must be purified in “the lake of fire” before we can enter into the fulness of God’s rest and fulfill His ultimate purpose for our lives. This fire burns “forever and ever” which simply means an ongoing process which we can’t escape. We use the term of something going on “forever” rather frequently which means an indefinite time, as long as the situation demands. God’s work in us is more thorough and inescapable than any metaphor could show. There will come a time in our spiritual path where we shall be so spiritually cleansed that it could be said that our personal “death and hell” will be cast into that purifying fire. There is no timeline revealed for this purification of our lives from all dross but the lesson to be learned is *let’s surrender fully to it*. All delay is simply prolonging the suffering of our ever burning “lake of fire.” Our final baptism of fire will be an empowerment beyond anything we can even begin to imagine (see 1 Corinthians 2:9-10). We all must enter “the lake of fire” and there is no escaping. Our destiny is to be purified either here or hereafter and only God knows the day and hour of His coming to us in final judgment which involves cleansing, purification, and empowerment. Sin shall indeed not rise up the second time. The “second death” is the end of the nightmare of sin and death. Thank God for that! TD

A CONDITION OF UTTER DESPAIR

Revelation 9:6 Amplified Bible (AMP)

6 And in those days people will seek death and will not find it; and they will yearn to die, but death evades and flees from them.

I believe that this verse is speaking of the utter despair and death wish, whether expressed or not, that comes from choosing to live by the human ego instead of by a life surrendered to God. A subconscious death wish motivates much of the human behavior that seems so totally insane.



God is our Life and if we live apart from an awareness of that and live in a self-centered way we are choosing a great deal of suffering. Because of the nearly universal belief in evil that dominates the world the righteous sometimes experience suffering but such is not the kind of despair and hopelessness that is described in this verse.

The only thing that really makes sense to me is to live in close fellowship with God which brings a peace and joy that this world will never understand. TD

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH



Revelation 21:1-2 New Living Translation (NLT)

The New Jerusalem

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

The fulfillment of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven is not limited to the future but speaks of a *present reality* that is possible for all of us and that is to live in a consciousness of the Presence of God. This is a growing experience that will continue beyond this present plane for those who

choose to live in the “secret place of the Most High God” instead of allowing themselves to become enmeshed in the affairs of this present material world. Seas separate nations and deceitful human consciousness separates us in our thinking from God and others. “The sea was also gone” is a metaphor to illustrate that the sense of separation between us and God and between one another is being diminished as we grow spiritually and somewhere in our eternal progression will cease altogether. We are privileged to seek to view others through “new Heavens” glasses instead of through the old ones which are only able to look at the outward appearance. We can look past what the physical senses perceive and see God’s perfect image and likeness beneath what often appears negative on the surface. I seek to do this and often find it not every easy but I want to be a child of “the new Heavens” instead of the old ones of the five physical senses. Chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation depict this heavenly reality

which we experience increasingly as we grow in our fellowship with God and love for one another. TD

"One of the dangers from which the Church should pray to be delivered is idolatry of the letter of Scripture. The letter exists for the spirit, not the spirit for the letter. Literalism is the grave in which spiritual religion is buried. The New Testament is a book which is to be spiritually interpreted. It has no greater enemy than the thorough-going literalist who would fetter its free thought by confining it within obsolete forms. It has no greater friend than the teacher who can give to its time-worn metaphors freshness and power by translating them into the language of the present." (James M. Campbell - *The Heart of the Gospel: A Popular Exposition of the Doctrine of the Atonement*. Fleming H. Revell Co. 1907. pg. 19)

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