

REVELATION: Zooming Out to God's-Eye-View

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You have to give John credit for his amazing level of discernment for heavenly beings. John has enough knowledge, wisdom, presence of mind, and spiritual maturity to know the angel is mighty. Still below the Son, of course, but it strikes me as the spiritual equivalent to David's "mighty men" (2 Sam. 23) and the power and authority (along with submission to their leader) that they wielded.

Not a messenger angel like Gabriel, but a warrior.

This mighty angel is elevated high enough by God to be given a crown, and not just any crown but a rainbow, the symbol of God's promise, which always rings true and is present in His throne room.

The seven voices of thunder John hears are quite clearly the voice of God (Rev. 10:3-4); Scripture verifies in multiple places that the voice of God thunders. But when I read this, I wonder, since the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are Three in One and One in Three, could these seven specific thunders be the voices of the Spirits of God as mentioned in Scripture? Previous references do not refer to God the Father in plural form, but they do with the Spirit of God. Perhaps I am splitting hairs here, but that is the amazing thing about the book of Revelation: It really makes you think and wonder.

These seven thunders prophesy to John, but then the voice of the Father issues instructions to John not to write down what

they say. Much like the Holy Spirit reveals to us the will of God, as the helper Jesus promised who is alive and well on the earth today, so too do the spirits reveal a mystery of God to John.

But it is not time for this particular revelation to be made known, and that drives an inquisitive person like me absolutely crazy. What it is time for is for John to witness a truly incredible sight. He bears witness to a mighty angel taking an oath before the God of creation, something I am quite sure the angelic being took extremely seriously, that the delay of final judgment is over. It is time for the harshest of judgments upon the earth before the return of the King of kings, who is coming with a sword and bringing war with Him.

The angel tells John to eat the little book: "I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. And he said to me, 'You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings'," (Revelation 10:10–11).

The Deeper Reaches of the Mysteries

Bear with me on this next part—it is totally theoretical and made of things that I wonder whenever I read through Revelation.

With John's consumption of the book and his task to still prophesy to the nations, will he play a part in the end of days, or was his task fulfilled within his life?

Which brings me to another branch of that theory: If John is to testify during the end of days, is John possibly still alive in some sort of stasis or perhaps hidden by the Lord somewhere on the earth, much like the angels of the Euphrates?

Trust me, I know this sounds crazy, but since there are so

many conflicting reports about John's death and no concrete information—regardless of what the church in Ephesus says (I am of the mind his grave is not there)—what if the Lord has hidden him away for another time?

For centuries the most widely accepted view has been that John spent his final years in Ephesus, where he ministered and eventually died. The Basilica of St. John, built in the sixth century by the Byzantine emperor Justinian, stands as a monument to this belief, covering what many have claimed to be John's tomb. Early Christian writers like Irenaeus (second century) and Eusebius (fourth century) attest to John's presence in Ephesus, though they stop short of explicitly confirming his burial there. Yet despite the centuries of veneration, there's a major problem—no bodily remains have ever been found. Unlike the apostles Peter and Paul, whose supposed relics are enshrined in Rome, John's physical presence is missing. This lack of evidence has fueled various alternative theories.

One of the most intriguing ideas is that John never actually died. This notion stems from a conversation recorded in John 21:22–23 where Jesus tells Peter, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?" (NASB). Some early Christians interpreted this to mean John had been taken up to heaven, like Elijah or Enoch, and thus never needed a burial site at all. While this theory isn't widely held in scholarly circles today, it persisted enough through history to add to the mystery.

Then, there's the theory that John was buried elsewhere. Some speculate he may have been buried on the island of Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelation while exiled. But no historical records or archaeological findings support this claim. Others suggest that John returned to Jerusalem in his final years and was buried there. Again, there's little to verify this idea, making it more of a pious legend than a grounded historical claim.

So where does that leave us? If John was buried in Ephesus, why is there no physical evidence? If he wasn't buried there, why did early Christians believe he was? And if he truly was taken up into heaven, why did later traditions develop around a supposed tomb? These are the kinds of lingering questions that make the study of biblical history so fascinating.

Again, that is the point to talk about the book of Revelation! To discuss it with one another and to dig deep into Scripture. Perhaps the utterings of the seven thunders are instructions to John regarding the Lord's mission for him. We, of course, cannot know this for certain; anyone who says otherwise is deceiving you. But I love theorizing and thinking about possibilities while ensuring I do not force thoughts and ideas into Scripture.

We should ponder and meditate on the Word but never add our own thoughts to it.

Reading Revelation throughout my life has always stirred a great desire in me to travel to the island of Patmos and look around at the places John was known to have inhabited.

Of course, much of the island has been excavated, and I am far from the first person to think of this, but I can never shake the idea that maybe, in the most minute of maybes, the disciple John is alive somewhere.

It is more doubtful than not. But I am not one to trod on an imagination, as long as that imagination is controlled.

Hurtling Toward the End of Days!

We are clearly on a collision course with the end-times, and the way things are heading, there are many passages in the Revelation that John was given that are turning out to be literal interpretations (in my belief—I find the evidence within our world to be irrefutable, from an honest perspective).

I believe this is in part due to the commands Jesus gives us, not just in Revelation but in the Gospels as well. We are to pay attention to both the good and the bad events taking place around the world and within the church.

As Christians we shout for joy along with heaven as each new soul accepts Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and we pray for the repentance of our nation, which in turn will see another Great Awakening shake the souls of citizens across the land. We yearn for these powerful moves of God as we make Him the top priority and repent of our sinful, prideful ways that have shifted our focus away from the Lord.

Yet at the same time, we must be aware that things are going to get worse before the return of Jesus Christ. We are called to the front lines of spiritual warfare against the enemy and to be participants in our society, not hiding in the shadows or merely standing on the sidelines while the world careens off course even further away from God and His original design for it.

Apostasy just does not feel like it is a word that gets used much these days, and when it does, it is quickly dismissed. It is not a word meant to bring judgment, but awareness and repentance.

There is a wave of apostate churches appearing in the West—churches that have abandoned the ways of God as described in His written Word. Entire denominations have abandoned the ways of God's Word and embraced the ways of the world.

Revelation teaches us how to course correct with the letters to the end-times churches, but for us to have any effect in showing those who have turned their backs on God the error of their ways, there must be love in our hearts.

We see clearly the fate awaiting the apostate church, which wraps the Bible with their ideologies instead of wrapping their worldviews with the Bible.

The greatest thing we as Christians can do for this world is to take Jesus—whom we confess as our Lord and Savior, as well as the ultimate example of how to live our lives—at His word. By doing so, we will obey His commands and live our lives with a sense of urgency, engaging in ministry and outreach to a world that desperately needs a relationship with its Creator.

If we don't do it, then who will? If the lost do not have a radical encounter with Jesus because we did not do what we were called to do, we will answer for it on the day that our deeds are read before the great white throne judgment. Is that something any of us want to answer to Jesus for? That because of our indifference and inaction, we failed in our commission?

Jesus says to be ready, for He is coming soon and quickly. While there are prophecies from other parts of the Bible still to be fulfilled, no one knows the day or time of His return or how quickly the events that must take place for Jesus' return will actually happen.

It is imperative for each and every one of us to be ready, to be sanctified and to be busy carrying out the works of Jesus, as we are commanded to do as Christians. I cannot explain it any better than the Word of God does, nor do I have the wisdom or authority behind the words.

So please, heed the Word of God, and let us all consecrate ourselves before the Lord, performing ministry in His name in service of Him. And let's not kid ourselves and live self-delusional lives, thinking we are something we are not when we ignore His commands and live lives focused on our own wants and desires.

Because just like Revelation and the Bible as a whole, our lives are to be all about Him.

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