

Receiving the Blessing

Anti-Semitism is exploding worldwide, a leading indicator that the return of Christ may be drawing near (Deuteronomy 28:37; Zechariah 12:3). Ironically, the attack by Hamas upon Israel on October 7, 2023, has intensified anti-Jewish fervor, especially on American university campuses. Satan's wrath seems to be ramping up (Revelation 12:12). *"See to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come."* Matthew 24:6.

The Blessing From the Heart of God Comes in Three Ways:

1. Thru the _____ (Revelation) Which _____ (Foretells)

- a. *"The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place."* Revelation 1:1a. We get the word 'apocalypse' from the Greek word for 'revelation', which has negative connotations today, while the biblical term ('the appearing') has positive connotations.
- b. In the last century, evangelical Christians have embraced three truths about the return of Christ: 1) Jesus can come at any moment (Matthew 24:42-44); 2) We must watch Israel, for the Jews are God's timepiece (Acts 1:6-7; Genesis 15:18); 3) The return of Jesus is our "Blessed Hope" (Titus 2:13), the most exciting event in history (I Thessalonians 4:16-18).
- c. Billy Graham continually preached all three of these truths, even producing *His Land*, a 1970 movie about the return of the Jewish people to their homeland. Yet, all three truths are disputed today, even in Christian universities. As Graham pointed out in *Approaching Hoofbeats: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, the return of Jesus is only scary for unbelievers.

2. Thru the _____ (Writer) Who _____ (Sees)

- a. *"He who made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw – that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ... 'Write on a scroll what you see.'"* Revelation 1:1b-2, 11. John was exiled by Emperor Domitian to the island of Patmos where he wrote Revelation about 95 AD. He was about 90 years old at the time.
- b. In Revelation 4-5, John is swept up to heaven and shown the throne of God. In Revelation 6-18, he is shown a series of judgments that God pours out upon the earth because of mankind's rebellion. In Revelation 19-22, John sees the return of a warrior-like Jesus who ushers in his Israel's promised kingdom followed by the final judgment and the new heaven and earth.
- c. In Revelation 22:7,12,20, Jesus promises that he is coming soon! And a final reminder is given: *"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away... God will take away... any share in the Holy City."* Revelation 22:18-19.

3. Thru the _____(Reader) Who _____(Acts)

- a. *"Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near."* Revelation 1:3. The Greek word for 'blessed' means 'happy'. God wants you to go beyond reading Revelation. He wants you to hear it, absorb it, and take it to heart by obeying it.
- b. The book of Revelation has been a great encouragement to Christians who are persecuted by hostile governments, and surrounded by hostile neighbors. Revelation reminds them of the ultimate victory we have in Christ!
- c. *"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."* Galatians 6:7-9.

Harry Truman (not the president) was a caretaker at a lodge near Mt. St. Helens and refused to budge as the volcanic mountain started to act up in 1980. On May 18, at 8:31 am, the mountain exploded, and Harry was buried by fifty feet of rock and mud in a millisecond. *"Be always on the watch and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."* Luke 21:36.