

# THE HEAVENLY CALLING

consider . . . Jesus

Heb. 3:1

VOLUME XXXIV

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

MARCH, APRIL 2008

NUMBER 2

## The Time of the End

### Part IV

#### In the Lord's Day (I)

**I John, who am also your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.**

**I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,**

**Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.**

**And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;**

**And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man... (Rev. 1:9-13a).**

John was on the Isle of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea (a northern branch of the Mediterranean Sea lying between Greece and Turkey), for a specifically stated purpose: "for ['because of'] the Word of God, and for ['because of'] the testimony of Jesus Christ" (v. 9; cf. v. 2). John was the one whom God had chosen to receive and record "the revelation ['the unveiling'] of Jesus Christ" (v. 1), further described in verses two and nine as "the word of God" and "the testimony of Jesus Christ." And John

had been taken to the Isle of Patmos *for this specific purpose.*

The Isle of Patmos was about ten miles long and six miles wide, and there was a penal colony on this island in John's day. The existence of this penal colony has given rise to a widely-held teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to this island by a Roman ruler because of his proclamation of the Word of God (usually understood as Domitian [who ruled from 81 A.D. to 96 A.D.]; and this Roman ruler is cited because of the widely accepted late date for the writing of the Book of Revelation).

The beginning of this teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to the Isle of Patmos can be traced back to at least the latter part of the second century, extending into the third century, one to two hundred years after the Book of Revelation had been written. This was taught by several of the early Church fathers during this time (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius all taught this). And this same teaching has been passed down, taught through the centuries, and carried into modern times.

The teaching that John had been imprisoned and exiled to this island in the Aegean Sea though has *no basis in fact.* It is strictly *tradition*, and this teaching undoubtedly arose and has continued to be accepted down through the centuries because of a misunderstanding of the stated purpose for John being on this island, given in verse nine of the opening chapter. It is specifically stated that he was on this island for *one purpose*: "for ['because of'] the Word of God, and for ['because of'] the testimony of

Jesus Christ."

John, being on this island *because of the Word*, takes one back to that previously stated concerning the content of the book, in verses one and two. John was on the Isle of Patmos *for a purpose which he himself provides*, as the Spirit moved him to write. He was there "because of" *the revelation (the unveiling) of Jesus Christ* (the manner in which the book opens, introducing the subject matter of the book), which is declared to be "the word of God" and "the testimony of Jesus Christ" (v. 2; cf. John 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:10b, 13). And the thought behind "because of," contextually, would have to be understood in the sense of John being there to receive and record God bringing *to completion all that He desires man to know and understand concerning His Son* — "the revelation ['the unveiling'] of Jesus Christ."

God seems to have an affinity for taking individuals whom He has chosen to isolated or out-of-the-way places to receive His revelation. Moses wrote the Pentateuch while in the desert; David wrote a number of Psalms while out in the hills being pursued by Saul; Ezekiel wrote from a place of exile, from Babylon; and Paul was seemingly taken to a place in Arabia to receive the revelation of the mystery, while later writing epistles from prisons.

Thus, it should not be thought strange at all to see God removing John from surroundings which the outside world offered and taking him to the remote Isle of Patmos to receive the capstone for all Scripture. In fact, something of this nature should be thought of far more as *expected* rather than strange.

But why *this particular island*? The answer is probably in its location. The Isle of Patmos, along with being a place

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removed from the outside world, was located out in a part of the Mediterranean Sea, with the “sea” being used in Scripture to depict *the Gentile nations*.

The Book of Revelation is first of all about *the Church*, as it presently exists among the nations and as it will exist once the Church has been removed from the nations (chs. 1-5, 19a, 20a); and the book is also about *Israel* out among the nations and that which will occur once Israel has been brought to the place of repentance (chs. 5-20a).

Thus, to see John removed from his surroundings and taken to an isolated, out-of-the-way place located out in the sea can only be seen as quite appropriate for the subject matter at hand. It can be seen as one of the many ways *significance* always surrounds acts of a triune God.

### I Became in Spirit

Verse ten should literally read, “I became in spirit in the Lord’s day...” And John was not only removed in this manner from the Isle of Patmos into heaven but he was also moved forward in time as well. John was moved forward to a time at the end of the present dispensation.

(John’s removal from the Isle of Patmos into heaven is simply stated to have been “in spirit.” Chapter four [vv. 1, 2], depicting the same scene again, adds information. And whether this was an actual bodily removal or a removal by means of visions is unrevealed and immaterial to the literality of and teachings drawn from the subject matter at hand.)

John, once removed from the Isle of Patmos into heaven, was shown things which would occur relative to the Church (judgment, with a view to the impending Messianic Era) and corresponding things relative to the transfer of the government of the earth from angels to man (chs. 1b-4; cf. Heb. 2:5). And he was then shown things preparatory to the redemption of the inheritance, which had to do with both *heavenly* and *earthly* spheres of the kingdom about to exist under *Christ, His co-heirs, Israel, and the nations* (ch. 5).

John was then moved farther forward in time, into and through seven subsequent years (Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week, the Tribulation). And he was shown things which would transpire on earth relative to Israel and the nations during these seven years (chs. 6-19a).

And during this time, not only would “the inheritance” be redeemed *through judgment* (the judgments of the Tribulation) but “the bride” previously shown forth at the judgment seat *would become the Son’s wife*, allowing the Son to be in a position to reign (cf. Gen. 2:18).

(According to the manner in which God established matters in the beginning relative to man holding the sceptre in the stead of Satan and his angels, a sovereign cannot reign apart from possessing a consort queen [Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-24]. The man and woman must reign *together*, seated on the throne as *one complete being*.)

Thus, God’s Son today is *not* in a position to assume the sceptre and reign. He *must* have a wife to ascend the throne with Him, a wife which, in the antitype of Eve in Gen. 2, is not only *part of His body* but *will complete Him* [cf. Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23, 30; Heb. 2:10]. And the Son will not possess a wife in the manner seen in the type until the end of the coming Tribulation [cf. Ruth 3, 4].

A knowledge of this fact will address, resolve, and put to rest widely-held false teachings concerning a present existence of some type mystery form of the kingdom in which the Son is presently reigning; or, others become more specific and see the Son already seated on David’s throne within this purported mystery form of the kingdom.

The preceding may sound strange to those properly instructed in things pertaining to the kingdom [cf. Matt. 13:52]. And so it should. Strange though or not, all of the preceding is widely held in Christian circles today, even taught in numerous Bible schools and seminaries. But the one Biblical fact concerning *the necessity* of the man and the woman ascending the throne *together* will, alone, show the fallacy of such teachings, for Christ *does not* presently have a wife to ascend the throne with Him.

Aside from the preceding, though there are two anointed Kings in relation to the earth today [Christ and Satan], as there were two anointed kings in Israel during the days of David and Saul, only

## THE HEAVENLY CALLING

Published bimonthly

The Lamp Broadcast, Inc.

2629 Wyandotte Way  
Norman, Oklahoma 73071

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www.lampbroadcast.org

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*All unsigned articles are  
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One can hold the sceptre at any given time. In the type, Saul held the sceptre until he was put down and his crown taken and given to David. *Only then* did David and his faithful men take the sceptre and reign in Israel [cf. I Sam. 31:1-6; II Sam. 1:4-10; 5:3]. And matters *can only be exactly the same in the antitype*. Satan will hold the sceptre until he is put down and his crown taken and given to Christ. *Only then* will Christ and His faithful co-heirs take the sceptre and reign over the earth.)

Then, beyond events of the Tribulation, John was moved even farther forward in time. He was moved through events immediately following the Tribulation, extending into the Messianic Era itself (chs. 19b, 20a). After that, revelation continues with John being shown events which will occur at the end of the Messianic Era relative to Satan, his angels, and his followers among men on earth, along with the judgment of the unsaved dead (ch. 20b).

And that which John was shown doesn’t stop with events at the end of the Messianic Era. Rather, John was carried even farther forward in time and shown things having to do with the eternal ages beyond the Messianic Era, when man will hold the sceptre relative to a rule extending beyond this earth, out into the universe itself (chs. 21, 22).

And a person being moved into another time and place and being shown events occurring during this future time, in this place, is not something new in Scripture. Ezekiel, in Babylonian captivity, was moved not only to another location (to Jerusalem) but was moved both back in time and forward in time. Ezekiel, through visions, was removed from Babylon, placed in Jerusalem, and

shown things which had occurred both before the captivity and which were yet to occur (Ezek. 8-11).

The captivity took place in stages, beginning about 605 B.C., but the Glory did not depart until almost twenty years later, about 586 B.C.

Ezekiel had been among the early captives transported to Babylon, and it was around the middle of this period (about 595 B.C.) when the Spirit entered into Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2), began showing him things (2:3ff), "lifted" him "up between the earth and the heaven," and carried him "in the visions of God to Jerusalem" (8:3).

Ezekiel, at first, was moved *back in time*, allowing him to see the abominations existing among the Jewish people which had resulted in the captivity. Then he was moved *forward in time*, allowing him to see the end result — the Jewish people not only in captivity but the resulting departure of the Glory (chs. 8-11).

"Time," rather than being a constant, is *relative*. Not only is this revealed in Scripture but man has been allowed to discover and see this even in his secular science. This is part of the theory of relativity which Albert Einstein (a Jew) was allowed to discover and demonstrate through the science of mathematics (showing a small part of that which God had previously established through His unchangeable laws in physics and mathematics).

And, if God so chooses (which He has done at times), He can take a man, place him in another location, and move him either back in time or forward in time in that location. Man can't operate in this sphere, but the One Who designed and created all of this can. Then, within the scope of God doing this, *one thing* which guarantees the future occurrence of that seen throughout the Book of Revelation is the fact that, in one respect, all of that seen in this book *has already occurred*. And changes can't take place in that which has already occurred.

### Time and Place into Which John Was Taken

John was removed from the Isle of Patmos and was not only transported into the Lord's Day but was moved forward in time as well. John was removed from Man's Day on earth and trans-

ported into the Lord's Day in heaven (or, *the Day of the Lord*, as it is referred to numerous other places in Scripture). And he was moved forward in time to the end of the present dispensation, to the time of the removal of the Church preceding the Tribulation.

In relation to the earth, Man's Day will last for 6,000 years — extending from the creation of man to the end of the Tribulation. Then, when Man's Day has been brought to a close, the Lord's Day will begin.

But this has to do with Man's Day and the Lord's Day in relation to *the earth*. Moving outside the earth, a person would move outside the bounds of Man's Day and move into a day which has always existed — *the Lord's Day*. Christ, for example, while on earth said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56; cf. Mark 12:27). Abraham, removed from Man's Day on earth, found himself in a place separate from Man's Day. He found himself in *the Lord's Day*. And exactly the same thing is seen concerning the removal of the Church at the end of the present dispensation in both I Thess. 4:13-5:4 and Rev. 1:10-20.

If man is removed from the earth at any time during Man's Day he finds himself in *the Lord's Day*. This is why Abraham found himself in the Lord's Day in time past, and this is why the Church, once removed from the earth at the time of the rapture, will find itself in *the Lord's Day* as well.

Man's Day and the Lord's Day *cannot* run concurrently on earth. Man's Day, in this respect, has to run its course and be brought to a close before the Lord's Day can begin on earth.

(Any thought that the expression, "the Lord's day," in Rev. 1:10 is referencing a time other than *the Day of the Lord* is really not open for discussion. Such a thought is completely out of line with both the context and related Scripture.

The widely-held teaching that "the Lord's day" in this verse is a reference to the first day of the week, to Sunday, finds no support anywhere in Scripture. "Sunday" is never referred to as *the Lord's Day* in Scripture [unless this verse is the exception, which it evidently isn't].

As will later be shown, this section of the Book of Revelation parallels I Thess.

4:13-5:4, where the expression "the day of the Lord" is used.

In this same respect, also note Psa. 118:24,

"This is *the day* which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

This verse is often quoted out of context and applied to *a day* during the present time, during Man's Day. This verse though is set within a Messianic passage and has to do with the future Messianic Era when the Lord's Day will replace Man's Day on earth. And any application to present time would have to involve a secondary application of the verse.)

It is commonly taught that either all or part of the coming Tribulation (Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week, the last seven years of Man's Day) forms the beginning of the Lord's Day. Such a teaching has Man's Day and the Lord's Day existing at the same time on earth during the last seven years of Man's Day.

Not only is this *not possible*, and not only is this *not taught* anywhere in Scripture, but Scripture teaches *just the opposite* relative to the timing of the beginning of the Lord's Day on earth.

In the Book of Joel, following the Day of the Lord being introduced in connection with judgment befalling the nations (1:15; 2:1), the timing of the beginning of the Day of the Lord is seen. In Joel 2:27-3:21, the beginning of Day of the Lord on earth is clearly seen to be *following Christ's return to the earth after the Tribulation has run its course, i.e., after Man's Day has run its course*. Joel's prophecy, in actuality, *cannot* be understood after any other fashion.

(A place where many go seeking to show that the Tribulation is referred to in Scripture as *the Day of the Lord* is I Thess. 5:2-4. They seek to make these verses relate to the unsaved remaining on earth following the removal of the Church, seen at the end of the preceding chapter [vv. 13-18]. But, understanding these verses both contextually and in the light of other Scripture [e.g., Joel's prophecy], it is quite evident that this cannot be the case. These verses, contextually, have to do with Christians removed from Man's Day and placed in the Lord's Day at the end of the present dispensation.

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Also, many seek to do this same thing with Rev. 1:10, saying that John was removed into heaven and shown events of the Tribulation, which they relate to the mention of the Lord's Day in this verse. Such individuals seek to teach that the Lord's Day in chapter one relates to events of the Tribulation, beginning in chapter six.

But exactly the same thing can be said here that was said about the incorrect understanding of I Thess. 5:2-4. Both, contextually and in the light of other Scripture [again *ref.* Joel's prophecy], this cannot be the case.

Revelation 1:10, contextually, has to do with Christians removed from the earth at the end of the present dispensation and placed in the Lord's Day. And this is exactly the scene presented in the verses immediately following [vv. 11-20]. Events of the Tribulation seen beginning in chapter six do not occur during the Lord's Day. Rather, they occur during the last seven years of Man's Day.

That "the Lord's day" couldn't refer to time on earth during the Tribulation is shown another way in the book. John was removed into the Lord's Day *before* the Tribulation began on earth; and, if the Lord's Day is understood correctly, John would have remained in the Lord's Day, in heaven, not only when moved through time covering the Tribulation but when moved through time beyond the Tribulation into both the millennium and the eternal ages which follow.)

### That Which John Saw

John being removed from the earth into heaven foreshadows the removal of the Church at the end of the dispensation. Not only was he removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day but a *trumpet* is seen connected with this removal in both Rev. 1:10 and Rev. 4:1, where the same scene is repeated (for reasons which will be discussed in a subsequent study). And this is in complete keeping with I Thess.

4:13-5:9, where Christians are removed from the earth in connection with a trumpet (4:16), being removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day (5:2-4).

John, through his experiences, depicting the Church being removed into heaven at the end of the dispensation, then relates things about the appearance of the Church in Christ's presence in that day. John sees "seven golden candlesticks," and in the midst of the seven candlesticks he sees *Christ in all His Glory*, described as One Whose "countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (v. 16); or, as previously described by Paul when He saw Christ enswathed in this same covering of Glory, as he traveled from Jerusalem to Damascus: "above the brightness of the ['midday'] sun" (Acts 26:13).

The "seven candlesticks" are stated to be *the seven Churches* (named in v. 11, with details provided about each in chs. 2, 3). The number "seven" is one of five numbers used in Scripture to show *completeness* in one form or another (the others are *three, ten, twelve, and forty*). The number "seven" shows *the completeness of that which is in view*, and this is a number used particularly concerning the judgments seen occurring throughout a large part of the book beginning in chapter six. There are *seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials*, showing *God's complete judgment upon Israel and the nations during this period*. This is what it will take (God's complete judgment, occurring in the manner presented in this book) to bring Israel to *the place of repentance*, which will, in turn, allow numerous necessary events to occur prior to the ushering in of the Messianic Era.

*All seven Churches* seen in Christ's presence at this time depict *the complete Church* being removed from the earth at the time of the rapture. The Church in Philadelphia (which had kept *the word of Christ's patience*) and the Church in Laodicea (which is described as *wretched,*

*and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*) are seen in Christ's presence *together following the rapture, both awaiting the same thing — judgment, with a view to the Messianic Era.*

It is widely but erroneously taught that only part of the Church (the faithful) will be removed at the time of the rapture (an event which those teaching along these lines usually see occurring before the Tribulation), with the remaining Christians left behind to go through either part or all of the Tribulation (as to whether it is *part* or *all* depends on who is doing the teaching; this false teaching takes numerous forms).

As any corruption of Biblical doctrine, erroneous teachings concerning the rapture emanate from a failure to begin with the Old Testament types and properly understand these types in the light of the antitype. Beginning with the types and progressing in a correct manner from that point, *it would not be possible to teach a selective-type rapture from Scripture.*

And the preceding would be true of any Biblical doctrine. One has to begin with the Old Testament types, properly understand these types, and then move on into the New Testament antitypes and see the proper relationship between the types and the antitypes. If Christians would do this, *there would be far more uniformity of interpretation of Scripture throughout Christendom.*

God has interwoven types throughout Biblical history for *an evident reason*. They are there *to help man properly understand the antitypes*. And any Christian ignoring the types is not only failing to study Scripture after the manner in which God structured His Word but he is doing this to his own peril and to the peril of any to whom he might minister.

*The importance of correctly studying Scripture after the fashion in which it has been structured cannot be overemphasized.*

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