

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, February 5, 2017

"Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof, That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?" (Job 38:19-20)

I love, love, love this verse! Under proper examination, it takes you to the baseline. There's a dude alive today who has an IQ of 198 -- which only one in 32 billion have been measured to have. Get that! That means that about 25 billion more people have to be born before we can expect to come upon the next one that smart! His IQ is 28 points higher than that champion of atheists, uber-smart Steven Hawkings. But neither genius -- or as one scale would classify them, "precocious" -- fellow can tell you where light comes from. Neither genius can tell you where darkness comes from. They can only tell you -- assuming they pour every ounce of that intellect into the study of the matter -- a smattering of the equation to get into (perhaps) the right galaxy of options for where light and darkness dwell. God has it locked up! Unless He commands that ***"light to shine out of darkness"***, you cannot find it and make it shine! Your darkness -- whoever you are and wherever you dwell and whenever you have existence -- will not be removed unless and until He goes to where light dwells and brings it forth to remove your darkness! He owns the light and the darkness, so He will administer it according to His counsels.

But, speaking of darkness, after the patriarch Job has suffered the complete loss of all riches, of his ten children, and of his health, he engages in an intense forensic disputation with his three closest and dearest friends. This goes on for about 29 chapters, when it is written: ***"The words of Job are ended" (Job 31:40)***. Then, for six chapters, the young -- some expositors say impertinent -- Elihu chastises the friends for missing the proper spiritual point, and Job for his audacity. When Elihu finishes, God takes up the cause -- speaking to Job out of the whirlwind, beginning with:

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2)

Job accepts the imperative rhetorical answer: It is he (Job 42:3).

There is great danger here. Time and again, in God's providence, one of His gentle lambs is pressed beyond their measure of spiritual maturity as they engage with Satan's expertise in deceit and malice. In their distress they cry out ... in error. There is great danger here. Particularly when you are one to whom less spiritually mature souls look for how properly to have the ***"peaceable fruit of righteousness"*** yielded them *through* the affliction, being exercised *by* that affliction. In such depth of distress, it is a darkening -- an obscuring, if you please -- of God's holy counsel to speak beyond what you know and beyond what God Almighty in wisdom has opened to you!

Everybody here knows that I have been blessed mightily by God in my peculiar life -- chiefly because He has given me these past several years a great sense of exigency ... even importunity ... about things involving Christ's Revelation. I love it! I dream frequently about the matter and it often possesses my waking thoughts to distraction. Not by my design, because I deeply fear - - as Job intimates in his concession to God's unanswerable case -- that I might utter ***"that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not."*** It would be to my great dishonor and eternal shame if I were to darken God's pure counsel about this great end of things in the minds and hearts of His people, because I speak without knowledge.

So, I began my time in preparation of today's sermon with the intent to speak of Christ's words in Matthew 24-25 -- together with the synoptic treatments of the same subject by Mark and Luke. I thought I was going into a nice pool for a peaceful swim; but I dropped into an ocean of billowing waves that have beat my bark mercilessly. So, so many people think they know what Christ is saying. So, so many disappointing, incongruous, internally inconsistent words offered by very wise men. With great sorrow, I have found that I do not have satisfying knowledge such that I would dare to speak to this blessed audience until God grant me -- if God grant me -- a fuller and satisfying and (above all) Scripturally-defensible understanding. I ask that you pray for me on the matter; as I am convinced that many of our greatest jewels on eschatology are buried there for that blessed people who will usher in that great season.

I want to share, however, one rather pregnant thought -- that was brought into sharper import for me when I read Fred's e-mail on Friday. Talking about the story on Fox News with the deceitful "Marine-type" pretending that those thugs haven't been violent -- with law enforcement's full knowledge and implied consent -- toward our peaceful members who dared to warn them that worshipping the flag and dead carcasses would bring more of God's wrath upon their heads. The passage to which his comments brought my mind is one on which I have gained some thankful understanding, and reads as follows:

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." (Matthew 24:6-7)

I tweeted a few weeks back, on the @WBCApocalypse account, about this passage, in relation to the perpetually-existing ignition points across this globe. I got mocked to within an inch of my life, on the point that in every generation there have been conflicts between groups of persons. So, it bears considering what in Christ's prophetic words we might grab hold on, since He starts this sermon from Mt. Olivet with the warning: ***"Take heed that no man deceive you."*** (Matthew 24:4)

Three parts of this passage -- the key words being underscored for you in the writing -- bear some brief expository treatment to give you loved ones here some joy and refreshing related to the current milieu in which we live, both national and international.

First, the word translated "**rumours**" comes from the Greek word "*akoe*" (ak-o-ay'), and it has more import than the mere notion of "hearing a rumor". The word includes a reference to the ability to hear. In two senses this brings more explosive flavor to the passage. In one sense, those to whom Christ is speaking have been given an ability beyond the unregenerate man, as these passages reflect:

"And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." (Deuteronomy 29:2-4)

and by contrasting example

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches". (Revelation 2:7)

As part of our predestined blessings, we are "**conformed to the image of his Son**" (Romans 8:29) ... "**we have the mind of Christ**" (1 Corinthians 2:16) ... we are "**full of eyes before and behind ... and ... full of eyes within**" (Revelation 4:6, 8) ... and we are to "**know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**" (Matthew 13:11). So, too, we are given a clearer ability to hear with spiritual discernment what the earth-dwellers find to be nothing but the drumbeat of their vain lives.

The other sense in which this Greek word has particular significance is that it implies a capaciousness in the ability to hear. The companion term in this passage, "**hear**" -- the root word behind what is translated "**rumours**" -- refers to being able to "*get by hearing, learn*". It's not an accident, my friends, that the Holy Ghost provided these terms. What is unique about this generation, as it relates to the ability to hear? Particularly, as it relates to the explosion of conflict and the increasing evidence that peace is being taken from those that dwell upon the earth? Is it not the capacity to know -- almost instantaneously -- when conflict ignites? The earth-dwellers hear about conflict -- and the ease with which they're able to know about it, makes them infinitely more affected by it, and influenced to engage more readily in it! Tell me how else flash-mobs accumulate? Uniquely to that last generation, will be the reality that every conflict -- howsoever remote in the earth -- will be played out on their knowledge devices ... their seeing devices ... their hearing devices. It has a dizzying effect on the heart and mind, causing amplification of the fret God puts them into.

The second point deserving some fleshing out is to understand what is meant in this passage by use of the word "**nation**". Since we all have been born and raised in political frameworks referred to as "**nations**", we use that word as we were taught to use it. We live in a "**nation**" called the United States of America. Our dear friend Matthias came from a "**nation**" called United Kingdom or Britain. We read and hear of the United Nations, understanding that it is an accumulation of cooperative countries or "**nations**" that work toward their mutual interests. But that is not the full import of the word in this passage. The word goes beyond national borders. It includes cultural differences. The Greek word is "**ethnos**", from which we get our English word "ethnic" or "ethnicity".

The conflicts, to be more clear about my point, arise not simply between sovereign entities -- like the perpetual boiling and roiling between China, Russia, North Korea, European Union, South America, "Muslim-dominant nations" (that Trump issued his Executive Order about), etc. -- it also includes the culture wars that boil over within the nations. Cultural fault lines run across families, communities, cities, states, and nations! When peace is taken -- like is referenced by Christ in this passage, and by John in Revelation chapter six -- it is peace at every level of society that is affected. Civil war ... on steroids!

Finally, the third point Fred's e-mail triggered in my heart, is a discussion about the term in this passage "**divers places**". This word translated "**divers**" is understood by those who read it's usage to intimate things taking place throughout the earth or, as it relates to diseases (Luke 4:40), they run throughout the body. When it's divers tongues, it means multiple languages. But, in addition to expressing multiplicity of places and points of impact, this Greek word "**kata**" (kat-ah') includes the notion of frequency. So, in any place you see the term "**divers**" being used, you should understand it to include both expansiveness and frequency! To apply it more specifically, the unleashing of events as spoken of by Christ is going to not only be that it is erupting in strange and various locations -- but that it seems to happen as a near daily occurrence!

So, as we consider the more abstruse -- that is, yet-unclear -- aspects of Christ's eschatological sermon to some of His disciples about the "**sign of [His] coming, and of the end of the world**" (**Matthew 24:3**), we need to understand that the increased breakdown of peace between all elements of society, and near daily reports of deterioration of human health (both physical and psychological) ... and the structural integrity of the natural world, we are seeing "**the beginning of sorrows**" that will usher in that period about which our dear brother and fellow-laborer John was given visions to declare unto us what must then shortly come to pass.

As I am given more light on these amazing words of Christ, I will joyfully share them with you. And, again, I ask that you pray Christ open them up to me -- or another of these gentle elders or members -- so that we may all be edified, if it be His will.

In the meanwhile, I have been working with some sweet friends in this house for some many months now addressing John's prophecy. No week passes without much sowing of time and reaping the understanding of the book, so that I dare to suggest I have many sermons' substance to occupy my time in front of you. I hope, in time, to present a comprehensive exposition of the Revelation for this body's full examination and edit as light provides -- passage by passage. It is a good work. It is a most joyful work. I will begin presenting some of it today.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ". (Revelation 1:1a)

Virtually the whole of mankind -- including near every member of Christendom -- stumbles over the opening words of this blessed manuscript, breaks their foot and their stride, and then goes forward to the race out of step and limping. I cannot number the instances when I have heard an impertinent, pseudo-religious soul make reference to "The Revelations" or "The Book of Revelations". I correct their assault on the very essence of the writing, and I get a vacant stare and grudging acknowledgement that they may have misstated the title.

It reminds me of an exchange I had during the picket at last month's presidential inaugural festivities. The crowd had grown to full flow, and every form of confused, vile, filthy-mouthed rebel was passing by our beautiful signs. I was at the west end of the corral, and a small, bundled up Hispanic woman walked up to the barricade. She pointed to one of the signs I held -- "God Hates Proud Sinners" and said: "I don't understand why this?" Hoping to help her out, I directed her attention to the other sign I held, "Why Did God Destroy Sodom?" I said: "See hon ... question and answer. Why did God destroy Sodom? Because He hates proud sinners." She said: "Oh Sodom and Gomorrah. I know this verse." Then, as though she didn't just get face planted with the most powerful woe that could be placed upon a living soul, she smiled and walked away. I turned to my sister and said: "Well, I guess that's all she could be bothered with." She answered: "It's like Churchill said: 'Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but they pick themselves up and hurry off.'"

We must not be so woefully dark-minded! This is the most significant book contained in the most significant cannon ever to grace the writings of the human race! Treat it with some respect! Know something about it -- for absolute certain! Grab at it! Scratch at it! Put it -- in -- your head!

As with any sincere examination of this blessed cannon of scripture, it is important to become familiar with the expressions or terms that are made use of in expressing the will of our God and his Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost is charged with the duty to guide us in all truth, speaking not of himself, but those things given him by God (John 16:13). He guided the writing

of these **"holy men of God" (2 Peter 1:21)**, so that we might the better know His will. We should be clear on what words are used and why the variations of words were chosen.

To properly understand the first words of this book, we have to understand the distinction between three Greek words that are translated into English expressions that even sober-minded lovers of Christ often interchange in their communications about aspects of this blessed coming event: (1) *"apokalupsis"*, (2) *"phaneroo"*, and (3) *"parousia"*.

Let us begin with the word translated "revelation". Here is that Greek word translated in the writings of the Apostle Peter:

"But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter 4:13)

It is used 18 times, seven of which refer to Christ's revelation: ***"the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5); "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 14:6); "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven" (2 Thessalonians 1:7); "at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7); "at the revelation of Jesus Christ;" (1 Peter 1:13)***, and then the two verses I've previously referenced. It is also used when Paul discusses the divine revelation of the things of God and Christ when he was taken into the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:1, 7; Galatians 1:12, 2:2)

The Greek word is, *"apokalupsis"*, and is a slight variation of the root word *"apokalupto"*, which means to uncover; lay open what has been veiled or covered up; to make known; make manifest; disclose what was before unknown. This word *"apokalupto"* -- which is found 26 times in the cannon, including a smattering of references to the time period, but not with an actual reference to Christ -- has two components: The bare revealing; and the revealing of something that before the time it is revealed has been judicially kept unknown. Consider this passage for edification on this point of things not before understood:

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." (1 Corinthians 13:8-13)

As a bit of an aside -- but a most critical piece of knowledge -- what comes together simultaneously in this beautiful passage is the perfection of charity and the proper mindset to

have Christ *fully revealed* to you. This point is important to consider -- though it will be more fully examined later -- as it is consistent with the compelling hypothesis that Revelation Chapters 2 and 3 are about the Church of Revelation (a term I've previously coined for that final body of Christians) becoming perfected in charity, and that has to happen before the events of Revelation 4 can and will be initiated. Another passage on this point:

***“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love ['agape' or 'charity'] of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. ... But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”* (1 John 2:5, 27-28)**

In this chapter, John connects the strict and sincere adherence to the scriptures with the perfection of love or charity. And that perfection is what is going to make you able to stand -- when the Revelation (or "*apokalupsis*") of Jesus Christ comes to the critical moment that "he shall appear" -- with confidence. The word translated "**he shall appear**", you see, is not "*apokalupsis*", but "*phaneroo*", which means to make manifest, visible or known what has been hidden or unknown; *make the actual invisible realized*; made known by teaching. The word translated "**coming**" is "*parousia*", the coming, arrival, advent.

***“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”* (Matthew 24:3)**

That "**coming**" is the same word, "*parousia*" (Strong's 3952). The distinction is a time frame or period or dispensation (Strong's 602, "*apokalupsis*") vis-à-vis a specific event, the coming (Strong's 3952, "*parousia*"). It's found also in this verse:

***“For this we say until you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.”* (1 Thessalonians 4:15)**

The coming of the Lord – the event of His second advent – ties to Revelation 11 – when the seventh trumpet sounds and the Lord comes in the clouds as was told the "**men of Galilee**":

***“[T]his same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”* (Acts 1:11)**

The Revelation ("*apokalupsis*"), on the other hand, is a dispensation; not a single event. Two additional verses help to see the distinction:

"For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad." (Mark 4:22)

The word "manifested" is the Greek "*phaneroo*", make manifest; appear; show.

"After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country." (Mark 16:12)

Again, the word "appeared" is *phaneroo*, make manifest; appear. This is the physical manifesting of himself. So you have three different terms. The coming of Christ is metaphysically different from Him physically manifesting himself, which is different from the dispensation of His revelation. Three different, though associated, concepts; three different Greek words:

Phaneroo (5319) – Always intimating Christ physically showing himself

Apokalipto (602) – Christ's revelation or coming out party; the whole dispensation of events leading up to His return, and the aftermath through to His millennial reign and turning the kingdom over to God

Parousia (3952) – His advent, the event of His physically returning in power at the mid-point of the dispensation called The Revelation.

All three words are used by Christ and His apostles to refer to the some aspect of the events of the Revelation. The book under consideration, however, is the subject of that grand period in human history when the mystery begun with Adam in the pristine beauty of Eden -- and traced through every generation of mankind with the intricate weaving of God's merciful and awful providential dispensation of His inimitable majesty and authority over every least detail of the created heaven and earth -- comes to full and excited conclusion. Christ will receive His Revelation.

But we are far from finished with this opening clause of this amazing work of prophecy. Understanding that the subject is one of great majesty and subjugates every historical event of mankind -- the question is fairly raised: Why must Christ be revealed? This opening clause compels examination of this question because any and all power and glory that is possessed by Christ is essential to His godhead! It is not dependent in any degree upon the creation, or upon how that creation is disposed of. Christ is one with God, and therefore *is* God, a reality that you find this same author -- John the Beloved -- articulating:

"I and my Father are one." (John 10:30)

and

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

All the attributes of, and perfected in, a true sovereign King -- immutability, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, love, grace, mercy, longsuffering, goodness, wrath, hatred, joy, holiness, righteousness, veracity, faithfulness, sufficiency, blessedness, unity, deity -- are possessed, and from all eternity were possessed by Christ. Consequently, nothing in His glories could be augmented or diminished one whit by His Revelation to the human creation.

What can be searched out and understood that would give us greater confidence about the need for and nature of Christ's revealing. How can we be bolder in speech to this generation, or stronger in love to our co-elect, by understanding not just what is written in this great book, but why these things ***"must shortly come to pass"***? We certainly know that all matters concerning the mystery of God and of Christ occupy the active attention of the angels and those of His seed who have gone before us:

"For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." (1 Corinthians 11:10)

and

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Ephesians 3:10-12)

and

"Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Peter 1:12)

and

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1)

It certainly should be every bit as important to we who are engaged in the church militant stage of our existences. Preaching and ministering are the two things that motivate us to better

understand, because these are our two primary duties as we spend our days -- whether they are to be joined with the period of this Revelation or spent occupying this battlefield until we are taken to our God and pass the torch to another body of believers. Consider these various expressions from Scripture about the context of and reasons for Christ to be physically revealed:

"And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." (Isaiah 40:5)

and

"But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." (Malachi 3:2)

and

"Behold, I, and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LOD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." (Isaiah 8:18)

and

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." (Psalm 46:10)

and, finally

"Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me." (Hebrews 2:12-13)

This exemplary series of verses -- and you could easily pour dozens or perhaps hundreds more into this listing -- you begin to find what Scripture articulates as the purposes designed in Christ's Revelation. He will -- as in it is the determinate counsel of God Almighty that it happen -- be seen of all flesh. He will be exalted among the earth dwellers! He will be a purging, cleansing, blisteringly-trying presence that will violently shake His elect apart from the non-elect, and take them to Himself and present them with Himself before His Father! Revelation chapters 6-19 covers this. Chapters 4 and 5 set the stage. Having done so, He will take His earthly throne and demonstrate His complete authority over this creation, on His terms and in accordance with the words prophesied by His servants from the beginning of the human experiment! Of course, Christ could have done all these things without ever being personally revealed. However, He is not ashamed to own us before men or before His Father; it's part of

the benefits in the covenant that are to be brought forth for those beneficiaries of that solemn work of grace between the Trinity. In accordance with His own will, the attributes of God are all committed to the fulfillment of that covenant. This makes a proper view of this book and all prophecies about its glorious events worthy of the most sober and zealous study.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

This grand language -- though commonly presented as a Messianic prophecy relating to His first advent -- clearly far exceeds the nature and scope of that time! It must, therefore, refer to His second advent. When the dispensation introduced with these words of solemn pronouncement "***The Revelation of Jesus Christ***" opens, it is time to set the world stage for this prophecy to be fulfilled.

The Lord willing, I am hopeful to continue delivering an examination of the Revelation to you -- either as a continuation of the passage-by-passage exposition, or a detour to some prophetic work in Scripture relating to the same subject matter -- the next time I am granted the honor of feeding the flock of Great King and Shepherd. And, of course, I am most willing to receive edits or questions as we go forward.

I love you all very dearly.

Amen.