

Apocalypse Now

Revelation 1

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Ten years ago at our high school youth group in Danville, I introduced a study on the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation. I began talking about how confusing these times are in which we live, and wouldn't it be great to have a chronology with all the details of the future?

Then I introduced The Revelation.

I told them I had been doing some amazing research, and I began talking about the issue of the harmonic convergence in the seven bowls of wrath. I showed them two graphs which systematically plotted the convergences in the hermeneutical systems of the apocalyptic vision as it relates to the socio-political, geo-synchronic issues of our day, which all point clearly to the year in which the Antichrist would appear on the world scene: 1991.

I then revealed to them the remarkable, numeric acuity so prevalent in the last eleven chapters. On the overhead we began to fill in the blanks of the name of the Antichrist, all according to numeric, acuitive construction.

Before our very eyes the name took shape: Saksuork Mij. (Now, of course I just made all this stuff up, but they were totally buying it! — eyes wide open, staring at the overhead.) I said, "I just don't know what this name Saksuork Mij means." Then I said, "What if we turned the overhead over, reversing polarity." And we did.

All at once it became clear. The name was not Saksuork Mij; it was Jim Krouskas! Jim Krouskas, our new high school intern, was sitting in the back row! The staff all screamed; kids started looking at me like, "Hey . . . you made up that harmonic numeric acuity stuff, didn't you?"

We ran to the back of the room, grabbed Jim, and dragged him up front. We ripped off his shirt, and sure enough! He was wearing some Satanic, heavy metal T-shirt under his other shirt. We ripped several other bad rock and roll T-shirts off Jim until he was standing there bare-chested.

But Jim's chest wasn't really bare . . . it was covered with thick, black, curly, Greek hair. Fortunately, we just happened to have an electric razor handy. I yelled to Matt Skinner, "Let's look for the mark!" (I'd seen the movie The Omen.)

We began shaving off chest hair, and sure enough, right there on the right side of his chest was a huge, black number 6. We gasped and shaved more, revealing another number 6, saying, "Oh, Jim, we're really disappointed." Then we shaved the other side of Jim's chest, revealing the number . . . 5.

I looked and said, “Oh man . . . Jim, it’s 665. I’m so sorry. I miscalculated. I was off by one.”

Now, was I off by one or more than one? Did I miscalculate or misunderstand? Whatever the case, I wasn’t the first to get it wrong . . .

- Remember all the books a few years ago about Saddam Hussein and the End Times? (You could get them really cheap right after the Persian Gulf War.)
- Before that it was Gorbachov.
- I also remember that Ronald Wilson Reagan somehow adds up to 666.
- Before that folks were convinced it was Hitler.
- During the Revolutionary War many Americans were convinced that the Antichrist was King George the Third.
- For most of Protestant history, the Pope was thought to be the Antichrist. (It’s a view you don’t hear much at Promise Keepers reconciliation rallies, but folks like John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, John Wesley, and Martin Luther thought it was the Pope. So Luther, for instance, expected the world to end within his century.)
- The church father Hippolytus taught the world would end in 500 A.D.
- People were going nuts around 1000 A.D., even more than in 2000 A.D.
- The Jehovah’s Witnesses have set dates of end times events for 1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1925, 1975, and 1984.
- When I was in high school, The Late Great Planet Earth was the rage. I have another book on my shelf by the same author. It’s entitled The 1980’s: Countdown to Armageddon. It’s full of frightening statistics on the U.S.S.R. and how they fulfill Bible prophecy.
- In 1988 Edgar Whisenant sold over 3 million copies of 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Be in 1988. (Nineteen eighty-eight was one forty-year generation after Israel became a nation in 1948.) But in late December 1988, bookstores were offering substantial discounts.
- In 1989 Whisenant came out with 89 Reasons Christ Could Return in 1989. (People didn’t buy as many that time around.)

The cumulative batting average of all these chronologists throughout history is .000.

A few years ago a fellow named David Koresh taught a class on Revelation. He obviously did some miscalculating, with tragic results.

Did he miscalculate . . . or misunderstand?

An old friend really into End Times prophecy called me a while ago and said something like: “The woman will ride the beast tonight over the skies of Jerusalem!” Well, all things are possible with God . . . except maybe for what He says *isn’t* possible.

In Matthew 24 Jesus says, “Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” Jesus does say we can know seasons, but then He seems to say *now* is the season, so *always* be ready. “Keep your lamps burning, foolish virgins.”

Well, why are we so concerned to get the day and hour?

My old friend sent me one of her prophecy newsletters. It quoted Revelation about famines and earthquakes, and then the rest of the newsletter had to do with canning fruit, food storage, and nutritional concerns during the Tribulation. Is that what Revelation is about? why we’ll be “blessed” if we read it? We’ll get the chronology so we’ll be prepared for the last days with canned goods, secret hideouts, and shotguns?

I’ll tell you what: The last place I want to be when Jesus comes back is sitting on a pile of food in a secret hideout holding a shotgun, while people starve to death in the streets. Maybe some people stockpile food to give it away. I don’t know. But is that why we should read The Revelation?

I’ve read all of the Left Behind series (which has sold a gazillion copies). In those books the great Bible scholar Tsion Ben Judah sits in a safe house unlocking the chronology of Revelation, then printing it on the internet, so that the one billion Tribulation saints can be prepared for the coming woes . . .

and be encouraged by the countdown
to the glorious appearing,
when Jesus will return on a white horse,
and all eyes will see Him.

I enjoy reading the books. But it paints a weird picture, considering that in Revelation 16:15 Jesus says very clearly, “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake”

Vernard Eller asks:

Is it plausible that an author who includes such a statement at two points in his book could be writing the very same book for the purpose of telling us when the day was to come: like, “Jesus wants to come like a thief, but here are the data you need to calculate the time of His coming”?

That’s something to think about. But I’m telling you: I don’t think I ever held the attention of the youth group like I did when I told those teenagers I knew who the Antichrist is and when the world would end!

Teenagers, like most adults, think their world will never end. I remember as a teenager being so fascinated with the subject. I suppose that was for several reasons, but if I'm really honest, there were especially two reasons: Before Jesus came back 1.) I wanted to get a driver's license, and 2.) I wanted to get married so I could experience marital relations. Now I can say, "Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

Yet I'm still the same . . . I want to plan my future. Why? Well, who else will plan it? And besides, it's hard to keep oil in your lamp twenty-four hours a day!

Jesus said, "The Son of man is coming at an unexpected hour." That's rude! If only He would tell us, we could set our lamps down every once in a while! (When you "least expect it, expect it." Then you shouldn't expect it, because you're expecting it, which means you should expect it . . .)

I like to maintain control. So I need to know the when, where, and to whom . . . the chronology.

Well, there are four traditional views about the chronology of The Revelation:

1. Preterist. Preterists believe that all of it already did happen, or at least most of it up until chapter 21. Oh no! Are we "left behind"? Not according to the Preterists. They say all the imagery and events described in Revelation were easily understandable and applicable to the people to whom John the Revelator was writing. It was about them. Most of the critical Bible scholars today hold to this view.
2. Historist. Historists believe that Revelation is an elaborate map of all church history. They're the ones who usually pegged the Pope as the Antichrist. It was a really popular view during the Reformation. Its adherents were folks like Wycliffe, Knox, Tyndale, Zwingli, Melancthon, Calvin, Luther, Isaac Newton, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, Matthew Henry . . . *all* the heavyweights. Hardly anybody ascribes to Historism any more, because they kind of ran out of time. (They had this "day in Revelation equals a year" scheme.) Not only that, but the Pope, for instance, has become a pretty likeable guy.
3. Futurist. Futurists believe that everything in Revelation after the first three chapters refers to events that have not yet come. This is the most popular view today among evangelicals. It's the view of the Left Behind series; it's the view you'll find on the shelf at Wal-Mart, in the National Enquirer, and in the Weekly World News. I don't say that to be derogatory, but because it's culturally the most popular view right now. And movies about bloodthirsty popes with 666 stamped on their heads are just not in vogue. Understandably, the Catholic Church really advocated this Futurist view during the Reformation. Most Protestants shunned it until about 150 years ago. There are different types of Futurists. The most popular today are the Dispensationalists, who argue the Church won't even be around for most of Revelation, because we'll be raptured . . . in which case you won't need canned food and a shotgun! Of course, this view, along with the Historist view, implies that most of the details of Revelation have just about absolutely nothing to do with the people to whom the book was written.

4. Idealist or Spiritualist. Idealists or Spiritualists believe that John didn't intend or believe his message to regard any historical events. Instead it was a visionary expression of timeless truths. This view was popular among the early church fathers. Origen, for instance, taught that the beast with seven heads represented evil and the seven deadly sins.

All that is to say that the precise who, when, and where of Revelation is pretty hard to nail down. But then again, maybe not. Let's read . . .

The Revelation (the word in Greek is "apocolyptus") *of Jesus Christ* . . .

Notice it doesn't say *The Revelation of the Antichrist* or *The Revelation of End Times Chronology*. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* can either mean it was *about* Jesus or it came *through* Jesus. It means both: For "this is the plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:10).

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written therein; for the time is near.

"Blessed are those who read, hear, and keep" (not just a few Bible scholars). In the early church most people were probably illiterate, so they would gather to read and hear *The Revelation* in one sitting. I hope you do that soon: just sit down and read . . . just read. It was written to be read as a whole in worship.

"Blessed are those who hear and keep" . . . That could be us! *Blessed*. Why? "For the time is near." Literally: "The time is at hand." At hand!

"At hand" is a common, Bible expression. Do you know what "at hand" means in the original Greek? It means "at hand." When something is at your hand, it's right there. You can reach out and touch it, grab it, or lay hold of it. Jesus came preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "The time is at hand." Whose hand? I guess whoever reads and hears and takes to heart the prophecy. Wow! They read . . . we read . . . it must mean the time has been *at hand* for 2000 years!

1. For those early Christians in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea—the seven churches to whom the letter of Revelation was written in specific—the time *was* at hand. Well, where was the Antichrist? I don't know, but John tells us in II John 7 that the Antichrist was already in the world. Go read it (or don't you take the Bible literally?).
2. But this also means that for Martin Luther and his Historist friends who read Revelation, the time was at hand. You ask, "Are you saying the Pope was the Antichrist?" No . . . however, according to John, the spirit of the Antichrist is in the world and has been, and "every spirit that does not confess Christ is the Antichrist" (I John 4:2-3). That's wild!

3. But this then also means that for every believer in the future who reads and hears, the time is at hand.
4. And it means for us that if we read and hear, the time is at hand.

I'm not simply being a Spiritualist. I really mean it in space and time.

You ask, "Well, when is Jesus coming?" I know He is coming on a white horse at the end of the age, and "all eyes will see Him." (I wait and wait for that day.) Yet to be entirely literal, taking Scripture at face value, He has come again and again throughout Scripture and in Revelation.

- He may come to the church in Ephesus and remove their lampstand (2:5).
- He may come to Pergamum to war against the Nicolaitans (2:16).
- If Sardis won't wake up, He may come on them like a thief (3:3).
- He said to suffering Philadelphia, "Hold fast . . . I am coming soon" (3:11). Now, did He really mean 1988? Maybe Philadelphia, Pennsylvania? How depressing!
- And He said to those in Laodicea, "If any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him . . ." (3:20). (He comes for each of us.)
- And Jesus told His disciples, "I will come again and will take you to myself" I think Jesus comes to get each of His beloved individually at death. Like He said to that thief on the cross, "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

"The time is at hand." In Greek, "Kairos is at hand." Guy Chevreau writes:

Time is the key word here because in Biblical Greek there are two words for "time": the first is *chronos*; English words like *chronometer* and *chronology* are derived from its root. *Chronos* is clock time, calendar time: 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock; January, February, March . . . all marching right along. The second Greek word, *kairos* is special time. Those who are mothers know the difference between *chronos* and *kairos*. About nine months or so into a pregnancy—*chronos* time—many soon-to-be mothers shake their husband by the shoulder and say . . . "It's time!" He opens a bleary eye, looks at the clock, and says, "It's 3:17 in the morning; go back to sleep!" She's on *kairos* time, he's talking *chronos*. So he gets shaken again: "IT'S TIME!!!" And this time he gets it. "IT'S TIME!!!!"

All reality is now pregnant with "the time," with "eternity."

All *chronos* is pregnant with *kairos*.

All times are pregnant with meaning.

All reality is pregnant with the plot, to those who read and hear in faith in Jesus.

Revelation isn't just about some seven, historical churches in the Preterist past . . . or just some ten-nation confederacy in the future . . . or just some series of events in the Middle Ages

involving the Pope . . . or just some spiritual ideals. I think it's about *all* those things, but it's *especially* about *you*!

The *who* is Jesus and you;
The *where* is here;
The *when* is now.

Their eyes got big in youth group ten years ago, because they thought The Revelation was about *them* and where they were, and that they had met the Antichrist, and Jesus was coming soon.

Well, your eyes should get big too . . . because The Revelation is about you and where you are, and you *have* met the Antichrist, or at least the spirit of the Antichrist . . . and Jesus *is* coming soon. He is here. Eat His body and drink His blood, and the Ancient Dragon rages with fury.

What I'm saying is, "The time is at hand." And it has been at hand for 2000 years. If you say, "I don't get it," that's fine. Believe it in faith.

Time is weird in the Bible . . .

Not only is "a day as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day," Bible time doesn't travel in a straight line sometimes. A lot of Old Testament prophecies, for instance, seem to refer to something in the time of the prophets (like Isaiah). But then we find they also refer to something in the time and life of Jesus . . . multiple fulfillments.

Times show up in different times, kairos in different chronos, qualitative time at different chronological times.

The story of Jesus shows up again and again in Old Testament chronology. In Revelation 13:8 John writes, "The lamb was slain from the foundation of the world." That's Jesus . . . but He was slain in like 30 A.D. outside Jerusalem! How can that be? But it gets weirder . . .

Jesus says, "Before Abraham was, I am." Not "I *was*," but "I *am*." God tells Moses His name is "I am that I am."

In the next verse, Revelation 1:4, John calls the Lord "The one who is and who was and who is to come." And I "have been crucified with Christ," and I am already "seated in the heavenlies" (Ephesians 2:6).

People like us who believe the Word of God know that the distinction between past, present, and future is a stubbornly persistent illusion.

Time is weird in Scripture, and time is weird in physics.

At Niels Bohr's funeral Albert Einstein said, "People like us who believe in physics know the distinction between past, present, and future is a stubbornly persistent illusion."

Physics has demonstrated that time is relative to the speed of light, and that at the speed of light everything is perfectly present . . . complete “am-ness.” Was, is, and is to come are all present. At the speed of light there is no chronology; just eternity.

In the beginning God said, “Let there be light.” He is beyond time, but His eternal kairos is pressing in on our temporal chronos. His light enlightens all men. He entered our time in Jesus, the light of the world, that we might have eternal life. Eternal life is knowing Jesus. And we can know Him *now!*

Now is not in our chronology. As soon as we see it, it’s no longer *now*. (As soon as we say “now,” the “n” is past by the time you say “ow.”) *Now*, the present moment, is when we step out of time, reflect on time, and ask, “Does my time have meaning? Does my chronos have kairos?—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness . . . eternal meaning?”

And Jesus, the light of the world, gives us meaning—logos. Eternity presses in on our temporality. Revelation reveals Jesus, the eternal truth that transforms all time. God’s kairos in all our chronos.

So when you’re surfing the Web alone in your room, and you’re tempted like they were in Thyatira, tempted to sexual immorality, you’ll see the truth: It’s not just biology going on. You’ll see an Ancient Harlot drunk with the blood of the saints, who rides a beast with seven heads. So you call out to the Lamb . . . and you may end up changing Web sites.

When your life is falling apart . . . poverty, suffering, and tears, like the church in Smyrna . . . the Preterist Futurist debate won’t help much. But read about the New Jerusalem and streets of gold and the One on the throne who says, “I make all things new” . . . and that will help.

If they put a knife to your throat saying, “Renounce your faith or die,” like they did in Pergamum, theories of the numeric acuity of the seven bowls won’t help. But have faith in the Rider on the white horse, who is called Faithful and True, and that will make a difference.

Now, I’m not just talking psychology, I’m talking physics, I’m talking about the *real* world—eternal world—invading this one.

This week I received several e-mails from Brett Edwards in our church, who forwarded them from his Australian pastor friend Ian, who has gone to Manado, Indonesia to work with Christian refugees from the island of Maluku. Last year Islamic extremists declared a “Jihad” (holy war) on the Christians on the island of Maluku. Since then over 10,000 men, women, and children have been slaughtered for their faith. Five hundred thousand have fled their homes. Many have been tortured and force-circumcised (men and women).

Ian writes in his e-mail from last week of all the suffering, and then he writes the most amazing thing:

We have heard on several occasions from different sources the story of Jihad warriors attempting to land their boats in order to attack another Christian village. There is a mysterious figure dressed in white with a beard, riding a white horse, who repels the attackers. There is total confusion, and in the confusion a number of Muslims are killed. This is without Christians firing a shot! The Christians did not know this was happening until they started being visited by the military who were looking for an Australian (can you believe that?!) who was fighting for the Christians. They sent out investigative teams to look for this “Australian.” Christians asked them to describe what he looked like and then responded, “That’s not an Australian, that is the Lord Jesus Christ.” Isn’t that cool? And I’ve heard it from enough credible sources to believe it is not an “urban myth.”

The Rider on the white horse went riding last week. And they recognized Him, for they’d read the prophecy and believed “the time is at hand.” “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war” (Revelation 19:11).

And if you say, “Oh, that can’t happen until after the ten-nation confederacy!” *stop it.* Stop trying to control the future. Let the future—eternity—control you. “The time is at hand.”

In fact, the end of your time is as close as your next heartbeat. He’s coming back on the clouds of Heaven at the end of the age . . . or maybe you’ll get hit by a truck on your way home. And behold, the kairos is at your chronos. The time is at hand.

Blessed is the one who reads 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 [at hand].

John, to the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

“On the night that Jesus was betrayed, having given thanks He took the bread and broke it saying, ‘This is my body which is for you.’ In the same way after supper He took the cup and said, ‘This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you.’”

A man held a cup, and a Lamb was slain at the “foundation of the world.” You come to this table in faith, and eternity invades our temporality.

“So, Lord God, ‘May your kingdom come, may your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.’ Amen.”

If you come to this communion table, you are saying publicly, “I trust Jesus the Christ to be my Savior, to be the sacrifice for my sin. And I ask Him to come into me and live with me and be my Lord.” If you do that in faith, it happens. If you say, “I *want* that to happen,” ask, “Help my unbelief.” God says, “Come. I’ll help you.”

If on the other hand you don’t believe, I’m warning you: Don’t come. In Jesus’ name, amen.

[Communion]

If you came to this table in faith,
You belong to Him, and you’re a child of God.

If you came to this table in faith,
Believe He loves you.

If you came to this table in faith,
For the very first time in your life,
You just got saved.

When? At the foundation of the world. Your name was written in the Book of Life before the foundation of the world. Actually, it was when Jesus died on the cross in 33 A.D. It was an eternal moment. He chose you. That’s cool.

“Blessed are you who read the words of the prophecy, and hear, and take to heart.” It doesn’t say, “Blessed are you who *understand*,” because then we’d all be toast. But “Blessed are you who hear and keep it.”

It reminds me of what the angel said to Mary at Christmas: “Mary, blessed are you.” Then the angel told Mary some incredible stuff! Do you think she understood all that? No! But it says she “kept it in her heart.” Did it bear fruit? She gave birth to the Messiah.

Blessed are you who keep the words of the prophecy, for the time is at hand. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Further Reading

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time [kairos] is at hand.

Revelation 1:1-3

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 4:17

And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time [kairos] is at hand.

Revelation 22:10

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man. Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left. Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Matthew 24:36-44

But as to the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When people say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child, and there will be no escape. But you are not in darkness, brethren, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

I Thessalonians 5:1-4

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already.

I John 4:2-3

As we have just pointed out, the prophets had two foci in their prophetic perspective: the events of the present and the immediate future, and the ultimate eschatological event. These two are held in a dynamic tension often without chronological distinction, for the main purpose of prophecy is not to give a program or chart of the future, but to let the light of the eschatological consummation fall on the present (II Pet. 1:19). Thus in Amos' prophecy the impending historical judgment of Israel at the hands of Assyria was called the Day of the Lord (Amos 5:18, 27), and the eschatological salvation of Israel will also occur in that day (9:11). Isaiah pictured the overthrow of Babylon in apocalyptic colors as though it were the end of the world (Isa. 13:1-22). Zephaniah described some (to us) unknown historical visitation as the Day of the Lord which would consume the entire earth and its inhabitants (1:2-18) as though with fire (1:18; 3:8). Joel moved imperceptibly from historical plagues of locust and drought into the eschatological judgments of the Day of the Lord.

George Ladd, *Revelation*

Time is nature's way to keep everything from happening all at once.

Edwin Taylor

"There seems no plan because it is all plan: there seems no center because it is all center. Blessed be He! Yet this seeming also is the end and final cause for which He spreads out Time so long and Heaven so deep . . ."

C. S. Lewis, *Paralandra*

The riddle of the present is the deepest of all the riddles of time. Again, there is no answer except from that which comprises all time and lies beyond it—the eternal. Whenever we say "now" or "today," we stop the flux of time for

us. We accept the present and do not care that it is gone in the moment that we accept it. We live in it and it is renewed for us in every new “present.” This is possible because every moment of time reaches into the eternal. It is the eternal that stops the flux of time for us. It is the eternal “now” which provides for us a temporal “now.” We live so long as “it is still today”—in the words of the letter to the Hebrews. Not everybody, and nobody all the time, is aware of this “eternal now” in the temporal “now.” But sometimes it breaks powerfully into our consciousness and gives us the certainty of the eternal, of a dimension of time which cuts into time and gives us our time.

Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now*

“The humans live in time, but our Enemy [God] destines them to eternity. He therefore, I believe, wants them to attend chiefly to two things, to eternity itself and to that point of time which they call the Present. For the Present is the point at which time touches eternity. Of the present moment, and of it only, humans have an experience analogous to the experience which our Enemy [God] has of reality as a whole; in it alone freedom and actuality are offered them. He would therefore have them continually concerned either with eternity (which means being concerned with Him) or with the Present—either meditating on their eternal union with, or separation from, Himself, or else obeying the present voice of conscience, bearing the present cross, receiving the present grace, giving thanks for the present pleasure.”

C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*

When the sage points to the moon all the idiot sees is the finger.

Anthony Demello

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.

II John 1:7

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

John 8:58