

Apocalypse Now

Revelation 1:1-3

September 10, 2017

#1 in our series "The Gospel According to Jesus: The Revelation"

Peter Hiatt

Message

Twenty-five years ago, at our high school youth group in Danville CA, I introduced a study on the letters to the seven churches in the book of the Revelation. I began talking about how confusing these times are in which we live—hurricanes, wars, and debauchery. I said, "Wouldn't it be great to have a chronology of what will happen in the future; wouldn't it be great to have a map? Then I introduced The Revelation.

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

I then revealed to them the remarkable, numeric acuity so prevalent in the last eleven chapters of the Revelation. On the overhead, we began to fill in the blanks that would reveal 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!

And these kids were smart kids—but they were buying it!)

(It actually scared me. I remember thinking, "*Wow, is it this easy to mislead people? Are we really that desperate for a map?*")

I said, "I just don't know what this name means: Saksuork Mij.

...What if we reversed polarity and I turned the overhead over."

S A K S U O R K M I J

↓
"Reversed Polarity"
↓

J I M K R O U S K A S

All at once, it became clear. The name was not Saksuork Mij; it was Jim Krouskas! And 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 off five or six heavy metal rock and roll T-shirts until Jim was standing in front of 150 confused high schoolers. He was standing there bare-chested. But Jim’s chest wasn’t really bare . . . it was covered with thick, black, curly, Greek hair.

I yelled to Matt Skinner, our high school director, “Let’s look for the mark!” (I’d seen the movie *The Omen*.) And fortunately, we just happened to have an electric hair trimmer plugged into the wall behind Jim.

As Jim struggled, and staff members held him fast, we began shaving off Jim’s chest hair . . . and sure enough, right there on the left side of his chest was a huge, black number 6. It had been hidden by all his chest hair. We gasped and shaved more, from the left to the right, revealing another number 6 . . . I said, “Oh, Jim, I’m so disappointed... how will I explain to the parents that we hired the antichrist to be our new intern?” Then we shaved the other side of Jim’s chest, revealing the number . . . 5. I looked twice . . . 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 entirely misunderstand?

Whatever the case, I wasn’t the first to get it wrong . . .

Remember a couple of years ago—all the hubbub from John Hagee about the blood moons, the imminent return of Christ and how sometimes Barak Obama looked kinda like the antichrist?

[Image of Obama pictured as the Antichrist with a pitchfork]

A couple decades ago, there were a slough of books about Saddam Hussein and the End Times? You could get them really cheap right after the 2nd Persian Gulf War.

[Image of the book *The Rise of Babylon* by Charles H. Dyer]

Before that, it was Gorbachov. It’s that freaky birthmark!

[Image of Gorbachov and his “freaky” birth mark]

I also remember that the name Ronald Wilson Reagan somehow adds up to 666. His address was even 666.

[Image of Ronald Regan and his street address]

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. (Folks like John Calvin, John Wesley, and Martin Luther all 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 they did 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*. (1988 was one forty-year generation after Israel became a nation in 1948.) By late December 1988 book sales had dropped.

In 1989 Whisenant came out with *89 Reasons Christ Could Return in 1989*. (People didn't buy as many that time around.)

Pat Robertson has predicted the end of the world a few times. April 29th 2007 was his last prediction.

The cumulative batting average of all these chronologists throughout history appears to be about 0.000.

A couple of decades ago, a fellow named David Koresh taught a class on the Revelation—he obviously did some miscalculating, with tragic results . . . including eighty dead Branch Davidians in Waco Texas.

Did he miscalculate . . . or entirely misunderstand?

An old friend really into End Times prophecy called me one day 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.

Acts 1:7 The resurrected Jesus says, "*It's not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.*"

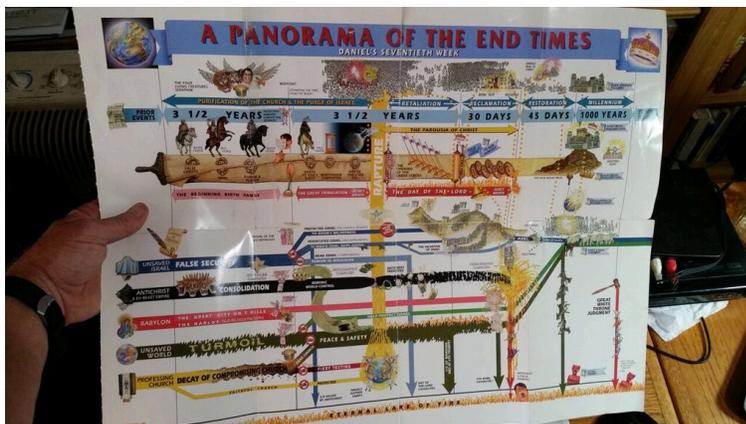
In Matthew 24 Jesus says, “Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” Jesus does say something about discerning seasons just before that, but then He seems to say “Now is the season, so always be ready.” “Keep your lamps burning, foolish virgins.”

Why are we so concerned to get the day and the hour?

My old friend sent me one of her prophecy newsletters. It quoted the 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?

Is it a map?



This is a map, that came in a book that someone gave me. It's a map of space and time during the end times, supposedly based on the Revelation.

Actually, you could make a good argument that the modern nation state of Israel, along with 9-11, and a whole bunch of wars in the Middle East, wouldn't even have happened except that some folks in the 19th century made this map and figured that Israel needed to exist in order for Jesus to come back, so we could all get raptured before the world annihilated itself in war . . .

Well . . . that's a long story . . .

But, is that what the Revelation is about? manipulating global politics or sitting on a stash of food, holding a shotgun to protect yourself from starving people or maybe getting yourself raptured so you won't have to suffer tribulation . . . like Jesus, who said, “In this world you will have tribulation”?

In the *Left Behind* series, the great post rapture Jewish Bible scholar Tsion Ben Judah sits in a safe house unlocking the chronology of the Revelation, then printing it on the internet so that the

one billion tribulation saints can be prepared for the coming woes . . . and be prepared for the glorious appearing—when Jesus will return on a white horse, and all eyes will see Him.

I think I read most of those *Left Behind* books. They're definitely engaging, but they paint a really weird picture, considering that in Revelation 6:10 the Martyrs cry "*How long oh Lord?*" . . . Stupid martyrs. If they just read the *Left Behind* books they'd know exactly how long.

In Rev. 16:15 Jesus says very clearly, "*Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake . . .*"

Vernard Eller writes:

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 was and when the world would end!

And I'm just like them . . . I want to plan my future.

Cause . . . if I don't, who will?

And besides, it's hard to keep oil in your lamp twenty-four hours a day!

I like control and so I need knowledge, in order to protect myself to save my life...

I need to know when, where, and to whom . . . I want a chronology.

I want the map.

Clip 1 from *Time Bandits*.

Six dwarfs are in a bedroom. They are running from a large looming light and as they run the room seemingly lengthens. They cry out: "He's found us! He's found us!" A little boy (Kevin) looks back and forth and then follows the little men running from the bright light. He asks, "Who is that?"

The large light takes on the shape of a face and says, "Return what you have stolen from me. Return. Return the map. It will bring you great danger. Stop now." The dwarfs and the boy continue to run further and further from the light.

The room keeps extending as they run. Finally, the room stops extending, a wall falls away, and the dwarfs and Kevin fall down, down, down into darkness.

That's Kevin and the six dwarfs in the movie *Time Bandits*. They're running from the Supreme Being because they stole the map to space and time. The Supreme Being says, "*Stop now, it will bring you great danger.*"

That reminds me of what God said to Adam and Eve, “*The day you eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will die.*” I bet they were looking for the map. I think we’d all like the map . . .

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

1. Preterist. Preterists believe that most of it happened in 70 AD or before . . . So . . . *Holy Moly!* Are we “left behind”?

No. 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 sent the vision. It was about them and not a “rapture” two-thousand years later. Most critical Bible scholars today hold to this view.

And it does seem awfully clear to me, having carefully examined the texts, that when Jesus said the stuff about discerning seasons, and when he said, “*this generation will not pass away until all these things take place,*” He was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD—one generation after His ministry.

It was right after He said those things about seasons that He went on to say, “*But of that day and that hour, no one knows.*”

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 very 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.

Very few ascribe to Historism anymore: some had this “day in the Revelation equals a year” scheme, and ran out of time. But even worse for Historism: the Pope has turned into a pretty nice guy.

3. Futurist. Futurists believe that everything in Revelation after the first three chapters refers to events that will happen in the future.

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 most Hollywood movies... See?

It makes for great Science Fiction and historical movies about bloodthirsty popes with 666 stamped on their head are just not in vogue.

Understandably, the Catholic Church really advocated this Futurist view during the Reformation. Most Protestants shunned the view 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.

Of course, this view (along with the Historist view) implies that most of the Revelation has nothing to do with the people to whom the book was first sent . . . or even to the followers of Christ who get raptured in Chapter 4.

4. Idealist or Spiritualist. Idealists or Spiritualists argue that John didn't intend or believe that his book had anything to do with particular historical events but that, instead, it is a visionary expression of timeless truths. This view was popular among the early church fathers.

All that, 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 . . .

Revelation 1:1 "*The Revelation...*" [the word in Greek is *apocolupsis* (It's where we get our English word: Apocalypse.) Apocalypse literally means "unveiling."

[*apo*—"out of" + *kalupto*—"hide, cover, veil"]

Revelation 1:1 "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ...*"

Notice it doesn't say, "*The Revelation of the antichrist*" or "*The Revelation of the map of the End Times.*" But: "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*"—that's probably meant to be the title of the book.

It can mean that Jesus is the one doing the unveiling.
Or even better, Jesus is the one that's being unveiled.

It must mean both:

- Jesus is the Word of God that reveals everything.
- And the Word of God through whom all is created and sustained.
He's the thing behind everything else.

Revelation 1:1-3

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. 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 the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time [kairos] is near [eggus, "at hand"].

"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 . . . and hear!

"Blessed are those who hear and keep" . . . That could be us!

"Blessed" . . . Why? "For the time is near." Literally: "The time is at hand." *Eggus* is the adverb; *eggizo* is the verb; both from *agkale*, which means the crook of the arm.

In the King James Version “The time is at hand.” It means at hand. It’s something you can reach out and grab with your arm. 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. 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 sent—the time *was* at hand. Well, where was the antichrist? I don’t know, but John tells us in 2 John 7 that the antichrist was already in the world.

2. But now, this also means that for Martin Luther (and his Historist friends who read Revelation) the time *was* at hand.

“Am I saying that the Pope was the antichrist?” No, not necessarily . . . however, according to John, the spirit of the antichrist is in the world and has been, and “every spirit that does not confess Jesus (which means “God is Salvation) is the antichrist” (1 John 4:2-3).

That’s wild because maybe you’ve met the antichrist; it means imitation Christ. The time is at hand.

3. And check this out: For every believer in the future who reads and hears, the time is at hand.

4. And it means for us right now, that if we read and hear, the time is at hand. And I’m not just talking metaphorically. The Time, the Kingdom, and the End, really is at hand... in space and time—our time.

You might ask, “So, 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?’” Yes! You will see that! But if I take Scripture seriously, I have to acknowledge that . . .

- Jesus has come—again and again— throughout Scripture and in the 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). Do you think He meant 1988? Maybe Philadelphia, Pennsylvania? How depressing for the suffering saints in ancient Philadelphia!
- 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...).
- He 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.*”
- In Matt. 26, to the religious leaders, Jesus declares, “*From now on you will see the Son of Man... coming on the clouds of heaven.*”

Revelation 3:3, we read: “The time—*kairos*—is at hand:”
It is like Jesus “was, is, and is to come.”

Not *chronos*, but *kairos*...

...in Biblical Greek there are two words for “time” (writes Guy Chevreau): 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 *Logos*, the meaning, the plot.

The Revelation isn’t just about seven little churches in the Preterist past . . .
Or just some series of events in the Middle Ages involving the Pope . . .
Or just some ten-nation European Confederacy in the future . . .
Or just some spiritual ideals...
Actually, I think it may be about *all* those things,
But no matter what it’s about *you!*

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

Their eyes got big in youth group twenty-five years ago, because they thought the Revelation was about *them*, *when* and *where* they were, for the time was at hand, and Jesus was coming soon. I guarantee that it will be within one generation—one lifetime.

Well, your eyes should get big too because The Revelation is about you and when and where you are. The time is at hand, and Jesus is coming soon.
Jesus is coming, but you don’t need a map . . . you need a revelation—an apocalypse!

If you think Jesus is a thief, of course, you want a map because you have to protect yourself from thieves. But Jesus didn’t say “I am a thief.” He said, “I’m coming *like* a thief... Keep your lamps burning all you virgins... don’t be foolish be wise.”

See? Maybe wisdom isn’t a map. Maybe Wisdom is a Person or hope in a Person. Maybe what we need to know is not when it is that He’s coming...but just who it is, that is coming. Maybe we don’t need the revelation of a map, but the revelation of Jesus—who is not a thief, but the lover, and owner, of your soul. He can’t steal it. It belongs to Him.

Whatever the case, “The time is at hand.” The time is at hand, and it has been at hand for 2000 years. You might say, “Well the Revelation sure seems like a map!” Does it... really? When

was the last time you read it—or did you just see the movie? You may say, “Well, it seems that a lot of bad stuff will happen. Have you watched the news? Bad stuff *is* happening. If it *is* a map, it’s a really weird map.

You know the stars fall, and the sky rolls up, in chapter 6—that’s one-quarter of the way to the end of the book. “The End” comes several times throughout the book. Time is weird in the Revelation . . . and 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 always seem to travel in a straight line.

Many Old Testament prophecies, seem to refer to something in the time of the prophets, but also refer to events in the time and life of Jesus . . . They’re like timeless realities, but not irrelevant to our time—but touching time in many places and times at once . . .

In Revelation 12, we read about Christmas and the ascension of Christ
In Revelation 13:8 John writes, “*The lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.*” That’s way before Christmas or 30 AD.

In John’s Gospel Jesus says, “*Before Abraham was, I am.*” Not “*I was,*” but “*I am.*” God tells Moses His name is “*I am that I am.*” Rev. 1:8, 21:6, and 22:13, Jesus says just what God Almighty says,

“*I am . . . the alpha and the omega...*”

That’s “*the beginning and the end, the one who is, was, and is to come.*”

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

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.” Even 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 in an eternal Now.

At the speed of light there is no *chronology*; just eternity—a *kairology*, if you will.

“God is Light” and in the beginning, God said, “*Let there be light.*” He is beyond time, but His eternal *kairos* is pressing in on our temporal *chronos*. “*He is the light that enlightens all men,*” writes John.

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 observe it, it’s no longer *now*. Now is the point eternity touches time. *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, which is Himself.

The Revelation reveals Jesus, the eternal Way, Truth, and Life that transforms all our time.

So when you're tempted to cheat on your wife or chase after fame and fortune like we do in America, and like they did in the city of Thyatira, you might see reality as it truly is. You just might see an ancient harlot drunk with the blood of the saints . . . And you'll see a slaughtered lamb standing on a throne and you'll call out, "Help me, Jesus. I need you Jesus"—not instructions: "I need *you*."

Or 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, streets of gold, and the One on the throne who says, "I make all things new" . . . and that might help. Hope might help. He might 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 faith in the Rider on the white horse, who is called Faithful and True, who died and lives forevermore . . . that might make a difference.

And now, I'm not just talking psychology, I'm talking physics, I'm talking about the *real* world—eternal world—invading this one. Seventeen years ago, I preached through the Revelation for the first time wondering if any of it would be relevant.

During that time, planes flew into the world trade center and the towers fell. God didn't hate the people in the towers, but the towers represented world trade, which the revelation seems to describe as a great harlot, who is loved by the kings of the earth for her pleasures, and yet deeply resented for her power.

When it happened I could almost see the Great Harlot who rides the beast, and the Kings of the Earth who fornicate with her, and almost hear the angel crying, "Come out of her my people."

The next day, we had a service at church and preached the Word. After the service a friend wrote to me asking, "Did you see him? I kept seeing a rider on a white horse. He was riding in our little congregation"—riding as we sang and prayed.

During that time, One woman saw a Giant Eagle like the one in Revelation 12, it was screeching at us and saying, "My banner over you is love."

During that time, I spent countless hours praying for a woman who had been bought and sold as a harlot, but Jesus revealed to be His Bride.

One morning during that time, my wife had a vision of a lake of fire that turned into a sea of glass and produced a woman made of solid gold.

I don't think any of those things were meant to be a prediction of the date of Jesus' return. But I think all of those things were part of the revelation of Jesus, that Jesus is here, the time is at hand, and Jesus wins.

When Bernard Travaieille was a young seminarian he used to play basketball with other seminarians at a nearby public school after class. The janitor was an elderly black man with white hair, who would patiently wait for them to finish their game before he'd clean up the gymnasium. Invariably he would read his Bible as he waited.

One day Bernard inquired of the man, asking, "What are you reading?"

The old man didn't simply respond, "The Bible."

Instead, he answered, "The Book of Revelation."

A little surprised, Bernard replied, "The Book of Revelation? Do you understand it?"

"Oh yes," the man assured him. "I understand it."

"You understand the Book of Revelation! What does it mean?"

Very quietly that old janitor answered, "It means that my Jesus is gonna win."

It means Jesus is gonna win, has won, and is always winning. Jesus is the Word of God who creates and sustains all things. God in Christ Jesus is in absolute control...

He even lets us steal the map and make a mess of things.

He even lets us take the fruit from the tree, just so we could see how insanely good He truly is.

In the movie *Time Bandits*, they steal the map, but can't follow the map, and so make everything a mess ending up in the pit controlled by satan.

The Supreme Being appears, destroys evil, turns death into life and tells them about the map.

Clip 2 from *Time Bandits*

[A frightening being appears before the dwarfs. He looks angry and about to do something awful. The dwarfs cower in fear. A bright light flashes and he appears to explode and disappear. Only a statue is left behind. Then bright shining light with a face suddenly appears. The dwarfs back up quickly looking for a way out. One cries out, "Oh no! He found us." The dwarfs struggle trying to decide what to do but recognizing there's no way out they bow. The light continues to approach them and then morphs into a man.]

Supreme Being: *Oh! I hate having to appear like that; it really is the most tiresome, noisy manifestation. So, rather what I would've expected of one I suppose.*

Dwarf 1: *Oh great one. Oh supreme being. Oh creator of all the universe without whom we'd be naught but scowered beatles...*

Supreme Being: (Interrupting) *Oh dreadful... Dead? No excuse for laying off work.* [The Supreme Being raises a dwarf from the dead.]

Dwarf 1: *I'd like to explain something. We didn't mean to steal the map. We didn't mean to run away.*

Supreme Being: *What do you mean you didn't mean to steal the map?*

Dwarf 1: *It just . . . sort of . . .*

Supreme Being: *Well, of course you didn't mean to steal it. I gave it to you; you silly man.*

Dwarf 2: *Do you mean you knew what was happening to us all the time?*

Supreme Being: *Well of course. I am the Supreme Being. I'm not entirely dim.*

Dwarf 1: *Oh no sir. We weren't suggesting that sir. It's just . . .*

Supreme Being: *I let you borrow my map.* [The Supreme Being takes the map out of the hands of the dwarf and shakes the dust off of it.] *Now, I want every bit of evil put in here.* [The Supreme Being points to a red mailbox.] *Right away.* [The dwarfs haul away the large red mailbox filled with evil.] *Come on then, back to creation. We must not waste any time. They'll think I've lost control again and put it all down to evolution.*

I love that movie. Even stealing the map was part of the plan. Even taking fruit from the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, was part of God's plan to reveal the glory of the tree of life, and the One who is Life, and who hangs on the tree for the love of you. Even sin, especially sin, is used to reveal the wonder of God's Grace.

When God finally reveals Himself, He's not an elderly English Gentleman, He's the Lamb who is slain for the sin of the world from the foundation of the World. He's Jesus the Christ and Him crucified. And everything has happened, that everyone would see Him and fall in love with Him—that is have faith, hope, and love in and through Him. That's what God is creating now—His heart beating in you.

And you, believer, you know Him—even now.

You know that He's not a thief—we're the thieves.

You know Him, even now . . .that's the Good News.

Not that you have a map. You have Jesus, and Jesus has you.

The way is not a map that belongs to you. The way is Jesus, and you belong to Him.

Two weeks ago, Susan and I moved my, soon to be ninety-year-old, mother to New Mexico to live with my sister Lydia. The weeks before the move were pretty stressful for Mom: She got scammed by a con artist. She was preparing to leave the home she'd lived in for twenty years—the last thirteen years by herself—and on top of everything else, she gets tons of junk mail from Christian organizations wanting her to give money to their cause because they say the end is coming and she should be stressed!

One night she called me (or I called her)—I can't remember—but she was in a terrible panic. I asked what she was worried about. And she gave me a litany of troubles, mostly to do with the world scene, the liberals, and the Muslims, and the earthquakes, hurricanes and all sorts of storms—political, ethical, and social... and then she said, "It's so bad. Peter don't you think it's the end times?"

And I said, "Well Mom, you lived through the depression, World War II, the Nazi's, the Cold War, segregation . . . I mean, dang, that was pretty bad . . . at least as bad as anything today . . . so I don't know... But Mom, so what if it's the end times? You are 89, almost 90... It *is* the End Times. How long do you expect to live? It's the end times... but Mom, that's not bad news it's the Good News."

"Mom you know that Jesus is in total control of this whole thing—You know that."

"But more than know that, You know Him. And soon you'll see Him."

"You'll see him... and Mom you know Him..."

"Mom you know, that you love Him and you know that He loves you..."

"And you know Dad is already with Him, and soon we'll all be with Him."

"Mom, wouldn't it be great if this actually were the end times?"

"I don't know if it is... but wouldn't it be great if it was?"

"Wouldn't it be great if it was the time of the end because Jesus, our Jesus, is the End."

She was quiet for a moment... and then she said, "Oh Peter, that's right! Thanks so much for reminding me. I needed that. Goodbye."

Revelation Chapter One, verse One: "*The Revelation of Jesus*"

Literally "*The Apocalypse (the unveiling) of Jesus*"

This is the Apocalypse Now [Peter walks over to the communion table and removes a sheet that was covering up the communion bread and wine.] You expected that, didn't you?

Communion

On the night that the Way was betrayed, He took bread and broke it saying this is my body given to you; take and eat and do this in remembrance of me. And in the same way, after supper, He took the cup and said this is the covenant in my blood. Drink of it all of you and do it in remembrance of me. In the morning he took the cup saying, "This is the covenant in my blood shed for the forgiveness of sins, drink of it all of you." In the morning, as He hung on the tree, His flesh ripped and He delivered up His spirit. Scripture says that as His flesh ripped, the veil in the temple separating the glory of God from the eyes of men also ripped—from the top to

the bottom. It was the unveiling. It was the Apocalypse . . . And [Peter points to the communion table] this is the Apocalypse now.

Never run from the End. Always run *to* the End, for the End is Jesus.
Blessed are you, who hear it and keep it.

Prayer

Lord God, open the eyes of our hearts that we would see you, that we would see what is true and adore you even now. Thank you that we just did that during communion and so we say what you tell us to say at the end of The Revelation and that is “Come Lord Jesus. Come Lord Jesus.” Forgive us Lord Jesus for being afraid of your coming. We invite your coming. It’s in your name we pray, Amen.

Benediction

If there was ever an apocalyptic fervor in the history of the world it would’ve been during the time that Jesus came. The Jews were really worked up about the end of the world and the coming of the Messiah. They were waiting for a king to deliver them from the oppression of Rome. And Jesus came. Do you remember what He said? He came preaching: “Repent! The Kingdom of God is at hand.”

I used to think that repent meant: “Try HARDER!” But that’s not what it means. It means: “Have a new mind. Have a new way of thinking.” Repent. The Kingdom of Heaven is *at hand*. Everyone was at war and blaming each other, and He said, “Repent the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” That’s my prayer for us—that we would come to believe the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and we would cry out: “Come Lord Jesus. Come.”

In His name, believe the Gospel.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.