

The purpose of The Unveiling

We must never forget the purpose of the book of Revelation that is found in the book's first five words:

"The Unveiling of Jesus Christ, which God gives to Him, to show to His slaves what must occur swiftly."

The events of this book will unveil Jesus Christ to an unbelieving world. Read the book and see what it's going to take. A momentous shock must come, otherwise, no one awakes.

In His wrath, God remembers mercy. His motivation is love. The time of the harshest of God's judgments is 3 1/2 years; 3 1/2 years to purge

OW.

the world of crippling self-confidence. The payoff: 1000 years of bliss.

We are no strangers to this process. Often, we are asleep to some vast truth. It cripples our life, though we know it not. We pray, always, for revelation—but we must be careful what we pray for. God loves us and hears our prayer and sends a terrible trial to open our eyes. The trial unveils the truth about ourselves, about God, and about others. The purpose is to bless, not curse. And this is what happens.

Eventually.

God so loved the world.

But see what it takes for the world to realize it.

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

The book of Revelation; literal or figurative?

Many consider the book of Revelation the most confusing book they've ever read. The cause of this confusion, I believe, has been writers and commentators who have forced a figurative meaning on nearly every single part of it.

There is a law of scriptural interpretation that reads: "Literal if possible." This is not only a fundamental law when interpreting scripture, but when reading any other form of literature. Only when the literal is clearly impossible should we look for a figurative meaning.

Almost all writers and commentators start off on the wrong foot. Here are the first two verses of the Unveiling of Jesus Christ, that is, the book of Revelation:

"The Unveiling of Jesus Christ, which God gives to Him, to show to His slaves what must occur swiftly; and He signifies it, dispatching through His messenger to His slave John, who testifies to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatever he perceived."

The word that sends most commentators off course is "signifies." It is almost universally pointed out that, since the root of "signify" is



"sign," then the word must mean, "to make known by signs or symbols." If that's the case, then the book contains not a single literal element; it's all signs and figures. But if Revelation is all signs and figures, meaning becomes subjective. Everyone reading—even so-called experts—has a different opinion, a different slant, a different view. The result: a colorful but mystifying puzzle; THE OPPOSITE OF REVELATION.

But what if the word "signifies" does not, in either scriptural or common English usage, mean, "to make known by signs?" Putting aside common English usage for the moment,

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DO NOT EXPLAIN GOD'S EXPLANATIONS!

God's explanations of figures are literal



The figure
(not literal)

God's explanation
(literal)

Seven lampstands = Seven ecclesias

The faithless woman = A city: Babylon

Four horsemen = Conquest, wars, famine, pestilence

...literal or figurative?

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let's agree that scriptural usage is the only way to safely define a word *the way the writers understood it*, and therefore, the way God meant it. Is there another place in Scripture where this word "signifies" occurs? Thankfully, there is.

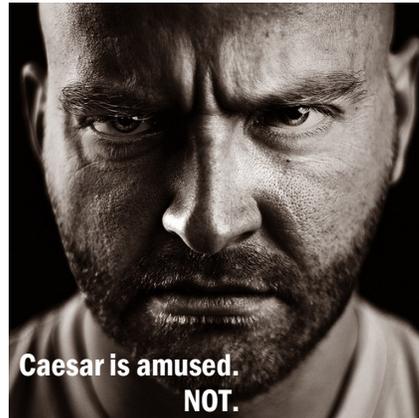
Acts 25:26-27. Festus to King Agrippa concerning Paul, a prisoner of Rome:

"Wherefore I led him before you, and especially before you, king Agrippa, so that, the examination occurring, I should have something to write. For it seems to me irrational, sending a prisoner, not also to signify the charges against him."

Festus planned to detail Paul's charges to Caesar by means of a letter. The only "signs" involved here would be the letters of the alphabet. The common meaning of the word signify is, "to make known," and the word in this context in Acts fits that definition perfectly. Even our dictionary defines signify as: "To make known."

Can you imagine Festus writing Caesar with a puzzle to decipher? Imagine him drawing pictures, or inventing word games, and telling Caesar: "I am not going to make known to you, specifically, what Paul's charges are, dear Emperor—for what fun would that be? Try my little word game! See if you can interpret my hand-drawn pictures! I want you to *guess* what the charges may be against this man!"

I don't really think Caesar was the enigma-loving, "signs" type. And neither do I think that Festus was so stupid to have mystified the emperor with signs.



Caesar is amused.
NOT.

Another sure way to know that this book is more than unending signs is: *it contains signs*. Three distinct signs are called so by name:

- ▶ the woman clothed in the sun (12:1)
- ▶ the dragon (12:3)
- ▶ the seven messengers (15:1)

There are many figures of speech in the Unveiling, and three signs. *They all mean something*. In the three signs above, we should not look for a literal woman, a literal dragon, or seven literal messengers; these are what *John* saw; the signs are figures. But the things that the figures represent are literal, and *are* meant to be looked for. *The explanations of figures are always literal*. This is how God writes.

Without knowing this, there can be no revelation, for you, in the book of Revelation. ■

Swiftly, not shortly

ANOTHER KEY LOST AT AN IMPORTANT DOOR

Talk about losing an important key early on. The King James rendering of Revelation 1:1 has caused countless writers and commentators to somehow imagine (and the following is difficult to imagine, even if you do drop the key), that the events of Revelation are all in the past.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass..."

Instead of "must shortly come to pass," the Concordant Literal New Testament has, "must occur swiftly." What a difference. The King James rendering of the Greek *tacheos* suggests that the events described by John would follow soon after they were written. But rather than conveying the proximity of the events, John meant to communicate the swift completion of the events, *once they commenced*. This is why he used the Greek word for "swiftness," which was *tacheos*. There is another Greek word that answers to the idea of "soon," and that



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What a Revelation!

THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS OF REVELATION 1-3 ARE LITERAL

"And, turning about, I perceived seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like a son of mankind...And He has in His right hand seven stars...And He places His right hand on me, saying..."the seven stars are messengers of the seven ecclesias, and the seven lampstands are seven ecclesias" (Rev. 1:12-13; 17, 20).

Complicated? Not when you follow the laws of language. But isn't following the laws of language unspiritual? No. Guessing and making things up (such as saying that the ecclesias are lengthy church ages) is unspiritual. Believing what God has said is the most spiritual thing one can do.

John actually saw seven lampstands. As part of a vision, the lampstands did not literally exist at the time; rather, they represented something literal that would occur. "The seven lampstands are seven ecclesias." *God's explanation of the lampstands is literal*. Period. Prior to the Lord's Day, there will be seven ecclesias at the locations specified. If you doubt that, then you doubt God. Good luck.

God never uses figures to define figures. If God abused language in such a way, He would have left us with no foundation for belief.

Q&A

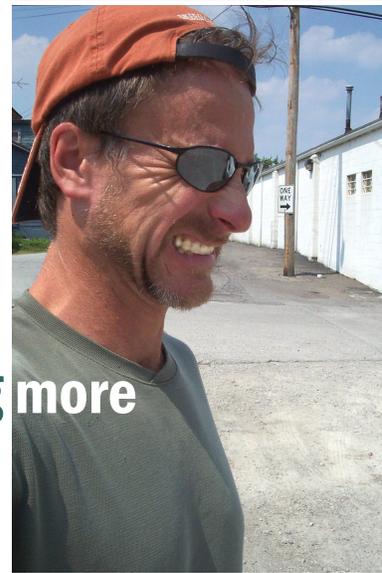
Doesn't Babylon represent the apostate church?

First and foremost, no. First and foremost, Babylon will be the financial capital of the next world empire. Even now, the U.S. has a significant military base there, "Camp Alpha." This is only the beginning. Babylon was the literal capital of the first three world empires. If Babylon is literal elsewhere, why not here? In the Unveiling, the figure of a woman represents the city. Remember: *Do not explain God's explanations*. The woman is figurative; the city it literal. As long as you treat Babylon—first and foremost—as the literal capital of the coming world empire, apply all the allegories you want.

Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.

“Spiritualizers” find allegories—nothing more



The literal Word of God is just not spiritual enough for some people. Some people have to find, “secret, spiritual meanings.” This can be a rewarding hobby; I used to do it myself.

All eleven people who used to receive my very first newsletter years ago couldn’t wait to hear what unique insight I would come up with next. Here’s how I usually did it: I’d look up a word in a concordance, find the root meaning, think of an application based on that meaning, and then announce my finding as “a spiritual interpretation.”

For instance, let’s say I wasn’t satisfied with the revelation in Revelation 21:1, of “a new heaven and a new earth.” That sounds quite spiritual as it stands, true, but it wasn’t spiritual enough for *me*. In some circles, it is considered unsophisticated to take any verse at face value. Anyone can do that; it’s ordinary. Spiritual people do the extra-ordinary.

word is *ouranos*, and the elements are SEE-UP. If my body is the earth, then couldn’t my mind be construed as my body’s “heaven?” Why not? The mind is “up” on top of the body. Isn’t it?

And so God was not *really* going to create a literal new heaven and a literal new earth. That revelation was *too* literal; too simple; too ordinary; too available to the natural mind. I pontificated, rather, that God was creating a new body and a new mind for His saints. And because my “revelation” *wasn’t* literal, it was automatically accepted as spiritual. (As if literal is the opposite of spiritual; rather, “soulish” is.)

Little did I know that I was merely finding allegories in God’s multifaceted Word. Is that a bad thing? It’s not of itself. What *is* bad is assuming that by uncovering allegories, one is somehow operating on a higher spiritual plane. And this isn’t so hot, either: assuming that the literal Word itself is not spiritual. ■

NAN & FRAN by Martin Zender



The problem with literal interpretation was that it relied too much on “the natural mind.” The cure for this was to think unnaturally.

So I would look up “earth” and discover that it meant, “earth.” Such a finding would discourage me, but I’d persevere. Wasn’t the human body composed of the same elements of earth? Sure! So I’d say that the “new earth” of this passage was actually my new body. What about heaven? The Greek

...swiftly (continued from page 2)

word is *eutheos*, which the CLNT renders, “immediately.” John had this word at his disposal, but did not use it.

The best example of the word *tacheos* in action occurs in John 20:3-4. Here, Peter races John to the tomb of Jesus on resurrection morning:

“Peter, then, and the other disciple came out, and they came to the tomb. Now the two raced alike, and the other disciple runs more swiftly (*tacheos*) before Peter and came first to the tomb.”

It should be noted that one disciple did not start for the tomb before the other, or immediately after, for “the two raced alike.” One disciple simply ran more swiftly than the other. I mention this because we are considering the speed of *execution*, rather than the speed of who started when. And neither do we know whether or not Peter or John began racing immediately after they heard the news; that is not the burden of the Greek word *tacheos*.



I praise God for putting these simple stories in the scriptures. They enable us to take the obvious meaning of a word from a readily-understood story, and transfer it to the more complex theological debate. At least, this is what we’re *supposed* to do. ■