

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, November 1, 2020

“... deiknuo autos doulos hos dei en ginomai” (Apokalupsis 1:1c)

[dike-noo'-o aw-tos' doo'-los hos die en ghin'-om-ahee (Ap-ok-al'-oop-sis 1:1)]

“to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;” (Revelation 1:1c)

At the close of my last sermon on the subject, I mentioned that the last great thing that I see must come from the examination of Daniel’s visions was understanding the timeline within those visions. As I continue to examine that question as supported by the words of other prophets, apostles, and Christ himself, it has become clear to me that some things regarding the coming Day of the Lord are not yet to be shown – at least not to me. I will complete my work in framing those matters as best as they may be known by me at present, and present that work for this body’s edification.

But things are ordered in this body, as our great King and Husband would have it at this hour, such that time will not allow for that to be completed at present. Thus, I will turn aside for this sermon to what is necessary in more closely examining the Book of Revelation; a work that was prepared and performed for our fellow servant John when he was imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos. If you ever have opportunity to do so, a great deal of light can be obtained – though it may be found lacking in some respects when compared to what the Lord has shown us in this generation – by reading the work by Joseph Seiss called *“The Apocalypse”*. I have it in electronic format, if that is preferable to anyone, and will share it freely. His opening words echo my own experience with this subject generally, and the book of The Revelation specifically, so I want to share them here for consideration:

“It has been upon my mind, and in my heart, for a long time, to deliver a series of special discourses upon this remarkable portion of the Holy Scriptures; not from a conceit of superior wisdom or spiritual gifts; — not with the vain ambition of making all mysteries plain, — nor yet out of mere curious desire to pry into the things of the future; but out of solemn reverence for all that God has caused to be written for our learning, with a view conscientiously to declare the whole counsel of God, and with an earnest desire to secure for myself and those who hear me that special benediction which is pronounced upon them that read, hear, and keep what is written in this prophecy [Revelation 1:3]. ... I am also very sure, as God has promised his Spirit to them that ask him, and directed those who lack wisdom to seek for it at his hands, and pronounced all inspired writings to be “for our learning” and comfort, that it will be profitable for all of us, in humble dependence upon Divine grace and guidance, carefully to review what this book was meant to teach.” So, with those thoughts, let us take up the first verse of the book where we last left it.

In two previous sermons, I have examined the first ten words in opening the Book of Revelation ... five words were considered in each of the sermonsⁱ. Today’s work will be to consider the next clause in the opening verse, as quoted above in the Greek as well as the English translation. I opened it

with the Greek words, because the best presentation of this clause is to consider it through an in-depth analysis of the Greek.

“to shew”

This word, “*deiknuo*”, is used 29 times in the New Testament. It is presented as literally “*to ... expose to the eyes*” or metaphorically “*to give evidence or proof of a thing ... to show by words or teach*”. You get the flavor of the meaning when you read the words of Philip speaking to Christ saying “***Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us***” (John 14:8), about which Dr. Gill offers these words. “*it was a corporeal sight of him he asked for; such a sight of the glory of God as Moses desired, and the elders of Israel had at Mount Sinai; and signifies, that if this could be obtained, it would give them full satisfaction:*” As I have read the remarkable reports in Scripture about the things brought to the vision of our spiritual forefathers, I have often wondered (and remarked) about how profound an experience it would be to see with these weak, human eyes such amazing things reflecting the immediate presence of God or His power in the physical world. How life- and spirit-sustaining would it have been for Elisha to witness the mighty army of angels coming to take Elijah? How incredible an experience for Joshua (Joshua 5:16) or Gideon (Judges 6:11-12) to behold the Angel of the Lord ... or even for the sight of the Sun moving in reverse to confirm the promise to King Hezekiah that God would add fifteen years to his life (Isaiah 38:8)?

“And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.” (Luke 4:5)

In another expression of this Greek word we see how Satan does, hoping vainly to take advantage of Christ’s presence in his human body. Christ, it is said, “***was in all points tempted like as we are***” (Hebrews 4:15), including being offered what humans naturally find themselves craving above all other things ... power and riches in the world; which avarice brings the offspring of every form of injurious, baneful, and destructive behavior in our sinful nature (1 Timothy 6:10). How comprehensive was Satan’s display of all worldly things to the eyes and mind of Christ in the flesh? How thoroughly would that matter be displayed for His understanding, so that it would tempt the very God when He was very man? “***All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them***”, Satan says, indicating the scope of what he had shown to our Savior.

This showing indeed included, at times, a physical or visual component when expressed. Such as when it references Christ showing miracles (John 5:20, 10:32) or even when He showed His hands and His side after His resurrection (John 20:20). Clearly even *that* was for purposes of expressing spiritual truth, as instructing in the covenant power being fulfilled. That is, of what significance were His miracles except to show His divinity (as Ben has been recently discussing for us). And what was the point of his displaying His hands and side except to show that He was that same Christ who suffered and died and rose again as prophesied?

This Greek word was also used to express a purely metaphorical and spiritual shewing. Christ showed His death and resurrection for a sign (John 2:19). Abraham was directed by God to go ***“into the land which I shall shew thee”*** (Acts 7:3), a metaphor for the final glories of God dwelling with His elect Jews. The word is used by James to demonstrate how true faith is shown through the good works manifested in those to whom it is given (James 2:18).

In the passage, this Greek word is encased in a statement that includes three similar and related expressions: ***“Revelation”***, ***“signified”***, and ***“he saw”***. Each of these expressions communicate components of the act of receiving information that is packaged and delivered for that receiving. However, these three items are completely distinct from this term we presently examine. ***“The Revelation”*** introduces the *event* called the Day of the Lord. The other two communication terms are distinct as to the intended audience and purpose of the communication.

So, as we consider these two words ***“to shew”***, we have to focus in on the question of why. Why is this book prepared as a portion of the recorded Canon? The answer: to give evidence or proof of things to teach the target audience what God Almighty wanted the target audience to be taught. Of course, all of Scripture ***“is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”***, as this book of the Canon is prepared to be. So, what unique purpose is served in the presentation of the Apocalypse to those for whom it is prepared? Why is it so critically important that *these* words are presented ... in this way ... at the specific hour of history to close the ***“more sure word of prophecy; whereunto [we] do well that [we] take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts”*** (2 Peter 1:19)?

Because it’s the conclusion, my friends. From before the day that this human experiment began with our father Adam and our mother Eve being created in resplendent beauty – without the nasty, violent, vicious, selfish, gross effects of sin to put every vile thought and action into motion – there was appointed a day certain. That day will bring the ***“restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”*** (Acts 3:21). ***“Restitution”*** means ***“restoration”***. Matters were ordained to be mercilessly embroiled in sin-affected chaos that etched death into the essence of all of the creation. But the glories from which the creation fell is scheduled to be restored ... or as that same passage in Acts articulates, a ***“refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord”*** (v. 19).

God is revealed to the human creation. God’s glory is put onto display by this grand mystery woven into the warp and woof of the whole creation. Paul says that the ***“invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead”***. (Romans 1:20) Creation and His Word reveal his character as He has determined it to be understood. A crucial winding up of all these things is encased in this glorious work called the Apocalypse. The Revelation. The events articulated with respect to how He intends

that all these things – began in glory and corrupted by sin – will be concluded and glory restored, are in this book crystalized **“to shew”** them for consumption at the appointed hour.

Those who are appointed to receive this showing here discussed – in their spirits ... their hearts ... their tender and frightened minds – are **“his servants”**. Let us now consider these two words that are captured in the Greek expression **“duolos”** (**“doo’-los”**). This word coupling should result in every single person – who is moved spiritually to actually gain a sober understanding of what this book is instructing – to despise the endless droning and speculation found waiting for them on the internet. I say this because these two words – this Greek expression – is a discriminating one.

“¶ Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?” (Matthew 21:33-40)

What indeed? In this parable we see the ancestors of the servants articulated in this passage. The spiritual forefathers, if you will. These contained in this parable are those servants of God who preached and prophesied before the *first* advent of Jesus the Christ. They warned those husbandmen – the Jews who were uniquely called out to work in the vineyard of God – that they owed fruits to the Owner ... their Betrothed ... their God! They were killed for it ... beaten for it ... stoned for it. Then when Christ came in His first advent, they likewise beat and killed Him.

We – who are the heritage of those spiritual brethren – are spoken of in a different parable, with similar but distinctly different specifics:

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were

bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matthew 22:2-14)

Here we have a description of the servants to whom our passage in Revelation 1:1 makes reference. These are the servants to whom the blueprint of this wedding plan and their duties in preparation of that wedding are more specifically laid out. These are the servants who will be charged with going forth to the world to do two distinct things in this parable. First, to declare the commandments of our Master. Second, to gather those in the highways who are not only called, but chosen.

This book of the canon – on which our Father has indicted me to spend my life’s energies – is not going to be seen or understood in its terms and conditions, except by those servants to whom it is supernaturally shown. Other parables articulate some nuances to how those servants who are appointed will behave, and will be held accountable. It is an office, my sweet friends. We are servants of the King! We have a profound and non-delegable duty to that King. These words are opened up. These words write for us how the matters of human history will close and what will become of the inhabitants of this amazing world within the universe of God. It cannot be treated lightly. It cannot be treated with disrespect or speculation. It has to be embraced to the extent that it is opened to each of us. We do not *own* that revelation to our spirits. The light shown to each of us about this work appointed should be willingly and soberly shared with our co-elect. We dare not take it to ourselves and exalt our own person with it. We are servants until the day comes that we are made ***“kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.” (Revelation 5:10)***

The next piece of this clause that we need to look at is the third person, singular, active present tense of the Greek word “*deo*” (“*deh’-o*”). The word here used is specifically ... “*dei*” (“*die*”). The English word is ***“must”***. In application within this passage, this is a fun and desperately important term to examine. The word is defined in the online Greek dictionary like this:

1) *it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper*

1a) *necessity lying in the nature of the case*

1b) *necessity brought on by circumstances or by the conduct of others toward us.*

1c) *necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end*

1d) *a necessity of law and command, of duty, equity*

1e) necessity established by the counsel and decree of God, especially by that purpose of his which relates to the salvation of men by the intervention of Christ and which is disclosed in the Old Testament prophecies

1e1) concerning what Christ was destined finally to undergo, his sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension

Friends, the frightful, devastating, delightful, and glorious things appointed to the earth and her inhabitants within this stupendous writing ... are necessary! Just in the nature of the case of God, Christ, the Holy Ghost it is necessary that they display the brightness of the glory of God in the resolution of His creation. The circumstances of Satan, his fallen angels, and the wholly corrupted nature of mankind – in how that vicious and vile mess have conducted themselves toward those whom God has loved from eternity – make the compensatory things contained in the Apocalypse necessary. Because those who are loved eternally by God, and covered in the Covenant of Grace, are in desperate need of redemption, the protecting, energizing, and glorifying events that fall out to that elect group within the events of the Revelation are necessary. The laws and commandments of God ... and the sheer equity demanded by His glorious display toward the creation ... make the matters of the Revelation necessary. They **“must”** happen!

There is no sense in the words of prophecy ... the songs of praise ... the perfect expression of the laws under the Mosaic code ... the articulations of grace by the Apostles ... the very Covenant of Grace itself unless there is a conclusion that meets each breathed word in perfect symmetry. There cannot be found a idle word in all the inspired canon. There cannot be one of God’s promises found to be unfulfilled. There is no Achilles’ heel or portion of the creation that is not perfectly wrapped in purpose ... and eternal purpose ... that absolutely **“must”** be brought to conclusion in the words of this Apocalypse.

And so it will be. The last portion of this clause are four words that are expressed in two Greek words. **“[S]hortly”** is the Greek *“en”*, and **“come to pass”** is the Greek *“ginomai”* (*“ghin’-om-ahee”*). For a proper understanding of *“ginomai”* we have to make use of the Greek preposition *“en”*. That is, you cannot properly understand what is intended by **“come to pass”** without using the English preposition **“shortly”**.

Grammatically, these two expressions are telling us that the events being shown to the servants of the Lord in this inspired book of the Apocalypse will take place within a short and fixed period of time. I have been mocked by challengers who have argued that the Scriptures are invalid because this book was written by the Apostle John in the first century A.D. and therefore those matters written in the book had to occur within a short period *after* the time John wrote the words. This is an error, as demonstrated by the proper use and understanding of this preposition **“shortly”**. It

literally means that the events of the Apocalypse – once they are initiated in the providence of God – will unfold in a fixed period of time that is relatively brief.

This phraseology puts the lie to expositions of the words that apply the words in this prophetic book that draw them out over centuries of time. These words instruct us otherwise. If I were to ask you the question: “How long will the period of the Day of the Lord last?” The answer from these words would be: “A fixed and short period of time”.

As it pertains to the component of this Day of the Lord that accomplishes the work of restoring the Jewish nation, we have the prophecy of Hosea, reiterated in the prophetic and apostolic words of Paul that emphasizes the precision of this point:

“¶ As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” (Romans 9:25-28)

We know from the prophecy of Daniel, that we have given extensive consideration to in examination of his visions, that the period assigned to the work of confirming the Abrahamic covenant with the redeemed of Israel is ***“one week [of years]” (Daniel 9:27)***, or seven years. We have also reviewed, from the book of Daniel and from the book of the Revelation, expressions that mirror the identity of a seven-year period by speaking of two distinct periods of three- and one-half years (Daniel 12:7; Revelation 11:3, 12:6).

So, while this opening clause in the Revelation does not articulate the specifics of the time in which those matters are to come to pass, this language assures the servants of God who will be drawn into the fray articulated in the subsequent words the same way that Christ articulated to His disciples when discussing this same period:

“For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.” (Mark 13:19-20)

So the shortness of the period in which the work will be performed is evident. The reason for the shortness, I believe, is also evident. The other thing that is shown in this clause – that this language is providentially structured ***“to shew unto his servants”*** – are things which must ***“come to pass”***.

“For by [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

(Colossians 1:16-17)

This word used for ***“come to pass”*** is one that expresses in application the sovereign power of God in the design and execution of providence. As our friend Charles spent some considerable time laying out for us in a previous sermon ... time is a real, created thing, and a finite thing that we have an affirmative duty to see, value, and make proper use of in God’s providenceⁱⁱ. Good stuff, and I encourage a revisit to those strong words in this context.

Here we are given what is likely the clearest statement in all of Scripture that providence, too, is a created thing. God has established ... created ... brought into a certain being and placed onto the created timeline of the human experience ... people, places, events, outcomes. As certainly as they have already had existence, these are shown to God’s elect persons who are assigned the work within the Day of the Lord. They are said in this blessed passage to ***“come to pass”*** ... ***“come into existence”*** ... ***“appear in history”*** ... ***“come upon the stage”*** ... ***“be made”*** ... ***“be performed”***. That is the word here used. It is an expression that goes along with the word ***“must”*** as the expression of the imperative. The imperative is that they absolutely must happen ... the expression here is that they have already been secured in their existence in God’s providence and only await the passage of that created time in execution.

In summary, then, these twelve words express that our God – in covenanted gift to the Savior Jesus Christ – has appointed a tremendous, specific, and short period of outcomes that bring the conclusion to the human experiment. He has articulated those things in a perfect expression that has the effect of making clear to those of His servants who must carry the work forward in time, so they are spiritually, physically, intellectually, and perfectly prepared. It is a comforting expression that opens up to those servants how they must be and will be made ready and ***“wiling in the day of [His] power”*** (Psalms 110:3).

This book brings together all of the expressions of God, Christ, the prophets, and the apostles – from throughout the entire period during which the full record of prophecy was captured – to make those ready who will live the outcome. You can read the whole of the book ... set it down ... let some time pass ... and pick it up to read again. Each time you do so, there are new jewels to be mined. In three sermons, I have plucked a little juice from the first 22 words, but I have only scratched it.

The writings are dense. All other writings in human experience pale in scope and value. It is our highest duty to make ourselves aware of them. Search them out. Pray to our God to make them open and real to our existence. If we have – as we perpetually articulate – a clear sense that we are

living in the last time, there has to be an equal sense that we must expect to have shown unto us, as God's servants, those things which must shortly come to pass in the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

When God has prepared to move me toward further examination of the final clause of this first verse of Revelation, I joyously look forward to the work. I invite and encourage all my friends here to share in the journey. I love you all. Amen.

ⁱ Two sermons on the opening language of Revelation 1:1 are dated September 5, 2017 (tinyurl.com/RevelationPDF) and then on April 1, 2018 (<https://tinyurl.com/WBC2180401PDF>).

ⁱⁱ Sermon on Redeeming the Time, dated May 21, 2017 (tinyurl.com/RedeemTimePDF)