

He Comes With Clouds – The Theme of Revelation

How It All Ends

By William J. Sturm

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Berean Baptist Church
517 Glensford Drive
Fayetteville, NC 28314

Website: www.bereanbaptistchurch.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/bereanbaptistch

Revelation is not new material. It is not new material. It is material that has been spoken about throughout the New Testament and throughout the Old Testament. This is old material. It just seems new because, quite frankly, it's in the New Testament and a lot of us don't read the Old Testament. And so, when we read the Revelation at the end of the New Testament, we treat it like it's new material but it's not. It's not. Most of what you've seen in Revelation, or what you will see in Revelation, has been found already in other books of the Bible.

So, instead of guessing what the writer of Revelation means, we're going to let the Old Testament tell us and give us something to read against. So, we are in Daniel 7 and I want you to see, please, in verse 9 that Daniels is in a sort of trance, if you want to call it that. He's in a situation where he's carried about by the Holy Spirit and look at verse 9. Here's what Daniel says, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." That might look something like this. "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake," and you'll see the horn here in this book of Revelation, "I beheld even till the beast was slain," and you'll see that in the book of Revelation, "and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame," and you'll see that in the book of Revelation. "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him," that's in the book of Revelation, "his dominion is an everlasting dominion," that's in the book of Revelation, "which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

There are some things that we are seeing there, aren't there? So, in this little vision of the book of Revelation we see a few things. 1. We see the flaming one on the throne. What

else? We see the Son of Man. Did you notice, that in this passage in the book of Daniel, you have two figures. Did you see it? Verse 13, you have one like the Son of Man and verse 9, you have the Ancient of days. Do you see that? You're going to see that in the book of Revelation as well. John is caught up to the throne room in heaven, Revelation 4. He sees one sitting on the throne and there's only one worthy to take the book and open the seals and who is it? I want you to see it real good. How about in verse 13? "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the," what is that there? "Clouds of heaven." Yes, I see that. Clouds of heaven.

All nations. How about verse 14? All nations. So, this is a worldwide thing. Now, this all looks very much Revelation-like, doesn't it? I mean, you've got books being opened in Revelation 20:12, "and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books." You have worldwide. How about Revelation 5:9, "And they said, Thou art worthy, O Lord, for thou hast redeemed us by thy blood out of every kindred, tribe, people and nation." So, that's chapter 5:9 of Revelation.

How about the beast and the fire thing. Did you see that? Beast in the fire. Did you know that that actually takes place in Revelation 19. Books were opened, chapter 20:11. Clouds of heaven: we're going to see that today in chapter 1:7. Everlasting Kingdom: you'll see that in chapter 12:10-11. Son of Man: you're going to see that in chapter 1, we'll see it in just a minute. The one on the throne: we've got that in chapters 4 and 5.

So, we're seeing that none of the stuff that we see in Revelation is new. Go ahead Brother Corban. (...) You know, I think that is a great point and here's my view on that: do you remember in Hebrews 11, where it talks about by faith this person, by faith that person, by faith this person, by faith that person, all the way through chapter 11? And chapter 12:1 it says, "Wherefore, seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every way in the sin which dost so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." To me, dear brother, the plain sense of that Scripture is that "they" refers back to clouds: they brought him with the clouds of heaven. We're dealing with a mass of people, a cloud of people. Now, to us, we think of cumulus, stretched to believe that the "they who brought him before the Ancient of days" are the clouds of heaven. (...) That's right. Yes, I believe that we're going to see that Revelation 1:7 is dealing with people and when we get there, I will do my best to support that view.

Joel 2 and let's look at verse 1-10. Let's see if we can get some more information added to this whole Revelation 1:7 picture, okay? Letting the Scripture speak, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand." Now, in just a moment, you're going to see something and I want to connect the dots.

Verse 2, "A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of

Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them.” Now, we keep seeing this them, them, them, them, do you see that? “The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.”

Verse 5, “Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.” Like a thief, do you see that? Like a thief? I want you to notice that thief idea and I want you to notice the Day of the Lord idea in verse 1, “let all the inhabitants of the land tremble for the day of the Lord cometh.” Do you see that connection there?

Verse 10, “The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army.”

Now, the question is: who are the “they?” It seems from verse 11 that the “they” and the “them” of these preceding 8-10 verses is the army of the Lord. Now, the question is: alright, will we see those folks in the book of Revelation? We certainly will and I will show you. So, we want to look for that whole idea in the book of Revelation of the army of heaven.

Verse 10, “The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?”

Wow. So, we’re going to find out that we have a Day of the Lord. In verse 2, it is “a day of clouds.” A Day of the Lord is the “day of clouds.” And he goes on to talk about them, they, them, them, them, they, they, they, they, they, them, they, them, they, them, they, them, they, them, them, all the way through verse 10 and it says in verse 11, that we’re talking about the army of the Lord.

Michael? (...) Well, you would think that there is...I’m going to talk to you in just a little bit. We’re talking about the locusts and the cankerworm, right? And that’s from chapter 1 and Michael is making a reference to the fact that in chapter 1 the army of the Lord is identified as locusts. Locusts.

And so we have a real situation here and what is it? Here’s a good situation we want to talk about. In Scripture, I need you to think with me for just a moment, when God judges Israel it is always called “the Day of the Lord.” Always called “the Day of the Lord.” For

the most part, we see a two fulfillment idea from the Day of the Lord. Now, at first, it sounds kind of far-fetched but I need to show you this in the text. You don't want my opinion, I hope? I hope you want the text and so, we see the Day of the Lord talked about in verse 1-11 and in Joel, chapter 1, you'll notice there in verse 4, "That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten." And so, the army of the Lord is identified as these clouds of locusts. When they approach a camp, it looks like a cloud. Have you ever seen one? So, we have these clouds of locusts and they are coming into the people of God and they are devouring their land, they're eating all the crops and God calls it the Day of the Lord.

Now, I want you to notice something else if I could, to answer this question. Look at chapter 2:25, he says, "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you." There it is. So, it looks like that the locusts is the great army in the first ten verses. And, indeed, when Israel was judged by God in the Old Testament, they were judged through things like famine and it was known as the Day of the Lord.

But, you'll notice in verse 28, after he restores the years that the cankerworm has eaten, look at verse 28, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." When was that fulfilled? Acts 2, day of Pentecost. Peter gets up and says "this is that which Joel prophesied." So, Joel 2:28 has been fulfilled. It might be fulfilled again later on at the beginning of the millennium but it has been fulfilled already.

Verse 29, "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come." Two things: 1. everything we just read is in the book of Revelation, chapter 6. But I also want you to notice that even though the Day of the Lord had passed, it's still coming. Look in verse 31, there is a "great and terrible day of the Lord" still coming. And the armies, as you'll see from the book of Revelation, are quite literal.

So, the first fulfillment which took place with Israel's being judged by God in the Old Testament was nothing but a foreshadow through the clouds of locusts, there will be nothing but a foreshadow of what happens at the Day of the Lord that is the great and terrible and still coming in the future in which there will be a cloud from the armies of heaven coming with the Christ when he descends.

We need to encourage ourselves to stay interested in these subjects and so the Day of the Lord passed? Yes. The Day of the Lord still coming? Yes. Carbon copies of each other? No, one foreshadows the other. If you're approaching and I've used this illustration several times, if you're approaching the Rocky Mountains in Colorado and you say, "Okay, there is just one range." When you get up over that first ridge, you're going to see

that there are miles and miles and miles between those ridges. And in the eyes of the prophets, this was just one fulfillment but once you got over that first bump, it's New Testament days. Pentecost has come and gone and you see there is still yet a great and terrible Day of the Lord coming. So, they're not the same mountain ridge, they just look like it from a distance.

We must move on. Zephaniah is where you want to go. It's a very long book of three chapters. I'm sure most of you have read it in your devotions this week. Just kidding, usually people have to stumble through that. Zephaniah 1. I want you to see this terminology again: Day of the Lord, cloudy day, armies of the Lord. I want you to see that. Put these things together so that you can see the theme that keeps on traveling through the book of Revelation. Here we are in Zephaniah 1:14, "The great day of the LORD is near." You see, this is something all the prophets talked about. I could take you through every one of the major and minor prophets in the Old Testament and show you that they talked about the Day of the Lord. "The day of the Lord it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung." Now, isn't that a pleasant message? Verse 18, "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." Question is: did that happen in the Old Testament time from the Assyrians and the Babylonians or will it happen in the book of Revelation? The answer is: both. The point of Revelation was to show you that you haven't crossed the entire mountain range, you're in the valley right now between the fulfillments. That's the whole point of the book of Revelation. There is still a great and terrible Day of the Lord coming.

Now, let's look at Revelation 1. It is 11 after 10 and we have an entire verse we need to cover. Revelation 1:7, look here, this is the theme verse of the book of Revelation: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." That's what we're covering today. Why? Well, because that's what we've doing for about 20 minutes now. I just want to remind you of some things, four things about this verse. Are you read? Four things about this verse: 1. it's already talked about in the Old Testament, already spoken of. 2. Jesus already talked about it. I'll show you some examples. This is not new material. The reason you see in verse 8 that Alpha and Omega is talking to John is because Alpha and Omega talked to the disciples already about this on the Mount of Olives in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21. Do you remember? You've read through the gospels? Some of you have, right? This is old material. So, Jesus has already talked about this. The Old Testament prophets have already talked about this.

Three more things: its close proximity to the Almighty. Do you remember anything about Daniel 7 and the Almighty, Ancient of Days, that kind of thing? Do you remember that?

Okay, look down there in verse 8, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” Okay, who is this Almighty, anyway? It’s good to say this because it proves that Jesus is God. Why do I say that? Why do I say Jesus is God? Well, because we have Alpha and Omega, the Almighty in verse 8. Do you see that?

Look at verse 10, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” Alright, who’s talking? Look at verse 12, “I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto,” who? “The Son of man.” Who is that? Jesus. So, Jesus is the Almighty? Is that a fact? So, he’s the Almighty.

Look at number 4 there: close proximity to the flaming one. Where did we see the flaming one? Everything you see in Revelation chapter 1 is a repeat. Look at it with me, it’s so mind numbing. You’re like, “I didn’t know this was in the Bible already.” Look at verse 11, “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” Verse 12, “I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man.” Didn’t we see the Son of man in Daniel 7? Yes, we did. The Son of man in Daniel 7.

And let’s talk about him: “clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.” Did you see that in Daniel 7? Yes. “His eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.” Now, get this, this is good stuff right here, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” And we’ll talk about that in great detail in weeks to come, but all you’re seeing in Revelation 1 is a rehearsal of what was already spoken of in Daniel 7.

Number 5: written by a prophet in the Spirit, away from home. Now, what do I mean by that? Daniel, where was Daniel when he wrote his book? (...) So, when Daniel spoke and wrote, he was moved by the Holy Ghost, that’s 2 Peter 1:21. It’s a nautical term. The idea there is that the prophets were carried about like they were sailboats and the wind was the Holy Spirit. It’s the idea there and so, John, notice, it’s really interesting. Look at verse 10, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.” So, how did John get this great revelation? He was in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit moved him just like he moved the Old Testament prophets of 2 Peter 1:21. What is the Holy Spirit, the writer of the book of Revelation, making sure you know? He’s making sure that you know that the New Testament prophet, John, is just as dependable as the Old Testament prophet, Daniel, because both were in the Spirit.

Now, Joel talks about the Day of the Lord. Zephaniah talks about the Day of the Lord. Look at verse 10 of Revelation 1. What has John seen in his vision? The Lord's day. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Now, you're probably thinking, "Well, that's Sunday." No. In the New Testament that was never used to describe the first day of the week. Ever. The only proof-text people have when they preach that we should call Sunday the Lord's day, and I'm all for calling it the Lord's day, let's do it, but the fact is here we have Revelation 1:10, John says, "I was in the Spirit and here is where I was, I was whisked away into the future, into a period known as the Lord's day," or the Day of the Lord.

So, John has seen what Daniel saw. John has seen what Joel saw. John has seen what Zephaniah. And he's adding more detail to it for us. That is the purpose of this great passage.

So, he comes with clouds. Where else do we see this? We see it in Psalm 104. Check that out with me, "Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain." So, you want to know why the universe is expanding? It's telling you. Verse 3, "Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot." Now, he was prophesying. Was David a prophet? It says in Acts 2 that David was a prophet. So, he was prophesying about the Day of the Lord right there. When the Lord comes back with clouds. It seem like Zephaniah is calling it people, these clouds are people, and in other places it seems like these clouds are real clouds. The fact is, remember when I told you week one, some prophecies are not transparent, translucent. So, some of the details were not very clear to the prophets either.

Let me read a verse to you, Matthew 26:64. Listen to this, "Jesus saith unto him, You said it: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." That's Matthew 26. This is old stuff, right? Jesus said it to Caiaphas, the high priest. Luke 21, "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars upon the earth, distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring. Men's heart failing them for fear and for looking for those things which are coming on the earth for the powers of heaven shall be shaken and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with great power and glory."

Now, look back down to Revelation 1. Let's talk about that phrase "every eye shall see him." Every eye shall see him? What is clearly not the emphasis of the book of Revelation? The seven year tribulation period is not the focus of Revelation. What is? (...) Revelation 1:7, he comes right out and says, "Here's what I want to show you." And then in chapter 19, he does.

Every eye shall see him. Every eye shall see him. So, what does that mean, then? That means that, listen now, listen carefully: the secret snatching away of the church is not the point of this book. I am saying, if you're hoping to find a secret snatching away in the

book of Revelation, where the church poofs out of here before the tribulation, then you're going to be real disappointed with the lack of evidence in chapter 4. Hang on to your hats. Is it there? We'll see. But because of the fact that it is not explicit, it would be really clear to you that it is not John's point in writing this passage.

Notice, please, that this must be the point: John is describing a Day of the Lord, Revelation 1:10, in which all of this stuff takes place. He's describing a Day of the Lord in which the Lord Jesus will come back and have a Kingdom which does not end. A Kingdom that doesn't end? When does that happen? You've got to read the end of the book.

So, every eye will see him. Look at verse 7 and how it describes those eyes that see him, "they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." I will send these out to you.

But I want to share with you, I want to give you two passages of Scripture, I want you to write next to Revelation 1:7 in the margin of your Bible. Are you ready? Zechariah 12:10. Listen to this passage. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced." Who pierced him? Everyone got nervous around the Passion of the Christ with Mel Gibson. There is no need to get nervous saying the Jews killed him. Paul says the Jews killed him. Peter says the Jews killed him. The Jews said the Jews killed him, "his blood be upon us and on our children," remember that? Acts 2, he says, "You killed the Lord of glory. You killed the one that God has made both Lord and Christ." Paul says it was the Jews. Peter says it was the Jews. Jesus says it was the Jews. The Jews said it was the Jews.

(...) The pope said they didn't do it? Well, then throw it all out. The fact is, friends, we're going to put the blame where God puts the blame.

Now, let's talk for just a moment: who really is to blame for the death of Jesus? (we are). Yeah, we are. Who else? Because it was my sin, right? Isn't it true that he's fully acquainted with what happened at Calvary every time I break his law? Isn't it true he has perfect memory and he remembers getting beat that day for sins that I commit today? Isn't that true? So, effectively, I crucified him. Effectively, the Romans did. There wasn't probably a Jewish person nailing him to the cross that day, probably Romans. But, who else? Who else killed Jesus? (Adam) Adam, but you else? (God) God killed Jesus. In a horrible case of cosmic child abuse, God said in Isaiah 53:10, listen: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." It said in Matthew 26, when Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane, "Smite the shepherd. I will smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered." Who said that? God did. God smote the Shepherd.

"They also which pierced him." So, the Jews will welcome him when he returns.

"And all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." What are the kindreds of the earth? They are the ones that gather at Armageddon in Revelation 19.

“They will wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” “Even so” is a word that means “yes.” “Amen” is a word that means “it is true.” So, at the end of Revelation 1:7, “behold he comes with clouds and every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Yes, it’s true.”

So, who are the clouds? It says in Revelation 19, “I saw heaven opened and one came on a white horse and the armies of heaven followed after.” On white horses. So, he comes with clouds: who are these clouds? Well, if they’re the same clouds as in Daniel 7, the same clouds as in Joel 2, they’re probably not moisture type clouds, they’re probably the clouds known as the armies of heaven.

So, it’s 10:30 and I have done what every teacher should not do and that is teach without leaving room for questions and I am sorry. So, if you want to email me a question, I will answer it. If you check your email once every three weeks, it’s probably not going to work for you. So, leave me an email address. I don’t have time now because I need to go across that hall and do some other things, to answer questions. So, if you were here at 8:30 worship, you’re probably going to feel slighted but we can talk on the phone, email, Facebook, twitter, courier pigeon, handwritten note, handshake.

Let’s have prayer.

Lord, thanks for the opportunity to teach the Word of God. Thank you for the opportunity to learn. Thank you for Daniel and Joel and Zephaniah and Jesus who had taught us Revelation before it was ever even written. We look forward to that glad day when you come back and make the wrongs right and bring peace on earth and good will to men. In Jesus’ name. Amen.