

ROMANS Part 70

Chapter 8:19-21

The unveiling of the sons of God.



For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God. 20 For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation 21 that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

In my video series I am delving into the details of the Unveiling of Jesus Christ, better known as the book of Revelation. “Revelation” is not the title of this famous—some would say “infamous”—book. We find this title in the very first words of the scroll itself: “The Unveiling of Jesus Christ.” Jesus Christ is primed to be unveiled to the world through awe-inspiring, fear-inducing, God-introducing judgments set upon the world by God Himself. It’s a wake-up call and a really rude alarm. Those who see nothing but the tips of their own noses and mock, “Where is God!” will regret the manner of their speaking. God is going to show up via a series of unprecedented plagues, and the mockers will want to stuff God back into whatever little bottle He came from—but it will be too late.

You might say that the world is about to be roused from its stupor in a bad way. I would not say this. I would use the phrase, “a hard way.” I like my perspective and recommend it. I look *through* the locusts, *through* the hailstones, and *through* the battles and blood to God’s end-game—salvation. Such a large end-game requires large preparation. Our God is One of contrastive forces and powers for the sake of lasting impressions. So why shouldn’t the night be darkest before the dawn? That is exactly what’s going to happen. These coming trials are the birth pangs ushering in a longed-for peace. This peace hits first upon this Earth and *its* time, then upon the new Earth and *its* time, and then everywhere for eternity. (We, the body of Christ, herald peace in heavenly places, then legislate it.)

The wake-up of the world precedes the eventual salvation of all. Two eons intervene. Besides the death, entombment and resurrection of Christ, the coming days of indignation are the first step toward relieving the world of its self-righteousness, its free will, and other redundancies. We have already been relieved of

our self-righteousness, free will, and other redundancies, through the words of our apostle. Paul told us to have no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3), so we don't. The flesh profits nothing, said a man who walked with Jesus (John 6:63), and Paul would agree with that.

THE TWO UNVEILINGS

In this passage of Romans Paul introduces to us another unveiling no less spectacular than that of our Lord and Savior upon the Mount of Olives at the dawn of the Millennium. In many ways, this other unveiling is even more spectacular. We, the body of Christ, are to be unveiled before the universe as conquerors. We are presently the loathed ones of the universe, and yet we shall be unveiled as mighty ones. We didn't really do anything. This will be a change of pace for us.



"Son of God" is our common place and calling, earned by virtue of Christ's death for our sakes. "Son" speaks of relationship, a figure of speech having nothing to do with gender. It's the intimacy of immediate offspring. You are closer to God than a cousin, uncle, step-brother, even a sibling. This is why both men and women in the body of Christ ought to be looking up. Because of your relationship with God, through Christ, change is imminent. Change

is coming not only for you, but also for the universe, later, *because of you*. Yours is not change for the sake of change, but change as a necessary prelude to an even bigger event: the reconciliation of the universe to God (Colossians 1:18-20). This end-game, effected through Christ, begins at the completion of Christ. We, the brethren of Christ, must be glorified and unveiled together with Him for this thing to begin in earnest.

Don't stumble over this. God chose to need you. It wasn't your idea. Your calling makes God happy. Your unveiling and presentation *to* the universe is Phase 3 of His plans *for* the universe. Phase 1 is God; Phase 2 was the death, entombment, and resurrection of His firstborn Son, Jesus Christ. Phase 3 is our change from soulish bodies to spiritual ones. Here are the three phases, then, of the plan to reconcile the universe to God: 1) God, 2) Christ, 3) our change, glorification, and unveiling.

CREATION KNOWS

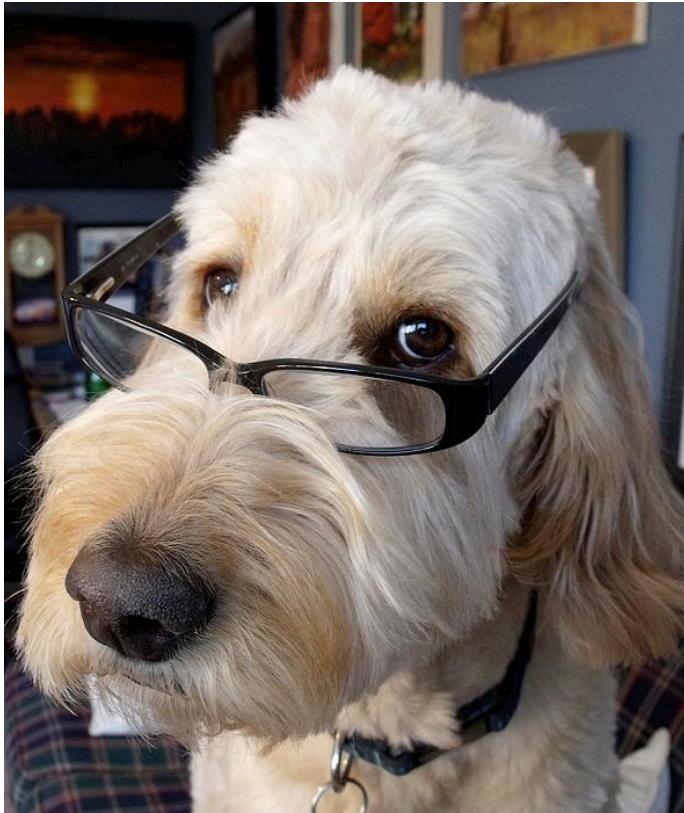
"For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19).

Every creature now senses that some big change must precede its own deliverance from a vain existence. This big thing is Phase 3 of The Plan, already mentioned. Even lesser creatures than we realize our importance to The Plan. Lesser creatures such as gerbils have not been infected by religion. God gave creatures instinct. It is why birds migrate to the same location year after year, and why

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dogs pace before storms. Animals are smart. Gerbils, swallows, and dogs know many things that we do not know. They know big things. They know God things. No one ever forced these creatures into church. No artificial systems intrude upon any animal's God-given sensibilities. The same cannot be said of many of us, speaking now of our religious history. Before God invaded our brains with truth, we deadened our spiritual senses with weekly ceremonies, and we weakened our spiritual eyes by reading Joyce Meyer books.

The creation spoken of here in Romans 8:19 that awaits



the unveiling of the sons of God includes intelligent celestial beings. If it includes gerbils, then it surely must include this higher creation. But back to animals. It may well be that, in this department of sensing large and imminent God-things, some or all of our pets are smarter than we are. After finally appreciating Romans 8:19-21, I have never looked at a dog in the same way, and dogs have repaid me a similar courtesy. It's as though the dogs know that I know that they know. Dogs aren't dumb. If dogs aren't dumb, then what does this say of cats? Dogs and cats all seem to like me. Birds want to be around me. The roaches in Brazil did not mind me. I let them live. When I turned on lights, they stayed put. "Oh, it's only Zender," they said. I respect the innate wisdom of the creation. This may have something to do with the courtesy afforded me by the animal and insect kingdoms. The animals, birds and the invertebrates—domestic and wild—know that our change is key to their deliverance. My advice to you is to adopt this wisdom, or at least borrow the energy. Take no wisdom from either your mirror or your present mood, for these primitive afflictions know about as much as Joyce Meyer knows about things, which is nothing.

NOW HIDDEN

What is this unveiling of the sons of God? To appreciate it, we must first appreciate its opposite: hiddenness;

anonymity. These are far easier things to grasp because these are the order of the day, for us. Whose order? God's. We are nobodies now, for it does not yet appear what we shall be. God works hard keeping us hidden. Depressing anonymity is our *soup du jour*. Our hour has not yet come, and neither has our soup. None of us ought to be levitating, glowing, raising the dead, or reigning. None of us ought to be writing any bestselling books. If we are, then it's the dangled carrot of Satan. Do not grasp at it. The same adversary dangled premature glory before Christ, but Jesus Christ preferred to finish His fast rather than do what Satan wanted Him to do. Resist Joyce Meyer, and she will flee from you.

Paul describes our present plight in Colossians 3:2-4—

Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory.

When Jesus Christ died, He was hidden in the tomb. At His resurrection, He was manifested first to Mary Magdalene, then to God, and then to a few others in that century and in that country, to whom God chose to show His un-entombed Darling. To most, He remained hidden. To the world-at-large today, He is still hidden. It is not yet time for Him to descend to Earth in glory to shoulder His priestly mantle. Before He went to

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heaven for 2,000 years, He told His disciples, "tarry for the spirit" (Luke 24:49), and then He went to heaven, not to be seen again for 2,000 years running. God does everything in its own time, according to *His* time. God carved out 2,000 years for His Son to leisurely call out a new body of believers from the Earth after the mold of Saul of Tarsus, a self-loving, Christ-loathing lunatic fingered to become God's greatest champion of grace and the first member of the body of Christ. The body of Christ heralds grace, not law. The body of Christ hates baptism, circumcision, church-going, Sabbath-keeping, and Joyce Meyer books.



“The real power is the power keeping this thing from happening.”

These body of Christ people are rare humans (for rare is the choosing of God), who would eventually read the letters of the former self-loving lunatic—speaking of our beloved apostle, Paul. This is the man who, in the letter to Rome now under consideration, acquainted us with our death with Christ. Christ, in His crucifixion, entombment and resurrection, represented us. Everything that happened to Him was considered to have happened to us, right down to the last nail and the last ounce of vinegar. It's all figurative because none of it actually happened to us. I take that back. Not all of it is figurative. The bad things—namely the crucifixion for sin and the entombment—are figurative, not for Him but for us. None of us have ever been or ever will be crucified for sin and subsequently entombed. The last thing, however—the good thing—the resurrection, will literally happen to us. I have been telling you for years about how good God is, and here is a prime example. God called upon Christ, not us, to endure death for sin and the subsequent entombment, and then He *figuratively* associated us with these awful yet necessary prerequisites to glory. Because God figuratively associates us with these awful things, we enter into the good things—the resurrection and the glory—but *these* things are literal. In other words, the bad stuff that happened to Christ is figurative for us, but the good stuff that happened to Him will *literally* happen to us. Wow.

We were figuratively, then, entombed together with Christ through baptism into His death (Romans 6:4), that we should be of the literal resurrection also (Romans 6:5). Christ's resurrection is the guarantee that we shall be raised. Christ is glorified with God, but we are not yet. We are still hidden, just as Christ was once hidden in the tomb. Our figurative entombment, then, is still true of our bodies. This is not so of the mind. Our minds are free (free of religion, I trust) to grasp onto the truth of what we shall become. This is Paul's wish for our minds. It's why he wrote Romans in the first place. Much of Romans is about grasping truth. Overcoming old thinking is difficult.

Our lives are “hid together with Christ in God.” To the world, we are dead. The world does not care about us. Our bodies do not and cannot speak of who we are. They betray our spiritual reality. This is why I never listen to my body; I listen to my mind. It's the way it must be for now. This is what we are to focus on: “Our lives are hid together with Christ in God.” Where is Christ? He is with God. Where is God? God is everywhere, but mainly He is known (or rather, not known) through His invisible power, which is spirit. This power shows up everywhere through the cohesion of everything (Colossians 1:17). That cups of coffee and office staplers do not fly randomly from tables is the power of God. Such power, though omnipresent, is not overtly *manifest* as God's power. Part of it is called “gravity.” Spiritual intuition credits all such forc-

es—nuclear, cellular, physical, quizzical—to God. That chairs and tables do not spontaneously combust—same thing. God is directly responsible for everything *not* flying off desks and spontaneously combusting.

We are God's sons, but no one seems to appreciate this fact. We could be glorified now if God wanted it, but it's not yet time for that. Gerbils know it's coming, and so do swallows and roaches. There is a great power holding us back. It



is as though our change wants to happen, but does not happen because God does not yet want it to happen. We still have more shame coming. He makes our shame cohere and not fly off. The Big Change is set on a hair-trigger, though. It won't take much to fire it

off. Again, the real power is the power keeping this thing from happening. The inherent power is so present that even the swallows of Capistrano sense it while winging to their appointed place.

THE COVER TO BE LIFTED

"Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory." This manifestation of Christ cannot be His manifestation before the Father following His resurrection, for that's a past event. It cannot be His manifestation to the world at the Unveiling, for that's a Circumcision event, but we are of the Uncircumcision. What manifestation, then, are we considering? I believe we are considering the manifestation of a completed Christ to the universe.

"Christ" is an office, not a last name. Jesus Christ became the head of a body of people known as the body of Christ. He was the firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15), but the first creatures of His heart are those designated members of His body. Christ is the head of the body (Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:27). If there is a head, then there is a body. We are that body. We, too, shall be "Christed." In this sense, He is incomplete. In this sense, Jesus Christ waits for us so that He can begin His most glorious work. In this sense, the creation also waits for us, because they have never read Joyce Meyer books and they know that they need us. Nothing of the universal reconciliation that we and the world long for can happen until Christ's body is complete. What good is a head without a body?

Consider the twelve apostles. What great work did they do when, following the death of Judas, their num-

ber was reduced to eleven? Nothing. The absence of the twelfth man rendered the remaining eleven impotent. Twelve is the number of Israel, of power, of government, of worldwide coverage. Not eleven. Eleven is a bad number. While there were only eleven disciples, the kingdom plan stalled. As soon as lots were cast and Matthias joined—bang—in came real Pentecostal power (sorry, Joyce Meyer), and those little tongues of fire that launched Peter, James and John upon divine rather than fleshly speaking engagements (sorry again, Joyce Meyer). Before that, not even Peter performed a miracle. Even Peter had to wait for the twelfth man.

Likewise, the body of Christ. In the task of the reconciliation of the universe, we are a necessary part of the work of Christ. More than this, we are His completion (Ephesians 1:22). Thus, He comes in a great fervor to get us. He started the ball rolling in the sense that He is our head and has all power, but He has yet to *take* all power. Everything is stalled, but divinely so. The future marvel of reconciliation is signed and sealed in the crosswork of Christ, but yet to be delivered. It is the delivery only that is future, and this is the thing requiring—yes, I said requiring—that Christ gather His body to Himself. He chooses to *not* start the great work until this happens. This is how important we are both to Him and to The Plan. This is why everything awaits. It is so great that gerbils sense it. Joyce Meyer, on the other hand, knows nothing about it.

When it is time for the completed Christ to be manifested, then we shall be manifested with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4). He will come to get us. This will be the snatch-



ing away (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). He will glorify us (Romans 8:30), make us immortal (1 Corinthians 15:53), then take us to where He lives (1 Thessalonians 4:17), and present Himself once again to God and to the universe (Colossians 3:4), only this time with the people He has spent the last 2,000 years calling out from humanity and training with great trial. This will be our unveiling. It will be our “coming-out” party. The trials will have completely stopped, for they will have fulfilled their purpose.

HOW I THINK IT WILL HAPPEN

One day in the near future we will all be standing alone somewhere, separately. Perhaps two or three of us will be gathered, but I think the snatching away will find each of us alone. Was not Paul alone in prison? I hope that we will sense the impending change, but I can't say that we will. Creation knows the era, but not the date.



The dead in Christ will rise first, and this will include the apostle Paul. The last trump will bring forth the dead (1 Thessalonians 4:16). I do not believe that we will hear the last trump. The last trump is not for the living, but for the dead. The dead will hear it, and rise. I do not believe that we will be aware that the dead in Christ have just been raised. For the world and even for us, the change of the dead is noiseless. Only they hear the trumpet. Next, however, we will see Jesus Christ. It is then that we shall be changed. We shall be changed at the casting of our eye, toward Him (1 Corinthians 15:52). We will instantly recognize Him. It is then that we will be aware that the dead have been raised.

Now, both the dead in Christ and the living in Christ will be snatched away (1 Thessalonians 4:17). It

will be at this time that we will put on immortal bodies (1 Corinthians 15:53). This will feel good.

We will rise toward where Christ is. All this time, Christ will have been above us. When we first see Him, we will be looking up, but not overly so. The angle will be pleasant. Nothing will be strained. But now we—along with the recently dead in Christ—rise to where He is. Now everything begins, because now He takes both the living and the formerly dead to His celestial home, where the throne of God is. I cannot describe this place, but it is a place. We have never seen it. Only Paul saw it, in the days of his humiliation when God took him in spirit to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2). This was the third heaven in time, not in space. This is where we will ascend. To Paul, the glory was so unspeakable (2 Corinthians 12:4) that he couldn't speak about it. New bodies is the only way that we could bear the coming glory. For all Paul saw then, he received but a glimpse. The glimpse was enough to make him so potentially proud that God sent him a messenger of Satan to buffet and humble him (2 Corinthians 12:7). We, immortalized, will see everything. Again, only a new body could bear this.

As this is the Next Big Thing, every being in the universe awaits it, even the biggest and most important beings. They have awaited this for two-thousand years, perhaps longer. They knew *when* we were chosen in Christ, for they existed before the disruption of the world. This is when we were chosen—before the disruption of the world (Ephesians 1:4). They anticipated us, with God, before we were. Now, they will certainly watch us come up. They have to be here; it's the Next Big Thing. No one will want to miss Christ completed.

At this time, Christ is manifested for the first time with His body. Finally, Christ is complete. There will be no more members of His body. The number is finite, and it will be completed on Earth to be taken to the third heaven to begin the work of reconciling the universe to God (Colossians 1:18-20).

There is awed silence at this time, much like the half-hour of silence in heaven spoken of in the Unveiling (Revelation 8:1), then rapturous applause (1 Corinthians 4:5). This applause will drown all other sound. If you can think of how many insects have existed since the beginning of time, then maybe you can formulate some dim idea of how many celestial beings, both great and small, attend our unveiling—but try to remember that, unlike insects, celestial beings never die. Then try to imagine what the combined applause of such a number of beings would sound like. It is at such a time that we are presented in heaven as Christ was presented in heaven following His resurrection. That was a Big Deal, and this is the Next Big Deal, the very Next One. Not one Big Deal precedes it.

After the corporate unveiling, we shall each be presented before God. The celestials, too, attend this. It is an awards ceremony. We shall each be receiving applause, individually, from God and the celestials (1 Corinthians 4:5). Even the biggest and brightest of celestial magistrates will bow in awe of our award. We will have just come from Earth, from trial, from the valley of the shadow of death. This brings fame.

Whenever I greet someone at the airport, no matter who, no matter where, I am in awe of the recent proximity of such a person to a faraway place. I look at the person and touch them and think, *this person was just in St. Louis. He was just in the environs of the St. Louis Arch. The air of the Arch is still upon him.* I imbibe deeply of this. It is as though the person is a time traveler. For car travelers, I look at the car. I marvel at trans-continental vehicles coming from, say, the West Coast to Ohio. I think, *this car was in California. It has known the kiss of Hollywood, and now here it is in Ohio, the land of zero palm trees and snow.*

I always wish that such cars could talk.

It will be the same when God manifests us with Christ to the celestials. The celestials will want to touch us. We will have come from grim death. We will have come from “that place”—meaning the Earth. Earth is a place as ex-



otic to the celestials as Bangkok is to us. We shall each receive our awards, our wreaths, our applause, our divine adjustments, at the dais of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5). Everyone will receive something. It will take a long time, as it should. No one will leave, or want to; I’m speaking of the celestials. God will get glory for us, but then we will get glory too. God loves sharing His glory, as does Christ. Our work will have yet to begin, but this presentation must precede it. We need it badly. Things have not gone well here on Earth, for us. God will make it up to us at the dais. No one will be disappointed. The lighting at the dais will be such as to highlight us. No one will be embarrassed then. Don’t begrudge the lighting of the spotlight at the dais. Let the beings in charge of lighting do their thing. The sound can only be imagined.

Perhaps the Bose company has approached it, but Bose itself will bow at the new sound.

If I have imagined this, then it can only be better. The reality can only blind my dim outlines into a “good-try-Zender” melancholy. But at least I tried.

GLORY BY FAITH

At that time, it will be *manifest* what we are. At present, we simply know what we are. It is not yet manifest. It’s something that we have to tell ourselves is true. We see no evidence of it except a little fruit. We can only believe what Paul tells us, that the thing is so guaranteed that we’re to consider it as though it has already occurred (Romans 6:11). When faith gives way to reality, the present days of faith disappear. Appreciate faith while you’ve got it, because very soon you won’t need it and will barely be able even to remember it.

Faith is a sweet gift. It feels good, sometimes, to believe things that aren’t visible simply because God says that the invisible things are true. I like faith. I like the audacity and boldness of faith. When faith goes, I will be melancholy. Even morons can believe things that they see. I may, for a moment, mourn the bygone era. I will stare at the photo album of faith and I will say to myself as I rise with Christ, *Those were some special days down there. How did I do it? It had to be the power of God operating in me because—this is on record—I saw none of this glory when I was walking around Earth in my flesh. My belief of this change sustained me. I believed simply on the strength of the Word of God. I simply believed God. I believed Him as a child believes a Daddy. Now that I see His Christ and now that I see that my body is rising and that I am no longer subject to death and gravity, everything will be easy now. The struggle is over. The struggle was hard, but this departure is bittersweet for Earth brought me so many blessings, for blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe. I miss the bittersweet struggles; in a weird sense and a weird way, I will stare fondly at these trials as they pass beneath, and reminisce. They bought me so much of this glory. They attuned me to the death of Christ without having seen any such death except my daily slaughter as a sheep. I will be forever grateful for all of my struggles, and I do mean forever.*

So enjoy faith while you’ve got it, for faith has nothing to do with our future life with Christ and with God. —MZ

(Next week: “The Premonition of the Creation.”)