



SAFE HARBOR

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I was thinking tonight about the amazing power of the gospel to change lives. This change comes when God enters into the heart and convinces a person of their sin, calls them to a turning into a new direction and establishes them as a true child of God.

Who is this one we would call a true child of God?

First this is one who has decided to completely turn from a life lived in rebellion against God, the Creator. This returning to the Creator is characterized by following the dictates of divine love. It involves caring, not only for one's own soul but the soul of others. It may involve being the agent of constant holy living, sharing of love to all and especially those who might be deemed reprehensible because of their lack of wealth or their being dirty and disheveled, or walking in the pathway of evil and destruction. This applies to the poor, the needy, the widows and orphans and the down-trodden.

Secondly the true child of God stands firmly in the truth of the gospel. Often this means living apart from the accepted societal norms of behavior. In Romans, Paul writes that persons who give approval to those who practice the violations of God's right decree are guilty as well. It is not a popular stance to be taken but the true child of God rests in God's love and power and comfort that comes from the presence of God by the indwelling Holy Spirit. As created, we are spiritual beings who without the presence of God are empty and truly devoid of true love and care for our fellow men and women.

The third and most important is the presence of the Holy Spirit within. When Jesus promised the coming "paraclete", he told of the completion of the plan of salvation and the beginning of the new creation. Before Calvary a believer had to rely on the intercessions of the High Priest and the blood of the sacrifices to approach God. At Calvary the eternal sacrifice was given and the veil of the Temple was torn in two, opening the way to the mercy seat of the Throne of God.

This being said, the true believer resides every day in the most holy place with his/her body being the temple of the Holy Spirit. Indeed we are inhabitants of the new heaven and new earth where the Throne of God and of the Lamb send for the river of the Spirit that nourishes and empowers the life the believer as we are the fruit on the tree of life to heal the nations.

A REFLECTION

Perhaps the greatest of joys comes from the studying of Scripture. As I read and re-read the passages, I find peace and comfort as well as new insights and understanding. It is most important to understand that our Bibles contain text that have spanned thousand of years and different cultural situations. I am reminded of a scene from James Michener's novel The Source where the comment is made that if you wanted to truly understand Judaism read the Book of Deuteronomy through 5 times. And so it is with Scripture. My personal feelings are that to really understand Christianity, one must read the Book of Hebrews through several times and then relate it to what you read in the other writings.

But these are my thoughts. Myself, I am trying to understand what the apostles of Jesus would have understood the implication of his teachings in light of their first century Jewish culture. It is always interesting to delve into the Scriptures and I hope that you will also find it rewarding.

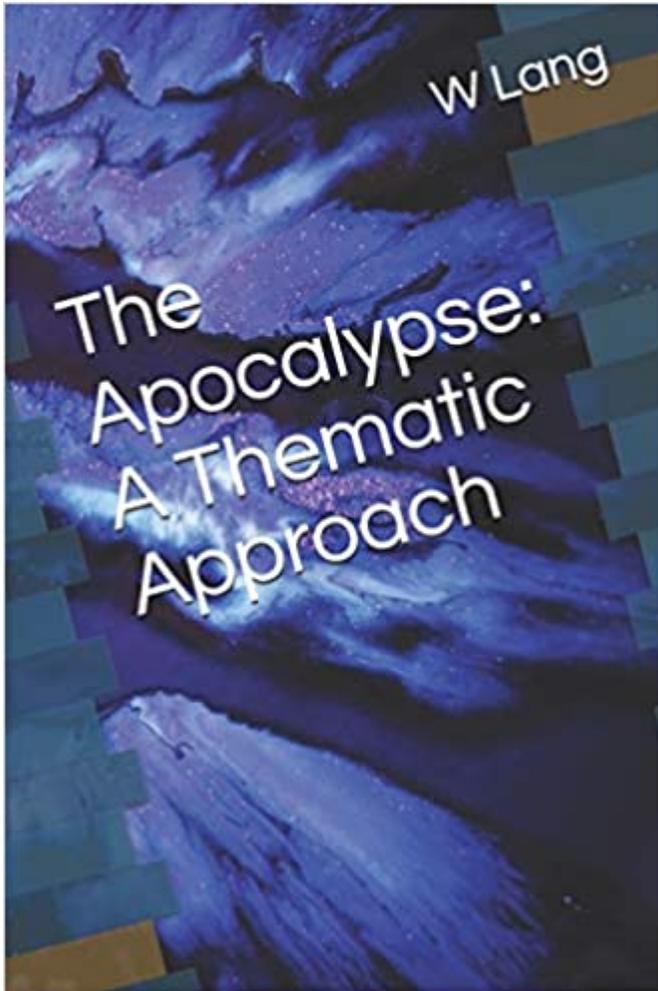
A WORD OF SCRIPTURE

Everything in this world has its moment,
a season of ripening and falling away:
Moments of birthing and moments of dying;
moments of planting and moments of reaping.
Moments of killing and moments of healing;
moments of demolition and moments of building.
Moments of weeping and moments of laughing;
moments of mourning and moments of dancing.
Moments of scattering stones and moments of gathering stones;
moments of embracing and moments of distance.
Moments of seeking and moments of losing;
moments of clinging and moments of releasing.
Moments of tearing and moments of mending;
moments of silence and moments of talking.
Moments of loving and moments of hating;
moments of warring and moments of peacemaking.

(Translation from *Ecclesiastes Annotated & Explained*, by Rami Shapiro)

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My book of poetry, **Midnight Musings: Thoughts from a Restless Mind**, is also available on Amazon and also Amazon Kindle. Your patronage and thoughts would be appreciated.