

The *Revelation*
of John
The Apocalypse

Thirty years ago I was ordained.
In my denomination we have
"16 Fundamental Truths"

That is our doctrinal statement.
Of the 16 "truths" the last 4 are
about the End Times:

- the Rapture of the Church
- the Millennial Reign
- the Final Judgment
- New Heavens and New Earth

So I spent the two years prior to my
ordination studying *The Revelation*.

I went to three seminars where
"experts" shared all about it.

And they all had different positions.
I have always found John's
Revelation to be... ..confusing.

My position became:

God is in Charge.

He did not tell us enough to figure it
out.

We shouldn't worry about it.

The meta-message of *Revelation* is
actually simple:

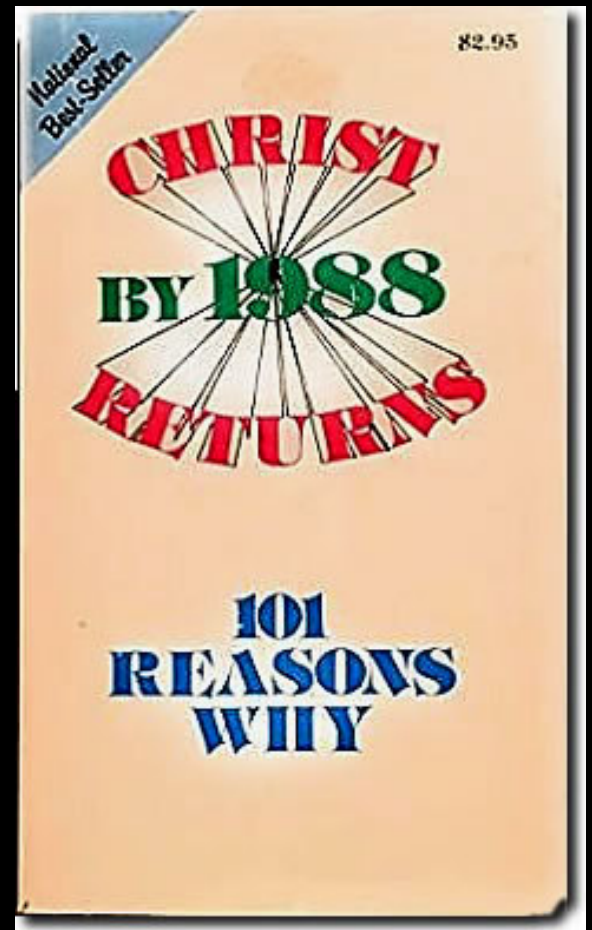
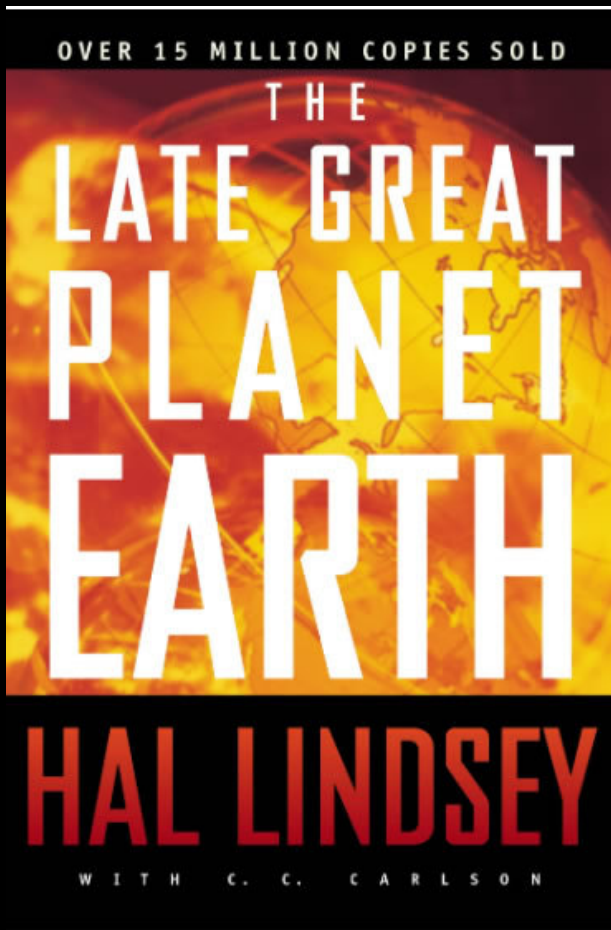
There is a Cosmic War between
light and darkness...
good and evil...
And Jesus Wins.

The sad truth is that Christians
have always been obsessed with
trying to figure it out.

Eschatology

ἔσχατον = "last"

The study of the "last days."



The Late Great Planet Earth

came out in 1970.

In 1974 Hal Lindsey and his book were featured on a primetime TV special...17 million people tuned in. 28 million copies of the book were sold.

In 1982 Colin Deal came out with his book: *101 Reasons Why Christ will Return by 1988.*

My church in little Troy Alabama had Colin Deal with us for 2-3 days...and he was selling his book. I bought a copy!



Dallas Powell



Spoiler alert: Christ never actually returned

Reviewed in the United States on February 17, 2018

I read this book voraciously as a teenager in the 1980s and believed every word. I even wrote a school paper on the Jupiter Effect because of this book. When 1988 came and went, I looked for other signs that pointed to when Christ would return during my lifetime. Boy, was I disappointed.

Please understand...

I am NOT making fun of the biblical text. I AM making fun at those who try to figure it out.

"Stepping into the *Revelation* from the rest of the New Testament is to

enter into a strange, bizarre new world; and this is true even in the days of *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*. Instead of narratives, arguments, or plain statements of fact, the *Revelation* is full of angels, trumpets, and earthquakes; of strange beasts, dragons, and bottomless pits.

Most believers, therefore, take one of two extremes: some simply avoid it in despair; others take an exaggerated interest in it, thinking they will find here all the keys to the end of the world" (Preface p. ix)

Revelation: A New Covenant
Commentary, Gordon D. Fee (2011)

v3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him asking: "Tell us when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

[After a lot of apocalyptic sayings]

v32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Mark 13

Greek: "apocalypse"

- "to reveal"...OR "the revealing"
OR "to uncover what is hidden"

Predictions that Failed:

180's – the Montanist movement

Maximilla, one of the main women
who was a prophet announced cir.

*179AD: "After me there is no more
prophecy, but only the end of the
world."*

500 – Julius Africanus predicted the
End was coming in year 500 based

on his calculations of the size of Noah's Ark.

Hippolytus of Rome also predicted the return of Christ at the year 500 based on his reading of years from the book of *Daniel*.

1000 – some thought this marked the end of the 1,000 year reign.

There was a lot of anxiety that the end was coming. This led to many seeking forgiveness with God – but the end did not come.

One commentator says of this
"prediction:"

"It could not have been the End
because most people did not even
really know what year it was."

1524 Feb 20 – Johannes Stoffler
predicted would be the End...and
the beginning of the 1,000 reign
based on a planetary alignment in
the constellation Pisces.

So Stoffler even predicted the day!
But he was bested by Michael Stifel

1533 – Oct 19 at 8:00am

Stifel was a mathematician and a pastor. He was fascinated by numerology. Based on statistical calculations of the words and letters in various passages he calculated that the End would happen at 8:00am on Oct 19th.

He and most of his congregation sold all their possessions and met in the church on the evening of

Oct 18 praying and waiting for the End.

After the End did NOT happen, Stifel was arrested for disturbing the peace. His close friend, Martin Luther, secured his release.

Stifel resigned from being a pastor and became a professor of mathematics where he published several works.

He should have stuck to Math!

The following "sects" started (or were bolstered) with predictions of the END:

1770 – the Shakers

1844 – Seventh Day Adventists
(1964 was another date)

1874 – Jehovah's Witnesses
(1914 – another date)

1891 – the Latter Day Saints

1936 – Worldwide Church of God
(and several other dates)

2000 – There were many
predictions around the world – Y2K

There have been numerous predictions in the last 10-12 years based on alignment of planets, blood moons, the Shemitah and other Jewish "signs."

What is The Point?

The *Revelation* of John is confusing enough that even those who *THINK* they have it figured out...have been **WRONG.**

[22 min]

Questions thus far?

I am going to load some readings from other apocalyptic writings of the second century for Friday.

This will help you "see" and understand the genre.