



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
*Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week*

## **Mysterious Visions**

Most of us aren't big on visions. I can't remember the last time – or really any time – I had a vision. Either that, or I haven't recognized a vision for what it really is!

John had a vision – and what a vision it was! Basically the whole book of Revelation is John's vision of the coming world. There have been a lot of people who have looked at this wonderful book in a number of ways. There always seem to be people in the world who are looking at Armageddon and thinking that we are at that time in the history of the world.

Others have looked at the whole book and feel that it is written in the pattern of a liturgical service with openings, hymns, prayers and the like within it. Some have taken small parts of it and turned it into a novel or a story gone in visionary form.

Basically, John had a vision. He felt that it came from God and, as misunderstood as it has been – including in our age – it has withstood assaults over the ages and is considered one of our sacred books.

I have an odd idea about the Revelation of John – and I can pretty much guarantee that it will not be widely accepted as a means of interpretation. Each of us needs to read this book and let the vision “happen” in our own minds. It's sort of like listening to a story rather than watching a movie. We make our own pictures rather than having someone else tell us what the story is all about. We “see” what John is talking about and in its own way it becomes helpful to us. I suppose that sounds rather silly considering we send our pastors to school for so many years so they can come back and interpret the scriptures for us. But there is more to interpreting than pulling something apart and trying to figure out what the author was talking about.

If we are in jail, it's easier to relate to Paul's writings when he was in the same situation. Hearing the story of Paul's shipwreck brought back memories of being in a hurricane on the ocean. In other words, our given situation sometimes – often – brings a new interpretation into our lives. This doesn't mean that one is better than another, only that we are more able to hear something better at one time than another.

So it is with the vision of John. There are times when we are more open to vision, to seeing something new on the horizon, than we are at other times. Don't give up on Revelation. Take it slowly. Savor what John is saying about God, about the kingdom of heaven and the like. Try not to "interpret" but be open to new pictures of God's rule from day to day.



John was a mysterious man. Quite frankly, we are mysterious people. I really don't know anyone as well as I know myself and there is always a part of myself that I keep hidden – that which makes me me! You do the same. But that hiddenness is what makes life interesting. I may not like the way you think about a certain subject, but our discussions make life a lot more interesting than if we agreed about everything. That would be boring!

We are mysterious to each other – let's keep it that way!

*TMK*

-- *Week of July 18, 2010*