

END TIMES PROPHECY PART 2.1 **INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION**

The Lord's Day, 19th August 2018, Reading: Revelation 1

Our coverage of 1 Corinthians 15, on “The resurrection of life”, was really just a preparation for this, but today, we start into a study of End Times Prophecy and The Revelation.

THE APOSTLE JOHN, THE “DISCIPLE JESUS LOVED”, UNDER THE PERSECUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, IMPRISONED ON THE ISLE OF PATMOS, NEAR THE END OF THE 1ST CENTURY, RECEIVED THIS LAST BOOK OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, CALLED “THE REVELATION”, WHEN HE WAS, APPARENTLY, THE LAST REMAINING APOSTLE. The Revelation has been used and abused and misunderstood by millions, for almost 2,000 years, a source of intrigue, and curiosity, and even confusion, for many. And in the past 100 years or so, a lukewarm, self-satisfied, self-seeking, 'Evangelical' church, which has cared more for its own respectability than for the Truth of God, has largely either relegated this book to the 'too hard basket,' or set it aside as something unhelpful, or too controversial.

WE ARE ENTERING A NEW DARK AGE – THE REVELATION IS OBSCURED: *I have said it many times over the years, and the blame for that darkness, that gross ignorance of the great majority of Christians and Churches, must lie squarely at the feet of pastors who are false teachers to a man, because they teach lies, instead of God's Truth! I make no apology for saying this, in fact if we don't face this fact squarely, we are exacerbating the problem, and working for the enemies of God instead of against them.*

*Many years ago, when I was involved in the local Ministers' Fraternal, a Baptist pastor at the time actually boasted that in the years he had been at that church, he had managed to keep hidden from his congregation, what his personal view of **The Revelation** was. (By the way, it is well-known that the Baptist Union has been under the influence of the Jesuits for many years!) I didn't bother to comment at the time, but I couldn't help but wonder, what such a man thought he was doing occupying the pulpit, if he was unwilling or unable to teach the straightforward and obvious doctrines and applications of this glorious book of prophecy, a book which is unique in many ways, and promises a blessing to all who read it:*

1:3, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

THIS IS MERELY SYMPTOMATIC OF THE REALITY OF THE GROSS ERRORS AND APOSTACY OF ALL DENOMINATIONS IN OUR TIMES, even the most respected (including Baptists, and I mean General Baptists, Independent Baptists, and Reformed Baptists, just so that I make myself clear), because all the seminaries and all the churches have been thoroughly infiltrated by the Jesuits, and now their labours are bearing much poisoned fruit, as they have made Roman Catholic heresy mainstream in the Protestant Churches (most of which of course are no longer truly Protestant!).

REFORMATION AND COUNTER-REFORMATION HISTORY MUST BE UNDERSTOOD: I have printed copies of an historical timeline, which shows highlights of the forces of **REFORMATION** and **COUNTER-REFORMATION** throughout the whole Christian age, which I think will be an eye-opener to those who have never bothered to check out the historical context of the doctrines they have received, and I encourage you all to do your own research on those few, basic but very important facts of history. One of the main things the Jesuits have been working so hard on, is to rob us of our Protestant history, which is punctuated with glorious victories of Christ and His people for 2,000 years! If the Jesuits can rewrite both history and Church doctrine, they have served Father Antichrist well, and they have largely done so over the best part of five centuries!

THE PROTESTANT ALLIANCE AND THE TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE BATTLE TODAY: I must say that **THE PROTESTANT ALLIANCE** is one of the most important missions in the whole world, as it publishes many brief accounts of important events in Church history, suitable for children and whole families (many of their articles are available to read online in their publication called **THE REFORMER**). Personally, it is my unshakable conviction, that The Reformer is mandatory reading for all Christian families – if you find it hard work to read history, and I do too, then at least acquaint yourself with Foxe's Book of Martyrs and articles by the Protestant Alliance, and you will be better schooled in Church History than the average pastor! Alongside this historical work of the **Protestant Alliance**, the work of the **TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY** is paramount also, as a keeper of what they call "protestant" and "uncorrupted" translations of the Scriptures. These two organisations were founded in 1845 and 1831 respectively, at a time when the Church was facing an onslaught of evil and corruption unsurpassed in Church history, and by the grace of God both of

them still stand faithful today, leading the charge against error and apostasy on a world-wide scale.

THE SAD THING ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF THE REVELATION AND END TIMES PROPHECY, IS THAT THERE IS FAR MORE ERROR TAUGHT ABOUT IT THAN TRUTH. THIS IS ALMOST ENTIRELY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE JESUITS AND THE COUNTER-REFORMATION. On the subject of this book, commonly called 'eschatology' or 'end times prophecy', the whole visible Church, worldwide, is almost swallowed up with two major false interpretations of **The Revelation**, and both of these interpretations can be easily traced to their source as the work of the **JESUITS** (the most treacherous, insidious, and ungodly religious order in the history of Christianity, a Roman Catholic order, also known as **THE SOCIETY OF JESUS**, which is a blasphemous use of the Lord's name, when used by men of such gross dishonesty, and deliberate, diabolical deception).

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION, THE GREATEST REVIVAL OF TRUE RELIGION IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, REALLY BROKE FORTH IN 1517 AD when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral in Germany. Simultaneously the Reformation had been under way across Europe and England. This moment in Church history was the moment when the Word of God, the Bible, was both printed in the common languages of Europe, and preached to the common people, after centuries of Papal darkness, oppression, and deception.

NO SOONER HAD THE REFORMATION BEGUN THAN SATAN AND HIS ROMAN ANTICHRIST RAISED UP A COUNTER-REFORMATION, AND THIS WAS SPEARHEADED BY THE JESUITS. In fact, the same year Martin Luther had the Bible first printed in the German language, 1534 AD, the Jesuit order was founded by Ignatius de Loyola! This pattern continued (the Jesuits dogging the steps of the Reformers): another notable example is **the Gunpowder Plot of Guy Fawkes and the Jesuits' in 1605 AD**, an attempt to blow up the new Protestant King and Parliament. It came right in the midst of a move, by the new King, James I, and the Protestant Church of England, to provide what we now know as the King James Bible/Authorised Version – the decision was made at the Hampton Court Conference in 1603, the translation work began in 1607, and the **AV was finally published in 1611**, one of the greatest victories over the forces of darkness in almost 2,000 years, to the praise of the glory of God's grace alone!

But to get right to the main point of all this, as we begin to study The Revelation, it is absolutely essential to know that,

THE JESUITS HAVE SPAWNED TWO MAJOR CONSPIRACIES OF MISINTERPRETATION OF BIBLE PROPHECY: the PRETERIST interpretation and the FUTURIST interpretation. To explain them very briefly,

THE PRETERIST view says that practically all of Revelation is already fulfilled, and the Antichrist was one of the Roman Emperors way back in the days of the apostles, or just after;

THE FUTURIST view says that practically all of Revelation is yet to be fulfilled, and a future Antichrist is yet to arise who will bring on the most brutal persecution in a time they call “The Great Tribulation”, shortly before Christ returns.

BOTH OF THESE INTERPRETATIONS ARE PURE FABRICATION AND LIES, INSTIGATED BY THE JESUITS THEMSELVES! (I don't say this lightly! This is not a throw-away statement! Look at the historical time line and check the facts for yourself! I admit that it is largely the PLYMOUTH BRETHERN and the AMERICAN BAPTISTS, (PROTESTANT CHURCHES), who have been the great perpetrators of FUTURISM (ALSO CALLED DISPENSATIONALISM), but their doctrine came from the Jesuits, and this is proof of the Jesuit infiltration of Protestant churches and seminaries – that is why I cannot recommend a single seminary or Bible college today! In fact, I strongly urge a complete separation from all such colleges – you cannot be “holy” or separate from evil, if you are being educated by the Jesuits and their followers! Make no mistake, the leaven of the Jesuits does have its effect – e.g. some who have been trained by them have escaped almost all of the Antichrist's errors of doctrine, except one: i.e. they go along with Rome's new bible versions and discard the KJV, which seems a small thing to some, but is probably the worst error of all, because it continues to sow the seeds of Popery into the minds of all who use the corrupted versions.) None of these Jesuit heresies can be supported by the Scriptures; and the Jesuits, as masters of deception, have done their job well, because both of these most commonly held views of Bible prophecy are part of their Counter-Reformation attack on Protestantism and God's Truth, as both these devious systems of interpretation (Preterism and Futurism) attempt to overthrow long standing sound doctrine, and the historic cry of all the Protestant Churches, that the Popes of Rome are the Antichrist, “the man of sin” of the Scriptures – on one hand, the Preterists

*say the days of Antichrist are over, and on the other hand, the **Futurists** say the days of Antichrist have not even begun yet, therefore, either way, the **Pope cannot be the Antichrist!** The Jesuits have indeed done their job well. They have control of all Protestant denominations, and the pastors trained by them can appear to be honest and moderate, as they present to you a range of possible interpretations of the Revelation, but conveniently leave out or denigrate the one which is true! Just for the skeptics, to show that I am speaking about the real history of the Church and of the Jesuits, **I will quote briefly from GE Ladd's book, "The Blessed Hope," on FRANCISCO RIBERA, A SPANISH JESUIT** (This information can be found in the Encyclopedia Britannica, and Wikipedia as well):*

In 1590 Ribera published a commentary on the Revelation as a counter interpretation to the prevailing view among Protestants which identified the Papacy with the Antichrist. Ribera applied all of Revelation to the end time rather than to the history of the church. Antichrist, he taught, would be a single evil person who would be received by the Jews and who would rebuild Jerusalem.

*And so, following the Jesuits, the modern Dispensationalist school of prophecy introduces an entirely new concept in Scripture interpretation, as **GE Ladd puts it in "The Blessed Hope,"***

*The hope of the Church throughout the early centuries was the second coming of Christ, not a pretribulation rapture. If the blessed hope is in fact a pretribulation rapture, then the Church has never known that hope through most of its history, **FOR THE IDEA OF A PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE DID NOT APPEAR IN PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION UNTIL THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.***

*And again, don't take my word for it. Don't take **GE Ladd's** word for it. **Check the facts of history for yourself!** If the modern Baptists are correct, then where was the Spirit of Truth during the first 18 centuries of the Church? Are the modern Baptists and the Brethren better than the Spirit of Truth? They must be in their own minds, for they do violence to both the Scriptures and to the understanding the Church has had for 1800 years! By the grace of God, I will prove all this to you from the Scriptures as we continue, but if you are already indoctrinated by these errors, please stick with us and hear what I have to say, because this study will take many months.*

THEREFORE, ONE OF THE GREATEST ERRORS OF OUR TIMES STEMS MAINLY FROM THE JESUIT RIBERA (1590), whose works gave rise to the popular modern doctrines of the future 'great tribulation,' the 'pre-tribulation rapture', the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, etc., (i.e. Jesus comes for His people not at the end of the world, as the Bible plainly says, but some years before that, leaving a world full of unbelievers and substandard Christians to go through a special time of 'tribulation' and a Jewish 'millennium'), so I sincerely ask you all to consider carefully what you believe about End Times prophecy (Many have departed from Scripture and follow this Jesuit, Ribera, without knowing it!)., and to carefully consider this reference to real history, which proves that most Christians (and most pastors) today haven't got a clue what The Revelation is about, but they are almost all eating out of the hand of the Roman Antichrist, e.g. all the talk about the supposed rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, is nothing more or less than a Jesuit Counter-reformation invention! So the appalling ignorance of the Church today on both the Bible and Church history, due to the great success of the Ecumenical Movement, has allowed the errors to continue and increase.

God willing, I will have more to say about the overall systems of interpretation of the Book in later sessions, but **I want to mention the subject at the outset so as to leave no room for misunderstanding, and also to challenge those who are deceived already by the Jesuits and their helpers, to consult the Scriptures:** Anybody who either avoids **The Revelation**, accepts at face value the views taught by a particular preacher, church, seminary or Bible college, or who mindlessly ridicules the idea of “conspiracy theories,” is a major part of the problem, and is aiding and abetting the Antichrist himself! In fact, **the moment you hear somebody 'pooh pooh' the idea of 'conspiracy', you know immediately that person is working for the enemy, because of the simple fact that, Satan himself has been the instigator of the most diabolical and ongoing conspiracy of evil against Christ and His Church, since time began, and The Revelation is the capstone of God's Word on Christ and His Church overcoming Satan and Antichrist. In other words, to deny 'conspiracy' is to deny the light of the noonday sun! To deny 'conspiracy' is to deny everything the Bible says about Christ and Satan, about Christ and Antichrist, about the true Church of Christ and the unholy “whore” of “Mystery Babylon”! Make no mistake, those who deny conspiracy are enemies of Christ! Our duty is not to deny reality, or to deny the Word of God, nor to keep the Church in the dark,**

as both the Church of Rome and the Evangelicals who follow her satanic lead do.

Therefore, let us hear the Word of God!

1. THE MESSAGE OF THE REVELATION – JESUS CHRIST

Revelation 1:1, “The revelation of Jesus Christ...” *These are the very opening words of The Revelation! It is all about the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Lord Jesus is revealed here, as He is in all the Scriptures, as the Almighty God: Revelation 1:8, “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.”

In case there is any doubt about whether this verse speaks of Jesus, that He is this Alpha and Omega, this Almighty God, it is made clear in the previous verse: “1:7 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.” Clearly, it is the Lord Jesus Who was “pierced” by crucifixion, and it is He also Who shall “come with clouds,” as Luke the evangelist had already mentioned in Acts 1, in his record of the ascension of Jesus up to heaven in the plain sight of the people:

Acts 1:1-11, “1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 1:2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 1:4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. **1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 1:10 And while they looked**

stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? **this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.**” So it is Jesus Who is to come with clouds.

JESUS “WAS” THE ALMIGHTY GOD FROM ALL ETERNITY, BEFORE HE CAME TO EARTH, as the same apostle John, who gave us the Revelation, tells us in the very beginning of his gospel (**John 1:1-3**, “In the beginning **was** the Word, and the Word **was** with God, and the Word **was** God. The same **was** in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.”);

BUT HE NOT ONLY ALWAYS “WAS,” BUT HE ALWAYS “IS” - He declared Himself to be the Eternal **“I AM!”** The same **“I AM”** to Whom Moses spoke when he was sent to confront Pharaoh and say, “Let my people go,” **Exodus 3:14: “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”** And Jesus said to the Jews when they challenged Him about knowing their father Abraham, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, **I am**” (**John 8:58**)! Then, considering another aspect of His Person, from the moment He was born as the incarnate Only-begotten Son of God, from that time on, **He “is” eternally, perpetually, the divine and human “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:16);** He **“is”** “Emanuel ... God with us”; He **“is”** for ever enthroned in heaven, ruling over all things, which is reinforced in His letter to the Church at Thyatira: **Revelation 2:26-27**, “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 2:27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.” - **Jesus is saying He has already received this – i.e. He had already received from the Father His throne, and He said this about 2,000 years ago! Therefore He “is” reigning now, because He began to reign as King of kings the moment He ascended to heaven's throne!** And Peter boldly preached this risen and reigning King to the Jews in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, as he expounded the prophecies that were fulfilled in Christ's ascension to heaven's throne: **Acts 2:32-36**, “**This Jesus hath God raised up**, whereof we all are witnesses. 2:33 Therefore **being by the right hand of God exalted**, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 2:34 For David is not ascended into the

heavens: but he saith himself, **The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 2:35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 2:36** Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that **God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Peter, preaching Psalm 110, explains that the man, Jesus of Nazareth, is already risen, glorified, and ascended, as the heir to David's throne, (which is the eternal throne of God), at the very right hand of God exalted, reigning over His enemies now! How amazing is it that the Futurists completely ignore and deny the facts of the first Christian sermon by Peter, by saying Jesus is not reigning yet!**

And not only is it true of Jesus, that He was and He is, but also that He “is to come”, as John says, in Revelation 1:7, “Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him...”

All this, undoubtedly and exclusively, speaks of Jesus. In the light of all this first chapter of the Revelation, for anyone to imagine that the “Alpha and Omega” is God the Father only, and not Jesus, is just nonsense, for this is all about the Lord Jesus! When I say it is all about Jesus exclusively, I don't mean it excludes the Father or the Holy Ghost, because as Jesus said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). If you speak of one of the divine Persons of the Trinity, in one sense, you naturally speak of all three, because they are one; they are inseparable: all three Persons are eternal; all three are our Creator; all three are Jehovah, the Lord God Almighty; all three uphold and rule the creation, yet there are distinct roles in the Persons of the Godhead, and our redemption was wrought especially and personally by our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is “God ... manifest in the flesh”; He is our Passover Lamb; He is our Good Shepherd, and so on. But the Revelation is especially about the Lord Jesus. It is “the revelation of Jesus Christ!”

John testifies further, in Revelation 1:11, that this is the Lord Jesus Whom he saw, and Who spoke with him: “1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 1:11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia....” And then he goes on further to show that it is Jesus he speaks of here. So yet a third time, this glorious fact is witnessed to, and clarified even more: Revelation 1:17-19, “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: 1:18 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. 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen,

and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter..” ***It can never be said that God has died, that the Eternal Spirit has ceased to exist (“God is a spirit” – John Ch. 4, He cannot die.), but here we have a strange statement, made by the Alpha and Omega, the Almighty God, “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!”***

*Charles Wesley spoke of the unfathomable wonder of the incarnation in his hymn, and it is only the wonder of the incarnation of Christ as Emmanuel, God with us, which can explain such a statement. Wesley well expresses the praise due to the Lord in this: “’Tis mystery all; the Immortal dies; Who can explore His strange design? In vain the firstborn seraph tries to sound the depths of love divine! ’Tis mercy all! Let earth adore! Let angel minds enquire no more!” This can only be the Lord Jesus, Who is both God and man in the one, miraculous Person of Christ, for only his humanity could die, that which is eternal cannot die! “God is a spirit” (John 4:24), but Christ is both God and man, and in Christ, and Christ alone, we have the most amazing, the most stupendous, the most glorious thing in time and eternity - “God ... manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16)! This is revelation indeed! You cannot explain it; you cannot fathom it; but you cannot deny it either, because it is the central theme and testimony of all the Scriptures and all the prophets, and **The Revelation**, the last book of Holy Scripture caps it all off! It is supremely, **The Revelation of Jesus Christ!***

Here, in the first few verses, in the opening chapter of this Book (The Revelation of Jesus Christ) is a threefold witness to Jesus, “the Alpha and Omega ... the Almighty!”, He “who was and is and is to come”.

Paul gives Him the same praise and glory in Romans 11:36, “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

Jesus had said earlier to the Jews, who did not believe on Him, who refused to receive Him as the incarnate, Almighty God: John 5:39, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” He is plainly telling them that all the Scriptures are a testimony to Him, to the incarnate, Almighty God, to Him Who is “God ... manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16), to Him Who “was and is and is to come!”

Is it any wonder then, that the apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians, “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him

crucified.” **(1 Corinthians 2:2)** For to speak of anything else, would be to ignore the whole purpose and import of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation! All the Scriptures speak pre-eminently of Christ! And the Scriptures declare that Christ must “have the pre-eminence in all things!” **(Colossians 1:18)**

SO THE MESSAGE OF THE REVELATION IS NOTHING ELSE BUT JESUS CHRIST THE LORD! John fell at His feet as a dead man, when he saw Him: “1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 1:14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 1:15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 1:16 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. 1:17 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: 1:18 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. 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter...”

If John fell at His feet, as a dead man, what do we expect to find when we read The Revelation? Do we expect to find the answers to all sorts of riddles, or some idea of how and when Jesus is to return, to calculate numbers and formulae, or some idea of the progress of world politics, and conquests for land and power and wealth, or whether the battle of Armageddon has yet begun or how it will come about? If these sorts of things are your purpose in reading the Revelation, then be careful you don't just find more questions than answers, and end up in confusion, and be led astray after some supposed prophecy expert, into false doctrine, because if that is your purpose (to divine the future), then you have missed the whole point of this book of prophecy. Even the first disciples of Jesus missed this self-same point, until Jesus corrected them, as we see in His answer to them just before He ascended into heaven: Acts 1:6-9, They asked Him, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? (NB: Modern Futurists and Dispensationalists continue to major on this very thing! They cannot let it go! They are obsessed with an obsession spawned by the Jesuits, about the

fantasy of a future rebuilding Jerusalem!) 1:7 And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons**, which the Father hath put in his own power. 1:8 **But ye shall receive power**, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and **ye shall be witnesses unto me** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. **1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.**” *It is as if Jesus was addressing a bunch of fidgety little children, whose eyes and minds were continually wandering and not concentrating on what He was saying to them, as if He needed to say to them, “Look at Me! Listen to what I'm saying! FORGET THE POLITICS OF THE WORLD! I AM ABOUT TO ASCEND TO HEAVEN'S THRONE! Why would you muddle your little minds about earthly matters, about politics and nations, when I am about to ascend the eternal throne of God, to rule over all creation, and to go and prepare a place for you to rule with me?” AFTER 2,000 YEARS, SOME CHRISTIANS ARE STILL OBSESSED WITH THE VERY THINGS JESUS DASHED FROM THE MINDS OF THOSE FIRST DISCIPLES IN THESE FEW WORDS! Why do they not simply look upon Jesus and never let their eyes depart from Him? Isn't it wonderful that great men wrestle with the Scriptures to find only what little children already know, as the apostle Peter preached in a few words, the opening sermon of the inaugurated and anointed Christian Church at Pentecost (Acts 2), that Jesus is both Lord (Jehovah) and Christ (King of kings), and that His reign shall have no end. So, may God help us all to meet the Lord Jesus as we read this priceless book, and to worship at His feet as John did, and for ever look upon Him! For Christ, (and Christ alone), is the Message of the Revelation! ALL WHO GET IT WRONG, DO SO, BY MISSING THIS ONE THING, SO, PLEASE GET THIS, AND REMIND YOURSELF OF IT ALL THE WAY THROUGH – CHRIST, (AND CHRIST ALONE), IS THE MESSAGE OF THE REVELATION! AMEN.*

END TIMES PROPHECY PART 2.2

THE MESSENGERS OF THE REVELATION

Continued, The Lord's Day 26th August 2018 – Reading: Revelation 1

IN OUR FIRST SESSION, LAST LORD'S DAY, WE MADE THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT OBSERVATION ABOUT THE BOOK OF SCRIPTURE CALLED THE REVELATION – IT IS “THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST,” as the very opening words declare (1:1); it is supremely and exclusively about The Lord Jesus Christ, and the purpose of the book is to reveal to the reader, The Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal King over all creation, Who is already seated on heaven's throne, ruling over all.

WE SAW THAT, IN THE VERY FIRST CHAPTER, CHRIST IS REVEALED AS, “ALPHA AND OMEGA”, “THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING,” “THE LORD, WHICH IS, AND WHICH WAS, AND WHICH IS TO COME,” “THE ALMIGHTY,” AND “THE FIRST AND THE LAST” (1:8, 11, 17). In view of this, isn't it just amazing that any human being can fail to see that Jesus is Almighty God, and that Almighty God is a Trinity (three-in-one)! In reality, it is only those who will not see, who do not see it, because it is written in black and white.

WE SAW ALSO THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, (THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD, (THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY GHOST), IS CLEARLY TAUGHT, (although that doctrine is weakened in modern Bible versions which are all translated from what is called THE “CRITICAL TEXT” OR THE “NU” (NESTLES UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES') GREEK TEXT, WHICH OMITTS THE WORDS “the beginning and the ending” in verse 8, and “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” in verse 11) – but in spite of the treacherous work of the Jesuits and their helpers, and the ancient Alexandrian false teachers whose corrupt texts the Roman Church follows, who have made such changes, and who pervert sound doctrine in every way, so that even among God's elect there is confusion, and WHOSE PERVERSE SCHOLARSHIP HAS ONLY ONE DESIGN: TO BRING EVERY SOUL UNDER THE IRON HEEL OF THE ROMAN ANTICHRIST, THE “BEAST” THAT IS FEATURED THROUGHOUT THE REVELATION. All this doctrine is very plain, hence we saw that the risen, ascended, and reigning Lord Jesus Christ is the Message of The Revelation.

This glorious Lord Jesus, Whose presence before Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, was “a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining around about” him (Acts 26:13), and Whose “countenance” before John, was likewise, “as the sun shineth in his strength” (Revelation 1:16),

when John “fell at his feet as dead” (1:17) – this great Light can never be obscured by even the most wicked of men and their most devious and deceptive schemes! Let His Name be praised for ever! He is not only **the Message of The Revelation**, but **the Message of every Word of Scripture!** But if Jesus is **The Message**, who are the messengers of **The Revelation**? So, this is our next point of instruction in the first chapter of Revelation – The messengers of the Revelation.

2. **THE MESSENGERS OF THE REVELATION**

FIRSTLY, John is the “messenger” who brings us the Revelation, the “seer” who sees the vision, or the prophet who receives the message from God, and delivers it to God's people: **Revelation 1:3**, “...he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John;” **Revelation 1:4**, “John to the seven churches which are in Asia....” It is John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (**John 13:23**), who at the last supper, “leaned on Jesus' bosom,” who bears the glad tidings of this message, this “revelation of Jesus Christ,” to us.

SECONDLY, the angel of the Lord is the messenger (i.e. “his angel” (1:3). In Greek, (the language this book was originally written in), it is “angelos”, and it means “messenger.” We call those holy, spirit beings, who serve God and His people, “angels”, but the word simply means “messenger.” The purpose of the holy angels is defined briefly by Paul in **Hebrews 1:14**, “Are they not all **ministering spirits**, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” It is because we have so commonly used the word “angel”, that we may have forgotten what it means – therefore “angel of the Lord” or “his angel”, on the surface of it, simply means the Lord's messenger, but who is this messenger of the Revelation? Well,

THIRDLY, as we have already seen, the Lord Jesus Himself is the Messenger, for He appeared to John and spoke to him, revealing Himself as the “Alpha and Omega.” Jesus is especially “the angel of the Lord”, as we see in so many places in Scripture, when the Lord God has chosen to reveal Himself to His people, (Although He is not in human form, He has **appeared** in human form - “God is a spirit”, as Jesus told the woman at the well of Samaria, according to **John 4:24**, therefore God is not like a man with a visible body, but when He chose to reveal Himself to man, He “humbled himself” and became a man (**Philippians 2:8**), and long before Christ appeared in the flesh, He appeared as a sort of premonition, or a preview if you like, of what Christ would be like when He finally should

appear in all His glory as the risen and reigning King of kings. The theologians use the terms, “epiphany,” and “theophany,” meaning appearance or manifestation of God, to describe the appearance of Christ in Old Testament times) – you don’t need to go into this, but I simply mention it as terms you might run across, but let us see some examples:

E.G. THE VISITATION OF GOD BEFORE THE BIRTH OF SAMSON IS A CLASSIC CASE OF WHAT IS CALLED 'THEOPHANY' – GOD APPEARING AS A MAN. This instance alone would suffice to show clearly how the Lord Himself appeared to men before He appeared in actual human form at Bethlehem: Judges 13, “13:2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. 13:3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. ...13:8 Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. 13:9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. 13:10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day. 13:11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. 13:12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him? 13:13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. 13:14 She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe. 13:15 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. 13:16 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD. 13:17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honor? 13:18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? 13:19 So Manoah

took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the LORD: and the angel did wonderously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. 13:20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that **the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.** 13:21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the LORD. 13:22 **And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.** *As we have noted already, “God is a spirit,” but His eternal plan had always been to become a man and redeem His lost and sinful people, and so, when He made certain important visitations to His people on earth, He appeared as a man, but that man did not appear in the flesh until Christ was born.*

WE READ OF A SIMILAR VISITATION OF CHRIST THE LORD, IN PERSON, TO ABRAHAM, WHEN THE LORD CONFIRMED HIS PROMISE TO HIM: Genesis 18, “18:1 And **the LORD appeared unto him** in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 18:2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, **three men stood by him:** and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, 18:3 And said, **My LORD,** if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: 18:4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 18:12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my Lord being old also? 18:13 **And the LORD said unto Abraham,** Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 18:14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. 18:15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh. **18:16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.** 18:17 **And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;** 18:18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 18:19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to

do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. 18:20 **And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 18:21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.** 18:22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.” *Here is a personal visitation of the Lord God Almighty to His servant Abraham, and to the city of Sodom, which He was about to destroy, and He appeared to Abraham, and THE TEXT SPEAKS OF THREE MEN. Abraham went on to plead with the Lord that He might spare Sodom, where his nephew Lot lived with his family. At the end of Abraham's pleading, we read, “18:33 And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place,” and the next verse, (19:1), declares, “And there came TWO ANGELS to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground...” We are told, “the LORD went his way,” and then “There came two angels to Sodom...” One of the “three men” who visited Abraham therefore must be the LORD Himself.*

NOW THAT WE HAVE CONSIDERED HOW THE LORD HAS HISTORICALLY APPEARED TO HIS PEOPLE FROM TIME TO TIME, LET US READ AGAIN THIS FIRST VISION JOHN SAW, AND GET SOMETHING OF THE IMPACT OF IT: Revelation 1:12-18, “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 1:14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 1:15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 1:16 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. 1:17 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: 1:18 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.”

FOURTHLY, it is stated plainly (Revelation 1:4-5), that this message comes, not just from Jesus the second Person of the Godhead, but from the

Triune God: literally from the three Persons of the Godhead – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. **So again, in this context, Christ is revealed as the Messenger:** “1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, **from him which is, and which was, and which is to come;** and **from the seven Spirits** which are before his throne; 1:5 **And from Jesus Christ,** who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.” *This is interesting, in tying together the other references to Christ and the Godhead – **THERE ARE THREE DISTINCT PERSONS MENTIONED HERE:** The term, “him which was, and is, and is to come,” although it undoubtedly refers to Jesus, yet it also refers to the Father, since the three are mentioned here in this context, so that we see the references to the three eternal Persons of the Godhead are almost interchangeable, because their unity is such that, if you speak of one, you speak of all three! **IN FACT, THIS PARTICULAR VERSE, TAKEN IN ITS CONTEXT, IS ONE OF THE CLEAREST REFERENCES TO THE TRINITY WE FIND IN SCRIPTURE, INCLUDING THE HOLY SPIRIT, (REFERRED TO IN A FIGURE OF PERFECTION HERE AS “SEVEN SPIRITS”).** You can speculate about what you think God is like, or what you think of the Trinity, whether you think it is possible or not, that God could be three Persons in one; you can speculate from the point of view of the Unitarians (who say there is really only one Person in the Godhead), or the Pagans (who worship many gods and goddesses), or anybody else who has made up his own mind about God, **but if you want to see what the Scriptures say about the Godhead, here it is!** You either accept it or reject it, but you cannot deny what Scripture says, you cannot deny the testimony of the Scriptures, as Jesus said, “They testify of me!” (**John 5:39**), and in **that** context He was speaking to unbelievers, Jews of whom He said, they “would not come to Him, that (they) might have eternal life!” And how do you have eternal life? You receive the testimony of the Scriptures about Jesus; you confess that He is **The Lord!** Just as in the wilderness, when the Israelites were bitten by snakes, the Lord commanded Moses to make a brass serpent on a pole, and the people were to look upon this and be healed – **THUS SIGNIFYING IN THE LAW, THAT TO MERELY LOOK UPON CHRIST CRUCIFIED AND BELIEVE, IS TO LIVE ETERNALLY!** (I must add, that is, not to look upon a graven image of Christ or the cross, but to look, with the eyes of faith, upon the divine Person of Christ in the Scriptures.)*

FIFTHLY, the revelation of the Lord, to His angel, to John, is passed on to the “angels of the seven churches” (Revelation 1:4, “John to the seven churches which are in Asia,” 1:11, “What thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia,” 1:20, “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches”).

*Here we see the term “angel” used in its most basic form of meaning – i.e. “a messenger”. **HERE, THE TERM “ANGELS” SIMPLY REFERS TO THE SEVEN PASTORS OR MINISTERS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.***

*A CASUAL READING OF THIS MIGHT GIVE US A KIND OF MYSTICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THIS STATEMENT: so that we might assume that somehow God has a guardian angel posted at every church, and that the angel somehow speaks to the Church, but this is nonsense of course, and it can lead to dangerous heresies about angels, not that God doesn't have angels guarding His Church, but because **THE WHOLE POINT OF THE STATEMENT IS THAT A MESSAGE IS TO BE DELIVERED TO CHURCHES, AND GOD'S METHOD, AS THE SCRIPTURES TESTIFY ABUNDANTLY IN MANY PLACES, IS A MAN APPOINTED TO TEACH AND PREACH** (I admit that, many years ago, as a young Christian, I just assumed this spoke of angels, until the meaning was pointed out to me. I had embraced the doctrine of the Plymouth Brethren, who believe that there is no such thing as “the pastor” or “the minister” of a Church, but that the Lord appoints a number of elders who together rule and teach the Church, but afterwards our pastor pointed out to me that, although there are to be more than one elder in every Church, who together take on the joint responsibility of oversight, there is only one pastor or minister, who is the messenger of the Church, who is also one of the elders – therefore the “angel of the church” is the pastor of the church, so that in God's purpose, He has a pastor or a minister who is responsible for the ministry of the Word to a Church, so the responsibility for all the ministry of the Word of God to a Church falls entirely on that one man God has called and appointed as the minister. **UNTIL I WAS TAUGHT THIS, I JUST HADN'T STOPPED TO CONSIDER HOW RIDICULOUS IT WAS, TO THINK GOD WOULD ACTUALLY SEND ANGELS TO TEACH HIS CHURCH, when the method He Himself had ordained and provided, was “pastors and teachers”, as plainly stated in Ephesians 4. I must add, on this point of eldership, that many make the error of thinking the pastor or minister (“angel” in our text) is superior to the other elders. The minister is not superior! He simply has a different function and calling! He is***

specifically called to the ministry of the Word, whereas other elders are called to the joint oversight of the church together with the minister. It is so important that we get this right, and I thank God He taught me this truth before I was ordained for the ministry, but it took me a long time to discover, by a somewhat long and winding track, what the Westminster Confession and many of the old Protestants had taught for centuries – hence the great value of works such as the Westminster Confession of 1647 and the London Baptist Confession of 1689.

LET US NOTE THE LORD'S ORDAINED METHOD OF SPEAKING TO HIS CHURCH, ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE, (Ephesians 4:10-16), “10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; **12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:** 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

SO, HOW DOES THE LORD TEACH HIS PEOPLE? *Well, He has provided special ministers of the Word for the foundation of His Church, (i.e. the apostles and prophets, and the evangelists who worked alongside them), and these men have given us the Scriptures, but He didn't stop there: since those days of the apostles and prophets, He has provided pastors and teachers, for the ongoing work of the ministry in all the Churches.*

HOW ARE THE SAINTS PERFECTED? HOW IS THE CHURCH EDIFIED? THROUGH THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY – i.e. the ministry of the Word of God, (the Word of God that is, which has been given to us through the apostles, prophets, and evangelists – those special ministers Jesus gave as the foundation of His Church – without these three special gifts, we would not have a New Testament to read today!).

*I mentioned in our first session on **The Revelation**, how mightily the Jesuits have been working to deceive and undermine and destroy everything Protestant, everything which is essentially “the ministry of the Word of God”. Notice also how the Jesuits have even altered this very verse in **Ephesians 4: The Authorised Version is true to the original Greek**, in saying, “the work of **the** ministry,” but in the modern versions, which are based on the Vatican's preferred, altered Greek text (NU – Nestles United Bible Societies, also called MT – Majority Text), it reads, “for the work of **ministry**” (NKJV), leaving out the definite article (“the”), the **MODERN ROMANISED BIBLE VERSIONS SPEAK OF “MINISTRY,” NOT “THE MINISTRY,” AND THE DIFFERENCE IN MEANING IS ASTRONOMICAL, AND THE EFFECTS OF THE ERROR, DEVASTATING!** Because Paul is not speaking here about all sorts of ministry, but specifically the ministry of the Word of God, and this is obvious in his context. Not only is the text perverted by Roman and Alexandrian scholarship, to suit the ecumenical agenda of the Vatican with its Jesuit Counter-Reformers, but the publishers of these perverted bibles are on Rome's side, - e.g. Rupert Murdoch, a Roman Catholic and one of the world's richest men, owns Nelson and Zondervan, which not only promote NKJV and NIV, but all sorts of heresies and heretics like Rick Warren and others as well. They print the KJV as well, a somewhat altered version of it. And many Reformed pastors are deceived by them. This is no coincidence, but, “by their fruits ye shall know them.” **The point here is that the ministry of the Word of God, and the very Word of God itself, are being subtly (but meticulously) downgraded**, so that, e.g. the idea that everybody has a gift, and that the fostering of as many gifts as possible is what makes the body healthy, overshadows the most essential gift Christ has given to His Church for its very health and survival – the ministry of the Word, in the form of “pastors and teachers”, called “angels” (messengers) here in our text. Some churches make tongues and prophecy the best gifts – take a look at them, and see that those churches are sadly lacking in the ministry of the Word, many are overseen by false teachers! Such errors of doctrine on the gifts, have spawned a multitude of foot-loose, self-appointed ministries, which presume to override the God-appointed eldership and ministry of many local Churches. We’ve seen far too many.*

I MAKE NO APOLOGY FOR SAYING THAT THE GIFT OF PASTOR AND TEACHER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT GIFT TO THE CHURCH IN OUR TIMES, BECAUSE IT IS THE HIGHEST GIFT CHRIST GAVE TO HIS CHURCH AFTER THE APOSTLES,

PROPHETS AND EVANGELISTS – and the reason is that the “pastor and teacher” teaches the Scriptures, which have been given by those three higher gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists). They gave us the Scriptures! And any pastor who does not teach exclusively from the Scriptures is a false shepherd, a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

WE SEE FROM THIS AN IMPORTANT LESSON: THAT THE LOCAL PASTORS AND TEACHERS IN ALL THE CHURCHES MUST RECEIVE THEIR INSTRUCTION FROM THE LORD – This is all-important! His sermons and his doctrine must come from the “Alpha and Omega”, from “the seven spirits which are before God's throne,” that although there are many natural means used, the nature of all true preaching and teaching must be such, that it can be delivered as a “Thus saith the Lord,” so that **THE PREACHER, IF HE IS FAITHFUL, IS A VIRTUAL PROPHET, SPEAKING FOR GOD, BUT ONLY AS HE FAITHFULLY HANDLES THE SCRIPTURES.** This doctrine is not, by any stretch of the imagination, to somehow put the pastor “on a pedestal!” The pastor is a man, with all the inherent human frailties common to man. He is capable of gross sins and errors. He is not a “law unto himself.” He is accountable to God, and to the Church, for his ministry and conduct. But he does have a God-ordained, unique role in the Church, as “pastor and teacher”, and that role, that “gift” of Christ to His Church, must be seen in its right perspective, according to all that the Scriptures teach us about it, and that pastor and teacher must bring to the Church, a “Thus saith the Lord” from the Scriptures, in his message and doctrine – this is not optional!

IF ONLY THE CHURCHES COULD GET THIS DOCTRINE STRAIGHT (ABOUT THE MESSENGERS OF THE CHURCHES), MANY PAINFUL CONTENTIONS AND SCHISMS COULD BE AVOIDED. Churches are dividing; people are demanding their own way; many think that as individual believers they have the capacity and the right to judge whole Churches and to force their own doctrines on Churches, with no regard whatsoever for God's purpose and God's doctrine in the local Church – many of them don’t even recognize such a thing as a local Church with an appointed eldership that includes an ordained “pastor and teacher”. They have abandoned the doctrine of the Church and its eldership and its properly ordained ministry! They flit from church to church and claim to be led by the Spirit, and have their direction straight from God – but it is not the Holy Spirit that leads these deceivers, but an evil spirit! No wonder the Church is in a mess! Much of this chaos is directly attributable to the ignorance or abandonment of the

*doctrine of eldership and the ministry. If the minister/pastor has the blessing and approval of the Church, then he has the final say on doctrine, and no dissenters should be given a voice, but if the Church conscientiously believes the pastor is in error, and he refuses to be admonished, then the pastor should be replaced with somebody the Church can prayerfully accept, and it should be the other elders who are at the forefront of any such corrective action – the whole church therefore, has an awesome responsibility: Never mind the many fantastic things which are focused on as gifts, by so many misguided and even self-centred believers! Let the gift of every member be focused primarily on this one thing – as an aid to the wellbeing of the whole body, by giving priority to ensuring faithful ministry of the Word in the Church! And that is exactly what **Ephesians 4** is saying, if only the Church has eyes to see it! It is also one of the things Jesus says to the “seven churches” in our text (Revelation 1).*

SPEAKING OF THE CONCEPT OF “THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH”, THERE IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT WARNING: NOT TO GO ASTRAY INTO STRANGE DOCTRINES AND MYSTICISM: Paul warned the Colossians: **Colossians 2:18-19**, “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 2:19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” **Men are always fascinated with the unseen and unknown** – that is what drives men to look for the origin of life in lifeless planets like Mars, when the origin of life is evident for all to see here on earth, through the Word of God. “Curiosity killed the cat,” and continues to do so. **Men love to delve into vain questions about angels and demons (and you and I may have done so in the past), but thank God, He is teaching us a more excellent way, from the Scriptures, so the Lord has already revealed in the Scriptures all that we need for our instruction.** There are plenty of mystics out there that you can follow if you are not careful, but let us hear the Word of God, let us hear what it is really saying, and we will be able to avoid such delusions. And so, if the ministry of the Word is faithfully carried out by the “pastors and teachers” and “elders” of all the Churches, then the Word of God is kept central, and if the Word of God is central, then Christ is central, for it is He of Whom every Word of Scripture speaks.

SO, CHRIST IS BOTH THE MESSAGE AND THE MESSENGER OF THE REVELATION! The Revelation was delivered, by the Triune Almighty God, Jehovah, specifically through the second Person of the Trinity, the risen and reigning Lord Jesus Christ, by the angel of the Lord, to John the apostle, and finally to the Churches via their appointed ministers of the Word. Well did Paul say to the Romans, “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things” (Romans 11:36), and in 1 Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” Let us, by the grace of God, as the sheep of the Good Shepherd, feed on the “green pastures”, and drink of the “still waters”, that only Christ can provide for His Church. Amen.

END TIMES PROPHECY PART 2.3
THE METHOD, THE MOTIVE, THE MOMENT, THE MATTER, AND
THE MAGNIFICENCE OF THE REVELATION

The Lord's Day 2nd September 2018 – Reading: Revelation 1

WE BEGAN THIS STUDY BY OBSERVING THAT CHRIST, AND CHRIST ALONE, IS BOTH THE MESSAGE AND THE MESSENGER OF THE REVELATION. Yes, it speaks also of the Father and the Holy Ghost, yes there are secondary messengers, but it is Christ alone, Creator and Upholder of all things, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, that we must see in all the Scriptures, and particularly The Revelation, the Book John calls “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which is the capstone of the Scriptures, and emphasizes supremely, Him Who is “God ... manifest in the flesh,” the risen and reigning “Only-begotten Son of God,” “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

THESE TWO POINTS ARE BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT IN OUR STUDY, AS THEY ARE ALSO, IN UNDERSTANDING ALL SCRIPTURE, BUT THERE IS ONE MORE POINT, WHICH MAKES UP THE UNBREAKABLE “THREEFOLD CORD” OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THIS PROPHECY IN PARTICULAR. The Scriptures are like a great masterpiece of artwork, which has been broken down into many pieces: The only way to fully appreciate its glory, is to see all the pieces in their place, as one – Hence,

THE REVELATION IS NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD IN ISOLATION OF THE OTHER BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE, nor to be somehow fathomed by the wisdom of men, nor by watching signs of the times, nor by special prayer and meditation and fasting and seeking of further revelation from God, but by prayerfully viewing it as part of the great, divine masterpiece of the whole canon of Scripture. WE NEED TO GET THIS POINT AT THE START, OR ALL OUR STUDY OF REVELATION WILL BE A WASTE OF TIME. Therefore we must observe,

3. THE METHOD OF THE REVELATION – SYMBOLIC, SCRIPTURAL, & SPIRITUAL

We must look at the method of communication of this prophecy, and hence, the correct way to understand it. The first step in understanding any Scripture is to discover its intended meaning in the first place, the meaning the author intended. So what is His method of communication? He tells us plainly:

FIRSTLY, IT IS SYMBOLIC: Revelation 1:3, “...he sent and **signified** it by his angel unto his servant John.” “**Signified**” is the key word. *If something is signified, its meaning is given by signs. In the case of The Revelation, as with the great majority of the messages of the prophets of old, this is done by visions, and the visions are themselves almost always symbolic, not literal visions of real things and events. There are some exceptions to this rule, and there are some visions which we really can't easily tell how symbolic or how literal they are – e.g. visions of the glory of God, or of the Lord Jesus. In Gethsemane and at Golgotha, the Lamb of God, in His human suffering and humiliation, was the most awful tragedy to look upon; but in John's Revelation, The Lamb upon the throne is glorified, and I really don't think we can comprehend that glory, until the day we see it for ourselves, so let us bear in mind that the prophet uses many figures of speech to describe the indescribable, and God, in His wisdom, has communicated all this by signs, meaning symbolic visions: Revelation 1:12-16*, “And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 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.” *The text tells us what the candlesticks and stars are, but as for the vision of the Lord Jesus, how much of this is literal, how much is symbolic, how much is figures of speech (as I say) to describe the indescribable, it is difficult to say, but it is not difficult to understand.*

AND I THINK HONESTY IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT REQUIREMENT FOR DEALING WITH SCRIPTURE AS WE CONSIDER THIS, because if we are not honest enough to acknowledge these things, then we are doomed to confusion and deception from the beginning. And there are many dishonest expositors, who simply will not receive plain truth when it is shown to them. So often they prefer to hold fast to their favourite author, their favourite preacher, and their own arbitrary rules of interpretation, which they usually break when it suits them to do so. And very often this dishonesty among preachers is fostered by their Bible colleges and seminaries, by their denominations, which insist on certain viewpoints – in other words, you will never make a respectable career out of your preaching in your particular denomination, if you beg to differ with what

you have been taught in their seminary. And in this way, many preachers are forced into the mold of the Pharisees: they simply will not challenge the status quo, for fear of becoming unpopular, or unsuccessful, or being out of a job. Hence dishonesty subtly rules beneath the surface of Church life to a frightening degree, and the Churches become devilish cults, and all the more so, because of the deliberate Counter-Reformation work of the Jesuits, whose motto is, “The end justifies the means”!

ONE OF THE MOST PREVALENT ERRORS CONCERNING THE REVELATION IS THE INSISTENCE OF SO MANY, THAT THE VISIONS SHOULD BE SEEN AS LITERAL, RATHER THAN SYMBOLIC. *However, it should be very obvious to any reader with any degree of common sense, that most of the visions here are certainly not to be understood literally. But add to that thought, a basic knowledge of the Scriptures, and it is doubly easy to see the errors of the Literalists for what they are.*

THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL ARE FOUNDATIONAL TO UNDERSTANDING THE REVELATION AS SYMBOLIC, NOT LITERAL, *and God willing, we’ll look at them later in our studies, but Daniel was given visions of the kingdoms of this world which were to prevail in their allotted times, right up till the very end of the world, and those visions in his God-inspired dreams were all symbolic – in Daniel chapters 2 & 7, the four great kingdoms were shown to him firstly, as “a great image”, a statue of a man, with its head, chest, belly, legs, and toes representing different kingdoms, and finally, Christ as a stone which fell on the image and destroyed it and “became a great mountain and filled the whole earth”, and secondly, in another dream, the same kingdoms were depicted as “four great beasts”, a lion with wings, a bear, a leopard, and “a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible”, which isn’t named, but when John the apostle was given *The Revelation*, he saw the same beast and described it as “a great red dragon” (ch 12). Let us hear the Word of God! **All this was entirely symbolic!***

A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE FALSE ‘LITERALISM’ OF THE FUTURIST INTERPRETERS, IS THEIR INSISTENCE ON SEEING THE “MARK OF THE BEAST” AS A LITERAL MARK ON THE RIGHT HAND OR THE FOREHEAD – *They are so obsessed with this idea that you cannot have a reasonable discussion with them about the mark of the beast! They maintain it just has to be a tattoo or a silicon chip – but they don't stop for a moment to consider the symbolic nature of practically all visions and prophecies; they don't stop to think that **the seal of God on His own people is not a***

literal mark on the forehead and the right hand, but the Holy Ghost within them (Ephesians 1:13), the Spirit that moves them to think and act in a godly manner, hence the seal of God's Spirit in a believer is also in his head and his hand – therefore, the mark (or seal) of Antichrist can easily be understood, if we acknowledge the symbolic nature of all prophecy. Scripture so easily interprets Scripture, if only we allow it to, and not rather force our own humanistic interpretations on it, or merely accept what we have read in a best-selling book!

ANOTHER GOOD EXAMPLE OF SYMBOLIC PROPHECY IS THAT JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS THE FULFILMENT OF ISAIAH'S PREDICTION OF A PREPARATION FOR THE WAY OF THE LORD – although the prophecy said, “every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low” (*Isaiah 40:4*), John himself interprets this in **Luke 3**, “4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; 6 **And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.**” This is about salvation and the kingdom of God and of Christ, as one commentator points out, **John the Baptist was not a bulldozer or a road builder, but a preacher, and the meaning of the prophecy was symbolic and spiritual, not literal and natural!** Yet the Literalists, if they were consistent, would have to say so, but they break their own rules of interpretation when it suits them (NB: You may not be aware but they do have a very specific rule, which basically says that if a passage of Scripture can be understood literally, then it must be taken literally! Of course, this is nonsense, because it immediately denies many obvious Biblical truths, told in symbolic language!).

TO PUT IT BRIEFLY AND BLUNTLY, THE LITERALIST IDEA OF INTERPRETING THE REVELATION IS JUST SO FAR-FETCHED, IT IS A WONDER ANYBODY CAN BELIEVE IT! To put this point of doctrine in its context, and to apply it to the reality we face as Christians today, I need to point out that **THE FUTURIST AND DISPENSATIONALIST SCHOOLS OF BIBLE PROPHECY ARE OF THIS RIDICULOUS LITERALIST MINDSET**, and as I also alluded to before, they also change their rule when it suits them – e.g. **THEY INTRODUCE A GAP OF 2,000 YEARS INTO THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL**, in order to maintain their own arbitrary interpretation of the time prophecy, while

breaking their own arbitrary rule of interpretation in the process: instead of reading the Scripture literally as it is written, they say there must be another 2,000 years the prophet has not mentioned, to make the dates line up (Daniel there speaks of Christ, not the Antichrist, but the Futurists have already decided he speaks of Antichrist, and they have already decided the Antichrist is yet future, so they resort to blatant dishonesty by inserting a 2,000 year period between the very Words of Daniel's prophecy!). They are not only mistaken, but they are dishonest interpreters as well, yet incredibly, they hold the sway over most of the Churches today on matters of End Times prophecy. (God willing, we will look at Daniel's prophecies in a later session. I only mention it as an example for the moment.)

THE FIRST VISION RECORDED BY THE PROPHET EZEKIEL REMINDS US OF THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF PROPHETIC VISIONS: Ezekiel, “1:1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. 1:4 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. 1:5 Also out of the midst thereof came **the likeness of four living creatures**. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. 1:6 And **every one had four faces**, and every one had four wings. **1:7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass.** 1:8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. 1:9 Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. 1:10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. 1:11 Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. 1:12 And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. 1:13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. 1:14 And the living creatures ran and returned

as the appearance of a flash of lightning. 1:15 Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. 1:16 The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and **their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.** 1:17 When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. 1:18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. 1:19 And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and **when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.** 1:20 Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. 1:21 When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. 1:22 And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the color of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. 1:23 And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies. **1:24 And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host:** when they stood, they let down their wings. 1:25 And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings. 1:26 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. 1:27 And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. 1:28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.”**

NOTICE, THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES EACH HAD FOUR FACES – THEY ARE NOT LITERAL! NOTICE ALSO, THE PROPHET DOES NOT SAY, “THIS WAS THE GLORY OF THE LORD,” BUT THAT, “THIS WAS THE APPEARANCE OF THE LIKENESS OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD.” I have heard unbelieving people say that Ezekiel saw a jet aircraft or a spacecraft, (the eyes were windows, the wheels and the wings all make sense – it just had to be some sort of modern aircraft that Ezekiel saw, didn't it?) No! It could have been a million other things! It could have been something modern man never saw or even dreamed of! It doesn't have to be what somebody imagines it has to be! As Peter would still put us in remembrance today, **Scripture is not a matter of “private interpretation!” - 2 Peter 1:20),** but all these Literalists and private interpreters have to do to see their error, is to **read what Ezekiel actually said** – he saw a vision, a **symbolic** representation of the glory of God – the “**appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD**”! And likewise, if John said that the Lord “signified” the Revelation, then signify it He did! It is symbolic!

WE SEE SIMILAR VISIONS OF SIMILAR SYMBOLS IN DANIEL: “7:9 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.” 10:4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; 10:5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: 10:6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. 10:7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.”

CLEARLY, THE VISIONS GOD GAVE TO HIS PROPHETS WERE MORE OFTEN SYMBOLIC THAN LITERAL, and especially so when they were viewing things in heaven, and the reason for this should be obvious, and so, the same is true of The Revelation. The Lord “sent and signified it”! It is symbolic!

SECONDLY, IT IS SCRIPTURAL

*The mere fact that we can see the same sorts of visions and symbols in the writings of the older prophets confirms that the communication and the interpretation of the Revelation is Scriptural – i.e. it is in accordance with all Scripture. When Paul reminded the Corinthians of the gospel he preached to them, he pointed out that Christ died, “**according to the scriptures,**” and that He rose from the dead, “**according to the scriptures**” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). **LIKEWISE, JOHN’S PROPHECY IS NOT COMMUNICATED IN MERELY INTERESTING SYMBOLS AND FIGURES, BUT BY SCRIPTURAL SYMBOLS AND FIGURES!***

*Remember how Paul said to Timothy, **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” Paul meant what he said. He was under the inspiration of the Spirit when he said it. **All Scripture, every Word of Scripture, is God-given. Therefore every Word of Scripture will harmonise with every other Word of Scripture.** Therefore it is no surprise to find that there is complete harmony among the prophets, and a great degree of similarity in their visions and dreams. And we must be reminded of something I think the modern Church has largely forgotten – that **the old prophets were preachers!** They didn't just contemplate their navels in the desert and then come bursting forth with a revelation, but most of the time they simply preached the Scriptures, as we do today, and their preaching was laced with special revelation or prophecy! They didn't have these visions and dreams every day, but when they did, the Holy Ghost gave them visions according to the Scriptures. Yes, as writing prophets under inspiration, they even added to the Scriptures, but when they did, it was still “according to the Scriptures.”*

If you think about it, it makes sense that, since The Revelation is the last book of Holy Scripture, then if you have a good understanding of the other books of Scripture, you will not have too much trouble understanding The Revelation.

SIMILARLY, MANY MODERN CHRISTIANS HAVE FALLEN INTO THE ERROR OF MYSTICISM – i.e. instead of resorting to Scripture for the understanding of these prophecies, they resort to visions and dreams of their own, and to wild imaginings plucked out of the air! They ask God to give them a direct 'word', and so, like the Papists with their visions of Mary and all sorts of other deceptions, they are deceived by their own neglect of Scripture, because they

looked outside Scripture for the answers. (NB: The wildfire of false doctrine on End Times, which is burning across all the churches today, chiefly a doctrine called 'Futurism', began as a tiny spark with the Counter-Reformation writings of Jesuit priests, Ribera and Lacunza, was fanned into a flame by a popular preacher called Edward Irving in the early 1800's, was fueled further by a woman uttering a false prophecy in one of Irving's meetings, and eventually exploded upon the Protestant Churches in the form of Darby's 'Dispensationalism' and Schofield's study Bible.) But, "All scripture ... is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction!" **AND IF SCRIPTURE IS "PROFITABLE," EVEN FOR THE CORRECTION OF ALL ERRORS, THEN IT IS ALSO SUFFICIENT FOR THAT PURPOSE – IT CANNOT BE PROFITABLE IF IT IS NOT SUFFICIENT!** Many think that the Scriptures are good but not perfect, good but not sufficient – they will even tell you there are many things not addressed by the Scriptures, but this is a cunning lie of the Devil himself! They use this excuse to invent all sorts of weird and false doctrines, and strangely enough, while false teachers tell you that you can't find the answer in Scripture, they equally maintain that you should believe what **they** say! **Hence they elevate themselves above the Scriptures!** Nowhere is this blatant elevation of men so obvious, than in those who claim to have special understanding of Bible prophecy, and note very well, it is not the fringe-dwelling Charismatics who are the leaders in this sort of deception, but Baptists and Brethren, the (so-called) Fundamentalists! – and this is exactly how all the major cults were spawned as well: the JW's, SDA's, Christadelphians, Herbert W Armstrong etc., with a special emphasis on claiming to understand prophecy as nobody else has done before. **But Scripture is absolutely profitable, absolutely sufficient, because it is absolutely the Word of God! And the evidence of the power and sufficiency of Scripture is in itself** – you only have to read it to see this, and if there is a difficult question, the answer lies in a prayerful study of Scripture, and if you hear a sermon, or read a book, about The Revelation or the End Times, a prayerful testing of those things, by Scripture alone, will soon sort out the wheat from the chaff. **Does it agree with Scripture? Does it agree with all Scripture?** Most of the popular stuff certainly does not! And anybody can see that! But many go on in deception, because when they do see the truth, they **will not** follow it, because their cult following is more important to them than the Word of God. **Honest men will always ask reasonable questions, and not be afraid of the answers the Scriptures give, but there are far too many dishonest men in the Churches.**

SPEAKING OF DISHONESTY, THERE ARE MANY CHRISTIANS, AND MANY 'MINISTRIES' SO-CALLED, WHO DO GREAT VIOLENCE TO SCRIPTURE IN ORDER TO GET THEIR PARTICULAR FALSE DOCTRINES ACROSS. I ran into this very early in my own Christian experience: I had been saved only about two years when I attended an evening Bible study on End Times. It was conducted by the local Assemblies of God pastor, who took most of his doctrine from a recent book co-authored by two men, one a Jew and one something else, an Arab I think, and he was telling us how their combined wisdom gave us special insight into understanding these prophecies. (Of course, that was rubbish to begin with). But then he got to interpreting the prophecies of Daniel, where Daniel was given the understanding of the return of the Israelites from Babylon to rebuild their temple and city, and it was the “seventy weeks” prophecy, (which turned out to be seventy weeks of years, or 490 years in the actual fulfilment, which nobody disputes), but then he explained that in the final week (the last seven years) of the period, which referred to the Messiah, when the Messiah was to be “cut off” in the “midst of the week” - i.e. after 3 ½ years, which Jesus literally was, **this pastor said there is a 2,000 year gap in the prophecy, so that, although most of that 490 year period was fulfilled 2,000 years ago, the final 3 ½ years of this prophecy are yet to be fulfilled (This is the Futurist error I have referred to so many times, made particularly popular by what is called Dispensationalism – some Futurists put the 2,000 year gap before the final 3 ½ years, and equate this period with the reign of “beast” in The Revelation, not the ministry of Christ), **HENCE, BY THIS INGENIOUS LITTLE PIECE OF MENTAL AND MORAL GYMNASTICS, THE ANTICHRIST, THE TRIBULATION ETC., ARE ALL YET TO HAPPEN**, and suddenly, as one very famous End Times Prophecy expert puts it, “God's prophetic clock stopped” almost 2,000 years ago, and it won't start ticking again until after the rapture. (It really is a wonder anybody believes these charlatans, their lies are so fantastic! But such is the deception of the Roman Antichrist himself, who, by the way, has been exposed for many centuries past, and is still with us, and his Jesuit scholars, have been the inventors of the Futurist manipulation of Bible prophecy – check for yourselves the significance of the **Jesuits, Ribera and Lacunza**.) I didn't know all this at the time, being such a young Christian, but I was a sane person (I think), and I could read plain English, so, later, over a cup of tea, I simply asked a reasonable question, “How is it that you can find a 2,000 year gap in the time prophecy which the Bible says nothing about?” And I was so thankful that there was another man present, (who**

later became our first pastor here, Eric Watson), who said very little in those awkward circumstances, being careful not to undermine the pastor, but he did say enough to indicate that he understood the prophecy very differently. And by God's gracious providence, Eric began a series of evening Bible studies on The Revelation not long after that, in which he showed the understanding of much of The Revelation according to the old-fashioned Protestants, and for this I will be eternally grateful, (not that I agree with Eric on every detail). **But the pastor who led that study broke the first and most basic rule of understanding Scripture – i.e. Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture; i.e. that God alone interprets His own Word – CHRISTIANS ARE NOT TO GO TO THE JEWS AND THE ARABS, OR ANYBODY ELSE, TO UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE BETTER!**

THIRDLY, IT IS SPIRITUAL

Just as “all Scripture” is God-given, all Scripture speaks of the Lord Jesus, for He is the great Subject and Object of all things in God's economy, in God's kingdom – He is the King! He is the Son and Heir of God!

Again, let us remember what Jesus Himself said to the Jews about the Scriptures being a testimony of Him: **John 5:39**, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and **they are they which testify of me.**”

Similarly, in John's vision in **chapter 19**, an unidentified messenger speaks to John: **19:10**, “I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for **the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**”

All Scriptures, both Old and New Testament, while they may have had an immediate purpose at the time given, always have their main import as they speak of Christ and His eternal kingdom – **that is always their main focus; Christ is the great Subject of all Scripture.** E.g. when David wrote *Psalms*, sometimes he was singing about his trials and battles at the time, but by the miracle of God's inspiration, those *Psalms* spoke more of Christ than they did of David's present circumstances! So, mark very well, before we go any further, The Revelation is not a history book of things past; it is not a history book of future events written beforehand; it is a spiritual book addressed to the Church, for spiritual edification, as Paul said (**1 Corinthians 14:3**), “He that prophesieth speaketh unto men, to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”

SO THE METHOD OF THE REVELATION IS SYMBOLIC, AND SCRIPTURAL, AND SPIRITUAL.

4. THE MOTIVE OF THE REVELATION – To bless the Church

THE FUTURISTS SAY THAT MOST OF THIS BOOK OF PROPHECY APPLIES TO A TIME YET FUTURE. *The Scripture itself refutes their error (1:3, “The time is at hand”), it is not 2,000 years future, and secondly, if it had been for the future, WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE RELEVANCE OF THE PROMISED BLESSING FOR THE CHURCH, (AS ACCORDING TO THE FUTURISTS’ FANTASTIC ‘GAP THEORY’ AND ‘PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE’ OF THE CHURCH, THE CHURCH IS TO BE WHISKED AWAY TO HEAVEN BEFORE THE TRIBULATION BEGINS)? SO, ACCORDING TO THE FUTURISTS, THE WHOLE SCENE OF REVELATION IS TO UNFOLD ONLY AFTER THE CHURCH IS GONE! HOW THEN CAN THESE PROPHECIES BE A BLESSING TO THE CHURCH? I mentioned that all Scripture is about Christ, but it is also about His Church – the hymn expresses it well, “Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God; He whose Word cannot be broken, formed thee for His own abode!” As we continue to study The Revelation, we will see how wonderfully it reveals the glory of Christ and His bride, Christ and His Church! THE REVELATION, LIKE ALL SCRIPTURE, IS GIVEN TO THE CHURCH ON EARTH, FOR ITS EDIFICATION! THIS ONE POINT IN ITSELF, REFUTES THE ENTIRE SCHEME OF ERRORS OF THE PREVAILING FUTURIST HERESIES CONCERNING THE REVELATION!*

5. THE MOMENT OF THE REVELATION – Now!

The Revelation is always to be understood in the present tense (although it does cover many historical events). I said in the first session, that if you approach this book of prophecy with a view to understanding the future of earthly matters, you have missed the point. This is the main reason – IT IS WRITTEN TO THE CHURCH FOR COMFORT AND BLESSING IN EVERY AGE UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD. THE MOMENT IS NOW. It is always now – it is a continuing ‘now’. The Revelation was given for the “last days”, and the last days began with Christ’s first coming, and will end with His second coming (but that is another subject) – we are in the last days, we are in the days of The Revelation! THE LAST DAYS ARE THE ETERNAL REIGN AND KINGDOM OF CHRIST! It is spiritual, and therefore eternal, and therefore it always applies spiritually to every believer in every age. This will be particularly relevant when we get to study the “the thousand years”, ‘the millennium’, because again, the millennium is the last days, it is Christ’s reign! The kingdom of God

is now, but it is “not of this world.” The King upon His eternal throne is now! And while some of His Church are reigning with Him in heaven, there are always those on earth continuing the battle. The Revelation is all about the present, eternal reality of Christ and His kingdom, and in this way, the Lord has blessed His Church over 2,000 years, no matter what their particular circumstances, no matter what the politics of their time and place, The Revelation is always relevant, and always a blessing to the saints. Many have viewed the visions too literally, in that they tried to fit them into the unfolding history of the Church, but they all failed to see the primary purpose and spiritual nature of all prophecy. Saints in Communist China and Russia have seen the spirit of Antichrist at work in their communist governments, even if they knew nothing of the politics of Europe in the Middle Ages, and even today, you can see Antichrist at work in our own governments, but that doesn't mean Chairman Mao, Malcolm Turnbull, or Scott Morrison is the Antichrist, even though they may well be his close friends, as they continue to promote globalist and anti-Australian policies! There are more specific lessons, which we will come to later, God willing. But let us mark this lesson – the time of the Revelation is always now!

*Just as the Great Messenger of the Revelation is He, “which was, and which is, and which is to come” (**Revelation 1:4**), so, in delivering His Message to John (verse 19), He gave the instruction, “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” **So, the Moment of the Message is for the continuing ‘Now’!** “The time is at hand!”*

6. THE MATTER OF THE REVELATION

***PRIMARILY, THE REVELATION IS A MESSAGE TO THE “SEVEN CHURCHES** which are in Asia” (**1:4**). Seven real Churches in their day, but their time is gone. Some of them, their “candlesticks” have long been removed by Him Who gave them this very warning.*

***SECONDARILY, THE MATTER OF THE REVELATION IS ADDRESSED TO EVERY BELIEVER, AND ALL THE CHURCH OF GOD,** which is also signified by the number '7', which is God's number of perfection – “seven churches” speaks symbolically of the whole Church, and God willing, we will look at more of the significance of numbers which the Lord has created also for His own glory, but the fact that this perfect message, delivered by the “seven Spirits” of God, and by Him who holds the “seven stars” in His hand, and to the seven*

*churches, this symbolic truth, applies very distinctly to the whole of God's Church, is borne out by its own context: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (1:3). **Everyone who reads the Revelation has this promise, (every believer in every age)! The time was "at hand" 2,000 years ago and it still is, and the message is still to the Church. Don't believe the Jesuit inspired false teachers, who tell you that this glorious last book of Scripture applies only to a tiny final chapter of the world's history and is not written to the Christian Church! The time is at hand, and the blessing is to all who read and understand! It is written to the whole Church of Jesus Christ, for edification, exhortation, and comfort! That is the Matter (or substance) of The Revelation.***

Because of all this, we therefore see a glimpse of,

7. THE MAGNIFICENCE OF THE REVELATION

I simply cannot find words sufficient to state the magnificence of The Revelation. But suffice it to say, that it is all about the risen and reigning Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, as He rules over all creation even now, sitting on heaven's throne, so that we don't have to worry about anything that comes to pass – it is all in His divine Hands! So, may God bless us with an ever-increasing revelation of Him as we continue our studies. The best words to describe the magnificence of this Revelation, are the very inspired Words given to us in the Scriptures themselves, so, by God's grace, let us enjoy them for ever, and give all glory to Him who sits upon the throne and unto the Lamb! Amen.