

### 3. Jesus and the Book of Revelation (2Q 2018— Preparation for the End Time)

**Biblical material:** 1 Cor. 10:1–11, Rev. 12:1–17, 19:11–15, Eph. 1:20, Rev. 11:19, 1:10–18; 3:21.

#### Quotes

- One of the things that surprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously was that it talked so much about a Dark Power in the universe—a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the Power behind death, disease, and sin . . . Christianity thinks this Dark Power was created by God, and was good when he was created, and went wrong. Christianity agrees . . . this is a universe at war. *C.S. Lewis*
- The Book of Revelation is about the gospel. The gospel is its central theme. Above all it is speaking of the coming kingdom of God through the victory of Christ at Calvary. *Graeme Goldsworthy*
- Why was the book of Revelation written? It was not written primarily, let me assure you, in order that people might be able to work out the date of the end of the world! That is a very grievous misunderstanding of that book. The book of Revelation was written in order that God's people who were passing through terrible persecutions and terrible adversity might be able to go on rejoicing. It is a book that showed them the ultimate victory of the Lord over Satan and all the other forces of evil. They were to rejoice. *Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

#### Questions

Why was there war in heaven? What was the war over? What was Jesus' role? How is this reflected in our situation? In reading the book of Revelation, what dangers do you see? How can we make sure the message is relevant to our time? Why is it so important to keep Jesus central to the book of Revelation?

#### Bible summary

In 1 Cor. 10:1–11 Paul reminds us of the experience of Israel. The dragon is at war with the woman, and refers back to the war in heaven (Rev. 12:1–17). Jesus is at the head of the heavenly army (Rev. 19:11–15). God raised Jesus from the dead and seated him at his right hand (Eph. 1:20). God's temple is in heaven (Rev. 11:19). Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ and he is the first speaker (Rev. 1:10–18). He is the victor (Rev. 3:21).

#### Comment

The central figure of Revelation is Jesus. The full title of the book is the "Revelation of Jesus Christ." This must always be remembered as we read and interpret the book—it is from Jesus and it is about Jesus. Jesus is the victor in Revelation. He is portrayed as Michael in chapter 12, the one who with the loyal angels defeats the dragon and his angels. He is the alpha at the beginning, and the omega at the end.

The war in heaven is fought over the kind of person God really is. All this as a result of Lucifer's choice to go his own way, to insanely believe he could run God's Universe better than God could.

Making himself like the Most High God. The heart of the rebellion is in believing your way better than God's. Only by inverting God's system of government can you justify yourself. So God becomes the tyrant, you the freedom-fighter. God the liar, you the source of truth. God the author of wrong, you the defender of the right.

So right becomes wrong, and wrong becomes right in this nightmare scenario that is the negative of God's good creation. Lucifer ended up not only deceiving others, but deluding himself into exchanging falsehood for truth. Right from the beginning, Satan has been lying to humankind about the kind of person God is. First to Eve and then Adam (Genesis 3). On to Cain, convincing him to rebel against the "arbitrary" requirements of God, leading him to murder his brother (Genesis 4). Then to all the inhabitants of the earth, when "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5).

God answers the controversy in the only way that really works: through evidence and demonstration. God chose to deal with Lucifer's rebellion as He always does—with love and compassion, working to win the war not by force of arms, but by spiritual "right."

However, restoring trust and demonstrating truth and right takes time. The ongoing battle reveals that lies, deceptions, innuendoes, gossip, misrepresentations all require much time to refute. And to refute the charges against His character, God could not simply say, "They're not true!" To prove the charges false, God has to show His true nature in practice over time, to reveal to everyone that the Devil is wrong in his accusations. While God wants trustworthy friends, the Devil enslaves those he forces to submit to his demands. "God seeks comrades and claims love, The Devil seeks slaves and claims obedience," writes Rabindranath Tagore.

To prove his point, Lucifer challenged God, and having had the opportunity to demonstrate his character and methods, is ultimately thrown down from heaven to earth. He continues his attack on God and His truth right here, and we are part of it. That's why "We have been made a public show before the entire universe, to angels and to human beings," (1 Corinthians 4:9 FBV). As a consequence of Lucifer's "disinformation campaign," God is feared and distrusted. Tragically, broken trust takes a long time to mend and restore. That's why God's answer continues...

### **Ellen White Comments**

The book of Revelation, in connection with the book of Daniel, especially demands study. Let every God-fearing teacher consider how most clearly to comprehend and to present the gospel that our Saviour came in person to make known to His servant John--"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." Revelation 1:1. None should become discouraged in the study of the Revelation because of its apparently mystical symbols. {Ed 191.2}

My brethren, read the book of Revelation from beginning to end, and ask yourselves whether you might not better spend less time in strife and contention, and begin to think of how fast we are approaching the last great crisis. {RH, August 20, 1903 par. 17}

"Jesus only"—in these words is contained the secret of the life and power that marked the history of the early church. {AA 64}

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