

must agree with "the blood, fire, vapor of smoke," the darkening and falling of heavenly bodies, fiery winds, earthquakes, etc. Such things are not directly associated with the events of profane history but belong to the Bible and scriptural events. Nevertheless, the speculations concerning the Revelation have been as profuse and varied as the ramifications of historical events through nineteen hundred years. All such have led to grievous perplexities and have cast their impious shadows of doubt and misunderstanding over this wonderful book. The Revelation was clearly perceivable to all unbiased Jews of the first century and again and again the Spirit through John said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear (understand) what the Spirit saith to the churches."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus spoke of "things hidden" to the Jews of the first century. Have they not also been hidden to the gaze of some exeges?<sup>3</sup> I am sure I have found it so as I read the works of Jewish, Calvinist, and other devout scholars who have attempted explanations of Revelation. And, some men of the churches of Christ have followed these blind guides from which I have seen fit to completely disassociate myself and remain close to the Bible in this study.

Here we would like to point out some examples of inappropriate explanations of the Revelation due to wrong points of view. The Revelation is the capstone of our New Covenant and the explanation of prophecies fulfilled in the first century and confirmed by the apostles of Christ. Despite this fact, a Catholic priest, contending in debate with a minister of the church of Christ, laid down a generally accepted principle of his faith which presumes to establish continuous revelation and a succession of the apostles in his popes, said, "Now, if Christ intended that the WRITTEN WORD (our New Testament) be the ultimate court of appeal, then that rule must have applied to the primitive christians. It didn't. They lived, died, shed their blood, and never read one word of the New Testament, because the first book was not written until 42 A. D. and it was not translated into Greek until about 65 A. D.; and, the last book of the New Testament was not written until 98 A. D. In other words, from 33 A. D. to 98 A. D., they could not use the New Testament as a rule of faith. It wasn't there. The first christians did what I do: they listened to the living voice of the living church."<sup>4</sup>

2. Rev. 27; Matt. 13:10-17; M'Ilvaine, *Op. Cit.*, p. 79.

3. Isa. 6:9-13; Lu. 19:41-44.

4. Stevens-Beevers: *New Testament & Roman Catholicism*, (David Lipscomb College, 1953), pp. 32-39.

The assumption above is in error for several reasons. The last book, the Revelation, was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem instead of "about 98 A. D." And, why translate any book of the New Testament if the churches had no need of it? The writers of Christian evidences contend that all the New Testament was written before the fall of Jerusalem and in the original Aramaic Greek, the language prevalent and most generally spoken and read throughout Palestine. Besides the Lord made it clear during his personal ministry that the GENERATION of Jews then addressed by him and his disciples would not pass until they had an opportunity to hear and understand all things spoken of them by their prophets.<sup>5</sup> Such a general enlightenment given orally and in writing was again and again assured the Jews by all the prophets from Moses to John on Patmos. God would use all means possible to save His people before He destroyed and scattered them. Hence the New Covenant in its completeness and full sufficiency would be given them both in writing and orally before their desolation came. Judah and Israel would most certainly get their New Covenant.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, M'Ilvaine, Paley and other competent authorities on Christian Evidences quote numerous sources, together with the canons of the early Church Councils, in proof of the fact that the entire canon (reed or rod) of our New Covenant existed in writing before the close of the first century and had Empire-wide circulation and renown among the scholars of that day. During the siege of Jerusalem, 66-70 A. D., in a masterful appeal to his people to surrender to the Romans, Josephus calls their attention to "that oracle" which is none other than our New Testament which he considered an effective appeal.<sup>7</sup>

Again, these writers point out that none but Jewish converts to Christ could have composed "that oracle" and all were martyred before 70 A. D., except John, who at that time was in forced exile on Patmos. We quote M'Ilvaine, "The use of words and phrases . . . peculiar to Judea in the times of the apostles; the continual, familiar, and natural allusions to the ceremonies and Temple services of the Jews, then existing, and which soon passed away; the universal prevalence of a mode of thinking and of expression, which none but Jews, brought up under the Law, always accustomed to think of religion through types and shadows, and reared amidst the usages, prejudices, associations, and errors of Jewish people,

5. Matt. 24:15, 34.

6. Acts 3:24; Jer. 31:31-34; Rev. 1:11.

7. Josephus, *Op. Cit.* Vol. II, p. 438.

as subsisting in the time of the apostles could have introduced without awkwardness and obvious forgery; all bear decided witness, not only that the writers of the New Testament were Jews originally, in every sense; but that they must have formed their habits of thinking, feeling, and writing, before the destruction of Jerusalem."<sup>8</sup> Otherwise, their writings and behavior-patterns for righteousness would have been futile, in view of God's purposes, if the publication of any book of the New Covenant had been delayed until after Jerusalem was destroyed and the inhabitants of Palestine either lay dead or had been banished to slavery into distant lands. After Pentecost (Acts 2) Jerusalem would become Mt. Zion from which Jews as well as all nations would receive their new law; it would have a time and a place of origin for all nations and would remain essential for its comprehension by all until time shall be no more.<sup>9</sup>

Such is evidenced also by the characteristic features of the Greek in which the original apostles wrote and spoke. At that time almost every city in Palestine was composed of Greeks, Syrians, Chaldeans, Jews, etc., who carried on extensive commerce and travel in a language known as Aramaic Greek. M'Ilvaine says, "If the books of the New Testament be the apostles' writings, they must contain the characteristics of Palestine Greek and such is most manifest the case."<sup>10</sup> And, it is a notable fact that such a written language disappeared before the death of John. When Jerusalem, with its civil and religious polity, disappeared and the Jews were rooted up out of their land and foreigners took their place, the language and customs of Palestine underwent a distinct change. The Greek of the New Testament was no more the living language of that time. Our authorities state that when John died probably not a man lived who could write or even speak precisely the Aramaic Greek and no writer could have produced a book of our New Testament in that language without a manifest suspicion of attempted forgery. This should answer the Catholic's claims.

Returning now to the contention that the wrong point of view is accountable for the errors some exegetes of the Revelation make, it is rather shocking to read Adam Clarke's confession that he did not understand the book." Almost all students rely heavily on Clarke's textual analyses of the Revelation and much credit is due him for our understanding of its contents. But his Wesleyan convic-

8. M'Ilvaine, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 85-86; Acts 3:25-26.

9. Heb. 12:18-28; Isa. 2:1-6; Lu. 1:32-33.

10. M'Ilvaine: *Op. Cit.*, p. 87.

11. Adam Clarke: *Commentary*, (Eaton & Mains-1883), Vol. VI, p. 573.

tion that the church began with Abraham contributed to his failure to make a proper application of his profound knowledge of the scriptures although his analyses of scriptural texts are excellent. He made no allowance for the tremendous, abrupt break between Judaism and Christianity when dealing with Revelation and thus his point of view was dim or extinct.

Now, all the prophets, in view of the great transition from Judaism to Christianity, referred to the culmination of mighty events in Jewish history which would take place with the coming of their Messiah and the end of their nation under God. They pointed out the things or events then dimly seen which would come to pass centuries later how the God of heaven would set up a kingdom and its sovereignty would be vested in their Messiah. This would take place when four universal civil governments would reach their zenith of power in the Roman Empire. All had been associated with the Jews and their history and all were encompassed within the Roman Empire. The impact of the Messiah's kingdom and its preparation before the Cross for its reception by Jews and Gentiles is the subject of and reason for the "opening of the seven seals" of the Revelation.<sup>12</sup>

Through a misunderstanding of the words "prophecy" and "prophet," much confusion has arisen in the interpretation of this "capstone" of the Bible. It is true the Lord calls the Revelation "the words of the prophecy of this book."<sup>13</sup> However, these words of prophecy, except where double allegory is used, do not refer to things mysterious or dimly seen in the distant future from John's day. Nothing is implied of events either which must irresistably come to pass. God will always be the Master of nations, of human events in history, and will ever respect the free moral agency of men for weal or woe, right or wrong. But we can be dead certain in the events of the Bible, religious, civil, or social, He has set the patterns of the things which He will approve or condemn and will regulate thereby all affairs of this world until time ends.

The term nabhi, from which we get "prophet," refers not only to one who declares future events, but also to the preacher or instructor of his time. Such a one frequently foresaw the disastrous consequences of evil men and nations and counselled them and made strong prayers and supplications to God on their behalf in order that they might turn and prevent God's threatened judgments. And, although such judgments apparently were positive in their

12. Dan. 2:41-44; Jno. 18:33-40.

13. Rev. 22:18.

times, they were always conditional.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, when it is implied of an apostle that he is a prophet, it does not follow that he was a fore-caster of similar or other events future to his day but that he was merely laying the capstone upon predictions previously made by inspired men before his day and warning his people of the pending dangers to which those forecasts applied. Such was John's mission in writing the Revelation. With this in mind we can appreciate Paul's contention that the church of our New Covenant is built upon "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone." The prophets before the Cross were the "predictors" of the death, burial, resurrection, the ascension, the advent of the Holy Spirit, and the building of the church by Christ's apostles, and the apostles stood this side of the Cross and confirmed their predictions and recorded the events and results of those divine forecasts.<sup>15</sup> Jehovah not only guided them by His Spirit to see such applications but confirmed them by signs which He did by the apostles of Christ and has given us supreme assurance of their correctness.<sup>16</sup>

14. Clarke: *Op. Cit.* Vol IV, Introduction to Isaiah.  
 15. Eph. 2:20; 3:5.  
 16. Heb. 2:1-4.

## Chapter II

### PLAN AND PRINCIPLES

With some modification, we shall follow a plan in our brief general analyses of the Revelation similar to that found in Clarke's Commentary:

1. THE TITLE — Rev. 1:1-3 (See The Introduction for explanation).
2. SALUTATION AND LETTERS ADDRESSED TO SEVEN CHURCHES which are assumed to be representative of all congregations of John's day — Rev. 1:4 to Rev. 3:22.
3. THRONE SCENE AND OPENING OF A BOOK CLOSE-SEALED WITH SEVEN SEALS — Rev. 4:1 to Rev. 11:19.
  - (a) Advent of John the immerser and announcement that the kingdom is at hand or approaching. Hence the Revelator sees a throne, a cloud of witnesses around it, and four living creatures (Cherubim) who will execute certain judgments upon the Jewish people unless they return to the law of Moses. These judgments are executed with the opening of the first four seals.
  - (b) John will hear by the Immerser's testimony that Jesus is worthy and able to open the sealed book (of the prophets) in which connection a Lamb appears slain in prospect and he sees multitudes out of every nation, tribe, kindred, and tongue entering the kingdom.
  - (c) John witnesses the opening of the seven seals and observes the events that follow. He sees also 144,000 preparing themselves to enter the kingdom and upon entering are sealed of God.
  - (d) Then he is required to arise and measure the Temple (Tabernacle) and its worshippers in Jerusalem who are found wanting.
  - (e) Next he sees a Sanctuary (Tabernacle) opened in heaven and is required to seal up or not reveal this until later — Matt. 16:20; Lu. 9:20-22.
4. THE CRUCIFIXION IS A FACT NOW AND THE SANCTUARY OPENED IN HEAVEN has entered into the world in the form of a WOMAN ARRAYED WITH THE SUN (Rev. 12:1). She is with child whom a Red Dragon is about to devour when delivered by Jehovah's Spirit. The child ascends to his Father's throne and the Dragon is cast down— Jno. 12:7-10; Acts 1:9 and Acts 2; Rev. 12:1-12. This marks

the entrance of the New Covenant (woman — Gal. 4:24-27) into the world which contained the Christ-child and the Jewish state is cast down.

5. WAR FOLLOWS — BEASTS AND DRAGON FIGHTING AGAINST THE APOSTLES AND THE CHURCH (Rev. 12:13 to Rev. 20:15):

- (a) New Testament — Sword of Spirit; Armor of saints — opposed by physical force and deadly persecutions.
- (b) Confronted also by "Anti-Christ" and Beasts whom Jews worship. Beasts are rulers of Jews, cruel, corrupt, blasphemous Herods.
- (c) Near close of apostolic ministry the beasts fall out: Roman rulers turn on Jews. Witnesses of God revived; entreated by their Commander (Christ) to flee Jerusalem and Palestine (Rev. 18:4; Matt. 24:15-28).
- (d) Vespasian begins war against Jews in Galilee; becomes Emperor of Rome and his son Titus takes command. Galilee and all cities around Jerusalem fall to Romans (Rev. 16:1-21).

6. THE SIEGE AND TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND PALESTINE DESOLATED:

- (a) Defeat of Dragon, false prophets and Anti-Christ; Triumphs of saints and songs of victory over Christ's enemies.
- (b) Holy City descends; "remnant" returns to Palestine; power of Rome broken by seditions; confusion and darkness over peoples of vast Roman Empire. The "remnant" planted — churches re-established in Palestine. Kingdom of Christ renews its onward march to universal conquest.

7. MAN'S LOST DOMINION RE-ESTABLISHED ON EARTH AND EDEN RESTORED (Rev. 21:1 to Rev. 22:21):

- (a) The Bride of Christ seen in all her present and future glory and the "second-Adam" (I Cor. 15:47), her husband, reigns in heaven with all power therein, on earth, and over the Hadean world by an eternal covenant.
- (b) No man can or should attempt to limit or revise this authority of heaven's Monarch, the Christ.

In the study of Revelation definite principles of interpretation must be observed. If the student of subsequent history sees within reigning monarchs or historical events scenes comparable to those

described symbolically in the Revelation, those with which this book deals originally should not be discredited. The Bible, sealed up and closed in 67 A. D., deals with every error individuals, nations or churches can commit and the just, faithful, true and righteous patterns lie with ominous warnings still upon its eternal pages.<sup>1</sup> Such divine, age-lasting, and universal patterns prove both the eternality of the book and the constancy of human nature. It is prophetic in this respect and double allegory is the means used by our Lord and by John to presage all spiritual and wicked conflicts and their results until time shall end.

We should study the Revelation with the prophets in mind and look within their records for Bible events which Christ and his apostles tell us were fulfilled from the birth of Christ to John the revelator. The Bible is its best interpreter from Genesis to the Revelation. Profane history and commentaries are wise hand-maidens, but the Bible is our first text-book. For instance, it would be difficult to see how Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar's times parallels perfectly Palestine and its rulers of the apostolic period without both sources. The history of Egypt in Moses' day as well as Sodom and Gomorrah of Abraham's time are likewise typical of the things John sees in Jerusalem and Palestine. Here are the plagues of Egypt, its darkness, the thunders of Sinai, its voices, earthquakes, hail, falling fire upon Sodom, sun darkened, etc., which also fell upon Palestine.<sup>2</sup> When we read in Matthew, "Out of Egypt have I called my son (Jacob)," we should study closely such passages of the Bible as are indicated below.<sup>3</sup>

A third principle to be observed pertains to the symbolism of the numerals and the figures of speech employed by the spirit and by John in writing the Revelation. In A. P. Forman's book, "Prophecy," an entire Chapter explains the numerals and figures employed by John. The student might consult also Fairbairn's "Typology," Stalnaker's "Mystic Symbolism in Bible Numerals," and White's "Symbolic Numbers." See Clarke's Commentary also.

Why "seventy years" of Babylonian captivity for the Jews under the law of Moses? The Bible number seventy denotes complete desolation and 70 A. D. may be seen as a climax to Jewish history under God. But let us see, "And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the Kingdom of Persia: to

1. John, seal not up this prophecy; it has future meaning also (Rev. 22:10)  
 2. "Testimony of Jesus, spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10; Acts 3:18; Ex. 7 to 12).  
 3. Ex. 4:22-23; Matt. 2:13-15; Lu. 1:32-33; Rev. 18:4; 11:8.

fulfill the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land (of Canaan) had enjoyed its sabbaths: for as long as it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfill three score and ten years."<sup>4</sup> The Jews were commanded by Jehovah to let their farms rest every seventh year and thus "replenish the earth" and fallow the soil. In other words, they had what is known as "sabbatic years of sevens (heptads). The numeral "10" contains a completeness of the digits and signifies fullness; so, when the "sabbatic" year is multiplied by ten, we see the explanation of the land enjoying complete rest for seventy years while the disobedient tillers are wasted by slavery and toil on in Babylon.<sup>5</sup>

With this in mind, another example taken from Daniel is very pertinent to our study and for an explanation of the use of symbolic numerals in ascertaining the fulfillment of his prophecy. Gabriel is sent to show Daniel the termination of God's people and the coming of a new order under Christ. Daniel had asked God to show him if Babylonian captivity meant the end of God's dealing with the Jews. Thus spoke the angel, "Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sin (offerings), and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in EVERLASTING righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy (place)."<sup>6</sup>

During the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, Josephus, a Jew, observed when "the daily sacrifice" ceased to be offered by the priest in Jerusalem. Notice: "And now Titus gave orders to his soldiers . . . to dig up the foundations of the tower of Antonia . . . while he had Josephus brought to him, for he had been informed that the daily sacrifice had ceased and commanded him to say to John, head of a seditious faction of Jews, 'if he had inclination to fight to come out with as many men as he chose; but that he desired he would not defile the Temple . . . and that he might . . . offer the sacrifice which were now discontinued by the Jews.'"<sup>7</sup> In a footnote Whiston says, "This was a remarkable day indeed, the 17th of Panemus (Temuz), when according to Daniel's prediction, the Romans "in a half a week (of seven years) caused the daily sacrifice and oblation to cease. From the month of February, A. D. 66, about which time Vespasian entered on this war, to this very time, was just three years and a half." See Bishop Lloyd's Tables of Chronology

4. II Chron. 36:20-21; A. P. Forman, *Prophecy*, (Presbyterian Publishing Co., 1878) See Appendix I.  
5. Lev. 25:1-4.  
6. Dan. 9:25-27.  
7. Josephus, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 437.

Also, Josephus states that there was a man, "one Jesus the son of Ananias, who for four years before the war began and while Jerusalem enjoyed great peace and prosperity came up to the feast and began suddenly to cry aloud, 'A voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, etc.' and he continued this ditty, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem,' for seven years and five months.'"<sup>8</sup> It is apparent from this that each week consisted of sabbatic years previously pointed out. My chronology below illustrates the meaning of the seventy weeks or 490 years terminating the vision shown Daniel by Gabriel:

1. Temple buildings completed (Hag. 1:14-15; 2:18; Ezra 6:15) ..... 418 B. C. \*
2. Cyrus decree (Isa. 44:24-28) ..... 450 B. C.
3. Cyrus' decree effective (Malachi 3:10 . . . . . (Seven weeks or 49 years later, Artaxerxes Mnemon issues decree by which Levitical priests and main body of Jews are liberated from PERSIA; Temple services and worship restored (Dan. 9:25) per Cyrus decree)<sup>9</sup> ..... 401 B. C.
4. Sixty-two weeks or 434 years remain, less 401 B. C. bring us most certainly to *the Cross* and following results: ..... 33 A. D. "
  - (a) Jewish nation becomes "spiritual widow" (Isa. 47:8-9; Rev. 18:8-20; Rom. 7:1-4; I Tsess. 2:14-16)
  - (b) "To (atone for) finish the (Adam's) transgression (Dan. 9:24; Gen. 3:2-9; 22-24; I Tim. 2:13-14; Rom. 5:14-16; Heb. 2:9; Gal. 3:19-22; Jno. 5:39; Heb. 10:4)
  - (c) "To make an end to sin-offerings" (Heb. 10:1-14; Dan. 9:24)
  - (d) "To make reconciliation (purge away) for iniquity (both past and future sins by the cross)" (Dan. 9:24; Eph. 2:15-18; II Cor. 5:18-20; Heb. 15; 10:14).

8. *Ibid.* pp. 454-455.

9. 1901 American Standard Version (Thos. Nelson & Sons), See Chronology, p. 24.  
10. See footnote, Josephus *Op. Cit.* Vol. II, p. 239; A. Clarke, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 800 (Malachi flourished B. C. 416); II Chron. 36:20 (" . . . until the reign of the kingdom of PERSIA.")

11. F. W. Farrar, *Life of Christ* (Thomas P. Crowell & Co., 1874), p. 699 (See comment on the age of our Lord).

- (e) "To bring in EVERLASTING righteousness" (Dan. 9:24; Gal. 3:21; Rom. 3:21; 4:9-14; 5:17-21; Acts 2).
- (f) "To seal up (fulfill and set limits to) vision and prophecy" (Dan. 9:24; Acts 3:24; Matt. 5:17; Lu. 24:44-46; Rev. 22:18; 10:4-7; 11:7).
- (g) "To anoint the Most Holy place" (Dan. 9:24; Acts 10:38; Heb. 9:11-12; 24-26; Acts 2:32-33; I Jno. 2:20, 27; Matt. 16:18-19; Eph. 2:19-20; Acts 2:38-47; Heb. 10:19-21, 28-29).
5. "And after the three score and two weeks (33 A. D.) shall the ANOINTED ONE be cut off (crucified), and shall have nothing (Isa. 53:8) and the people (Roman army) of the Prince (Vespasian) who shall come shall destroy the city (Jerusalem) (A. D. 70), and the Sanctuary (within the Temple, Neh. 6:10); and the END thereof shall be with a flood (Gospel preaching, Isa. 28:17-19), and even unto the end shall be WAR; DESOLATIONS are determined (Acts 2:23). And he (the Christ) shall make a FIRM COVENANT (completely fulfilled) with many for *one week* (within the last seven years before 70 A. D.): and in the midst of the week he (Titus) shall cause the daily sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing (pinacle) of abominations shall come one (Titus) that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined (Isa. 28: 22; 10:23), shall wrath be poured out (I Thess. 2:16) upon the DESOLATE (Jerusalem, Matt. 23:37-38)." Here is the summation of the SEVENTY WEEKS (490 years), of all prophecies pertaining to Jerusalem and the Mosaic economy, confirmed by Gabriel to Mary (Lu. 1:26-38; 2:34-35) and attested by Jesus (Matt. 24:15) concerning Daniel and the end of his people, the Jews. Daniel is told (Dan. 12:10-13) to rest for

awhile and that later, in the fullness of the times, he would stand in his lot, at the end of the days (Jewish dispensation).<sup>12</sup>

12. Gal. 4:4; Acts 3:18-21; 7:47-53.