



## The Book of Revelation 1Q 201

### The Gospel from Patmos

#### Introduction

In the second to the last paragraph there is a quote from *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 113 which says: “When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it.”

What does this mean?

Does it mean that we have room to expand our understanding? That we should not be dogmatic about a certain interpretation? That we should allow for various views to be considered?

The introduction points out that in most of the Bible things should be taken literally unless there is clear reason to consider it symbolically, however, in Revelation things should be taken symbolically first and only literally if there is clear reason to do so.

Do you agree? We might need to come back to this principle throughout the quarter—let’s help each other do this.

#### SABBATH

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Read first paragraph, “The prophecies of Revelation...” What is the blessing that one receives from reading this book?

- Why are they blessed?
- Is it like a knighthood, something that is bestowed by a higher authority on their subject for some great achievement—so if we read the book God hands out a blessing?
- Is it some design law—some natural result that comes from reading it?
- Is there a blessing in enlightenment, in knowing the truth, in knowing the truth about God and His kingdom of love? Is there a blessing in having one’s mind freed from lies?
- So, what is the blessing one receives? Would it be healing of their heart and mind as the truth penetrates and wins them to trust in God?

But the lesson says it isn’t just reading that results in blessing, but obeying that results in blessing—what does that mean and again, why would obeying result in blessing?

Is the blessing that comes from obedience, like the knighthood, something that is bestowed by the Sovereign because of good performance?

Or, is the blessing from obedience that natural result of what occurs when one lives in harmony with



design law?

- Is there a blessing in obeying the doctor's instructions (assuming the instructions are correct)? From where does the blessing come?
- Is there a blessing in obeying the commandments not to murder, steal, commit adultery, bear false witness etc.? From where does the blessing come?
- Is there a blessing in worshipping the one and only true God—from where does the blessing come? Is it some imperial decree from God, or is a natural result of God's design law of worship?
  - What does Paul in Romans 1 say happens to people who exchange the truth of God for a lie? Their minds become depraved, darkened, and futile—why?
  - What happens to the minds of people who worship the true God?
  - Would the expansion of their mental faculties be a one-time event, or a continual event that expands with time?
  - Would that require we continue to study and expand our understanding?
  - Is this connected to the saying that sanctification is a work of a lifetime? Does that mean we only obtain it at the end of life, or that it is a part of living, we continue to grow in our knowledge of God and His methods and thus continue in our spiritual maturity as long as we are alive?

And what does it mean to obey? Is obedience in God's kingdom measured by how well one performs, or by the intention of the heart to comply?

It is the desire, the intent, not the actual performance that is the primary issue in obeying God. Why?

## **SUNDAY**

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Read first paragraph, "Revelation 1:1 states..." Why would Jesus need to reveal Himself?

Has Jesus been hidden from our understanding?

How and why has Jesus been hidden?

Does Jesus want to remain hidden?

What keeps Jesus from greater revelations of Himself today?

Was the message of Revelation only for the people of John's day, or perhaps even more for the people living at the end of time?

Would that mean that Jesus knew that before the second coming He would not be understood, that the truth about God would be obscured and He would have to provide a special revelation of Himself to reveal His true character and nature to us?



Paul wrote to Timothy about the end of time telling him that the people at the end of time would have a form of godliness but deny the power. They would not really know Jesus.

Do we find that in the world today there are many religions and religious people who have a view of God that is more like the character of Satan, a punishing being who requires some legal payment in order to buy him off?

Do you find in the book of Revelation a message from Jesus that is to refute this satanic view of God?

## MONDAY

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What is the purpose of Bible prophecy?

Read second paragraph, “The primary purpose...” What is God in control of?

- Is God in control of whether a person is saved or not saved? Why or why not?
  - If salvation is a legal problem, why can't God just legally pardon everyone and take everyone to heaven?
  - Doesn't God have the power to do so?
  - What would be the problem if He did?
  - Wouldn't it be that such an action would result in sinners who have sinful hearts being in heaven i.e. such a legal action would not fix the problem, it would not heal the heart, renew the mind, recreate the being in righteousness. The entire legal model is a fraud, a lie, and it is the primary reason the church has not fulfilled its mission in preparing the world for Christ's return!
- Is God in control of whether a person sins or doesn't sin? Why or why not?
- So, is God in control of whether good people get mistreated and abused? Why or why not?
- Is God in control of whether a man rapes a woman or not?
- Is God in control of whether a woman gets pregnant or not?
  - When God healed women in Bible times of infertility, did God then impregnate them, or did those women still have to have sexual relations with their husbands? Who chose to do that, God or those people?
  - So, what was God in control of?
- Is God in control of whether a child is born with some physical defect? Why or why not?
- Is God in control of what God does?
- Was God in control of whether Nebuchadnezzar threw the three worthies in the fiery furnace? Was God in control of whether He would intervene to save them?

So, what is the purpose of Bible prophecy? To teach us what? That God is in control of Himself, His laws, His designs and is working through human history to heal and restore all who cooperate with Him. That God is not caught by surprise and knows the events of the future before they happen.

Consider some prophecies of the OT:



- The multi-medal image and the beasts of Daniel, which describe the rise and fall of nations:
  - Do these prophecies mean that God caused these nations to rise and fall, and God wanted the wars to happen, or that God foreknew it would happen this way and so revealed it?
- When God gave conditional prophecies for the prosperity of Israel, what does that reveal?
  - Does it reveal God didn't really know what would happen and was covering His bases?
  - Or, that God revealed two possible futures to Israel that were dependent on the choices that Israel made? Like revealing two paths, but rather than two paths over geography that lead to two different destinations, these were two paths were through time that led to two different destinations. And just as with the fork in the geographic road, we could accurately predict where one will end up if they take either fork, so too God could accurately predict where Israel will end up if they take either fork—the one fork of loyalty to God would free God to take actions to bless them in ways they would not receive if they chose disloyalty to God.
  - Does that mean God didn't know which fork in the road of time they would take until they took it? No! Then why give both views? To show that they did have a choice, they were not predestined to end up where they did, to entice, woo, encourage them to take the right road, just as a parent would tell a child of all the benefits of taking the right road.
  - So we see that God does have foreknowledge, but we still have complete freedom

The lesson points out that in Dt 29:29 the Lord keeps some things secret, and asks us why the Lord does this?

Jesus said to his Apostles: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."  
John 16:12

Does God keep some things secret because He wants us to be ignorant, or because of either our limited capacity or that we would be injured with the knowledge?

Do you ever keep things from your children? Why?

- To protect them?
- Because they are too immature to understand?
- Do we ever withhold information from our children out of embarrassment, guilt or shame—fear our children might reject us?
- God never withholds information for this third reason!

## **TUESDAY**

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The lesson emphasizes that Revelation and much of Bible prophecy is symbolic in nature—what does that mean?



It means that symbols stand for other ideas.

Consider the letters TREE, these are symbols that stand for a living organism—a tree. The letters TREE are not a tree, they are only a symbolic representation of a tree.

In the Bible we have letters that are symbolic representations of other symbolic representations.

For instance, the letters LAMB represent a docile animal, but that docile animal in Bible prophecy represents Jesus.

The problem in much of Bible prophecy is in determining what the symbol actually represents.

- What is the danger in failing to take a symbol symbolically?
- What is the danger in misinterpreting the meaning of the symbol?
- Any examples of this?
  - Taking the description of fire as combustion rather than the fire of God's life-giving glory—infinite truth and love
  - Taking the war and battle descriptions as physical battles rather than mental battles over ideas and beliefs—like the battle of Armageddon
  - Taking vials of wrath as plagues that literally come out from God rather than what happens when God surrenders sinners to their own selves.
  - Taking the descriptions of souls under the altar as living disembodied intelligences rather than symbols of beings who had been alive and are waiting for the resurrection and whose life-history and sacrifice call out through history for God to fix the sin problem

The lesson in the third paragraph states, “we must be careful not to impose on the text a meaning that comes out of human imagination or the current meanings of those symbols in our culture.”

Do you agree?

Does this only apply to physical objects like trees, beasts, rivers, angels, lamps, altars—or does this same rule apply to ideas, concepts, actions?

- Wrath and anger—do we apply modern human understanding, or realize these terms when applied to God are representative of His letting go, releasing people to their own choices?
- Atonement—do we apply the modern meaning of appeasement or realize it means unity, reconciliation, making at-one?
- Justification—do we apply the modern meaning of legal declaration, or do we realize it means setting things right in reality?
- Law—do we apply the human law concept of imposed rules, or realize God's laws are design protocols?



How much of Scripture and prophecy is misunderstood because we misunderstand the meaning of the terms?

Is there an overarching key for rightly interpreting Bible symbolism?

What about this idea?

**The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended.** [another system of symbols, which in the next paragraph is connected to Revelation] Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. **The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries.** [What is the key?] Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. Far more than we do, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. Angels desire to look into the truths that are revealed to the people who with contrite hearts are searching the word of God, and praying for greater lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the knowledge which He alone can give. {COL 133.1}

**As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study.** The last book of the New Testament scriptures is full of truth that we need to understand. Satan has blinded the minds of many, so that they have been glad of any excuse for not making the Revelation their study. But Christ through His servant John has here declared what shall be in the last days, and He says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." Revelation 1:3. {COL 133.2}

What is the key to unlock Bible mysteries? The gospel, if we misunderstand the gospel will we misunderstand the Bible symbols, so what is the gospel?

Consider this quote—do you agree?

No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. **The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded. The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears.** {COL 128.2}

What does this mean?

- Does it mean that the legal penal proponents are right, that God imposes a law and only by getting the right set of rules with right obedience can we understand the gospel?
- Or does it refer to God's design law, the protocols upon which life is built and it is good news to live in harmony with God and His design, and God and Jesus have been working to restore us to that design?

And, can you see how important it will be to decide what law is the law that is the root?



So how do you describe God's law?

Consider this quote:

The same power that upholds nature, is working also in man. **The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.** Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action. For all the objects of His creation the condition is the same--**a life sustained by receiving the life of God, a life exercised in harmony with the Creator's will. To transgress His law, physical, mental, or moral, is to place one's self out of harmony with the universe, to introduce discord, anarchy, ruin.** {Ed 99.2}

What kind of law is this?

Can you see what will happen if we replace God's design law with Satan's imperial/imposed law? **Then the gospel is perverted and we take a false gospel to the world—which is exactly what has happened to all of Christianity.**

So, why is the law the root and the gospel the fruit?

What is the law? The law of God is the principle of love upon which life is built, and the gospel is the good news that God is love and love is the outward movement of God toward the healing and saving of His creation. Thus, we see manifest in Christ the character of God, the movement of love toward a fallen race, to bring the truth about God back to our awareness while simultaneously taking up the sickness of sin in order to cure the condition and provide remedy to our terminal state.

But Satan has worked to replace God's design law with imposed law and to get humans to misinterpret God as a being of stern justice, who must inflict punishment for breaking the law, and the cross is perverted as a means of legal payment and propitiation of divine wrath.

Thus, the world languishes, darkness covers the people a gross and disgusting darkness and this darkness constantly spews forth from pulpits and religious publications, including those of the SDA church.

If we want to see Christ return, then we must reject the false law with its penal substitution theology and start promoting the truth about Our Creator God and His design law and the true gospel of His kingdom of love!

## WEDNESDAY

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The lesson points out that the three members of the Godhead are described in the first chapter of



Revelation:

From John to the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace be yours from God, who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits in front of his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first to be raised from death and who is also the ruler of the kings of the world. vs 4,5.

Read the fifth paragraph, “Jesus Christ is identified by...” What was washed by His blood?

- Is this literal or symbolic?
- What is it symbolic of?
- What does the blood represent?
- How are we washed in the blood?

When Jesus said unless we eat his flesh and drink his blood we have no part with him, what does that mean?

Jesus is the Word made flesh and we are to eat the flesh of Jesus; what does this mean?

What of this description?

**“In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God,** which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1

**“The leaven of truth works** a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. **By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb.**” Christ’s Object Lessons 102

So, how do we understand the paragraph about being washed in the blood of Jesus?

What would happen if we conclude that it means we are to claim the legal payment of Jesus death, the blood, and present it by faith to the Father, and that will have our records expunged in the courtroom of heaven and we will be declared to be righteous even though we are not?

It would mean we put an idea into people’s minds that prevents them from experiencing the true washing of their robes. They accept a lie and their characters remain infected with fear and selfishness and they never even think to ask for the Holy Spirit to transform them to Christlikeness.

This is what the penal substitution lie does.

Read last paragraph, “In the original Greek...” What does it mean? How are we released from our sins? Is it talking about being released from the penalty and punishment for sin, or being released from sinfulness—being cured?



What does it mean He provided the perfect atonement for our sins? Does this mean a legal payment to a punishing god that would otherwise kill us if this god isn't placated with a human sacrifice?

Or does it mean that He restored God's design into humanity and provides the remedy we need to fix what is broken in us?

## **THURSDAY**

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The lesson points out that the end point in history to which all the prophecy points is the second coming of Christ and the eradication of sin, sickness, and death.

Why, has Christ not returned?

Is there anything currently happening within Christianity that is obstructing Christ's return?

Is there anything Christianity could be doing that can hasten the day of Christ's return?

Is there a message that is to be given before Christ returns and is Christianity giving it?

## **FRIDAY**

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Read and discuss questions

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**January 4-6, 2019:** CANCELLED Dr. Jennings was scheduled to speak at the Florida Conference of SDA women's retreat, however this week received an email that said one person mentioned to the organizer that there were questions about Dr. J's theology so they cancelled Dr. Jennings speaking.

**February 2-3, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking Christ's Church of Oronogo, MO.

**February 22-March 9, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be in Australia speaking in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide, Avondale, Sydney, Livingston, Perth, and Melbourne.

**April 3-6, 2019:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Sophia Bulgaria.