

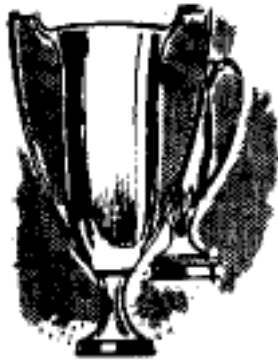
Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.

Revelation 15:1 And I saw another

sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had

gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.



Preparing to Pour Out the Vials

Brother E. A. Wilson

The Key to Symbolic Language

Many people feel that it is not time for the Revelation message, or else feel that it is past. The enemy wants to shield people from the greatest book in the Bible. Our Scripture text tells us, ". . . the time is at hand." It is time to read it, and it is time to hear it. You cannot hear it just because you read it. You must have ears to hear, a mind to hear, and a heart to hear.

Most of us know that the Book of Revelation was written in the Greek alphabet, but more than being written in the Greek alphabet, it was written in symbolic language. Symbolic expressions are used throughout the Bible because they are more descriptive. Through symbols, one word can clear your mind and you will get the message which might have taken half a page to write out in words. Jesus called Herod an old fox, and He got the whole message across. In another place, Jesus spoke of Himself as a vine; every true Christian who is born again and grafted into Him are the branches. Symbolic language gets right to the point.

A second reason for using symbolic language is because interpretation of words can become confusing. One reason people do not get more truth is because the devil has sold them on the idea, "That is your interpretation, and I have mine." Words may be interpreted in many different ways, but symbols cannot. There is only one meaning when the symbol is used.

Symbolic expressions were used in the morning time, and also in a great way today as the means of conveying truth without stirring up unnecessary persecution. In Jesus' time, in John's time, and it is pretty much so today, no man could be charged in court because he had written or read symbolic language.

In order to understand the symbols, we must have a key. It is necessary that we have keys to everything. Without keys our vaults, our automobiles, and our homes would remain locked. Jesus said in Revelation 1:18, "I . . . have the keys of hell and of death." He has the keys to all eternal things. He said in John 13:3 that the Father put all things into His hands. In Revelation 3:7, we read of Jesus, ". . . he that hath the

key of David . . . openeth; and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."

Jesus has lost His rightful position in the lives of many people. He has lost His rightful place in the channels of religion. Men are telling you that they can put you in and put you out of the church. Men are prescribing doctrines and creeds by which they say you must abide, or you have no part. Friend, Jesus, and nobody else, has the key. We need to see Jesus as He is today. In Revelation, the first chapter, we see Him as He is today. He said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore . . ." (verse 18).

What was He before He became a Lamb? He was the Lion of the tribe of Judah. What was He when He rose from the dead and ascended to the Father? He was made head over all things to the church, far above all principalities and powers. You can also get a picture of what Jesus will look like when He comes again in Revelation, the first chapter. He was stirred with the church in the morning time, and He is stirred with the church today.

The Way to Find True Peace

There is too much coming short of the real Church of God. Christ is losing His hold on people's lives; that is why we have so many troubles. If Christ had control of people's lives as they say He has, there would not be so many problems. Judgment needs to be put on the church now as never before. How troubled our world is today. How hard they have sought to unlock peace, yet we are further from peace to day than we ever have been.

Science, politics, education, and even religion have miserably failed. There is not peace in too many people's hearts who claim to be Christians. Much that calls itself religion has failed miserably. They are fulfilling the words of the prophet, crying, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace, where it is impossible to have peace. You can run all over the country, try everything you want, and wear yourself out and grow old doing it, but if you find true peace, you will find it in Jesus Christ. He is the only one who has the key to peace.

Isaiah said in Isaiah 53:5, "... the chastisement of our peace was upon him. . . ." He is the only one who took the chastisement for our peace. We find in Proverbs 3:1-2, that in the keeping of His commandments, peace is added to our lives. Isaiah 9:7 says, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. . . ." What did Isaiah mean? The more you let Christ govern your life, the greater your peace will be. There is no end to His government and peace, but people refuse to let Jesus govern their lives. They seek peace, talk about peace, and sing about peace, but they do not have it.

Brother, the only place where real peace can be found is where we make a one-hundred-percent commitment of our lives into the hands of Jesus Christ, and let Him be the governor of our lives. My friend, you can have peace in an experience that is everlasting.

Too many feel that because they are saved and sanctified, they have come to an end of His government; there is no end. Every one of us can live closer to God. Every one of us can be more punctual in our obedience to Christ. Christ can take hold of our lives in a greater way than He has today. There is no end to His government, the same as there is no end to truth. God's Word is settled in Heaven. The bottom of this spring is in Heaven. It is God's eternal Word. It is infinite, all powerful, and never ending.

The Purpose of the Revelation

God had a purpose in sending the Revelation. When He told John to write down what he heard, He told him to send it to the seven churches. Every one of the seven letters ends this way: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," letting it open out to any congregation, anywhere, that needs that particular truth.

What is the purpose? He began in the first chapter by opening our minds to the purpose. There we see a vision of Christ walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, representing the seven congregations of the church. The letters were given to those congregations, and Jesus so positively said to five of the seven, "Repent, or else." The first purpose of the Revelation is for everyone to know that He is still in charge. We need to see a repeated vision of Christ as He is today.

The Revelation is not written like a book wherein you read chapter after chapter; it is written in seven series. A series begins in a certain place in the Revelation and carries you through a portion of the Gospel Day, clear up to the end. This is how you can know when a series ends: that series brings you up to the threshold of the second coming of Christ; then the next chapter will start another series.

There are seven series: Chapters 1-3 are the letters to the seven

churches in Asia, or letters that cover seven periods of time. The second series is found in Chapters 4 and 5, a vision of God's throne and the government of the church, the opening of God's plan of salvation, and how God lined out His people in the government of the church.

The third series is Chapters 6-11, the opening of the seven seals and, the consequences that follow. The fourth series is Chapter 12, the parental phase of the church, showing the pure woman; the church, bringing forth her new converts, and the power of pagan Rome working in that day to devour her converts. The fifth series, Chapters 13-19, shows the false systems of religion brought forth by the devil and how the church overcame them.

Chapter 20 is a series in itself, picturing the binding and the loosing of the dragon. The seventh series, Chapters 21 and 22, gives a clear vision of the church in the evening time, letting us see, thank God, that she is just as complete, perfect, and powerful in the evening time as she was in the morning time. John knew all about the morning-time church, but an angel, a messenger or a minister, had to show him the evening-time church.

John's Vision

We are going to study the pouring out of the seven last plagues, or vials of God's judgment, on everything false. When John was talking about Heaven, he was sitting on the Isle of Patmos. God gave him a panorama vision stretched across the sky. You will read in Revelation 9:17, "And thus I saw the horses in the vision. . . ." He let you know over and over that it was just a vision; he did not see actual happenings. He saw a vision of things that would happen right here on the earth after his day.

Before we begin reading Revelation, the fifteenth chapter, I want to clarify something. A sign throughout the Revelation means that it is a prophecy, a sign of something else

coming. Many people trying to teach prophecy get the sign of Christ's coming confused with His actual coming. The sign of His coming is one thing, and His coming is another. As an illustration, when you see a sign that says, "Drink Coca-Cola," you cannot stop and drink it; that is just a sign advertising or telling you about something. As John was watching this portion of the vision, he was told to write what he saw.

In Revelation 15:1-2 he wrote: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels [seven messengers or seven ministers] having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass [The sea of glass is a symbol of the Word of God. As you look into it, you see yourself as you are. As you seek Jesus, and then look to the power of the Holy Spirit. He changes you into that same image. In the Old Testament, the sea of glass was that brazen place where the priest washed when he came in. It was a type of the reality of the New Testament. Paul said in Ephesians 5:25-26: 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' That washing was a type of God's Word. So, he saw a sea of glass.] mingled with fire: [That fire is the fire of the Holy Spirit. So far he has seen people standing on a Word that is anointed, that is preached, which is mingled with fire.] and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

John said, "I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous." There are not too many people who think the minister pouring out the vials of God's wrath on all falsity is great or marvelous. Here were ministers with the last plagues, vials

full and running over with the wrath of God. John thought it was great and marvelous because of what it was going to produce. It produced a people with victory over the beast and his image, a people with clear lives, a people with harps, praising God for His wonderful goodness.

How to Find Strength and Courage

Another purpose for the Revelation was to bring encouragement and strength to God's people, and it will still do it. Some congregations never will be strong until they are taught some of these divine truths. What was the first thing Jesus said to the churches? Grace divine, strength and peace be unto you. Blessed are you if you will read, hear, and keep this Book. It will bring strength back to you.

The devil is robbing us poor of our praises, of our overcoming power, and of the real victory God wants us to enjoy. Men and women in the past have laid down their lives, and nothing could stop them from going forward and living for God. Too many are so spiritually weak today.

I want to ask you a question: Are you a part of the true Church of God? Take a look, do you have a harp? If you have a harp, are you free to play it? You can get in a condition where your harp is hung on the willow. If you look at the world, and look at the situations going on, it will get anybody down, but the Bible says, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . ." (Hebrews 12:2).

You cannot look unto Jesus and get discouraged. No one has ever gotten discouraged looking unto Jesus: The devil tries to get us to look at something else—all our problems, all our burdens, the shape the world is in, the problems we have in school, the problems we have on the job. Look unto Jesus!

The Revelation was sent for encouragement and strength. Who

needed encouragement? John needed it, and many others who were living on the earth at that time. Why did they need encouragement? They had watched false religion work; they had watched the power of Satan work through false religion; they had watched their brethren thrown to the animals, burned at the stake, beaten, misused, and chased out of town.

Jesus was saying that it was enough; there was a message for them and for us. If you will read the entire Book of Revelation, you will see that millions of others who were being misused needed an encouraging message. They had felt false religion's sting, and they were made to wonder if God would ever come to the rescue and put judgment on it.

This message was not only for the saints here on the earth. You can read in Revelation 6:9 and 10 that under the altar the souls of them that had been slain and had made it to Glory asked God "how long" before He would bring vengeance and judgment down on the powers and systems that were working so against real salvation. The Revelation is an answer to that cry. They had pleaded for judgment, and now it was time for the wrath of God to be poured out through the preaching of the Word against those false systems.

Pouring Out the Plagues of Judgment

When God pours out preliminary judgment today, the same kind of judgment you are going to meet in the last day, except it is poured out early, it is called preliminary judgment. God, through preliminary judgment is judging you in mercy when He pours out judgment on a condition that is wrong. Why? He could let you live right on to the final judgment and come up short, and be cast away into eternal torment. Instead, through preliminary judgment, through the pouring out of His Word, He is letting you see

your true condition.

There are lots of things today that man tells you about sin. They say that God smiles on it, but the Bible says that God hates it. It is an abomination to Him. Preliminary judgment brings out the hidden works of darkness, so that man may see and flee before it is everlastingly too late.

Why are the plagues called the seven last plagues? The plagues were poured out on Pharaoh in Egypt, and before God poured out any one of the plagues, He said, "Let my people go." Today, God's people have gotten hooked up in religious organizations and societies that are abominations to God. There are honest hearts who are not saved in the darkness of these things, and God, in His love and mercy, is pouring out the vials of wrath, the plagues. What does He want? He wants His people loosed, whoever they are and wherever they are, so they can serve and worship Him in spirit and truth as He has ordained. God is pouring out the plagues of truth and judgment so that the truth will set you free. Judgment is part of truth. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). People need to hear the truth about false religion today. Some people say, "Now, don't say anything about them." It is almost to the place where they charge you with being unchristian if you tell people the truth of God's Word about false religion.

There will not be a child of God left in Babylon (false religion) before Jesus comes. Read Revelation 18:2; she will completely become the habitation of devils. Jesus is trying to set people free. According to the Revelation, those vials are filled up with the wrath of God.

In Revelation, Chapter 15, verse 6, you can read that the seven angels, or seven ministers, came out of the temple clothed in pure and white linen. I must keep myself pure inside and clean outside. They had golden girdles around their

breasts. Friend, God's wrath is stirred. Why is He stirred? Christ's offices and Christ's authority have been usurped by men. The Pope of Rome uses the expression "Dominus Deus Noster Papa" which means, "I am Lord God, the Pope." He is not Lord God! Men today have usurped offices that belong to Jesus Christ alone.

Holding the Truth in Unrighteousness

People have misused His name: drinkers, smokers, gamblers, fornicators, and adultresses tell you, "We belong to Christ. We are members of Christ's church." Through the preaching of the vials of wrath, God is avenging His Son and His people; both of them have been misused. Christ's name has been dishonored, and the great designs of His death have been opposed. More and more, there is a rising up against holiness. Why did Christ die? To make you holy. When you fight holiness, you are opposing the very works of Christ's death.

Men have perverted the Gospel. Paul said in Romans 1:16-18: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein [in the Gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven [Where? In the Gospel. How does it come? As a revelation; it is revealed.] against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

God will not let you judge until you are clear yourself. In Romans, Chapter 2, Paul asked them why they put judgment on someone else when they were doing the same thing. Right through the Gospel, the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness. It is coming from Heaven. However, people will not own it. They want to weaken it and

take the authority out of it, saying, "That is just his opinion, his idea."

One of the best ways to cast your soul into hell is to start saying that it is "just the preacher's opinion." The devil is already working a deception on you. Soon he is going to get you to the place where no preacher can help you, because it is just his opinion, and you think you have a right to your own.

God hates that business of holding the truth in unrighteousness. People who do not have the truth cannot hold the truth, but you hold it and will not let it loose. If you would let it loose, it would have an effect on your family and your neighbors, but you hold it through your unrighteous attitude, unrighteous feeling. There is not a thing going on out in the world that can hold the truth or hinder it. The only ones hindering the truth are people who claim to be the church, but will not measure to the truth and let it loose to work in their lives like God wants it to.

Wrath Preaching

Those vials in the Revelation were just flat bowls, full of the wrath of God. That is a symbolic expression meaning that God has moved on a preacher and filled him up with wrath preaching. No matter how much he tries to think about the love of God and other things, he is full of wrath preaching. The wrath of God is simply this—the will of God. God has forever linked together sin and suffering, woe and wickedness. If you are going to live wicked, you are going to have woe put on you.

People want to go on in their wickedness and sin, and they get stirred if a preacher pours woe out. Listen to the Master's teaching: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" I know there will be people who will pat you on the back when you are wrong; but a true minister will not pat you on the back, he will put fire on your sin. It is the will of God.

Jesus said that His house had become a den of thieves. His house ought to be a place where thieves get the heat put on them, but many religious organizations have become a place to hide. With all the wickedness that is going on, you will hear some woes coming out of the mouth of a true man of God.

The reason the world is in such a condition is because false religion is patting people on the back when they are wrong. When judgment was laid to the line and righteousness was the plummet, people's wrong did not get patted. They were awakened to their true condition every time they got around the Gospel.

In Ecclesiastes 8:11 the wise man said, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." We need more speedy execution of God's eternal Word.

Far too many are looking for results without paying the price for good results. Many are sowing briars, thorns, and thistles and hoping for figs and grapes. They are living like they want to live, and wondering why they cannot see great manifestations of the power of God and why sick people cannot be healed.

The manifestation of God is a reaping of the right kind of sowing. We all want figs; we do not want briars, thorns, and thistles, but we sow them, and wonder why figs and grapes do not show up. Do not be deceived, friend.

Progressing in the Wrong Direction

We have better houses to live in today than we ever have had, but while we have better houses, our homes are getting in wore shape. We need to wake up to what we are doing. We have greater wealth today, and less happiness. We have wonder drugs, but our health is no better as a whole. We are traveling at accelerated speeds, but we have lost our direction. We have in-

creased knowledge today, oh, what knowledge we have, but less wisdom. Even Christians are doing things that are unwise: It is not the fact that we do not know better; we have the knowledge, but we lack wisdom. Friend, we need to see, some of these things only God can give us.

We have more churches today than at any time in the history of the world, but there are fewer saints. We have the knowledge to put men into space, but we do not have the knowledge to teach people how to live right and how to get along with each other. I want you to see why **G o d i s s t i r r e d**. Our twentieth-century world is a chaotic picture. Civilization is making progress in reverse. We are going down the fastest any nation ever went down. Yes, we are making more progress than any nation, but we are going in the wrong direction. We are getting farther from God and closer to hell every day God lets the sun come up. Confusion and chaos are the results. Where did it all come from? It all came from ignoring God and His ways. From the very beginning, God has been trying to get man to see that he can live higher. God's ways are high above man's ways, and God sent His Son to lift us up from the human level, the ways of man, to God's ways. God has a way to live on every level of your life, and when you rebel against it, you are only bringing yourself into a chaotic condition.

God's way reaches into the home, the job, and our worship services. God has a way for you to behave yourself in the house of God. I do not believe there is such freedom that you can get up and walk about and talk. No, sir! That is not God's way to act in church! You may do things the way you want to, but where is your power with God?

How long has it been since you prayed through and got a direct miracle? See, you can go on and profess, but your sin will find you out. It shows up in the lack of power in your life, it shows up in

your praying, it shows up in your preaching, and it shows up in your daily living. God alone knows the pattern for this world. He made it to function in His way, and it will function just exactly as He ordained it to function.

Has Humanism Affected You?

Humanism has worked in such a manner that we bring our ways up; God's ways have become antiquated. We forget that God is eternal and all His ways are infinite; God's way can never become antiquated. God set His ways in order for as long as this world stands: they will work just as well today as they did long ago. When a man excludes God from his plans, it is as disastrous as trying to fly an airplane with one wing. If you lose one wing, you are going to go in circles and end up in calamity.

Materialism is just one wing. We have to come back to the vital fact of truth that man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. There is a spiritual faith that will balance our world. Materialism must be balanced by the wing of spiritual strength for the soul of man.

We must watch that we do not prosper more materially than we do spiritually. Why? If there is not proper balance, we will soon be ready for a spin and a crash. God wants us to prosper and be in health, even as our soul prospers. Today, we are going in circles, politically, socially, and economically. What a tailspin we have taken, and we are not out of it yet. The Bible has the only answer for our mixed up world.

When a minister will pour out the judgments of God and make plain God's plan, it will be a great and marvelous sign to you. Why? That is the real sign that things are going to look better. Notice the second verse and on through in Revelation, Chapter 15. It says that they stand on the sea of glass; the Word

of God mingled with fire, the Holy Ghost. They have harps, and they are singing.

What are they singing? The song of Moses, the song of deliverance, the song that Israel sang when God miraculously backed up the Red Sea. As soon as their feet touched dry ground on the other side, the Bible said they started to sing the song of Moses. What did they sing about? They sang of the greatness of God.

God has been minimized today. Humanism has lifted up man and put God down. He will never be lifted back to His rightful place in people's lives unless the church lifts Him, but we are never going to lift Him by going around with our harps hung on the willows. The world says that things are pretty tough, and you answer, "Yes, they sure are. We are really in a mess, and it looks like it might get worse." If you have a harp, it is on the willow. These days in which we are living are precious opportunities to lift up God. Our conversation ought to be:

"Are you out of work?"

"Yes, I am out of work, but, thank God, I have God. He is taking care of me."

If you are living for God, He will take care of you. If you are losing your house, you ought to be able to say, "Yes, there is a possibility that I will lose my house, but, thank God, I am not losing God. He is keeping me." Oh, we have lost that language.

Do You Have God's Spot?

Let us read a little of the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:3-5: "Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. [then he begins to talk about people who have corrupted themselves] their spot is not the spot of his children. "

There are two kinds of spots. A

real saint has God's spot, not the world's spot. If the world gets its spot on you, you cannot have God's spot. Somebody may ask, "Well, what kind of spot does God have?" White all over. Every one of His children has a white garment made up of righteousness, purity, and holiness; that is God's spot. That lets everybody who looks on you know that you belong to God. The world likes to put black spots on white; God likes to put white spots where black once had been, and make you pure, clean, and upright.

God has chosen human instrumentality to do His work clear through the Gospel Day. The angels know nothing about the plan of salvation. In the Revelation symbolic expressions of angels with vials filled with the wrath of God means nothing more than God has sent ministers to pour out the judgments of God, letting you know how God feels about some things.

Jesus taught in the Gospel ". . . for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). The Word of God lets us look at things the way God looks at them. Men today are doing their own thing. Men wear their hair like the women. It does not make any difference to them what God thinks about it.

God thinks that a man who will wear his hair like a woman has become effeminate, and he is a poor witness because people cannot tell whether he is a man or a woman. He also said that the long hair was given to the woman for a glory, but some women say, "Well, I have my own feeling about it." The blessed old Bible is the only thing that saved us, and it is the only thing that will get us through to Heaven.

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