

Understanding Revelation: **2) Revelation's Long-Range Predictive Prophecies**

In order to understand **Revelation**, it is necessary to have clear and adequate ideas concerning the nature of Jehovah's long-range, predictive prophecies, and concerning their significance.

Revelation makes a unique contribution. It adds two periods of time to the interval of time between the prophet and the final culminations. The first period of time is the one which will elapse before Christ returns in His Parousia and that Kingdom of God which Jehovah foretold in **Daniel 2:31-35** and **44-45** is established on Earth. The second period of time is the one thousand years that the Kingdom of God (the Millennium) will last before Satan is released from prison and Gog and Magog attack the Beloved City.

In doing this **Revelation's** prophecies have divided the processes and events of the end-time into two series, and have put a space of a thousand years between the two series of final culminations. One series of end-time processes and events is to occur just before the Millennium begins, and as it begins. It will be a pre-Millennial series of great end-time events, including the Second Coming of Christ, the great Day of Jehovah's Wrath, "the First Resurrection" (= "the Resurrection of the Just"), the Translation of the then living saints, and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. It will introduce and establish the theocratic kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the people of the saints of the Most High. The other series of end-time processes and events is to occur as the Millennium draws to its close, or just after it ends. It will be a post-Millennial series of great end-time developments, including about a dozen great events; for example, Satan's release from prison, his great final seduction of the nations, their last war against the Holy City, their peremptory destruction, the consignment of Satan to the Lake of Fire, the revelation of Jehovah upon His Great White Throne, the revelation of His face, the Second or General Resurrection of All the Dead, the Last Judgment, the Consignment of Death and Hades to the Lake of Fire, the Emergence of the New Heavens and the New Earth, and the Descent

of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, out of Heaven from God to the Earth. It will introduce and establish the New Heavens and New Earth of an ensuing period of Eternity. **Revelation**'s prophecies, it is noteworthy, do not make the Millennium the grand climax of all Jehovah's work. Instead, they have made it a great interregnum, a continuation of history minus many of the great evils of preceding millennia, and under new, radically improved conditions, and under the very best auspices. It will be a Sabbath of rest between two great series of end-time developments and events!

The Bible does not state the length of the first period of time which **Revelation** adds. Nevertheless, we can form some idea of its length because John prophesied in 96 A. D., and we are now living in 2004 A. D. The Kingdom of God has still not come in power. Consequently, we know that the first period has already lasted 1,908 years since John sent **Revelation** to the churches, and also that it will probably last a bit longer before the 1,000 year period of the Millennium will begin. Therefore, **Revelation**'s long-range prophecies have added at least three thousand years to the Bible's prophetic "timetable" of coming events.

One well-known result of this has been to lead many to suppose that because **Revelation**'s prophecies of the eschatological culminations have not yet been fulfilled they never will be. Therefore they have concluded that the prophecies can not be genuine oracles and the things that they foretell must be delusions.

A second result of this is fairly obvious although few ever value it properly. It is that if we assume that **Revelation**'s long-range prophecies **are** genuine oracles, and that the things which they foretell **will** surely occur, as this writer does, then its prophecies have added a new dimension to Jehovah's prophecies in the Bible, so that they now reveal fully the inconceivably immense scope of His great designs and purposes. For example, **Revelation** tells us that just as Jehovah had "done it long ago, and formed it of ancient times" long before the kings of Assyria and Sennacherib had "laid waste fortified cities into ruinous

heaps” (Isaiah 37:26); so He has already done it and formed it 2,903 years before it will eventually occur that Gog and Magog shall attack the Beloved City. Nay, He had done it and formed it over 3,500 years earlier because Ezekiel had prophesied the attack of Gog and Magog over six hundred years before John wrote **Revelation**.

A third result of this will be obvious after we have described it. It is that Jehovah’s long-range prophecies, and above all those in **Revelation**, have proved to be the most powerful of all possible demonstrations not only of the truth of the Bible’s prophecies, but also of His great personal excellences. In this connection, moreover, it is especially important to realize that it is not only the intrinsic nature of the prophecies themselves which has given them their great power to demonstrate the greatness of Jehovah’s personal excellences and the truth of the Bible’s prophecies, but it is also **the ways in which He has used them in connection with various collateral circumstances** that have given them unsurpassable demonstrative force. Especially the long-range predictive prophecies in **Revelation** demonstrate His personal excellences as follows.

Before John wrote **Revelation**, many of the Bible’s books already contained some of Jehovah’s long-range, predictive prophecies. Then **Revelation** added others. It is first necessary to understand **their intrinsic nature**, and second, to be aware that Jehovah has used them in connection with **five kinds of collateral circumstances** which have given them tremendous significance as evidences of His faithfulness and His other excellences (**ἀρεταί**), and as evidences of the truth of the Bible’s prophecies.

Before John wrote **Revelation** some of the Bible’s prophecies had already foretold things that would occur hundreds of years later, and others had foretold things that would happen thousands of years later. Many foretold things that would happen at the end of the age or “world”; that is, at the time when the Kingdom of God would arrive. And of course, the long-range prophecies in **Revelation** are closely related to

the earlier ones in the rest of the Bible. They fit right in with them, supplement them, and complete them. Indeed, some in **Revelation** foretell things that will happen **following** the time which many usually think of as the “end of the world.”

Jehovah has made wonderful use of His long-range predictive prophecies as a tool. They are a powerful tool because when they have been fulfilled **they compel rational natures** — angels as well as men — **to recognize and to adopt certain correct understandings concerning many of the most important realities.** Therefore, He has used them to give men an assured knowledge (1) of the reality of His presence and activity; and (2) of the transcennial and transmilenial range of His powerful working in the course of human and cosmic events; and (3) of the fact that the words of His prophets had indeed been **His divine Word.** Consequently, we need to describe briefly the nature of Jehovah’s long-range predictive prophecies, and to show how He has turned them into **foundations of assured knowledge.**

Two things give Jehovah’s long-range predictive prophecies their immense significance and powerful influence: first, **their intrinsic nature** which *ipso facto* makes them foundations of knowledge; and second, **five kinds of crucially important collateral circumstances** which Jehovah has turned to account in a very masterful way to enhance their value as foundations of knowledge.

First, consider their intrinsic nature. Every predictive prophecy consists of four basic parts. The first is a prediction to be fulfilled: “Thus saith Jehovah ...” The second is a space of time intervening between the prophecy and its fulfillment, or fulfillments (plural). The third is a process of some kind which creates the resulting fulfillment, or fulfillments (plural). And the fourth is the resulting fulfillment, or fulfillments (plural). The thing to understand is what such an intrinsic nature makes it possible for Jehovah to cause His long-range predictive prophecies to do for His glory and for His people’s instruction.

First, then, consider the **intrinsic nature** of a long-range prediction and its fulfillment. Its **key feature** is the long space of time between the date of the prediction and the date of its fulfillment. This temporal interval becomes important whenever anyone questions either the genuineness of the alleged prophecy or the genuineness of its alleged fulfillment. Therefore, it becomes important whenever any scholar asserts, as so many have, that there are no predictive prophecies, but all the Bible's alleged prophecies which may seem to have been fulfilled were *vaticinia ex eventû*. The particular power which this key feature has is that under certain specifiable circumstances it makes it impossible for rational beings to assert that an alleged prophecy could have been manufactured after its alleged fulfillment had already previously occurred.

In order to show the great importance of this key feature, we need only mention three concrete situations. The first is the existence of that absolutely undeniable space of time — several centuries or more — which elapsed between **all** of the Old Testament's prophecies, on the one hand, and every one of the New Testament's events which it is possible to think of as having been fulfillments of any of them, on the other. Now, the essential idea of a **vaticinium ex eventû** is: (1) that some unknown writer had some past event in view. He had then (2) deliberately formulated a false prophecy that it would happen. And then (3) somehow or other it had managed to crop up in a Biblical document which of course must therefore have been written after the alleged "fulfillment" had occurred.

Therefore, first, no claim that a prophecy was a **vaticinium ex eventû** can ever make sense unless we have good reason to feel certain that the document which contains it had been written at some time later than the date of the alleged fulfillment of the prophecy. And therefore, secondly, no rational being will ever claim that any Old Testament prophecy which foretells a New Testament event is a **vaticinium ex eventû**. Of course, to say this is not to deny that men can be irrational. Neither is it to deny that in their irrationality many critics have claimed

that all the Old Testament's prophecies of New Testament events are **vaticinia ex eventû**; for scholars have done so, and probably always will. No! but it is merely to say that the undeniable interval of centuries between the alleged prophecies in the Old Testament and the alleged fulfillments of them in the New Testament has also made it undeniable that, if they insist on doing so, they must be fools. For how else, pray, should we regard persons who are self-complacent, and who make themselves, perhaps unconsciously, ridiculous or absurd?

A second concrete situation is the one which will exist in the future at the start of the Millennium; that is, when those processes, developments, and events occur which will be the fulfillments of **Revelation**'s prophecies. As of the present day, nineteen hundred years have already elapsed since John wrote **Revelation** in 96 A. D. This means that an absolutely undeniable space of nineteen centuries will exist between **all** the Bible's prophecies, on the one hand, and **every one** of the events of 2000 A. D., or later, which it may be possible to think of as having fulfilled them, on the other. Therefore, when **Revelation**'s long-range predictive prophecies have been fulfilled, no rational being will ever be able to think of claiming that they were **vaticinia ex eventû** which had been invented, and had been inserted into the texts of **Revelation**, after the events which had fulfilled them had occurred.

For example, if our Lord returns at any time in the year 2004 A. D. or after, and if He then does any of the things which **Revelation** foretells, no one will dare to assert that the prophecies in **Revelation**, which the whole world had had ever since 96 A. D., must be **vaticinia ex eventû**, and that someone must have invented them after 2000 A. D., and must then have inserted them into the text of **Revelation**. Surely, the existence of an undeniable interval of 1,900 years, or sixty generations, would create mouth-stopping evidences of the truth of Jehovah's long-range, predictive prophecies and of the certainty of their fulfillments. Such evidences could never lose their power to stop all mouths. The events of those days — that is, *quâ* manifest fulfillments of many prophecies which will be 1,900 years old, or older — will *ipso*

facto equip the Millennial Kingdom which our Lord will establish with everlasting evidences of its divine origins, its ancient charters, and its supernaturally accredited authority. No critics will ever be able to impugn those evidences.

A third concrete situation will be quite similar. It is the one which will exist in the future at the end of the Millennium, or toward its close. Then almost a dozen additional processes, developments, and events, which **Revelation** has also prophesied, will occur. They will include Satan's release from prison, his great final seduction of the nations, their last war against the Holy City, their swift destruction, the second or general resurrection of all the dead, the last judgment, the consignment of Death and Hades to the Lake of Fire, the emergence of a new heaven and a new earth, and the descent of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, out of Heaven to the Earth. Those who live at that time will know assuredly that an additional thousand years — 2,900 years in all — will separate the events which will then fulfill the prophecies from the date of the prophecies which had foretold them. And thus, not only at the start of the Millennium — say around 2000 A. D. — and not only at the close of the Millennium — say about 3000 A. D. — but for all future eternity no one will ever venture to doubt the absolute integrity of Jehovah's long-range, predictive prophecies, which had been notoriously in existence for such long ages before they were fulfilled.

Thus, **if and when they are fulfilled**, the evidences for their integrity will be unshakable, and the implications of their demonstrated integrity will be utterly clear and incontrovertible, as follows. Those three great spaces of time which Jehovah has placed between His long-range, predictive prophecies and their promised fulfillments will make the evidences unshakable. One interval has already separated the prophecies of our Lord's First Coming from His First Advent. Another will have separated prophecies of His Second Coming from His Second Advent; while a third will have separated prophecies of a series of post-Millennial events from their occurrence. Of course, it makes a great deal of difference who uttered the prophecies, and the date at which he

uttered them. Nevertheless, the incontrovertible existence of the great spaces of time will stop the mouths of all destructive critics because they will render absolutely irrelevant all that destructive critics ever have said or ever can say in objections based upon theories of authorship, provenance, dates of manuscripts or versions, religionsgeschichtliche considerations, and whatever. And therefore, at that future time when the Millennium starts, Jehovah's long-range, predictive prophecies will provide unshakable evidences of the divine provenance of that eternal Kingdom — that everlasting dominion — which Christ will inaugurate when He comes. And not only in that future time when the Millennium starts, but also one thousand years later when it ends, and ever after, Jehovah's people, having received "a Kingdom which cannot be shaken," **will be able to know assuredly** that their belief concerning it — namely, that Jehovah had promised and foretold it two thousand years before He had introduced it — is also based upon **evidences** which can never be shaken.

Furthermore, the intrinsic nature of a long-range predictive prophecy being what it is, the implications of the demonstrated integrity of Jehovah's long-range, predictive prophecies are positively astounding. For example, the fulfillment of any one of His long-range prophecies proves that He — **and not any prophet whatever** — had to have been its Author, and that He had had the ability to **foreknow** remotest future events and to foretell them. Moreover, each fulfillment of Jehovah's long-range prophecies demonstrates His ability to make the ongoing course of natural occurrences and of human events **produce** those processes and events which He had foreknown and foretold. What this means is that every long-range prophecy of Jehovah's, when fulfilled, **demand**s three things: first, a recognition of the truth of the prediction which it contains; second, recognition of the reality of its unquestionable actual fulfillment; and third, recognition of Jehovah's power to control nature and its processes, history and its processes, and the cosmos and its processes. Indeed, it not only demands but it **extorts** such recognition from every rational creature; so that even those who refuse to give such recognition will know that they ought to give it, and

that they can never have any valid excuse for refusing to do so. Such is one key function which the Bible's long-range prophecies perform. They can perform it because their intrinsic nature enables them to do so.

And furthermore, every long-range prophecy of Jehovah, when fulfilled, **absolutely guarantees the truth of every one of the many implications** which are based upon its nature and upon the nature of the fulfillments of it. For example, we have just mentioned several such implications, namely, Jehovah's knowledge of the future, His ability to foretell future things, His power to produce adequate fulfillments of His prophecies. Another is His control over certain parts of "the course of human events," and over certain parts of the course of cosmic events, including certain very noteworthy victories over human evils and over cosmic evils. Still others are His intellectual excellences, His holiness and moral supremacy, and so on.

The obvious import of these considerations is that inescapable implications of the truth of Jehovah's long-range predictive prophecies **are of such a nature that they make it impossible for rational beings not to believe** that Jehovist-Christian Interpretation of History which the genuine oracles of the Bible reveal. Many call this "the Christian Interpretation of History." It may be legitimate to use this expression, but only if in doing so we take great care not to permit the use of the adjective "Christian" to mislead us into radically altering the original character and significance of the Old Testament prophecies, or into substituting the Church, or some conception of a future ethical or spiritual society, for the Bible's apocalyptic Kingdom of God. But more concerning this in a moment.

And now, **second**, let us describe the masterful ways in which Jehovah has used the **five kinds of crucially important collateral circumstances** which we have mentioned. By using them He has made His long-range, predictive prophecies indescribably powerful demonstrations of His greatness and His Son's. The five kinds of collateral circumstances are:

first, Jehovah has always made sure that He shall have **a monopoly** of the power to make long-range predictive prophecies;

second, Jehovah has made many of His predictive prophecies **great promises of great things** rather than mere predictions;

third, He has chosen to foretell the future occurrence of **many seemingly impossible things** which were utterly unbelievable, but which He can bring to pass and does;

fourth, He has chosen to foretell many epochs and critically important **historical** processes, developments, and events; and

fifth, He has chosen to foretell critically important **cosmic** developments and events.

We shall say just enough about each of these crucially important kinds of collateral circumstances, in order to be able to point out how Jehovah has taken advantage of each kind so as to be able to make the Bible's long-range predictive prophecies the most powerful demonstrations of His greatness, and His Son's.

The first crucially important collateral circumstance was Jehovah's decision to monopolize the power to make long-range predictive prophecies. He makes certain that no one else, and especially that no other supernatural being, will be able to foretell any events, except that for a special purpose He does occasionally permit them to foretell a few relatively quite unimpressive and even contemptible occurrences. That purpose is to test His people's loyalty to Himself. Will they remain faithful to Him even though they know that some other "god" has been able to do something miraculous (Deuteronomy 13:1-3)? He wants to know, and they need to know, the answer to this all-important question. But other than this He secures and maintains a monopoly.

Jehovah's monopoly of long-range prophecies is a crucially important special circumstance. It is a principle of policy which enables Him to achieve many excellent results. For example, it enables Him to show angels and men two things: first, that just as He alone (לְבַדּוֹ = μονος) can do wondrous works (נִפְלְאוֹת = θαυμασια, Psalm 72:18), so He alone can foresee that history's most significant future processes, developments, and events will occur. And second, it enables Him to show them that only He can cause the things that He has foreseen and predicted to happen. In short, the policy based upon this collateral circumstance has made Him alone the God of Prophecy and the Lord of History.

Of course, other "gods" claimed that they could foretell future occurrences, and tried to do so. However, Jehovah almost always prevents their predictions from being fulfilled.

[**Note.** The Greek historian Herodotus related a significant conversation between the wisest of men (Solon of Athens) and the richest and most powerful of emperors (Croesus of Sardis). The Athenian described himself as "one who knows that the power above us is full of jealousy, and fond of troubling our lot." A footnote reads: "The φθονος ("jealousy") of God is a leading feature in Herodotus's conception of the Deity, and no doubt it is one of the chief moral conclusions which he drew from his own survey of human events, and intended to impress on us by his history." Book I, chapter 32, The History of Herodotus, Translated by George Rawlinson, Edited by E. H. Blakeney (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, no date) Vol. I., p. 15. As a Scotch versifier has written: "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley."]

By doing this He makes their false prophets twice liars: once, in their false pretensions and claims to be able to foretell future events, and again with respect to their would-be forecasts which He has falsified. It is very noteworthy in this connection how those supernatural beings who work incessantly to seduce men and women have always shown great shyness about venturing to foretell future events. They know that Jehovah prevents their predictions from being fulfilled, and that by doing so He makes them liars. Thus, the other gods, "the gods who did not create the heavens and the earth," can never hope to become gods of prophecy. They can only be gods of the false prophets. Let the preceding statement suffice to give some idea of how Jehovah turns His monopoly of long-range prophecy to account for His purposes.

The second crucially important collateral circumstance was Jehovah's decision to cause some of His prophecies to make breath-taking promises of great things; that is, rather than mere predictions. In regard to this matter the point is that any trivial performance could serve to demonstrate Jehovah's ability to foresee and foretell a future occurrence and then to produce the fulfillment which He had foreseen and foretold. For instance, He might foretell that a certain name or number would be drawn in a lottery, and then cause it to be drawn. If so, it would be a true demonstration of His power to foresee an event and to cause it to occur, even though it might be a disgusting triviality.

But on the other hand, a promise in the form of an indefectible, preservation-guaranteeing covenant between God and a nation would require centuries of faithful care. Consider, for example, all the times that Jehovah saved Israel from destruction by powerful enemies. Now, in order to perceive the true nature of Jehovah's long-range predictive prophecies, it is necessary to realize that some of them are **promises**. They are great promises of great things. As such, they require Him to use ways and means which are adequate to produce the great events, processes, or developments which will be adequate fulfillments. And thus, the prophetic prediction of any of them includes a prediction of the ways and means which are required to produce the fulfillment of the prediction. Moreover, one promise will often call for the production of a series of results; so that, when a series of results fulfills any prediction, then each of the results in the series is certainly a distinct fulfillment of the one original prophecy. In other words, the things that the prophecies predict are never trivial things, but are things of great significance which will produce many results, each of which is one part of the fulfillment of the prediction. Examples of such promises are Jehovah's promises to Abraham, His promises to Israel, His promises to David, His promises regarding Zion, and His promises to His Son, all of which involve very extensive multiple fulfillments.

The third crucially important collateral circumstance was Jehovah's decision to foretell the future occurrence of many seemingly

impossible things which were utterly unbelievable, but which He can bring to pass and does. In some of His long-range prophecies Jehovah has foretold things that seem to be not only humanly impossible but intrinsically and utterly impossible, and which, therefore, are utterly unbelievable. The fact that He chooses to do this is a third, crucially important, collateral circumstance. In such cases His fulfillments have demonstrated that He **can** do those utterly unbelievable things. They have also demonstrated that if He has said that He will do something, then He will surely do it. Thus, they prove the complete dependableness of His words, promises, covenants, and oaths. This is the great lesson which He taught Abraham in the beginning, namely, the absolute dependability of His word because of His faithfulness. Abraham learned that however impossible it may seem, Jehovah **can** do what He says, and He **will** do what He has said. And of course, the natural result of learning this lesson is that he who has learned it will trust Jehovah implicitly and will obey Him for thoroughly rational reasons. And in the present connection we must point out that this particular collateral circumstance is one that makes it possible for men to acquire and exercise one of the very highest virtues that angels or men can practice, namely, trusting Jehovah implicitly. Isaac Barrow has carefully explained the essence of the particular form of goodness which such trusting and obeying exemplifies. He has shown that it is not at all the easy childish evasion of rationality, which so many have always misrepresented it as being, but that it is an action which is virtuous in the highest degree.

[Note. "The Christian Faith Explained and Vindicated. Sermons on the Apostles' Creed." Sermon I (Of the Evil and Unreasonableness of Infidelity), Sermon II (Of the Virtue and Reasonableness of Faith), and Sermon III (Of the Virtue and Reasonableness of Faith). *The Works of Isaac Barrow* (New York: John C. Riker, 1845), Vol. II., pp. 165-206.]

Let this suffice to explain the third kind of crucial collateral circumstance and its rôle.

The fourth crucially important collateral circumstance was the fact that Jehovah's long-range predictive prophecies foretell many epochs and critically important **historical** processes, developments, and events.

Jehovah's **choice of the subjects** of His long-range prophecies has created the collateral circumstances of this kind. Jehovah saw that He could demonstrate His excellences by creating long-range predictive prophecies upon such subjects as these, and then by creating impressive fulfillments of them. Therefore, He deliberately chose to foretell the kinds of processes, developments, and occurrences which would turn out to be **historically** significant; that is, in the sense that they would determine not only the character and destinies of Earth's kingdoms and empires, but also the character of "the course of human events," and the direction in which it shall go, and its final outcome.

For example, a long-range prophecy of His may foretell the rise of a great nation and describe its rôle before the father of that nation has been born, or before he has a single son. Again, in the prophecies of Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel Jehovah speaks directly to particular nations and to great empires and their heads. He addresses them as the One who is unquestionably the Lord of History. He tells of their rise to power. He assigns rôles to them. He foretells their fall and disappearance, or their eventual restoration. Therefore, whenever anyone sees that such a prophecy has received a manifest fulfillment, he knows several things and it is almost impossible for him not to draw some very important conclusions. For example, he knows that there had been a prophecy and that it had foretold certain things. He knows that there was a fulfillment in which what had been foretold had occurred. He knows that the fulfillment could not possibly have been an accident which chance or fate produced, but that some (super)intelligent and (super)powerful Agent had to have produced it. He knows that the prophecy had said explicitly that Jehovah of Hosts, the Living God, had foretold it and that He would produce it. He knows that he cannot help concluding that Jehovah is a God of History who controls its vicissitudes. He knows that manifest fulfillments of such prophecies are historical facts which show, or tend to show, His divine authority and Lordship over the course of human events as the God of History. Therefore, they powerfully suggest that Jehovah has a plan for human history and that He is actively at work executing it. Two things greatly

reinforce all such conclusions. One is the undoubted fact that divine oracles explicitly assert that Jehovah has such a plan and that He is executing it. They explicitly describe certain features of it and thus make it easy to judge as to whether He is executing it or not. The other is the previously noted fact that Jehovah does not permit other gods or men successfully to foretell any historical phenomena of the same caliber.

In short, when Jehovah foretells **historically** significant processes, developments, and events, His long-range prophecies have two impressive purposes or functions. One is to make those prophecies and their fulfillments powerful, knockout evidences of His excellences. This is the feature that interests us at present, namely, concerning how Jehovah's choice of such events as the subjects of His long-range prophecies has made those prophecies into the most powerful kinds of evidences of His personal excellences. The other is that they shall make the whole world know that He is the God of History. In order to understand **Revelation** it is certainly necessary to perceive that the Bible contains and reveals an interpretation of history; and also that it is Jehovah's long-range predictive prophecies more than any other feature of the Bible that have made it impossible for any reader not to see that the Bible reveals a Jehovist-Christian Interpretation of History. That interpretation of history is not a conclusion of philosophers based upon their study of history. Neither is it a mere belief that an inscrutable divine providence invisibly directs history. Instead, it is a divine revelation that Jehovah has a great plan of ascertainable operations which He is executing, and that in doing so, He has intervened in the life of mankind by direct action at quite a few specified times in quite a few definite places. We shall say more concerning this second purpose and the Bible's interpretation of history later in the section of this Introduction on "**Revelation's** Interpretation of History" and in the section on "**Revelation** and Jehovah's Cosmic Epic."

The fifth crucially important collateral circumstance connected with the Bible's long-range predictive prophecies is the fact that in some

of them Jehovah chose to lay bare many realities and to foretell many things which are **cosmically** significant; that is, in the sense that they have determined the nature of the rôles of Jehovah, and His Son, and His Holy Spirit; and in the sense that they will determine the basic nature of the entire Universe and the destiny of all its denizens, angels as well as men. Jehovah's long-range prophecies have foretold some crucial events that have occurred among supernatural beings in Heaven, and others that will occur there in the future. They have also foretold some crucially important events which supernatural beings have caused to occur here on Earth, and others that they will cause to occur here in the future. They thus reveal activities of Jehovah which show Him to be the Lord of the course of **Cosmic** History.

Now whether men realize it or not, this is the history that they really want to know about. Are evil powers at work in the Cosmos? And if so, can Jehovah and His Christ chain them, put them in the dock, and bring them to book; or rather, can **They** extirpate them, and destroy them, and repair the great damages which they have caused. Scripture relates many episodes of this Cosmic History. It gives us views of Jehovah's divine consults, which He holds in the court of Heaven. In them He makes and implements decisions; for example, in Job 1 & 2, in I. Kings 22, and elsewhere. It tells of a Book of the Wars of Jehovah and of One who is Captain of Jehovah's Army (שֶׁר־צְבָא־יְהוָה) - Joshua 5:14). It gives glimpses of those wars in which Jehovah has been at work exposing the far-reaching operations of a great "mystery of iniquity."

This "mystery" is a prime reality. In it evil angels and other evil spirits work ceaselessly to deceive men and women and to seduce them — nay, to victimize and abuse them, and, when possible, to turn some of them into fiends. Moreover, they have been hugely successful. They have also worked ceaselessly to gain control of kingdoms and other establishments of government, and of religious establishments, and of economies. In this, too, they have been very successful. So that, by means of this mystery of iniquity Satan has ever been able to take men

and women captive to him to do his will. But that is only half the story; for **Revelation** revealed that this mystery of iniquity had another dimension.

In a disclosure of immense importance it revealed that the Devil's conquests included one-third of the angels (**Revelation** 12:4,7-12). Satan had been able to take them captive to himself to do his will. Of course, this means that the mystery of iniquity originally had two branches, an earthly and a heavenly. In each department a situation existed. We are involved in the earthly situation and therefore have some acquaintance with its nature, its exigencies, its implications, bearings, and tendencies. But we were not directly involved in the heavenly situation. We only know that one-third of the angels were Satan's partisans. If so, however, then Heaven's situation was similar to that of France in the days when one-third of her citizens were members of the Communist Party. Heaven's citizens were hopelessly divided, and its government (= Jehovah the God of Heaven) faced the prospect of an inevitable "War of the Rebellion." We can certainly perceive that in Heaven vitally important issues had to be resolved. Clearly, in such a Universe as ours there were (and are) two principal needs. One is to deliver the Earth from evil supernatural powers who would swallow men up. The other was an even greater need to decontaminate and purge the Heavens. These two needs posed two problems which were so closely related that they really formed a single problem and required a single, comprehensive solution. It is the special merit of **Revelation**'s long-range prophecies that they fully reveal the realities and developments which enable one to comprehend the nature of the problem, and that they also foretell the processes and events which will really solve it. Therefore, in order to understand **Revelation** it is necessary to acquire a **cosmic** perspective from which it will become clear **what** the two problems really were, and **how** they are related to each other, and **why** Jehovah's solution, which **Revelation** foretells, will be truly adequate.

The War in Heaven, when it finally occurred, apparently satisfied the need to decontaminate the Heavens, but only made conditions so

much worse for the Earth. For **Revelation** tells us that Michael and his angels fought a war with the Dragon and his angels. The latter was hurled (εβληθη), and his angels along with him were hurled (εβληθησαν), into the Earth. There the angry expatriates of Heaven continued to be extremely active. So that the great Voice, which thereupon had commanded the denizens of Heaven to rejoice, had also cried:

Woe for the Earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down (κατεβη, aorist) unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

Therefore, the successful conclusion of the War in Heaven had left Satan still in business in a new location, and had left men in greater need than ever for deliverance from the evil supernatural powers who would swallow them up.

Mankind's need is obvious and many have understood it quite well. It was, and is, that someone should expose fully the great systematic attempts of evil supernatural powers to poison all the wells and destroy all good. Those attempts are so well disguised and so extremely deceptive that only Jehovah can discover them behind the façades of false appearances. The need was also to **empower** men to resist their evil activities in which they debauch the minds of men and women by injecting into them perverse thoughts, vile feelings, and uncontrolled willfulness. They would create bloodshed, lust, every kind of irrationality, perversions, insanity, and malevolent devilishness. Such evils **are** realities. Only Jehovah has fully and correctly understood the **nature** of such supernaturally inspired evil. He alone has correctly judged the **power** of evil whenever, as in the present case, master minds (= powerful intellects) under the domination of malignant wills, which are both intransigent and incorrigible, are the driving force behind evil activities. Only He knows the ability of such malignant intellects to lasso and hog-tie the wisest of mortals as well as immature minds. For they know well how convincingly to slander everything good, and also how to deck out and exalt all evil. Therefore, they have the power to blind and

capture the whole world (κοσμος), and consequently it is written in I. John 5:15:

The whole world lieth in the Evil One.

Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΟΛΟΟΣ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΠΟΝΗΡΩ ΚΕΙΤΑΙ

And thus, it is a case in which only Jehovah knows what it takes, first, to expose and defeat the supernaturally inspired evil; and second, to extirpate and exterminate it; and third, to repair the devastations which it has wrought. Therefore, in His wars He has also been at work breaking the great power of the kingdom of the Evil One and repairing many of its greatest devastations; so that, the Bible's accounts of His long-range prophecies and their fulfillments are often "excerpts" of the Cosmic History. And certainly, Holy Writ reveals much concerning what Jehovah has done and will yet do to defeat Satan and other supernatural beings in the Cosmos, and to protect His people against their enemies who incessantly harass them from that quarter.

In saying these things we have opened up the whole subject of interactions between Earth and the wider Cosmos, namely, the subject of direct interventions by extraterrestrial intelligences (= supernatural beings) in "the course of human events." Certainly, long before John wrote **Revelation** the Bible had already opened up clearly to view an extensive range of interactions between Earth and the wider Cosmos. And of course, **Revelation** is full of such interventions from beginning to end. Moreover, the actions which it foretells represent a great stepping-up and intensification of earlier supernatural interventions of both good and evil powers. In **Revelation** the evil comes out into the open as never before, and Jehovah lays bare His "Arm," even that "Arm of Jehovah" which of old had cut Rahab in pieces and pierced the Dragon (**Isaiah** 51:9). So that what **Revelation** tells us is that our Earth will someday become the "ring" in which the supernatural powers, which had previously "slugged it out" in the War in Heaven, will again "slug it out"

in an epochal face-to-face combat on the Earth. Indeed, **Revelation** tells us that the evil supernatural powers will first take over the management of the human scene. Then the Arm of Jehovah will intervene. It will cut in pieces the last edition of the same old Rahab-beast, and will chain the Dragon, and will wrest the human scene from their management, and will put it under a new, better management.

In order to understand **Revelation** one needs to study these interventions. Probably one of the soundest ways to learn the nature of **Revelation** and its rôle is to compare the interactions which the Bible says occurred, or had foretold, before John wrote **Revelation** with those which the long-range prophecies in **Revelation** foretell, and then to draw the conclusions which such a study warrants.

Now long before John wrote **Revelation** in 96 A. D. the Bible's historical accounts had already recorded many of these interventions, and its long-range, predictive prophecies had foretold many. It told how Jehovah had intervened *viâ* angels, mediators, priests, and prophets, including a divine Mediator, Priest, and Prophet. It also told of other interventions on the part of evil angels and unclean spirits. Some interventions were in natural phenomena, and others were in human history. Many were in the form of invisible providences, which anyone could interpret as chance occurrences if he were inclined to do so. Others were manifest interventions — either visible, and/or audible, and/or palpable. In many of them Jehovah and His angels had intervened directly and decisively in “the course of human events” in order to make them what He wanted them to be. For example, the Old Testament tells of the redemption of Israel from Egyptian bondage and the Exodus, the giving of the Law to Israel at Mt. Sinai, the supernatural preservation of Elijah, and his translation. The New Testament also tells of many such interventions. The Angel of the Lord — no less! — by night opened the prison's doors and brought the Apostles out of jail, and later let Peter out of jail, and immediately afterward smote King Herod. Such interventions show that there is “a course of human events,” and that there is “a course of cosmic events,” and that **two systems were interacting** in

the process of causing some crucially significant historical events to occur. Jehovah and other supernatural beings had intervened in and decisively altered “the course of human events.” Of course, some interventions or events are **both historically and cosmically** significant. And therefore, what Scripture had given men before **Revelation** arrived was very wonderful. Every one who had believed Jehovah — who had believed His prophets, who had believed His Son and His apostles — would certainly have been well prepared to receive **Revelation** and to rejoice at the prospect of the coming of that series of far greater, dazzling, overt supernatural interventions which its long-range prophecies foretell.

Furthermore, every such believer would inevitably compare the long-range predictive prophecies in **Revelation** with those earlier long-range prophecies which the Bible had already contained before John wrote **Revelation**. And the comparison would show him that **Revelation**’s prophecies not only contain many unique additions to earlier Biblical prophecies which add to and supplement all the preceding revealments, but that in some respects its prophecies must be regarded as the greatest in all of Holy Writ. For he would see that at least four facts clearly indicate and establish the all-surpassing excellence of **Revelation**’s long-range (and other) prophecies.

The first of those facts is that they had come directly from God the Father in a unique way; for He alone — not the Son or the Spirit — had originated the contents of the Seven-Sealed Book which foretells the largest part of “the things which must be hereafter.” It not only contains the final and ultimate plan of God, but it also describes how the Son of God and the Seven Angels — the Seven Spirits of God which are before His throne — will execute Jehovah’s great plan. Only the Father knew these things initially. He put them into the Seven-Sealed Book which no one — no man nor any angel — was worthy to open and to read, or even so much as to look upon.

The second thing that establishes the all-surpassing excellence of **Revelation**'s long-range prophecies is the fact that God the Father "gave" — if that is the correct word for it — this unique Book to no one but only to our Lord; that is, to Him who was the ascended and (re)enthroned Son of God, and who was also the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (την αμαρτιαν του κοσμου). He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the Root (ριζα) and the Race (το γενος) of David. He is the Radiant, the Morning Star. To Him the Father "gave" the Seven-Sealed Book. But how? In a formal, public ceremony; for John saw exactly what Micaiah the son of Imlah had seen, so that he too could have said:

I saw Jehovah sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. (I. Kings 22:19).

In that ceremony God the Father had first established the fact that no angel or man was worthy or able to open the Book, or even to look at it. Then John had "wept much because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon." However, the Lamb appeared. He had overcome (ενικησεν) to open the book. At this point we do not read that God the Father handed the Seven-Sealed Book to the Lamb. But instead we read, first, that "He, the Lamb, came (ηλθεν)"; and second, that "He has taken (ειληφεν) [it] out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne." And we next read that the four Seraphim and the twenty-four enthroned Elders at once fall down before the Lamb. **They** acknowledge Him as one who had not only redeemed men, buying them for God, or saved men with a spiritual salvation, but also as one who has made them a kingdom (βασιλειαν) and priests (ιερεις) who shall reign as kings (βασιλευσουσιν) on the earth. And thereupon all the angels unite in worship of the Lamb and God the Father, and along with them all other creatures too. And thus it was that in the formal public ceremony God the Father "gave" His Son the Book, "giving" it to Him **as the only one who was worthy to open its Seven Seals and to look upon its contents.**

This bestowment or award was a gift, and an honor, and a reward, and a divine recognition of an earned right. It was **the greatest possible gift** to be permitted to know the thoughts and ways of the Supreme Excellence as inscribed in the Writing of the Truth; that is, in that same Seven-Sealed Book which the Lamb then proceeded to open. It contained Jehovah's plan for Israel, for the Churches, for the whole world, and for the entire universe. Its contents elucidated the meaning of the whole course of terrestrial and cosmic history and of all past supernatural interventions. They also foretold a future in which the greatest of all such interventions will occur. Its long-range predictive prophecies show a great Cosmic Warfare debouching into the Earth. They foretell a complete deliverance of the Earth from evil supernatural powers who would swallow men up. They foretell the final extirpation and destruction of such malignant troublemakers as Satan, Wormwood, Death, Hades, Abaddon-Apollyon, and others.

This bestowment was an **honor**. For it was **the highest possible honor** to be designated as the one to open the Seals and reveal the contents of the Book to angels and men, and then to execute the plan of Jehovah. This bestowment was a **reward**. For it was Jehovah's **reward for the all-time highest merit**; that is, for the excellence of our Lord's all-surpassing moral heroism. He was the only one **worthy** to open the Seals. Finally, it was **a divine recognition of an earned right**. For the Lamb had a **right** to open that Book **because** by redeeming mankind (and angels) He had **earned** the right to govern the Universe and had been given **all authority**. Therefore, Jehovah revealed the contents of that Book to His Son, the Lamb. It was the highest award for His all-surpassing excellence. No created being had a right to see its contents. The Lamb **alone had earned that right**. Now of course, anyone can say that he does not believe these things. However, no one can say that **Revelation** does not say them.

The third thing that establishes the all-surpassing excellence of **Revelation's** long-range prophecies is the fact that when the Lamb revealed the contents of this Book to His servant John, a distinguished

company had assisted Him. For when our Lord broke the first four Seals, four seraphim, each in his turn, summoned John to “come and see” (**Revelation** 6:1, 3,5,7). And later a distinguished Elder stepped forward to give John one of the principal explanations (**Revelation** 7:13-17).

And the fourth thing that establishes the all-surpassing excellence of **Revelation**'s long-range prophecies is the fact that when Christ fulfills the long-range prophecies by executing Jehovah's great Plan, a distinguished company will then work under Him as His assistants. For Christ and the Seven Angels, the Seven Spirits of God who are before His Throne, will execute the plan. And they will have two human assistants, namely, our Lord's Two Witnesses, who many interpreters have always thought will be none other than Moses and Elijah.

And thus, at least four facts clearly indicate and establish the all-surpassing excellence of **Revelation**'s long-range (and other) prophecies. However, their all-surpassing excellence becomes doubly clear when we evaluate them: first, in the light of their intrinsic nature and its implications; second, in connection with the functions that they perform; and above all, third, in connection with the future fulfillments which will demonstrate that their predictions were true. For those fulfillments will establish Jehovah's everlasting Universe permanently upon **everlasting, insubvertible moral foundations** which angels and glorified men will eternally commemorate and will everlastingly celebrate.

Some of the fulfillments of which we are speaking will occur nineteen hundred years or so after John wrote **Revelation**; and others will occur twenty-nine hundred years or so after John wrote **Revelation**. They will occur in **two successive cycles of never-to-be-forgotten historical events**, as follows.

The first series of stupendous events will occur at the start of the Millennium when Jehovah inaugurates His coming Kingdom and our

Lord returns to reign. It will occur after the saints have waited nineteen hundred years. In it Jehovah will raise the dead in Christ and His other servants. He will translate His living saints. He will reward all His servants, the small and the great. At the same time He will execute the judgments of His long-threatened “Day of Wrath,” *alias* “the Day of the Lord.” He will defeat and destroy the Kings of the earth and their assembled armies and the False Prophet. He will cast both the Beast and the Antichrist into the Lake of Fire. He will chain and imprison Satan.

The second series of stupendous fulfillments will occur at the close of the Millennium; that is, following another thousand years of waiting. The great events of those days will include Jehovah’s post-Millennial release of Satan from prison, the Satan-inspired rebellion of the nations of mankind, the deliverance of the Beloved City when Jehovah destroys the armies of Gog and Magog, the casting of the Devil who had deceived them into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone. Then will ensue the Advent of the Throne of the God of Heaven, the general resurrection of all the dead, an adjudication of the case of each of them, and last and most important of all, after Christ has raised and judged all the dead, the hurling of Death and Hades into the Lake of Fire. Finally, after all the aforementioned events have occurred, God will establish the New Heavens and the New Earth, and then the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem, will descend out of Heaven from God and take up its eternal seat on the Earth.

These two cycles of **historical** events will establish the moral foundations of Jehovah’s everlasting Universe upon **forever insubvertible historical foundations** — upon **historical facts** that angels and glorified men and women will never afterwards be able to question or doubt. In other words, Jehovah’s two series of fulfillments will have created evidences — **historical** evidences — which no higher critics could possibly challenge.

Furthermore, all of those fulfillments of **Revelation**’s prophecies will be evidences of the excellences (ἀρεταί) **especially of God the**

Father; that is, of the endlessly maligned Jehovah of Hosts. For they will be undying witnesses not only to **His** power, government, and effective control over all men and angels in the Universe; and not only to **His** wisdom, to **His** wise thoughts and ways; but also especially to **His** love, to **His** goodness and righteousness; to **His** truth and faithfulness; to **His** holiness; to **His Mouth**, which foretold such a splendidly conceived work of God in its entirety; and to **His zeal**, which will then have fully performed it (**Isaiah** 40:5 and 9:7). All will then perceive the excellences of God as demonstrated in the entire corpus of the long-range prophecies and their fulfillments. And best of all, every one will then understand that Jehovah had never done without cause any of the things that He had ever done.

And consequently, if one compares the long-range predictive prophecies in **Revelation** with those which the Bible contained before John wrote **Revelation**, he will perceive that anyone would sell **Revelation** short if he were to treat it as if it only contained more of the same old thing. For considered in themselves for what they are, and for the functions they perform, and for what they show, **Revelation's** long-range, predictive prophecies, especially when we evaluate them in connection with the fulfillments which will demonstrate that their predictions were true, are the greatest examples of Jehovah's unsearchable (אֵינֶנּוּ חִקְרֵי) greatness (Ω βαθος). For however great His other mighty works have shown Him to be, and will yet show Him to be, the long-range prophecies have far greater power than they to blaze abroad (εξαγγελειν) His excellent majesty. (**Psalms** 145:3, **Romans** 11:33, **I. Peter** 2:9).

Finally, in regard to **Revelation's** long-range, predictive prophecies this writer feels compelled to state that he for one cannot conceive of how anything could ever demonstrate more effectively the greatness of God the Father, or His great faithfulness and righteousness and love, than His fulfillments of the long-range predictive prophecies in **Revelation**, especially as He has scheduled them to occur in the two

series or rounds which **Revelation** has foretold and which have just been described.

Rewrite of Introduction: Part II (John's Documents\Website).