

## Heaven: The Throne Room of the Universe

# THE MAP OF THE FUTURE GOD LEFT IN HIS WORD

Revelation 1-22

God wrote down an inspired record of the history of the world: from the time when John was sitting on Patmos in AD 95, right up to the very end of days. That is what you are holding in your hands this morning.

The online world mourned for a few moments this week, the passing of another icon from the former, pre-cyber world of the past. After 244 years of publication, the Encyclopedia Britannica will no longer be printed on paper. Thus ended the longest published record of civilization's knowledge.

The byline of that monumental compendium of knowledge, are these words: ***facts matter.***

Facts matter even more to God. Today, the facts about what God has said, describing the future of every person in the world, are crucial. The facts that God has given to us are quite clear. The ability to precisely tell the future is part of God's uniquely Divine identity. First we know that:

## God Always Gives the Facts

Do you remember a few weeks ago when we looked at how we know the Bible is true?

Remember the fourth reason we should trust God's Word? It was: ***Fulfilled Prophecy is the simplest and yet most profound evidence the Bible offers.*** Prophecy fulfilled is an irrefutable verification found only in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures.

Prophecy is the missing element in all other sacred scriptures of the world's religions. It is not to be found in the Muslim's Koran, the sayings of Buddha, the Hindu's Vedas, or the Mormon's Book.

By contrast: prophecy comprises about one-third of the Scriptures! The Book of Isaiah contains six of the clearest declarations of God's sole ability to write the future, plus perhaps the clearest and most remarkable prophetic passage, in the Bible!

Look at this string of declarations from the one and only God, who reveals Himself by writing down history before it happens. Start with me in Isaiah 41:21.

1. **Prophecy is God's Unique Distinctive: Isaiah 41:21-22** (NKJV) "**Present your case,**" says the LORD. "**Bring forth your strong reasons,**" says the King of Jacob. 22 "Let them bring forth and **show us what will happen**; Let them show the former things, what they were, That we may consider them, **And know the latter end of them; Or declare to us things to come.**
2. **Prophecy is a demonstration of God's Glory: Isaiah 42:8-9** (NKJV) I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.<sup>9</sup> Behold, the former things have come to pass, **And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them.**"
3. **Prophecy is the Acid Test of Deity: Isaiah 44:6-7** (NKJV) "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is* no God.'<sup>7</sup> **And who can proclaim as I do?** Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. **And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them.**
4. **Prophecy is a Verifiable Proof of God's Power: Isaiah 45:21** (NKJV) **Tell and bring forth your case;** Yes, let them take counsel together. **Who has declared this from ancient time? Who** has told it from that time? *Have* not I, the LORD? And *there is* no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; *There is* none besides Me.
5. **Prophecy is History Written in Advance: Isaiah 46:10** (NKJV) **Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done,** Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'
6. **Prophecy is to Confirm that God can be Trusted: Isaiah 48:3-5** (NKJV) "**I have declared the former things from the beginning; They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.**"<sup>4</sup> Because I knew that you were obstinate, And your neck was an iron sinew, And your brow bronze,<sup>5</sup> **Even from the beginning I have declared it to you; Before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you, Lest you should say, 'My idol has done them, And my carved image and my molded image Have commanded them.'**

Now, for a moment, move back to Isaiah 45:1. This is what I call perhaps the single most remarkable prophecy in the Bible.

## **One of the Most Astounding Biblical Prophecies**

A person is named in v. 1 as Cyrus. Cyrus is an identifiable person in history, mentioned also in II Chronicles 36, Ezra 1-4, and Daniel 1-10. Cyrus ruled Persia from 559-530BC. Nothing amazing so far, except when you turn back and look when Isaiah wrote this chapter.

For the biblical facts, look at Isaiah 6. When did Isaiah start writing? "The year that King Uzziah died". When was that? 739BC. That date happens to be exactly 200 years BEFORE Cyrus was the King, that Ezra & Daniel are writing about.

Now, to help that event sink in, let me give you a modern equivalent. Russia recently elected a man named Vladimir Putin to be the next President of Russia. On March 4, 2012 Putin won the presidential elections of Russia. That is just a fact of history.

But, for a well know and recognized servant of God to have publically predicted that momentous event in writing, 200 years ago, would be astounding.

There are three very well known and godly men who lived 200 years ago. Most of us in this place have heard of one or more of them. They are pioneer missionary to India William Carey, American missionary Adoniram Judson, and famed orphanage founder and man of faith George Muller of Bristol, England. So, all three of those servants of God were alive 200 years ago.

What you are reading in Isaiah 45 about Cyrus being in power would be the historic equivalent of one of those three missionaries writing and publishing, and distributing the world over, that a man by the name of Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin would become the President of Russia, in the future.

Only God would know such a thing. Only God could know who will rule on Earth and when. Only God's Word has historic facts prophetically revealed hundreds and even thousands of years before they happen.

In God's Word we hold history written in advance, which is called Biblical Prophecy.

The Book of Revelation is the singles greatest tool to understand the future because it is the only book that clearly spells out each step from today to the end. Each of the stages of God's plans is found in another part of the Bible, but only Revelation features them all in one place, and explained in detail.

## **The Map of the Future Events That God Left in His Word**

Let me show you what I mean. The following would be a basic statement of what most evangelical, Biblical Bible teachers would see in the Scriptures. By Biblical I mean,

teachers that rely upon the Scriptures rather than a theological system to explain the future plans of God.

1. **THE CHURCH at Work:** Before His death, Jesus promised to “build His church” (Matt. 16:18). Born on the Day of Pentecost, Christ's Church is made from remnants of Jews and Gentiles who come to trust Christ as their Savior (Eph. 2-3). God's plan for Christ's church is to have us share His Word, and see Him call out a people for His name. In addition to discipleship evangelism, the church is asked to wait for Christ (I Thess. 1:10; Acts 1:8). The church age will close amid global apostasy in a culture obsessed with selfish pursuits, immorality, violence, and emptiness (2 Tim. 3:1-6; 2 Thess. 2:3).
2. **THE RAPTURE of the Church:** The rapture is described in God's Word as the “catching away” of the church. Jesus meets His church in the air to take them home (John 14:1-6; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). This event is called the church's “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13). God concludes His plan for Christ's church just before His seven-year plan for Israel called the Tribulation (or the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel) begins (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9). When the church is gone, the Antichrist appears on earth (2 Thess. 2:3-9) and the Tribulation (or time of Jacob's trouble) begins. During the Tribulation, the church is in heaven with Christ, receiving rewards, enjoying the “marriage feast of the Lamb”; and preparing to return with Him in glory (Rev. 19:7-9).
3. **THE TRIBULATION on Earth:** Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (Daniel 9:27) begins as God officially resumes His program for the Jewish nation. The purpose of the Tribulation is to bring national Israel back to the Messiah. A few of the clear events around the Tribulation include: Israel existing as a nation in unbelief (Ezk. 37-38); Persian and Russian allies invade Israel (Ezk. 38) as Satan seeks to destroy the Jewish people before they return to their Messiah. At the midpoint of the Tribulation, the Antichrist enters the temple in Jerusalem, demands worship, and refuses his “mark” to all who will not bow down to him (Mat. 24:15; 2 Th. 2:3-4; Rev. 13). After 7 years, Jesus Christ returns with His saints to take His throne and judge the nations (Mat. 24:25; Rev. 19:11-21). After facing the persecution by the Antichrist and the world seeking to annihilate them, the remnant of Israel (about one-third of them), at the last moment, accept Christ as Messiah (Zech. 12:10-12; 13:8-9; Rom. 11:25-27).
4. **Christ's MILLENNIAL KINGDOM:** For the next 1,000 years, resurrected believers reign with Christ in His kingdom where God's promises to Israel are fulfilled (Deut. 30:1-6; Rev. 20:4-6). Universal peace and justice prevail (Isaiah 11:1-10), and millennial age believers from all nations worship at the millennial temple in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 40-48; Zech. 8:22, 23). Satan's influence on earth is restrained for the 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3).
5. **THE FINAL UPRISING of Mankind:** At the end of Christ's 1,000-year reign, Satan is released to incite all the unregenerate to rebel against Christ (Rev. 20:7-

9), confirming that mankind is so depraved, that even the presence of Christ on Earth before their eyes is not enough to persuade their conversion.

6. **The GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT:** Every human who has ever lived, but never had their sins forgiven, is resurrected from the Pit (Ezek. 32), to stand before Christ's Throne, and be sentenced to the eternal punishment their sins have earned (Rev. 20:11-15). Each of them finally confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, but they are too late for deliverance (Phil. 2:10-11). Each unsaved human, plus Satan and his angels are then cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).
7. **The NEW HEAVEN, NEW EARTH:** Finally, the promise of Emmanuel, God with us, appears in Heaven, as fire melts the Earth and Universe (2 Peter 3:10), and God makes a new world (Rev. 21:1-5). As God's servants we live in a New Jerusalem (Rev. 21-22) in the many "rooms" prepared by Christ for us (John 14:2-3). We get to enjoy our Creator and Redeemer forever.

The whole book of Revelation revolves around these facts of seeing and responding to God's Throne; and Jesus gives us this last book to get us ready to meet Him.

Revelation was written to show redeemed servants of God how to live.

## **How to Live for Christ on The Throne of Heaven**

What exactly does God consider so important in our lives He collects all that we offer Him?

Several things we can do every day. Here is just a brief summary of what God collects from our lives. Let's start with two very unusual verses: Revelation 5:8 and 8:3.

God tells us that our worship prayers, offered to Him, are so important: He keeps them stored right at His feet. That is the first of these seven treasures we can send ahead to God's Throne:

### ***First, all of our prayers offered in Jesus Name Rise to be collected as treasures by God:***

*Revelation 5:8 (NKJV) Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 8:3-4 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.*

See them there, right in front of His Throne?

What do you have in that bowl of our collected prayers? If God loves our prayers so much that He collects them all (like notes from my wife & kids) why don't we send Him even more?

We each need to up our times of prayers. If we just invite God into every praise and problem, every fear and frustration: our life will be revolutionized as we say to the Lord, "I need YOU in every part of my life!"

***Second, our devotional love for God is more important to God than all the Old Testament sacrifices ever offered on altars; and that He treasures:***

Mark 12:33 *And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.*"

Have we offered our devotion up to Him irretrievably, completely, and lovingly—by giving Him time each day because we love Him; by giving Him our complete attention as we focus upon Him in His Word and in prayer?

***Third, our life offered in surrender each day for His glory Becomes an act of worship that God treasures:***

Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

Have we recently renewed that offering of all we are to Him? Have we repeated those simple words of the child Samuel, that the Lord so delights to hear from us, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening!"

***Fourth, serving in the ministries of Christ's Church is An offering of worship that God notes and treasures:***

*Philippians 2:17 Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.*

Are we pouring out our time to God? Time flies by, and we cannot keep it. But if we invest our time with Him, we will never lose it.

Each time you serve: look up in your heart from the classroom, nursery, choir room, youth or children's ministry room, or where ever you offer that service, and say to the Lord, "I am giving this time to you. I can't keep it, I could selfishly squander it, but instead I give it to YOU as an act of devotion and worship!"

***Fifth, our gifts given to Christ's Church are Worship offerings that God treasures:***

Philippians 4:18 *Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.*

What is the aroma ascending from our gifts invested in Christ's Church today?

Make more of your offerings by praying over each check, hold it in your hand as you mail it or place it in the offering, and breathe out to God: "I give this to YOU as an offering of love and gratitude!"

***Sixth, our words of praise and songs of worship  
Can become offerings that God treasures:***

Hebrews 13:15 *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.*

When is the last time we stopped and launched a wave of praise filled worship toward His Throne?

Why not make regular plans to burst forth in your car, or on a walk, or when you are all alone: into a cry of love to the Lord.

You can even say something like the words of that chorus we sing: "I love YOU Lord, and I lift my voice, to WORSHIP You."

***Finally, our secret acts of kindness and other good deeds in  
Christ's Name: are treasured by God:***

Hebrews 13:16 *But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased*

What acts of kindness have we premeditated and carried out this week?

Plan to do intentional sacrificial acts of kindness for others.

Do things unasked, unseen, and without expecting any thanks.

As you do that act of sacrificial investment in your family (like doing the trash, laundry, sweeping, mowing, or whatever) lift your eyes above and say, "I am doing this in YOUR Name, Oh Lord, because I love YOU and I want to serve like You served!"

God consider those choices so important in our lives He collects all that we offer Him.

God tells us that our worship prayers, offered to Him, are so important: He keeps them stored right at His feet.

Which of these seven treasures are you planning to send as an offering of love to God, so that He can store them in your bowl at the foot of His Throne?