

Beauties of the Truth

A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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Revelation-Section 1. Introduction
Solar System Symbology

Revelation-Section I, Introduction

At the outset of the book, John gives us the authority for the Revelation he saw and recorded. It came from God, given to Jesus, and delivered to John through Christ's angel, messenger.

God
to
Jesus
to
Angel
to
John

John addressed his writings to the seven churches in Asia minor, as he was instructed to do (vs. 11). But as the promises, warnings, counsel and encouragement of the book are clearly pertinent to the entire church, it is evident that those 7 churches are representative of the entire Church of Christ.

Then follow greetings to the Church. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from" God, the 7 spirits, and Jesus. God is not named as such, but is described as "him which is, and which was, and which is to come." God is the one who has been from "everlasting" and will be to "everlasting" (Psa. 90:2)-always existent. He was, He is, and He always will be. This may be a reasonable extension of His description as the great "I AM" of Exodus 3:14, referring to Jehovah.

That John's description refers to Jehovah is clear enough. He is distinguished from Jesus, mentioned in verse 5, and is said to have 7 spirits before his throne. In Chapter 4 of Revelation God is viewed as seated on his universal throne, with 7 spirits before his throne. There also He is described as he "which was, and is, and is to come," (Rev. 4:8), and there also distinguished from Jesus, the Lamb who subsequently approached the throne. (Rev. 5:7) But another title is added: "Lord God Almighty."

Both of these designations also appear in verse 1:8, but it is not apparent from the King James version, which omits the word "God." From the American Standard version verse 8 reads "I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is, and who was and who is to come, the

Almighty." We understand this text to refer to Jehovah. If so, then we have found yet another appellation for God: "Alpha and Omega." But here we have a title that does not refer exclusively to God, for it is elsewhere used of Christ. (Footnote: Many brethren choose the other alternative—that verse ~ refers to Jesus, leaving "Alpha and Omega" a singular title for Him, and sharit the other designations with Jehovah. On this see Streeter, Rev. of Jesus Christ, pp. 84-85. Also see last subhead, Rep. 1514.)

Not in verse 11, for "Alpha and Omega" there is evidently spurious (note its absence in ASV), but in 22:13. "I come quickly ... I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last ... Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:12,13,19. Notice also Rev. 1:17 where Jesus is "the first and the last," which is very much like saying "alpha and omega," the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.)

In what sense is God Alpha and Omega, and in what sense is Jesus Alpha and Omega? From different standpoints. Jesus is the first of God's direct creation (Revelation 3:14), and the last, for after the Logos (Michael) was created, he was used to create all else. "By him (Jesus) all things consist." (Col. 1:17) God is the first and last in another sense. He is the only supreme omnipotent God, there never will be another, and thus he is the First and Last supreme God. Isaiah 43:10 speaks of Jehovah this way. "Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, ... before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."

IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY

At the time John received the Revelation it was late in his life. It is commonly thought that John was the only surviving apostle at that time. That he would linger longer than the others may have been suggested by our Lord's words of him, recorded in John 21:18-23. Jesus had foretold Peter's death, cryptically, "signifying by what death [crucifixion] he should glorify God." Peter then inquired of John's future. Jesus replied, "If I will that he tarry ... what is that to thee?" And indeed, John did tarry. He tarried longer than the others, in the flesh.

But Jesus actually said "If I will that he tarry till I come ..." That could not happen to John himself. But may it be that Jesus referred to the possibility of John's tarrying till the 2nd advent, to identify him as representing those of his followers who would tarry into the second advent the feet members of the Body of Christ? We think so. We understand John receiving the vision of Revelation to represent the feet members at this end of the age, those who tarry into the second advent, receiving the revelation of present truth, a revealing of God's plans. When John received the Revelation, he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day ..." (Rev. 1:10) Literally, this means he received the Revelation on Sunday, the Day of the Lord's resurrection. But spiritually it points to the John class on the Lord's greater day - the "Day of the Lord," the time of his return, and assumption of control of earth's dominion. (Revelation 11:15) In this greater day, the vision of truth from our returned Lord originates, like the Revelation John himself received, from God. And we also receive it through a messenger, the Laodicean messenger.

Perhaps that John "turned . . . and being turned, I saw" the vision of the 7 candlesticks, the 7 churches, shows that from our vantage point we look *back* over the Gospel age to view the history of the church, and our Lord's care for it.

OUR LORD, THE HIGH PRIEST

In verses 13-18 our Lord appears among the golden candlesticks, identified as symbolic of the 7 churches. This shows him as our Great High Priest, tending and caring for the candlesticks, much as the high priest in the tabernacle might care for the burning of the 7-branched candlestick in the holy. Perhaps another parallel to this scene is in Genesis 15:17, showing the Divine presence (lamp of fire-margin) attending the sacrifice of the Church.

Our Lord is described in detail. Various elements of his description are:

Clothed with a garment to the foot
A golden girdle about the chest
Head and hair white as wool
Eyes as a flame of fire Feet as burnished copper
Voice as the sound of many waters
7 stars in his right hand
2-edged sword proceeding from his mouth
His countenance was as the sun
The first and the last
He that lives forever, but had been dead
He has the keys of hell & death.

These all indicate symbolic aspects of Christ. It is of interest that in the messages to the various churches, one or another of these features is recalled, as though emphasizing an aspect of the Lord's character which specially relates to the experiences of that church.

The introductory chapter closes with a brief interpretation of the main symbols introduced to that point. The 7 candlesticks are the 7 churches, and the 7 stars in the hand of our Lord are 7 messengers to the 7 churches.

Solar System Symbology

A number of brethren favor the thought that the star constellations of the heavens are arranged by divine providence to picture features of the Divine Plan. And there are scriptural references to the "Mazzaroth," the signs of the zodiac, and particular symbolic stars and star clusters. We cannot recount the evidence here, but many brethren have some familiarity with this subject. This leads to the natural question: do the planets also bear symbolic testimony to the Divine Plan? We have not heard much discussion on this, but the article following gives some suggestions. It is from a brother who has considered the question in some detail, building on a study of earlier date.

From time immemorial, mankind has been fascinated by the planets, the brightest objects in the sky next to the sun and moon. Their movements were particularly intriguing, since they did not follow the general rotation of the stars, but wandered along their own individual, sometimes erratic paths. For this reason they were looked upon with awe and reverence and given the name "planets," which is Greek for "wanderers." Five days of the week were named after them and a great body of superstition was formed around them. Some of this survives even today in astrology circles.

It appeals to us that the planets and other bodies of the solar system serve as remarkable object lessons of the main characters in the cast of what Bible students familiarly term "The Divine Plan of the Ages." Such a conclusion, however, is not based upon astrological tradition or the literature of ancient mythology, which we believe is false and Satan-inspired. Rather, it is founded upon a scientific study of the physical characteristics of the heavenly bodies themselves.

As remarkable as it may be, the very heavens themselves seem to serve as a stage for presenting the highlights of the drama of the ages. The Bible instructs us regarding the various classes of people and the personalities involved; the heavenly objects seem to reflect such in their unique qualities and arrangement. In the study that follows, which is limited to our own solar system, the evidence is presented to show how such things as location, motion, appearance, temperature, and color combine to set forth a corroboration of the basic features of the divine plan and particularly the role of the principal characters therein.

This study was stimulated by an article by C. E. Stewart entitled, "The Glory of Jehovah In Our Solar System," which appeared in the *St. Paul Enterprise* on November 19, 1915. It was also enriched in no small measure by this country's recent spacecraft flights, with their spectacular photographs and wealth of new data and discoveries.

SOLAR SYSTEM SYMBOLOGY

A Portrayal of the Chief Characters in the Divine Plan of the Ages

HEAVENLY BODY	PHYSICAL TRAIT	OBJECT LESSON
SUN (Jesus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Inexhaustible energy source, golden color. (b) Center of solar system. (c) Most brilliant object in sky. (d) Rays of light vital to all life. (e) Rays are warm and healing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Immortality, divine nature. (b) Jesus honored above all others; ransom the central doctrine (Eph. 1:20, Rom. 6:23). (c) Jesus altogether lovely (Song Sol. 5:16). (d) Jesus the light of men and of the world (John 1:4,9, John 8:12). (e) Sun of Righteousness to arise with healing in his wings (Mal. 4:2).

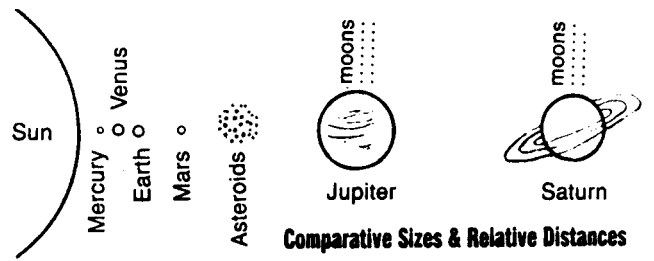
<p>MERCURY (Great Company)</p>	<p>(a) In close proximity to sun, within 36 million miles.</p> <p>(b) Most eccentric planet, varying 33% in orbit.</p> <p>(c) Slow rotation causes high surface temperature on exposed side, extreme cold on dark side.</p> <p>(d) Name has basic meaning (apart from mythology) of "messenger, news carrier, guide."</p>	<p>(a) Great Company in position of favor while running for prize.</p> <p>(b) Great Company unstable and erratic, wandering from calling. Undependable, influenced by worldly goals; character not developed (1 Cor. 3:10-15).</p> <p>(c) Hot-cold, on again-off again nature of Great Company.</p> <p>(d) To function as servant class "before the throne" (Rev. 7:13-17)</p>
<p>Venus (Church)</p>	<p>(a) Orbit is almost perfect circle.</p> <p>(b) Slightly yellow in hue.</p> <p>(c) Most brilliant planet, 15 times brighter than Sirius (the brightest star).</p> <p>(d) Closest planet to earth.</p> <p>(e) Similar in size, mass, and density to earth.</p> <p>(f) High surface temperature and pressure, 100 times earth.</p> <p>(g) Backward rotation.</p> <p>(h) Rotation slower than revolution about sun.</p>	<p>(a) Perfection, faithfulness, consistency.</p> <p>(b) Reward of divine nature.</p> <p>(c) Church shines brightly in a dark world, reflecting light of Jesus (Phil. 2:15,16).</p> <p>(d) Church as sympathetic priesthood to bless mankind.</p> <p>(e) Trials of Church similar in some respects to common experiences of man (1 Cor. 10:13).</p> <p>(f) Thorough testing of Church through severe trials (1 Pet. 4:12,13).</p> <p>(g) Christian viewed as fanatical and peculiar, out of step with world (Rom. 12:2).</p> <p>(h) Church more concerned with serving God and others than self (Prov. 23:26, Phil. 2:3,4).</p>

<p>VENUS (Continued)</p>	<p>(i) Ashen light: mysterious luminosity on dark side.</p>	<p>(i) Shekinah light: God's presence and favor (Exod. 25:22, 2 Cor. 6:16-18).</p>
<p>EARTH</p>	<p>(a) Strikingly beautiful planet; abundant form, (Restored color, and variety; pleasant environment of Kingdom. Humanity) to support life.</p> <p>(b) Green color of foliage and trees.</p> <p>(c) Blue color of sky and ocean.</p> <p>(d) Brown color of earth's soil and crust.</p>	<p>(a) Humanity in perfection enjoying blessings</p> <p>(b) Everlasting life on earth to be reward of meek (Ps. 37:11,29).</p> <p>(c) Faithfulness of God and man (John 3:16, Ps. 72:11).</p> <p>(d) Earthly promises connecting man to planet earth.</p>
<p>MARS</p>	<p>(a) Red/orange dominating color.</p> <p>(b) Rugged surface features, including mountains, volcanoes, and canyons.</p> <p>(c) Planet is earth's second closest neighbor.</p> <p>(d) Thin atmosphere permits good observation.</p>	<p>(a) Slaughter of war: courage and exploits of God's heroes in ancient times (Heb. 11). Ashes of Red Heifer sprinkling the unclean: lessons for mankind.</p> <p>(b) Dependability and endurance of Ancient Worthies.</p> <p>(c) Next in honor to Bride (Venus) Class in uplifting humanity as Princes in all the earth.</p> <p>(d) History of Ancient Worthies spread out clearly before us.</p>
<p>ASTEROIDS OR MINOR PLANETS (Holy Angels)</p>	<p>(a) Divisible into classes, by surface composition.</p> <p>(b) Large number of bodies, almost numberless.</p> <p>(c) Moving about silently, mostly unnoticed.</p> <p>(d) A few asteroids follow widely wandering paths.</p>	<p>(a) Various orders of angels: messengers, seraphim, cherubim.</p> <p>(b) Vast multitude of angels (Rev. 5:11).</p> <p>(c) Spirit beings normally invisible to human eyes.</p> <p>(d) Special assignments take angels to far-flung places.</p>

<p>JUPITER (Fallen Humanity)</p>	<p>(a) Sixth planet out from sun (counting asteroid belt).</p> <p>(b) Rapid rotation in less than 10 hours.</p> <p>(c) Gases brilliant and rich in color, almost psychedelic.</p> <p>(d) Cloud belts turbulent and stormy.</p> <p>(e) Complicated, chaotic pattern of motions within belts.</p> <p>(f) Large number of moons circling about the planet (16 or more).</p>	<p>(a) A symbol of imperfection-fallen humanity.</p> <p>(b) Boastful, proud, calling attention to self (2 Tim. 3:2).</p> <p>(c) Vain goals and attractions of life that appear so desirable but burst as bubbles (1 Tim. 6:9).</p> <p>(d) Restless, moody, argumentative temperament of fallen man.</p> <p>(e) Confused, angry nations of world; disorder and anarchy evident (Ps. 46:2,3,6).</p> <p>(f) Fallen angels sentenced to darkness and restraint, in close proximity to fallen humanity (2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6).</p>
<p>SATURN (Satan and Systems of Error)</p>	<p>(a) One of the most beautiful and impressive of all planets.</p> <p>(b) Yellow in equatorial regions, green in polar.</p> <p>(c) Differential wind speeds mask circulation pattern in equatorial region.</p> <p>(d) Most regular and organized magnetic field pattern of all the planets.</p> <p>(e) Vast number of moons in orbit about planet (at least 15).</p> <p>(f) Intricate ring system composed of</p>	<p>(a) Lucifer ("day star," "light-bearer") originally created perfect in beauty, marked by wisdom and brightness (Ezek. 28:12,15,17).</p> <p>(b) Yellow or gold symbolizing Satan's attempt to appear as divine; green, his bold lie, "Thou shalt not surely die" (John 8:44).</p> <p>(c) Deception the key method chosen by Satan to spread his influence (Rev. 12:9).</p> <p>(d) Vast army of degraded order of angels under Satan's control.</p> <p>(e) Vast organization of fallen spirits marshalled to do Satan's bidding.</p> <p>(f) World system of error</p>

<p>SATURN (Continued)</p>	<p>three main sections: outer "A," brighter "B." and inner faint crepe "C."</p> <p>(g) Some fainter rings recently discovered seem controlled by "shepherd moons."</p> <p>(h) Rings appear beautiful and impressive, reaching out nearly 100,000 miles in diameter, yet if compressed, yield one tiny body.</p>	<p>composed of "beast" (antichrist), "dragon" (civil powers), and "false prophet" (daughter systems) (Rev. 16:13).</p> <p>(g) Worldly systems of error are under control of demonic forces (Rev. 16:14).</p> <p>(h) Satan's systems of error appear impressive on worldwide scale, but will collapse in due time (Isa. 14:12-20, Rev. 20:10,14).</p>
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NOTE: Planets discovered in recent era - Uranus (1781), Neptune (1846), Pluto (1930) - omitted from this study since not known to the ancients and seemingly extraneous to symbolizing revealed features of Divine Plan.



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