

Revelation 1;19 Missionary Conf.

by J.M. Davies

J.M. Davies explores the significance of Revelation chapters 1-3, emphasizing the prophetic nature of the letters to the churches and the call for believers to walk in the light.

Duration: 1:00:44

Topics: "Conference"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the period of monarchy and the events that took place during that time. He mentions a man who had his eyes gouged out after witnessing the murder of his two sons. The speaker then transitions to the remnant period, which began in the days of the lightness and continued through the days of war. He talks about commendations and condemnations found in letters during this period. The sermon also touches on the significance of a rainbow mentioned in Genesis and its connection to God's covenant with Noah regarding the earth. The speaker concludes by discussing the state of the church and the need for spiritual renewal.

Transcript

Well, it's nice to be back in St. Louis. I speak too loud there. It's fifty-four years.

It's last January since I took my privilege to be in St. Louis for the first time. The conference at the Bible Hall arranged for New Year, and for some reason no preachers were expected. I suppose they had expected somebody, but by Christmas time, when the conference had been convened in Kansas City, Missouri, they sent word to say conference arranged, but no speakers come.

So our brother Bruce Gilbert was approached by somebody, I don't know who, and the elderly brother, Mr. Leonard, from Nebraska, and Bruce approached me as to whether I would come along. I was in Kansas City conference, just listening for the word of God. I was at that time a student at Seton College, so I came along with Bruce, and the two of us, with our brother Leonard, taking part.

We well took responsibility for that conference, back in January of 1919, so that's a long time ago. Then, after that, in June of 1919, I was here, and after that, when we got married, we came here for what is called the honeymoon, and met with the believers in Bible Hall at that time also. Bruce likes to be back after many years in many parts.

Since my last visit here in 64 or 65, when we got to England, my wife died in October 67, and after that, I went out to India for another period of six months, then to Malaysia, then for a year to minister the word of God in Australia, and another 12 months in the two islands of New Zealand, in a very full program, then back to Australia, where I now have a daughter and a son. I spent some time with my daughter in Tasmania, and with my son in Perth. We came back to India for another six months of a very full program of ministry and Bible teaching there, and two months in the city of Colombo.

In Colombo, I stayed in the flat owned by the, rented by the, back to the Bible, Sir Rubesh was, at that time, away in the States, so they were glad for me to use the flat. Attending to my own breakfast very early, I was free very well from seven o'clock, going out to lunch and evening in one of the restaurants with meetings every night. I got busy and wrote out my studies on the heat, on the Jewish festivals, and also on the epistle to the Colossians.

These have since been printed. I have one or two copies of them there at the back, but we shall bring more of them here in the will of God on Thursday evening. On our way, on my way home from India, it was a privilege to call with your family in Kuwait, in Persian Gulf, in Bahrain, and up to the, to do the work in Addis Ababa, and give a little help to our president serving the Lord in Ethiopia, and from there down to Sunniya, and down to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, to be 12 days with your family there.

And, after returning to the UK to go for a change from the property truck to the arcade, I was up in what are known as the Pharaoh Islands, governed by Denmark, southeast of Iceland, 24 volcanic islands. The work was started there in 1865. Very hard and difficult work to begin with.

It was 12 years before they saw any fruit for their labor. Today, in the 21 inhabited islands, there are assemblies in 17 of them, and two of the assemblies have over 600 infelliges. A little town of 4,000 with over 600 in assembly fellows.

The capital, a town of about 11,000. The assembly building is the biggest in the town. There are over 600 meetings to remember the Lord, and about 900 to the gospel meetings, and about 1,500 to the annual conferences lasting for a week in mid-November, and an open-air meeting in front of the building on the Sunday, on the gospel hall every Sunday evening.

It's a great joy to be there with them for altogether about five and a half months, and then in Denmark with the assembly in Copenhagen for nearly a month, more than a month altogether, and then on the way here to call in Iceland for a visit with the assembly in Reykjavik. Iceland divides the number. There's a brother and his wife have gone there from the States recently.

Seventy percent of the Lutheran ministers in Iceland are reported to be spiritualists. There's a very sad condition there, very different to the condition spiritually in the hero. Reykjavik is a town of a hundred thousand.

Lockerere way to the northeast, another hundred thousand, but the island itself is absolutely barren, and we would ensure our brethren there would value prayer. I have a few slides of the work in East Haiti. The little assembly in Reykjavik is very small.

I have a letter from the brother there just recently, and I'm sure they would be glad for fellowship of the saints in prayer. Now that the brother and his wife have gone there, of course, they'll take some time. They have to learn Icelandic.

They're going to be able to communicate with the people of course. It's no use a man going to any country to serve the Lord for any length of time unless he learns the language of the people with whom he visits the community. That's one of the first essentials in connection with missionary work.

You can't get into personal contact with people unless there is, unless the language barrier is completely broken. Now, tonight, and on Thursday night, I want to consider with you one or two things from the book of Revelation, especially with regard to chapters two and three. But, before we go on to chapter two and three, let's look for a moment in chapter one, verse 19, to write the things which I must see, and the things which are, and the things which tell me hereafter.

In verse 11, John was told, for thousands of years, to write in a book, send it to the seven churches which are in Asia. So, again, in verse 19, that we've read together, the Lord tells him again, write the things which thou must see. That merely refers to chapter one.

The things which are, that I believe refers to chapters two and three. The things which shall be hereafter refers undoubtedly to what we have in chapter four to the end. Now, in order to be evident for that, turn to chapter four, please, in verse one.

Chapter four and verse one are the words translated, or the words, two words translated hereafter in verse 19 of chapter one, are found here twice in chapter four, verse one. After this, at the translation of the same two words, after this, I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, or the voice which I heard at the first, was, as it were, a trumpet talking with me, which said, come up hither, and I will show thee things which shall be, which must be hereafter. Now, that word hereafter is the translation of the same two words, translated literally after this.

John is caught up to heaven, and he's being raptured up to heaven is, I believe, symbolic of the rapture of the overcomer, that is, of the two believers caught up to meet the Lord in the air. And then, after that, we have the events referred to in chapter four, connected with chapter two and three. We have the Lord Jesus upon the throne of the Father.

In chapter three, verse twenty-one, he says, I am sat down with my Father in His throne. There he is the judge of his people. There he examines.

There he passes verdict upon the assembly. Each one, he says, I know thy worth. He commends where he can, and condemns what is not in keeping with his own mind and will.

Commendation and condemnation, or censure, are found in each of the certain letters. The Lord is the judge of his people. He is like the high priest next to his servant that went in and removed the ashes from the lamp in order to make that lamp burn brighter.

But, when we come into chapter four, we have another throne, a throne which has a rainbow around it. In the very practice, there's a rainbow around the throne linked with the covenant God made with Noah. There's no rainbow connected with God's dealings with the church, but in God's dealings with the earth.

We have a rainbow mentioned in Genesis chapter nine. When I bring a crowd, then I will cause the fool to be seen in the crowd. So, here, before the last great storm of wrath breaks, and the crowds are gathering for that awful day of tribulation, we have God given a vision of a rainbow and purple throne.

God is remembering his covenant made with Noah regarding the earth. There, along with that, you'll notice in verse three, he that sat upon must have looked like a jasper and a sardine stone. Now, those two stones, they represent, in the best state of the high priest in Israel, the first and the last of the kind.

The jasper was the stone that represented Benjamin. The sardine stone was the stone that represented Ruben. So, we have here, in the use of these two stones, a suggestion that Israel is coming into view.

No reference to Israel in chapters two and three. All we have in chapters two and three, as we have it, we turn back to chapter one again, please. Chapter one, look at verse, we end the verse at three, and it comes in the form of the sun shining in its strength.

God is in the light of the full-moon revelation of God in a glorified Christ. The days of our Lord were like the sun shining in its strength. Its midday splendor, the sun of its zenith, perfect light shine.

Far from the justice of the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day, or until the day be fully come. When we come here, the day is fully come. The promise of the prophecy that we have in Genesis and keeping all along come here into the full-on light of the complete revelation of God, a glorified Christ, a God's act.

God is in the light. But then, along with that, we have, in verse twenty, the mystery of the seven stars which shall shine. Now, here we have stars.

Stars don't shine in the daytime. Stars are suggestive of midnight light, and there is no reference to any moon. It's midnight darkness.

There is a people living in complete darkness. It's nothing but the light of the stars to shine. Here is John in the light of the sun at noonday.

Here is a consort, little one that John in his official speech of darkness and light, of those that walk in darkness and those that walk in the light. John was a representative of those who are in the light. The world is in darkness.

Israel represented or illustrated by the light of the moon is not in the picture at all today. The stars are there, and as we shall see those stars, they are referred to as the angels of the churches. They represent those who are the servants of God, ministering the word of God, whether locally or in a wider sphere.

But they are those to whom the Lord, and through whom the Lord communicates His message and His message is to their family. Now, here's the picture we have, then, in the end of chapter one, and follows chapters two and three. The believer himself in the light.

We are to walk as the children of the light. That's what the eternal people tell us. Walk as children of the light.

Walking in the light. That's true of every Christian. That's where we walk.

Every Christian is in the light. Every Christian is walking in the light. But every Christian doesn't walk according to the light.

It's one thing to be walking in the light. It's another thing to be walking according to the light that God has given to us in His word. God wants us not only to be walking in the light.

It is true of every Christian, every newborn again believer. The Lord says, we shall not walk in darkness. We shall have the light of life.

But He wants us to walk according to the light. So, when you see the picture we've got here, those of you that are artists, you may see on the one hand tremendous light, full Lord's light of the sun at noon, and that's the eastern, mid-eastern sun. Then, on the other hand, midnight gloom and midnight darkness.

Through tremendous contrast we have. So, what we have in chapters two and three represents the period spoken of. They are as the things that are, the things with which God is concerned today, the things that occupy the mind of heaven at the present time.

And I believe that what we've got in these seven letters is a prophetic preview of the history of the church from the close of apostolic days, right on to the coming of the war. And, having said so, one of course must give some reason for making a statement like that. You must not be expected just to accept it because I've said so.

Every preacher should give a reason for making a statement of that character. You must establish the ground upon which he draws that conclusion. And I want to give you a few reasons for that.

The first you have in chapter one and verse three, "Blessed is he that heedeth'-that is, reading publicly-'and is that hear the words of this prophecy.' That covers the whole of the book of Revelation, not only from chapter four on to the end, but the whole of the book of Revelation is prophetic in its character, and that verse really is enough to establish that which I believe is the intention of the Spirit of God in these letters, to give us a preview of church history and of the way the witness for God has been born during these past 1900 years. It's necessary to give reasons for believing this because there are many today who refuse to accept what is called the prophetic view of these two chapters. When I began studying these letters, say, back from 30 years ago now, I read several books.

I read some who said that they were prophetic, and I was inclined to accept their view, but I wanted to get something in the letters themselves that would satisfy me that there was a prophetic element in these letters. And I read them, and I reread them, and one day, my mind, my attention was drawn to two things. In the letters to the church of Ephesus, we have in the message to the overcomer, the hidden of the overcomer, that I give to each to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the book of Genesis.

That's really an allusion to the garden of Eden, the tree of life in the midst of the paradise, in the midst of the garden. And, of course, you have in verse one, he thinks that he who holds the stars, the seven stars in his right hand, and who walks in the midst of the lampstand, that was suggestive of the Lord walking in the midst of the garden. And then, you have in verse five, those awful words, remember, therefore, hence thou art fallen.

Such a terrible word. Hence thou art fallen. I turn on to the last letter, and the other message to the overcomer in Deuteronomy.

Now, here is not an allusion, but a sheer reference to the exaltation of Christ. And, I danced with joy almost when I saw those two things. The first is an allusion, a sheer allusion to Genesis, and the last is a sheer reference to the exaltation of Christ.

And then, I went back over the letters to see if there was any historical sequence in the subject matter of the letter. And, if you turn, we'll talk over Smyrna for the time being. We turn on to the third letter in the

letters of Church of Pergamos.

There we have, in verse 14, a reference to Caleb, and down in verse 17, to him that overcometh, I will give thee to the hidden manna. There we are in the wilderness now. Not only in the wilderness, but in the closing year of the wilderness.

In the closing year of the wilderness, Caleb appeared in the fortieth year of his journey through the wilderness. It's the concluding days of any period, and of the period covered that we have specially referred to in these letters. I think if we may keep that in mind, it will help us.

What we have in the first letter is illustrated not in Adam and Eve before they fell, but in Adam and Eve after they had fallen. Remember, hence our fallen is the conclusion of the world. And, what we have, I believe, in Smyrna is illustrated for us in the persecution of Egypt, in the closing days of the persecution of Egypt.

The greatest empire of the day, trying to track that nation that was to be the channel of communication, and the channel of revolution, and the channel through whom the Messiah was to come, and the devil using all his powers, trying to make it impossible for the promise of God for the seed of the woman to be fulfilled, or the seed of Abraham to arise. Here we have them in Pergamon, taking a journey through these inconclusions, idolatry, and immoralities. When we come into the last, or rather into the fourth, we come to Cyatira, and there we've got Jezebel.

A reference to Jezebel, a woman by the name of Jezebel. It says, there have been India, Kenya, Cyatira. A symbolic name, I have no doubt, but Jezebel was the wife, the Gentile wife of Ahab.

It was the apostasy of Israel at its worst. No one like Ahab told himself to do anything. Very shortly after that, they were sent into Assyria into captivity.

They had gone right down to the bottom. God abandoned them. Discovery was no longer possible.

God made them a witness against their idolatry through Elijah. He's an avocator. I hope you'll refer to him.

He'll have stated in what we've got in verse 24 of chapter two, but unto you I say, reading out the word and, unto you I say, unto the rest in Cyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, I will take upon you none other burden than all past that which you have shall I come. For the first time, you'll hear the promise of the coming again of the Lord. There's a remnant now.

Cyatira as a body, spirit as a whole, gone beyond recovery. Just as the days of Ahab and Jezebel, the Gentiles were beyond recovery, and they were sent into captivity, into Assyria. Here we have a remnant.

There were seven thousand in each day, and there were others. Come down to Elijah, a picture of the great days of the reformation. When you come down into Sabaoth, we have, read it over so much in verse five, you shall be called to the cage of ravens.

You'll come down to Zechariah, chapter three there. The three reference there is to the days of Zechariah. So, the early days of the remnant that came back under Zerubbabel.

Then, when you come into Philadelphia, you've got a reference to the Privy, and the reference there is the Old Testament picture there. It's the second group that came up under Ezra, to the building of the walls in the days of Nehemiah. That little remnant that was so weak, only a few thousand, only two thousand,

including women and children, without any political power behind them, without any military strength to help them, engaged upon God, stopped by the river Ahab, and trusted God to preserve them from the the plagues that were on that long journey between Babylon and Jerusalem.

You see, in the days of Elijah, in the days of Ezra, or rather, in the days of Zerubbabel, there was not only spiritual power. There was a military power. Cyrus stood behind them.

There was the spiritual, in Zerubbabel, and in Joshua, and later in Haggai, in Zechariah. But there was a political power as well. But, when it came to Ezra, there was no political power.

And those of us who are aware of the fact that, in the days of Zerubbabel, in the very early days, of course, there was persecution, hunts with ferns, and rituals with ferns, and others. But later, there was military power behind the Zerubbabel militia. The German government stood behind Luther, and the VH stood behind the Reformation in England.

And he was nothing but... He was anything but a saint, purely a military saint. But, when it comes to the revival of Luther, it was a pure spiritual revival. More than any political secret in the events that are referred to in these letters.

You don't mix the history. You don't... It's not... The history is not tumbled upside down here. You don't have the events of Malachi in the letter to Ephesus, and you don't have the letter in the letter to Nehemiah, a reference to the book of Genesis.

That's a historical secret. Now, in that connection, let us draw attention to this fact. You have to hear that the number of years here are seen in the study of the scriptures.

Human history, as far as good faith for God is concerned, may be divided into three periods of time. Let me repeat that. Human history, as far as good faith for God is concerned, may be divided into three periods of time.

This does not contradict in any way the differentiation of these, but some would advocate that it's a mere statement of time. The first period is covered in the book of Genesis, a period of about two thousand years. And, which person, God, in the book of Genesis, was born by individuals? You've got Adam, and Abel, and Andrew, Enoch, and Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph.

There are seven men there in the book of Genesis around whom good faith for God is maintained. They are the men. The family was a unit, and individuals were the good faith for God.

Then, idolatry came in, and Genesis came in. They built the tower of Babel, and recovery seemed an absolute impossibility. God gave them up.

According to Romans, chapter one, God gave them up in their own half-blood, and God called out Abraham. Out of that abandoned men and man, God called out Abraham. A new beginning now.

And, to Abraham, God was going to raise his head to heaven. But, as far as the book of Genesis is concerned, you're still individuals. Then you have the nation of Israel.

The nation of Israel and the wisdom born by it lasted about two thousand years. Now, we have the history of the church, the history of Israel came. Israel came.

Israel was spewed out in accordance with the prophecy of the Leviticus 26. God warned Israel, if you don't obey the word of God, you will be spewed out, just like the land spewed out the nations before you. Israel was spewed out.

Now, for nearly two thousand years, history of God in the world has been borne by individuals, but not by any nation, but by companies of the Lord's people. They are referred to as the land, and by individuals referred to, they are a star. Now, the remarkable thing is that these three periods are exactly the same in their commencement, and in their continuation, and in their confirmation.

They begin and they end exactly the same. Just look at the beginning of Israel for a moment. Genesis begins with Eve.

Adam and Eve in the garden, and then we have Satan coming in. Satan deceiving Eve, and Eve is failing to recognize that Adam is the head. She failed to acknowledge the truth of that scripture, not holding the head.

She was, I think, the first president of what we call the women's list. She acted independently of her husband. If she hadn't, she would have been spared.

She acted on a roll. If she had said Adam is responsible, she must have failed. She would have been saved.

If she acted on her own, she took responsibility into her hands. She must have this tragic result. She was deceived.

Though you've got at the hands of Genesis, you've got Eve deceived. Now, we have in 2nd Corinthians 11 a reference to that. Let me read that verse.

2nd Corinthians, chapter 11, and verse 2. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, he says, For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may contend to a church virgin for Christ. So, here, the church is compared to a church virgin, a very attractive, great virgin. Now, he says this.

Right here, that was the enemy, that was the serpent. He said, By any means of the serpent, I will lead you through its subtlety, so your mind should be corrupted from that centrality which is in Christ, centrality and purity of heart towards Christ. He's afraid that the church could follow the same path as Eve did, and that she would be deceived, and the church could fail to hold her head, fail to recognize that headship is vested in Christ, and the church virgin would be deceived and defiled, corrupted.

So, Paul draws a comparison between Eve and her being deceived, to the church in her Christian joy, Eve in her Christian purity, the church in her Christian purity. I don't have to draw that analogy. The apostle Paul is clearly drawn for us here.

Elizabeth here, in the Jews, takes up on one daughter. He has twelve sons, and he has one daughter, Zina, the daughter of Leah. There's only one event recorded of Leah of Zina in the book of Genesis.

We have no record of her ever having been married. We have no record of her ever having had any children. The only thing that is recorded of her is a very sad event, and she was defiled by the sons of Zechariah, the very same daughter of Israel was defiled by contact with the Gentiles.

So, technically, I have no doubt of the way Israel would be defiled by contact with the Gentiles later. So, we have these defiles, deceived and defiled. The Zina deceived and defiled.

The great virgin deceived and defiled. So, at the end of each of these three periods, we have an analogy drawn between the Paul of Eve, the Paul of Zina, and the Paul of the church. Remember when Paul, the church of his Christian purity and glory, was deceived and turned away from simplicity and purity of heart towards Christ? Things of manifoldness are affecting him from Christ.

That's the beginning. So, look at the end. The last letter tells us about Zerubbabel.

Very sad picture we have in the church of Zerubbabel. God said, if thou art rich, then in peace be good. Although it's not allowed, be elected one, be miserable one, poor, blind, and naked.

God says things about us. Lord, be elected one, Lord, be miserable one. Then, three things characterizing us.

Poor, blind, naked. Clearly, the picture is the blind man of John, chapter 9. Poor, blind, naked. A beggar, just as that poor blind man was a picture of Israel.

So, here, the Lord applies this as a picture of the church of Laodicea. The overcomer in Laodicea gets to the throne. The overcomer in the book of Genesis is Joseph, and he gets to the throne.

When we come into the history of the king of Israel, as a nation, we have the Lord Jesus, the overcomer, and he gets to the throne. In the churches, the overcomer gets to the throne. So, we have a very remarkable comparison between the beginning and the ending of Israel.

Church history at the beginning, or rather, Genesis history at the beginning, you have used the trees and the fields. The overcomer on the throne at the end. History of Israel, the dying of the fields and the trees.

Christ, the overcomer, on the throne. In church history, we have Ephesus, the most highly privileged descendant of all the christened of the family, turned aside, fallen. And, at the end, we have the overcomer ascending to the throne.

These are not coincidences. It would be foolish if these were just coincidences only. Let the divine be our guide, clearly, in the beginning to end.

But, when we have what we've got in the Old Testament, it's a foreshadowing of what we've got in the New. Look at some other pictures that we have here. Israel's history is divided into three periods.

Israel's national history. There was a theocratic period, the period when God was exiled. That's covered in the book of Psalms, right from the days of Exodus right through to the days of Judges, to the days of Tabernacles.

God was exiled. And, when they tried for a change, the Lord said, let them have a change. Children too, they're rejecting.

They're rejecting me. They don't want me to rule over. They didn't want theocracy.

They wanted monarchy. What's the end of that period? How does it end? It ends with a blinded trumpet, with its eyes bloused out. It ends with a blind Eli, a priest set aside, and the priest no longer holding the

faith of rule and government that God intended the priesthood to have.

Monarchy comes in, and in that monarchical period, what have we got? Starting with David, ending with Zedekiah. Zedekiah, as his eyes gouged out, chastened to Babylon. The last thing he was given to see was the murder of his two sons, and he saw his two sons killed before his eyes.

Zedekiah, gouged his eyes out. A blind Zedekiah, we come down to the remnant period, a period that began historically in the days of Elijah. The remnant came into, more into, into the openness of God, recognized as a remnant testimony in the days of Zerubbabel, and continued from there on to the days of the Lord.

But, when the Lord came, what have we got there? Blind Pharisees, blind rulers, blind leaders of the blind, so that when the Lord speaks to them in John chapter 9, after the healing of that blind man, recognizing the harshness of the threats of our Lord's words, they challenge him and say, are we blind also? Are we blind also? We are blind and we didn't know it. And we come into the matter to restrict the trial at Zedekiah. Lord, poor, and blind, and naked.

Complacent, utterly complacent, rich and in peace and good. But all sorts of complacent and of poverty, complacent and of spiritual darkness, and spiritual inability to reach the soul. Poor, blind, and naked, yet proud of the fact that he's rich and in peace and good, having ease of knowledge of the condition of the enemy.

If you even struggle, even fall upon the face of the Lord. Absolute complacency and pride are to characterize the Pharisees. They were the descendants of a very spiritual group.

The Pharisees and the scribes were the descendants of men like Ezra, who was already strived in the law of the Lord. But, they're degenerated. The spirituality that characterized the scribes in the days of Ezra have been lost altogether.

And that's a great danger with us. That's a great danger that they look back and say, oh yes, we're in the line of men who have borne real richness for God's dinner today, for God's service, in His grace and mercy, from feeding upon the ashes of a burnt-out experience. But, the ashes of a burnt-out historical thing, without knowing the heat and the warmth, the power, the spiritual power of these things in our own hearts and souls, so we have in the Old Testament tremendous pictures of what they've got here in these two chapters.

They're very touching letters. There's nothing like them anywhere in the word of God. If there's a lot within a little, in a small compass, tremendous amount of material within a few verses, Ben-Gurion commented, he said, we need nothing so touching for those who are the careful told of these letters.

You'll notice a bit before I go, that each letter is addressed to the angel of the church, to the angel of the church. You look in chapter one, chapter two, rather, to the angel of the church of Ephesus Christ. The treasure is sent to him, just like Paul wrote to Timothy.

Timothy was there, and Paul writes to him. He had a responsibility in the ministry. Hippocras is the true illustration of the angel of the church.

You read of him as a fellow laborer of the apostles, and you have him laboring in connection with Colossae and Hierapolis, and in Laodicea. We represent those in the assembly who are responsible

before God for the condition of the assembly, and those who belong with whom responsible for the spiritual condition of the assembly. Then we have the letter sent to the assembly.

You see in the letter, there was a spirit passed on to the churches. The letter to Ephesus is sent to all the churches. No church can say, oh well, that's not sent to us, that was sent to them.

What came to Ephesus is sent to them all. There is a message to them all. They were all individual companies, autonomous in their government and character, not affiliated in any way into any denomination.

Nothing of that about them, and the stars were never affiliated into any mission. The stars were held in the hand of the Lord. This is true New Testament Christianity.

The Lord says to Philip, rise and go, and he goes. He says to Paul, to Peter, rise and go, and he goes. He says to Paul, rise and go, and he goes.

For what I am in the act of the Lord telling his servants to rise and go, and they go. They're under the direct control of the Lord, responsible to the Lord, and he walks amidst the land. That's the Lordship of Christ recognized in a family New Testament Christianity, true theocracy, is what you have there.

The letter is sent to the churches, and then you have the words, see that's happening here. Let him hear. The hymn of overcoming.

So that he appeals to the individuals. You say, well, why do you apply the term angel to those who are the servants of God? Whether they are men giving their time fully, or whether men who are occupied in work at the kundalini, that's not irrelevant at all to the matter. How a man lives, whether he's in employment or whether he's full-time in the service of God, does not affect the matter.

The question is, are those men responsible? Do they exercise responsibility in the assembly? Are my reasons for taking them to be the representative of spiritual leaders in the assembly? And in Christendom, generally, it is that in the prophecy of Malachi, angels are called, or rather, priests are called angels, and prophets from the Baptist is called an angel, messengers of the Lord of Hosts. So the priests, on the one hand, and prophets on the other hand, they were the spiritual leaders of God's people. They were those who should have been leading God's people, and they were, and here they are.

They're spoken of in this way. And I say to you that the term is a very flexible term which can apply to people who are even not converted. Same as in service, there was an angel made the Lord's guest.

Terms are very flexible, sir. But as far as attempts of believers are concerned, we need to remember that this person of death as the angel here represents those of us who speak the minutes of the word of God, whether locally or moving about among God's people. This man gives the message not as a postman comes along and drops a letter into your box.

He doesn't know. It's nothing to him whether the letter contains bad news or good news, whether it's the news of somebody's death or the news of some money that's been left, whether it's a bill or a check. It makes no difference to him.

He drops the letter in the box, and that's his worst thing. But no teacher can do that. No servant of God can minister like that.

The word to the angel, or the word to the church through the angel, is first of all the word through the angel. And the angel digests it. If the Lord's word is truncated, truncated, he eats it and he masticates it, it becomes part of his very being.

So, brethren, those of us who minister on the word of God, and that that word becomes a very part of our being, and that it enters into the very matter of our being, we'll never be able to minister on behalf of others. The word of God coming to the angel comes to the attender, comes to the individual. Your family can't blame the elder.

Your family has a responsibility. Elders are responsible, your family is responsible, and the individual is responsible. And one illustration of this included in the Exodus, chapter thirty-three.

Exodus, chapter 34. You remember, Moses went up the mount, and before he went up the mount, he said, Aaron, if you have any deals or any matters to look to, come to Aaron, go to Aaron and hurl. Moses was away a month, forty days, and that period of testing found him utterly failing, gained in the balances, and found wanted.

And we have them at the end of the month worshiping a golden calf, apostasy has set in. Now, Moses comes back, and when Moses comes back, this is all I want to draw attention to in this. Look down into verse twenty-one.

Moses said unto Aaron, what did this people introduce? That thou hast brought so great a burden upon them. Aaron felt responsible. He had to give account.

He had to give an account. He was ashamed before Moses of his return. Failure.

He was the greatest, he was the highest position of responsibility, and of him much was to be required. And poor Aaron, in a very naive way, he said, I don't know if the people, I don't know if the people, with all the things they're talking about me, are you clear? The voice of the people. I have to do what the people wanted me to do.

It's the case of a tale like in the gospel, and here we have Aaron saying, I told them to give me some gold, and that was in the fire. Oh, did I seem to see a cast in it? I wonder if he expected Moses to believe that. Whether he intended to convey that, I don't know, but he found it, I said, when I read it.

I took the gold and put it in the fire, the cast was, marvelous. It's a miraculous thing, what is that? But then, when he come a little lower down, in verse thirty, Moses said unto the people, you have claimed a great thing. So it came to lay at the feet of Aaron, that the people have to be blamed, and three thousand of them died.

And then, a little lower down, he forever has sinned, verse thirty. Then will I blot out in my book the individual responsibility. What should I think of these letters to the churches? The ministerial responsibility, the collective assembly responsibility, the individual responsibility.

My brother, young or old, my sister, young or old, everyone in the assembly is a contributor to the well-being of the assembly, or is a hindrance to the assembly. Everyone is either a help or a hindrance, exception for us to ask ourselves in ninety-six what am I? Am I a hindrance to the assembly, or am I a parasite? Am I a contributor to the spiritual well-being of the assembly? Now, on Thursday night, God willing, we'll go into the letter to the church of Ephesus, and we'll draw a comparison between that what

we've got there, and the book of Judgment and Ruth. And, I hope to have some books here dealing with these letters available for anyone who cares to purchase them.

I've intended bringing some along tonight, but some of them were taken this morning over at Naples. I'm at Naples with tomorrow night on Tuesday, and we will be going on with these letters at Naples with tomorrow night on Tuesday night, and in all likelihood on Wednesday at the age of twenty-five.

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