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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1993

DEITY MANIFESTED IN FLESH

Speaker: Bro. John Knowles

Study #3

Yahweh Our Elohim Is One Yahweh

Reading: Revelation 1:1-20

Good Morning Brethren and Sisters.

We gather together once again now, to continue our studies in this beautiful theme of God manifestation; and, I'm sure the school is developing to the point now, where we are beginning to see the beautiful unity and continuity of thought, between those three phases of God Manifestation, which is being developed by the three speakers: Deity Manifested in the Past, at the Present and in the Future.

And so now, as we come to the second series of studies, we are of course, looking at Deity Manifested in the Flesh. Deity as it is manifested at the present time. By the present, of course, we incorporate the period from the Lord's first advent, right through to His second coming. But the beauty of these studies, of course, is that the speakers, undoubtedly, overlap, because some of the things that I will say this morning will go back a little bit into Colin's area, and probably a little bit into the future; because, as we see from Revelation chapter 1, we have a vision there that speaks about the He Who Was, the He Who Is and the He Who Is To Come.

And I'm sure as all of the studies develop, we are going to begin to see, that this subject of God Manifestation is a an absolutely beautiful one because of its simplicity, once we've grasped it. And that is, that it is 'Deity' all of the way through; but it is Deity in Manifestation. And so, to come specifically to the titles which we are using this week, and you've seen this transparency before (Figure 2.3.1).

In our first two addresses, we've endeavoured to look specifically at the Lord himself. How that the Word was made flesh in this one. And in study #1 we looked at Him as 'the representative man'. In other words, his oneness with us. And in our second study we looked at Him as 'the manifested Deity, His godly character'. So as to His nature He was one with us; as to his character, he was one with God. And therefore, he is the one in whom God can meet man, the true representative of man, the complete manifestation of Deity as far as his morality is concerned.

And so this morning, we want to consider the theme, Yahweh Our Elohim Is One Yahweh, which is the actual title, but by way of description we are calling it, 'The One who is the Author and Finisher of faith. In other words, the work he has accomplished on our behalf.

Of course, there are a lot of different ways in which this subject could be delivered, and if we called on six brethren, I'm sure that they could give the same title, and there would be six totally different talks all teaching the same doctrine. What I'd like to do this morning, is bring it back very much under the heading of this section of Eureka that we are looking at because, you remember that, the three subject titles are taken from Eureka - Deity Before Manifestation In Flesh, by bro. Colin [Hollamby]; Deity Manifested In Flesh, this session; and, Deity Manifested In Spirit, by bro. Graham [Harding]. But the lead up to that you might recall, was a section entitled 'The Mystery of Godliness Apocalypsed in Symbol'.

And so the approach that I want to take this morning is going to be, to a large extent, centred around Revelation chapter 1, because we want to see how the Deity has revealed the concept of God Manifestation in symbol. Now, He hasn't done that to make it difficult. I know we quoted from Phaneroses, in an earlier talk, where we quoted the words that the 'Deity delights in simulating the intellect of His creatures'. But it goes more than that. Deity chooses the very best way, by which He might describe a concept to us, and therefore, if Deity determines that the best way to describe a concept to us, is to put it in symbol, then that's what He does.

Now human nature says: Ah! You're not going to tell me that Revelation chapter 1 is the easiest way it could be done? The answer is that Revelation chapter 1 is the only way it could have been done. And I hope in the next 45 minutes, we're going to convince everybody of that, and also lay the basis for our better appreciation, our growing appreciation of this concept of God Manifestation, but something that will also go further in a specific sense. It's going to show to us, brethren and sisters, that without the understanding of God Manifestation, (and how's this for a nice dogmatic statement), that without the understanding of God Manifestation we will never understand the book of Revelation. We can understand all of the history of the so-called continuous historic view, which I believe is the right one, and if we don't understand God Manifestation, all our history means nothing. On the other hand, if we don't understand the concept of God Manifestation, principally in Revelation chapters 1, 4 and 5, then I'm going to say that it is impossible to come up with the right conclusion. We're going to go wrong.

And so, let's dispense with this fairly quickly by saying, that we know that within the Christian community, and one unfortunately has to say also the brotherhood, that there are such views as futurist views, preterist views, and all sorts of other views. And I would say that without fail those views are wrong views because they've gone wrong in Revelation chapter 1, where we have this basic concept of God Manifestation.

How could Jesus call himself 'the First and the Last'? He wasn't a pre-existent Deity. How could he describe himself as 'the He Who Was and Is and Is to Come'? How

could He describe Himself as 'the Alpha and the Omega'?

Well, I'm sure by this stage that our school, (Let's assume that some of us have never studied the subject of God Manifestation before), I'm sure that already we are beginning to see, how that is going to come through and, of course, we are going to have to see that it is going to involve a family. In a sense, this particular study this morning, will probably be the principle expository talk in the series of 6 that I am planning to do. The next 3 will have a certain amount of exposition, but are intended to be predominantly exhortational.

So, this morning then, with Revelation as our base, which we will come to in a few moments, we want to have a look at the way in which Deity as concealed in symbol, the beautiful unity, which Christ had with the Father, which the Father and the Son have with us, and even in this present sense, we must appreciate that now. And we will try not to intrude too much into the future, because I know that's going to be the theme that our bro. Graham will be developing.

Let's have a look at what we might understand by 'the divine family'.

This morning, bro. Colin has spoken about the fact that, in heaven, the angels encamp about the throne of the Deity. You know, that's incredible because we are going to read in a moment, in Revelation chapter 4, a few moments actually, it's a bit down the line, how that the saints will be encamped about the throne of Deity. So the past manifestation, the present and the future, all have a lot in common.

But let's have a look at this chart. Again, it's not a new one and some of you might have seen it before. We used it, I recall, in the Hebrew studies in December last year at Okanagan, but I think it is a very helpful one. And what we've endeavoured to do here, is to bring together the Name and some of the titles of Deity. It's almost what we might call a 'family tree', bare some limitations to the chart, and therefore, we ask you not to view it too technically, but to try and take the spirit of what it's saying. You'll see that I mean by that, that you can't always follow these lines, because if you did, well, then you would have the Son of God here, being in existence before the angels, and it doesn't mean that at all. It's more a line of authority in relation to this creation. That's what it is - it's what we might call a line of authority in relation to God's purpose with this earth.

So, we've got then, at the top of what we'll call this 'family tree', the one styled 'the Father'. The Father has one called 'the Son, the Son of God'. And then the family divides up into the two parts, as described by the apostle Paul: the whole family, he says, 'which is in heaven and in earth'. So, following this idea of 'Father' and 'Son', what we find then is that the heavenly component of the family is what we would call the 'sons of God in heaven'. Job 38:7 says at the time of creation the 'sons of God shouted for joy'. Let's come down along the other line of the tree. Here are the earthly components of the family, and we notice here that they are divided into two parts. I want to develop this part more particularly, in our study tomorrow. So I'll just mention it

at this stage, but to develop it later.

In terms of the Hebrew, or rather the Greek scriptures of the New Testament I should say, we are described as the 'children of God on earth'. The translators haven't always been consistent, but we'll use the word 'children' being the translation of the word 'teknon'. We are the children of God on earth, having been born of water. We have been brought into this family, then, as children. But what we are waiting for, is the time when we shall attain unto sonship. So, the 'children of God' are the mortal saints on earth, in the present dispensation; the 'sons of God' are the immortal saints on earth, in the future dispensation.

And that's why we have two quotes from Romans, i.e., Romans 8:16 and Romans 8:19, 'for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God'.

And when that happens then the time will have come, when the whole family, in heaven and in earth, shall be named in One; when the words of Zechariah 14:9 will be fulfilled, 'Yahweh shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Yahweh, and His name One'.

It doesn't just mean there's going to be One Father, but the Father is the Father of a family. That family has a name, and the family name, as we have seen, is the name of Yahweh. So that the name of the Son embodies the name of the Father, Jehoshua' as it comes to us in the Greek, Jesus. And so the name of the Father has been named upon us - we have been baptized into name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We've been assured that the name of God and the name of the city of our God, will be named upon us, and so when Yahweh is king over all the earth, there will be one Yahweh and His Name One. The purpose will be complete, or as our title for today's talk says, Yahweh Our Elohim Is One Yahweh; in other words, He Who Will Be manifested in our mighty ones, is the One Who Will Be.

And do you see how we go from the singular to the plural, back to the singular apparently. And that's very important - to understand that. It's like Paul's description of the ecclesia and the body of Christ in Corinthians, 'for as the body is one, and has many members, all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ'.

So, do we talk about the ecclesia as 'it' or 'them'? Is it singular or is it plural? You have your choice, it's essentially singular, but it is made up of a multitude; and, so this is where we're heading now in our studies. We are still looking at the present manifestation of Deity in flesh, although as I said, and we said this right from the beginning, there will be a certain amount of overlap obviously between the speakers, but this is where we're heading. And in the course of these studies, we're going to be very interested in 'these children of God on earth'. How they are endeavouring to develop the character of the Father, and to some extent, we are going to talk about the way in which the 'immortal Elohim' are able to be of assistance to them. Because, you

see, there is yet one further title that we haven't looked at. The Father, the source of all power, is Ail. He manifested Himself in a particular One, an 'Eloah', or if you like 'Emmanuel', Ail with us.

The immortal sons of God in heaven, are the immortal Elohim, the mighty ones; and, likewise, we are called upon to be the 'elohim of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob'. And so this is what God Manifestation is all about. Leave Deity out of this; there cannot be anything else on this chart.

And that doesn't sound very profound. Well, that's obvious, so why did you waste your time saying that, 'EVERYBODY knows that'? Yes, B&S, but everybody, everybody, me, you and everybody else, has to be reminded of this every day, for the simple reason that our nature, being what it is, leave the word aside for a few hours, and the mind automatically reverts back to 'self', and we leave God out of it. And even though our desire might be to get into the kingdom, by some means or other, we are trying to work our way there, through will power, works of law, or what ever. We've got to remember that it is God, who is working to His good pleasure. Ephesians says 'we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works'. Paul says that 'He is the great potter, molding us'. So we're not talking in a theoretical sense. We've got to allow the Father to discipline us, and to chasten us. And consequently in our latter three studies we want to look at how we think this can be done in real terms.

But this morning though, we want to look, essentially at this 'Mystery of Godliness Apocalypsed in Symbol', to see how the One Yahweh, manifests Himself in a multitude, and how the best way that He could describe it to us, would be a revelation, like [Revelation] chapters 1, 4 and 5. And of course, as we know, it has a double thrust in it. It means that somebody who doesn't understand God Manifestation, will never understand it. And so the book of Revelation, like the book of Daniel, was written that 'the wise might understand'. The wicked will not understand. This book, likewise, is concealed from those who don't know the truth. And so let's get on then and develop this beautiful thing.

Before turning to the Apocalypse, I would like to go with you to Hebrews chapter 2, because Hebrews chapter 2, and initially verses 9 and 10, endorse for us, what we are saying in the simple application of this chart. There will be a more detailed application to it in later studies, but in Hebrews chapter 2 and verses 9 and 10, we pick up the words where the apostle is referring to his previous quotation from Psalm 8. Hebrews 2:9, 'but, he says, and of course any sentence starting with 'but' means it's contrasting with something that went before, and he had been talking about 'what is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou visiteth him'; and he says, 'we will yet see all things put under man's feet', but, 'we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.'

Now here is the Father's purpose. His purpose is to bring 'many sons unto glory'. That's what He's wanting to do. So, He's manifested himself in the 'great Eloah', the 'Who I Will Be'. That's already been done, but the purpose is to 'bring many sons unto glory'. And to do that, this one had to be able to identify with them. He had to suffer with them. And, of course, as verse 10 says, 'that in bringing many sons unto glory, He was to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.'

Now, can you understand what it means when it says that 'Jesus Christ was the captain of their salvation'? It's the same word that's used in Hebrews 12 where it says, 'He is the author of our faith'. Can you understand what it means when it says he was made 'complete' or 'perfect' through suffering? And in Hebrews chapter 12:2 it's the same word as 'the finisher' of our faith. Without looking up all the words, and we can look them up, can you understand how Jesus is the 'captain of our salvation', the leader. The word 'captain' 'archegos' means, 'the chief leader, or the prince, or one that takes the lead in anything, and thus affords an example, a predecessor in a matter, or as in Hebrews 12:2, 'the author'.

Any difficulty with that? I don't think we've got any difficulty with that, have we?

Can we understand that how his character was made 'complete', (the word being 'perfect' in Hebrews 2:10), [was] 'through suffering'. The word is 'telelos' - it means to carry through completely, to accomplish, to bring to an end, and it is the same word as 'finisher' in Hebrews 12:2.

Do we understand then, how he is the beginning and the end of our hope? We'll say: Yes! Well, B&S, and I'll not try to talk to you as children, don't forget that, don't forget that, because when we get to Revelation chapter 1, that's all it's saying. But it's couched in the language of symbolism, where you've got Deity saying, 'I am the First and I am the Last; I am the One Who was Living and was Dead'. Deity says that!

Deity says, 'I am the One that was living, but was dead'. Ah! But, we've now come to understand what God manifestation is all about. God never died; but Jesus Christ did. But Jesus Christ died to declare the glory of God. So, if we can just keep in mind the simple concept of 'the captain of our salvation made perfect' or 'the author and finisher of our faith', (exactly the same terms), and bear this in mind as we go through Revelation 1, and we'll understand very easily what is meant by 'Alpha and Omega'. A and O, the beginning and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The first and the last. The He Who Was and Is and Is To Come. And so, what we find then in Hebrews chapter 2, that he goes on to say, 'for both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren'.

And so there it is, both he that sanctified, that's the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who are sanctified, the saints, are all of one Father - GOD.

Hebrews 2 would also understand that we are of the one father, Adam, in the sense of Hebrews 2:14, but I do believe that the principle thrust of this chapter, is to show to us

that the reason He calls us 'brethren' is not because we all have Adam as our father, but because we all have GOD as a Father. That's why he can say in verse 12, 'I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the ecclesia will I sing praise unto thee'. So it's his brethren in the ecclesia. And so it is, in this sense then, that this in fact is a 'work of God'. He's the Author and Finisher of our faith. And so in the light of what we read in Romans chapter 1, 'I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith'.

Jesus Christ is the author of faith, he's the finisher of faith. It was explained in the opening talk again this morning [Session #1, Study #3], which of course, leads into this, in the sense that, Abraham was justified by faith when he believed (Genesis 15). If you like, you can say that was the beginning of it; that was the authorship of it. But he was also counted worthy and had righteousness accounted unto him, when in Genesis 22 his faith was put to the test, and you might say that that was in a sense the completion of his faith. And as James pointed out, that when Abraham offered up Isaac as recorded in Genesis chapter 22, then were the words of Genesis 15 fulfilled.

Got the point? Genesis 15, Abraham believed - God counted it unto him for righteousness. He put his faith to the test! Abraham faithfully responded, and God said, 'I knew it, I was right back in Genesis 15 when I accounted righteousness unto him.' So Abraham's life was a life of 'from faith', the faith which comes through a belief and a baptism and righteousness imputed, unto a faith that is manifested in works of faith. 'Our response in time of trial', is what James is talking about.

So, here we are then, Jesus Christ the author and finisher of our faith. And we want to see this morning, how all of this is embodied in the symbolism of the Apocalypse.

Perhaps just to summarize though what we were saying about 'Author and Finisher', (in case I seem to be jumping backwards and forwards between Hebrews 12 and Hebrews 2), there is perhaps a simple summary of it found there on the screen in front of us. And we got there the fact that the word 'author', the Greek word 'archegos', is rendered 'captain' in Hebrews 2:10; it's rendered 'prince' in Acts 3:15 and 5:31. It means 'one that takes the lead and thus affords an example'.

He also is the 'finisher'; this is the only occurrence, but the culnate word 'made perfect' occurs in Hebrews 2 verse 10; 'the bond of perfecting' [in] Colossians 3:14; and, 'let us go on unto perfection' in Hebrews 6:1; means to bring to completeness or to maturity. Now, because we are bound by time, everything has to have a start and everything has to have a finish, but Deity, who is timeless, brings everything together and makes it as though it was one thing, one event, one concept.

And that's why when we come now to Revelation chapter 1, we are going to speak of Deity as being the 'He Who Was, and Is and Is To Come'. But it was manifested in Jesus Christ, the He Who Was, and Is and Is To Come. And that's why that chart, of course, is so helpful, because as bro. Thomas said, 'it starts with Deity and it goes right

through to Deity; Deity before manifestation in Flesh, Deity manifest in Flesh, and Deity manifest in spirit, but it's all Deity'. Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith was doing a work of Deity; it's one complete work.

Now, I think the best way to understand this is - let's go over to Revelation chapter 1. We want to see that these terms can only be understood when we appreciate the concept of God Manifestation; and, hence an understanding of God Manifestation is essential to the understanding of the Apocalypse as a whole. bro. Bart (Bartholomew) produced some time ago, a booklet entitled, God Manifestation in the Apocalypse, and they are available from the table down the back, that is, unless I picked the last one up from there on the way in. I think there were a couple of others and I will put this one back, but that does deal with Revelation 1, and 4 and 5 in particular. And it does happen, in the course of it, to make some contrasts with other views, which leave the concept of God Manifestation to one side, or at least, I don't understand it or don't give it it's full weight. Let's briefly then, pick up some of the features of God Manifestation, as found then in Revelation chapter 1.

Look at these titles. We've read them this morning, and we're not going to endeavour to expound them in any great detail. But when we look here at Revelation chapter 1 verse 4, we read there, 'John to the seven ecclesias which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come.' Now who is he speaking of? Who's the 'he which is and which was and which is to come'? Well, the safe answer is to say Deity, but we are going to come to the conclusion, B&S, I think we're going to come to the conclusion, that virtually every time in the Bible we read 'God', and let's just use that English word, I would say it is almost invariably 'God in Manifestation'. Deity, Ail, the Father, whatever term you like to give to that great Source of all Power, does not Himself come down and perform work on earth. He always manifests Himself through others.

Now, I'm not saying therefore, that every time you read the word 'God', it's got to be manifestation, because sometimes it will be speaking of the Invisible I, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, which no man hath seen nor can see'. That is the invisible Deity, so 'He who is, and was and is to come' is Deity, but it's Deity manifested in Jesus Christ. If I seem to be repeating the obvious, over and over again, bear with me, because towards the end, we are going to pick up some thoughts from Revelation 4 and 5. And I think if you haven't seen this before, you'll find it a very exciting concept because it opens up what could otherwise be an insurmountable problem. We'll come to that in due course.

Alright, so there is a title, it's the Lord Jesus Christ who is writing this book to John, and he calls himself, 'the He who is, and yet was, and yet is to come'. And bro. Thomas picks up those terms and he speaks about them in Eureka, in that section that we are dealing with, or a few pages later on. So the 'He who is, and was, and is to come', He is the Word that was in the beginning, now manifest in flesh. Oh! Sorry. When he wrote that, just prior to writing that, he was manifest in flesh, and now in Spirit. So there has been three stages of Jesus Christ; the Word that was in the beginning, the

Word manifest in Flesh, the Word manifest in Spirit; and that is the three phases of our talks. That's the three phases of the chart; can you [now see] how it almost coming to the point of where a Trinitarian would say: Ah! you're talking about the pre-existence of Christ. No, we're not! No way are we talking about the pre-existence of Christ. But, B&S, I think one of the difficulties we may have had over the years as a community, which has caused us perhaps to lose the full appreciation of God Manifestation, is that in order to combat such doctrines as the pre-existence, we've run the other way. No way was Jesus Christ in the beginning. He was in the beginning (Revelation 1 says He was in the beginning), but He wasn't there as some pre-existent Deity. He was there in the concept of God Manifestation, even before He was manifested in Flesh. So you see, when you read the title, 'He that was, and is, and is to come', it's speaking of Jesus Christ as the Word that was in the beginning, manifest in flesh, and now in spirit.

Let's pick up the second term in Revelation chapter 1 and verse 4, 'and from the seven Spirits which' (and it's not are, it's is) 'which is before His throne.' Quite ungrammatical isn't it? Quite ungrammatical, but that's not the first place in the Bible where the doctrine of God manifestation has been ungrammatical.

Where's the first place in the Bible, where the doctrine of God manifestation has been ungrammatical? How far back do you want to go? Genesis? chapter 1? Verse 1? Why not? 'In the beginning, Elohim (plural) He (singular) created'; a plural noun governing a singular verb. Ungrammatical? Why? Because, Deity is showing to us that the Elohim, who are a multitude, act as One. It's like the ecclesia. It's made up of a multitude, but it's a unit. And so, in order to impress upon us the unity of the Godhead, yet manifested in a multitude who act as One, not as robots because they've voluntarily given themselves to Him. They are now spirit in the complete sense of the term. They now think like spirit and act like spirit; therefore, act on behalf of ALL, Himself; and, therefore, to show that they act as a unit, like that cherubims of Ezekiel chapter 1, that was made up of many parts but it moved around as a unit, in all directions. In the beginning the Mighty Ones (plural), He created. So the Mighty Ones did a work on behalf of Deity.

What have we got here? - 'The seven spirits which is before his throne'? You see it's not talking about a multitude of spirits, it's talking about the complete spirit. The complete spirit manifestation to be seen in the complete spirit body, and I don't want to get to much further on there because I'm sure that's something that Graham's going to be developing later on. But it's past, present and future and it is also impossible for any speaker to say 'I'm going to stick in this narrow channel, and only talk about my aspect of the subject, because you see, we can't divide it up, can we? That's why Jesus Christ is the 'He who was, and is, and is to come'.

He is also the 'faithful witness'. That word 'witness' there is the word 'martyr' or 'martus'. Of course, this is dangerous. It's dangerous in the sense that, you know, we could go on for several hours here, if we give too much time to some of these very important terms. How precisely could I say it?

The book of Revelation is not a book that is set out to describe to us the history of the times of the Gentiles and the rise and the change in the various forms of the Roman Empire. It wasn't written for that at all. That just happens to be part of the structure - the great red dragon being Pagan Rome, and the beast of the sea being the early stages of Catholic Rome, and the beast of the earth which is the Holy Roman Empire, and the image of the beast ....., and we get unto Papal Rome. We've spent a lot of time talking about that, but the book of Revelation is all about the sufferings of the believers, the ones who will be the martyrs for Christ, and what they'll put up with.

So right at the very beginning, in the title which he uses here, he speaks of himself as the 'faithful witness'. The word is martyr, and as the basis of that and in turn that becomes the basis of the future manifestations of the martyrdom of others who will, likewise, follow His example. So He is the faithful witness and the 'first-begotten from the dead'.

The sense in which he is the firstborn from the dead is that he heads a family of brethren who, like him, had dedicated their lives to declaring the glory of His Father. So as the faithful witness, the faithful martyr, he dedicated his life to declaring the glory of His Father. He is the firstborn of the dead. I'm going to suggest, B&S, that is not to be mistaken as being the same as 1 Corinthians 15, which says, 'He is the firstfruits of them that sleep'.

It's not the same thing at all. The firstfruits of them that sleep means that he's the first one to come out of the grave. Firstborn is a title, it's a title given to the oldest son in the family, providing he proved worthy of it. And the oldest son in God's family didn't prove worthy of it because that was Adam. That's why Christ became the second or the last Adam, and He therefore, becomes the firstborn of those who were once dead in trespasses and sins, but who will come forth from the grave and be the other members of that family. There is, therefore, a difference between firstfruits and firstborn. Firstfruits, of course, picks up the idea of the sacrifices under the law of Moses, where firstborn is a title, a title which was earned by a son in the family.

He is the 'prince of the kings of the earth'. He will soon reveal this glory to the world, in company with his brethren. But, you see, when you look down through there, you could say, 'Well, I would have some difficulty in describing how Jesus could be the 'He Who was, and is, and is to come.' Or, for example, if we come down to verse 8, he says, 'I am the Alpha and Omega, I'm the beginning and the ending saith the Lord'; Okay? 'which is, and which was and which is to come.' And we say, Yes, I've almost grasp that. Huh? Well now look at the last two words, 'the Almighty'. But, it's Jesus, isn't it?

He is appropriating to Himself, Deity. He is there to represent Deity. Can you see what we are trying to say? That if we don't understand God Manifestation, we're going to have a terrible lot of trouble with those verses. And do you know what people do who don't have the understanding of God Manifestation and who, therefore, come to

other conclusions because they've got different historical views of the rest of the book. They have to invariably avoid some of these verses, such as, for example, where we read in verse 10, 'I was in spirit on the Lord's day', and John was taken forward in spirit, like Ezekiel was taken in spirit to Jerusalem, John was taken in spirit to the Lord's day. He was taken ahead effectively 2000 years in time and then he hears behind Him, a voice; and he turns and he looks and he sees a whole series of events coming up to him. That's one of the fundamental proofs of the continuous historic interpretation of the Apocalypse. John transported forward in time, and then behind him, (because you see, all the events are now effectively past, he standing there in spirit on the Lord's day), he looks back and all these events come up - the great red dragon, the beast of the sea, beast of the earth, the image of the beast, all of that, coming up to meet him.

What if you don't believe in the continuous historic view of the apocalypse, and you believe in a futurist or a preterist view, what do you do with that verse? Well, one writer might say the Lord's day, some say it's Sunday, some say it's the day of Christ's return, but frankly it can be any day when you are feeling spiritual. I said, 'one writer might say', one writer did say, 'what has it done to God manifestation?' You see, I know it sounds critical, B&S, but we're establishing truth, we're not fighting persons in these issues, as we said, it's not the history that's so important about the Apocalypse. If history was so important, then this book was useless to John when he received it, because none of the history had happened. But, if God manifestation was important, then this book was just as valuable to John as it is to us today. We've got the added advantage plus the added responsibility, because to whom much is given, from them much is expected. We have the added advantage of saying, 'Ah! I can see how it's being fulfilled'. John couldn't see that, but he could understand that a great red dragon represented a particular aspect of flesh in manifestation. We happen to say it's pagan Rome. It doesn't really matter in that sense of the term, and I'm not playing down the importance of study history, I'm just saying, let's get our priorities right.

But you see, it's all about saying that Revelation 1 is talking about Deity, but sometimes it's Jesus Christ, sometimes it's the saints. You say, 'Well, why didn't he say Jesus Christ, why didn't he say the saints?' Because he didn't want to identify who was doing it. He wanted to identify what aspect of God manifestation was being put into practice at that time.

Can I explain it this way: How many different symbols can you think of for the saints in the Apocalypse? The redeemed; The four living ones; The 24 elders; The bride (the Lamb's wife); The new Jerusalem. Well, that'll do for the moment, that's five. If you don't understand God manifestation, what do you do with those different symbols? You say, Well! those different symbols must represent different groups of people. But if the term 'redeemed' means the redeemed, then the four living ones can't be the redeemed. What can they be? The angels? Why the angels? Well, they can't be the redeemed and it does say to the four living ones surrounding the throne, and as Colin pointed out in the first talk this morning, at the present moment of time the angels are surrounding the throne. But that's not what God Manifestation is all about.

It says the four living ones and the 24 elders represent two aspects of Deity in manifestation: the four living ones, the militant aspect, the Israel going forth; the 24 elders their priestly aspect, the king priestly aspect if you like of the saints.

That's why different symbols, and I'd like to make this point very clear, although I'm sure many of you know it - different symbols do not necessarily represent different individuals or different groups of individuals. They represent different aspects of manifestation.

Now notice, I qualified that - 'they don't necessarily mean'. Of course, the great red dragon is not the same as the 24 elders. I know that - totally different, but there can be a number of different symbols for the Lord Jesus Christ as there can be for the saints.

One of the beautiful expressions that we've got here, we find it in verse 7 for example, is 'behold he cometh with clouds'. Now if we don't understand God manifestation, what are we going to make of these clouds he's coming with? Someone told me at breakfast time this morning, who was sitting opposite me at breakfast, and is now sitting opposite me in the second row, who should be unnamed, 'that the clouds represent the angels according to some views, but not his'. Why? Well, brethren who were here last night when we looked at Matthew 24, remember we saw there that 'then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, coming on the clouds of heaven', Right? And then the next verse goes on to say, 'and then shall He gather together His elect from the four corners of the earth'.

Well, if we make the elect the saints being gathered for the judgment, and the Lord has already appeared in the clouds, the clouds have got to be the angels. But where can you go to in the Bible, to explain Bible symbology which can always be explained, how can you explain that the clouds are the angels? You see it becomes a convenient interpretation. The clouds are the saints.

Look at this transparency [Figure 2.3.2] and the pictures have been available in many different forms before, but let's just take it in it's simplest form. Let's take the three phases of the development of the clouds and see how that every symbol is based upon a concept of God manifestation. The clouds represent the saints (And for the people, the feminine members of our community, who weren't here last night to hear the Olivet prophecy spoken about, and wonder then who are the elect that are going to be gathered - well, that's Israel.). So, that's just an aside.

Step 1 - God is calling out of the nations a people for His name.

In the Apocalypse, the waters, the seas, the rivers, which thou seest are peoples, languages, multitudes, nations, tongues, and the Son of righteousness shines down upon the sea of nations, and he calls out of them a people for his name, and he forms them into a cloud. Hebrews 12:1 says, 'seeing then that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses'.

Here's our word 'witnesses' again. What does a witness mean? It means one who

has effectively given his life even unto death, and in Hebrews 11 it says, 'these all died in faith', so whilst the word 'martyr' does not necessarily of itself mean that we have literally died, effectively it does mean that. We have either literally or spiritually died, so you see, this cloud of witnesses are now all dead. That's what we might call the first phase of the clouds. A cloud of witnesses formed by the spirit exhaling (bro. Thomas' word). It means to draw out, drawing out the constituents from the sea of nations, and they are made to sit in the heavenlies in Christ, but the majority of them are now dead. So that necessitates that if Christ is going to come, with the clouds, then there's got to be a second stage of the manifestation of clouds.

Step 2 - So, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, we are told in the terms of Isaiah 26 and verse 19, 'that the resurrected saints shall come forth as the 'dew of the morning'.

I don't know if you've thought about this very much, but actually the evaporation of dew is very significant factor in the formation of clouds. I didn't realize that until comparative recently, perhaps the last 6 or 7 years, or something like that. I thought that the majority of it came from the rivers and that.

But terms like 'dew point' and all of that sort of thing, have to do with the formation of clouds and such. And there are two different ways in which it's done. I forget the two terms now, but that doesn't matter.

But the saints come forth as the dew of the morning, the Son of righteousness arises with healing in His beams, and once more they are formed into clouds. These are the clouds now, of course, of Revelation chapter 1. What are these clouds? Well, these are the clouds which are described in more detail in Revelation chapter 4, as bro. Thomas says, 'the resurrected saints constitute the lightnings, thunders, and voices of the One Spirit, subduing the nations.

You see, here are the thunder clouds then, the clouds of judgment. So when it says here, 'Behold He cometh with clouds', I think you are beginning to see how every one of these symbols is worth a study in it's own right. But B&S, this is Deity manifesting itself. Well, as I said, we're almost getting into the Spirit area, aren't we? There was Deity manifested in Flesh, Right? This second stage now is the Deity manifesting Himself in Spirit in a militant form, and the thunders and the lightnings represent the judgments upon the nations, which are implicit here in Revelation chapter 1.

But what happens when the thunder and lightning is passed? Well, then the rain comes down upon the mown ground, a very apt and appropriate title for Armageddon 'the nations are reaped at eventide' and then Psalm 72 says, 'He shall pour down rain upon the mown grass'.

And so what happens after the clouds have poured down their rain and the grass springs forth? Well, then the clouds pass away and eventually we have the words of 2 Samuel 23:4, 'as the brightness of the morning shall He arise; the sun of an unclouded dawn, shining forth after rain upon tender grass out of the earth'. So we're compassed

about with a great cloud of witnesses at the moment, who've been separated from the sea of nations. We're waiting for the time when we'll come back with the Lord as the thunder clouds of judgment. But what we're really waiting for is for the symbol of the clouds to eventually pass away, like the symbol of the sea will eventually pass away. When God is all in all, there will be no more sea, there will be no more clouds. We will then be, 'all in all with Deity'.

But, B&S, that's what God manifestation is all about. We can't be all-in-all with Deity in the physical sense now, but we can mentally, and desirably, morally. Is that too difficult to comprehend? Can't you see then why God couldn't have explained it any other way than the way He's done it here. The Mystery of Godliness Apocalypsed in Symbol, is bro. Thomas' title. And so when we follow each one of these symbols through, it's Deity that is the centre of it all, and we will eventually totally lose our identity mentally, morally and physically.

We've given ourselves up now, in a sense we might say constitutionally, to being in Christ. We've lost our identity. But the time will come, 1 Corinthians 15, 'God will be all in all'; no more sea, no more clouds, no more 24 elders, no more four living ones; they will all have past away by the time we get to the end of the millennium. I'm not necessarily saying that those clouds there pass away at the end of the millennium, although of course, we do know that there will be a further judgment at the end of the millennium.

I'd like to then, just as we draw this to a conclusion, to turn over to Revelation chapter 4 and to present what it really means, but at the same time point out how some do genuinely have difficulties with these chapters. And I don't mean necessarily people who are going in the wrong direction, but there are some difficulties, but they are easily resolved when we understand this concept of God Manifestation.

By the way, just in passing over there, I was going to deal with the theme of 'the one like unto the Son of Man'. Time has run away with us, but we must point out that 'the one like unto the Son of Man' of Revelation 1, is again, a multitude in manifestation. It certainly points forward to the future, but that these characteristics must be developed now, i.e., the garment, a covering of righteousness. There must be that imputed righteousness now in the ultimate sense, of course, ultimate physical righteousness and immortality.

The golden girdle, you might be able to just read it there, 'the faithful ministrations of the saints'; the head and the hairs like wool, a pure ecclesia at one with the head; eyes as a flame of fire, spirit beings in the future administering God's judgment; feet like fine brass, the flesh purged and the nations subdued; the voice of many waters, the everlasting gospel proclaimed to the world; the seven stars and the sharp sword and the faces of the sun, the glorified ecclesia, the first one complete with the last ones.

In looking at the program, I understand that bro. Colin is due to speak on Daniel 10. If he does, he certainly will give a description of a very similar picture to this one here.

And very likely, our bro. Graham will be picking up similar features as well, when he looks at the subject, according to the book anyway, of resurrection and that sort of thing. So, let's just leave at that and say, we are in the course of preparing now to be part of that multitude. Well, the time will come when that multitude will be revealed.

And in Revelation 4:1 we read, 'and after this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter'. Now, that's very clear, isn't it? Things which must be hereafter, it can't be: when Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, and, that it's a literal vision of what's literally going on in heaven now, as has been suggested.

It's talking about the heavens of the age to come. He says to John 'come up and I'm going to show you a vision of the new heavens of the kingdom age'. And very quickly, we see here this beautiful concept of God in manifestation. He sees One sitting upon the throne. In verses 5 and 6, 'before the throne there was a sea of glass'.

Ah! There's still a sea there, yes, there's still mortal nations at this stage, but they're at peace; they're a sea of glass. It's not till we get to Revelation 21 that there is no more sea, 'and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne, where there the four living ones, full of eyes before and behind, and the first was like a lion and the second like a calf, and the third like a man, and fourth like an eagle. And the four living ones had each of them six wings and they were full of eyes within and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.'

And it picks up the vision of the cherubim of Ezekiel and the seraphim of Isaiah 6. Without turning back, it is interesting to note that in Isaiah chapter 6, where that quotation in the latter part of verse 8 comes from, actually says, 'Holy, holy, holy,' (I can't remember the exact Hebrew title, I think it says Lord God of Hosts), 'Yahweh Elohim Sabaoth', (or something like that), 'the fullness of the whole earth is His glory'. The Lord changes that, and instead of saying the fullness of the whole earth is glory, he says, 'which was, and is, and is to come'.

You see, the saints are the fullness of Christ. Aren't we? We are the fullness of Him. He is the head, we are the body. We complete the Lord Jesus Christ. We are the 'fullness of the whole earth', but in the Apocalypse it is changed to 'the He who was, and is, and is to come'.

You see, there's a sense in which we also must be past, present and future. If we are now part of Deity, you see, we can appropriate to ourselves, in a limited sense, these titles.

If you haven't heard this before, I'd say 50 minutes is probably about enough that anyone can take in one sitting - the mind starts to reel and, 'Oh!, I was going alright for a while'. And I think a speaker who shows some discretion would say, 'let people take it slowly'. Others say, 'I'm quite familiar with this, I can understand every bit of it.' But

the one thing we are saying is that Deity is the centre of it all. That's what God Manifestation is all about.

Now let's just take one final illustration of it, and this is the one that I said earlier we would pick up. See if you can solve this problem? Revelation 5:1, 'I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals'.

So we've got the One sitting on the throne, in the new age to come, in the kingdom to come, and he's got this sealed book there. Who's the One sitting on the throne there? Don't call out the answer, for your sake!. Who's the One sitting on the throne?

Well, I'm going to answer it for you - Jesus Christ. Come down to verse 6, 'And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne'.

Who is the Lamb? - Jesus Christ. We've got a problem. How can Jesus Christ hand something to Himself? And so what do we find? We find people saying, 'Well, the One sitting on the throne has to be God, therefore it has to be a vision of something going on in heaven now.' But it had to be fulfilled when Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and God gave Him the scroll, so it's all past'. See how you get such things as preterist and futurist views, because you don't understand God manifestation.

Who is the One sitting on the throne? - DEITY in manifestation. Who is the Lamb? - flesh in representation. The fact that it happens to be Jesus Christ in both cases is, B&S, purely incidental.

Now some of you might be horrified at that thought, but understand what I'm saying. The Apocalypse is not so much interested in telling us who is doing something, as much as it's trying to tell us, what is the concept of God Manifestation.

So the throne then is the throne of Deity, and on the throne of Deity there is Deity sitting, but it's Deity in manifestation in the kingdom age to come. The Lamb, on the other hand, who does also happen to be the Lord Jesus Christ, is representing flesh, sacrificed on our behalf. So you see, it's God giving to flesh. But, of course, that's the whole concept of the Lord Jesus Christ as our first two studies showed - the Word made flesh. As the Word, he is the manifested Deity; as flesh, he is the representative man.

Now I think we need to leave it at that for several reasons. One is the time factor, the other is we have probably had enough to think about. Really, I think we can appreciate that one could almost spend a whole Bible School dealing with this concept. But, brethren & sisters, (just to come back to where we started, and where we're trying to go), we said that in this course of our second series of studies that, try as we might, to stay in that fairly narrow channel of Deity manifested in flesh, that middle section, we've had to, of course, overlap a little bit. But what we've done now is, we've come to the

halfway mark.

We've seen the glory in a man, as the representative man. We've seen him as the manifested Deity, and we've seen him this morning, in what might have been a way in which you might not have anticipated before the talks started. We've seen him as: the Author and Finisher of faith, the Alpha and Omega, the first One and with the Last Ones, the He Who was, and is, and is to come, in picking up the terms from the Apocalypse, because we believe that God could not have described it to us in any better way, than doing it in symbols, that simulate our intellect, that we have to think about and endeavour to grasp.

Now, I said I thought this morning's talk would be the most significant and the most, perhaps, difficult as far as exposition is concerned. God willing then, from tomorrow on, we want to now look at the multitudinous manifestation of this 'NOW'. And we want to [do] that just as Jesus is 'One with us', so we must be one with Him. Just as Jesus manifested the godly character, so must we manifest the godly character.

Just as he is the first one and with the last ones, and has done a work for us in bringing us into being part of Deity, in a sense now, then we likewise, in our day and generation, have a work for him, the edifying of the body in love. And so we look forward, not only to my series of studies, but to the others as well, to see this beautiful theme of God Manifestation come to a climax. Something which starts off with fundamental exposition but becomes, with out any shadow of a doubt, the most excellent exhortational theme found in the whole of the scriptures.