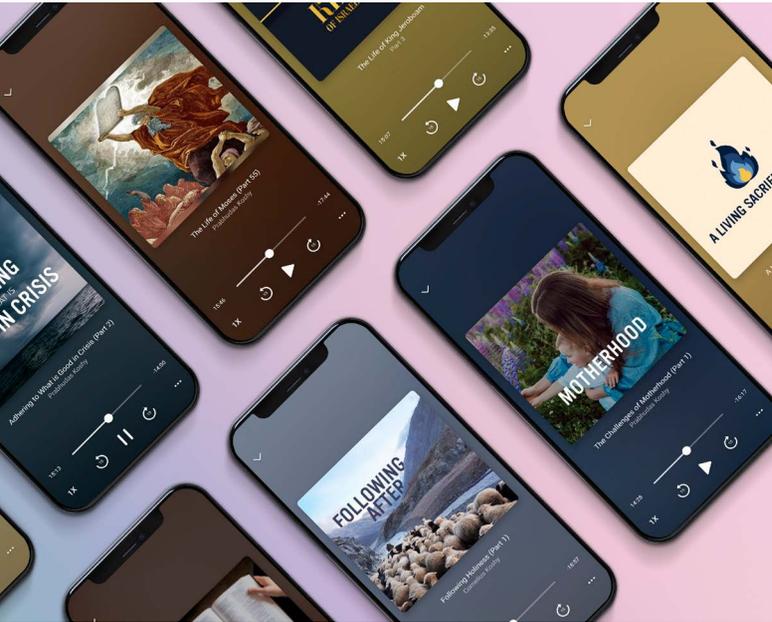


# Bible Witness

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## The Exalted CHRIST (Part 1)



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“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.”  
—Revelation 1:5a



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# THE EXALTED CHRIST (PART 1)

Volume 26 Issue 1 | January–February 2026

---

## IN THIS ISSUE

4

Jesus Christ,  
the Revealer

8

Jesus Christ,  
the Faithful Witness



12

Christ, the Slain Lamb  
Forever!

15

The Prince of the Kings  
of the Earth

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Singapore, and Editor of the Bible Witness Magazine.*

---

## CHILDREN'S PAGE

20

Bible Trivia  
(Joshua 13–14)  
*Sarah Yong*



22

George Whitefield  
(Part 1)  
*Jenny Lok*

### References for the Children's Story:

- Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield: Evangelist of the 18th-Century Revival*, (The Wakeman Trust, London, 1990)
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# Jesus Christ, the Revealer

“**T**he Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Revelation 1:1–3).

## **SEEING CHRIST AS THE REVEALER**

The Book of Revelation opens not with descriptions of beasts, plagues, or strange visions, but with focus on a Person—the resurrected, ascended and exalted Jesus Christ, the Revealer. Before the reader is drawn into scenes

of heaven and judgments of seals, trumpets and bowls, the Holy Spirit anchors us in this truth—that is, what we hold in our hands is “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 1a).

The word “revelation” (*apokalupsis*) means an unveiling, a pulling back of the curtain to show what was hidden. In one sense, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” denotes that this Book is from Jesus Christ, for He is the One who speaks, sends, and shows. In another sense, it indicates that this Book is about Jesus Christ, for He is the subject, the central and shining figure on every page of this Book.

The chain of communication in v. 1 is striking. God the Father gives the Revelation to God the Son, who sends it by His angel to His servant John, who

in turn bears witness to the churches. The Revealer is not an abstract idea or an impersonal force; He is the risen, living Lord Jesus Christ! He discloses in this Book the plan and purposes of God to His people.

## **PURPOSE OF THE REVELATION**

The very first verse of Revelation tells us exactly why this unveiling was given: “to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass” (v. 1b). This is not a mere catalogue of future events for the curious mind; it is the exalted Christ’s gift to “his servants”, those who faithfully hear Him and do His will. Christ reveals these things, that His servants may obey His will, endure their trials, and hope for His glory.

The phrase, “must shortly come to pass”, conveys a sense of divine necessity. Just as the world’s creation was unfolded by God’s sovereign Word, so its history will move unflinchingly towards its appointed goal according to His sovereign Word. Nothing in the unfolding plan of God is accidental or uncertain. This is because the Revealer is also the Sovereign. The same voice that said, “Let there be” (Genesis 1:3, 6, 14), now says, “(It) must ... come to pass”—and no power in heaven or earth can overturn His decree. In a world that is often chaotic, this is a comfort of immeasurable value. Because the sovereign Christ decreed these things to be revealed, He also appointed how they would be conveyed. Thus, the apostle John explains the angel’s and his own role: “by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw” (vv. 1c-2). John was entrusted with the divine truths

revealed through the angel Christ sent, so that the churches might receive them in all their accuracy and authority.

In this Book, John was not offering a private opinion or speculative insight. He was bearing record, testifying under oath, as it were, to the truths entrusted to him by divine revelation. What he bore record of was “the word of God” (v. 2a), the message that originates in the very mind of God and carries His full authority. He also affirmed it as “the testimony of Jesus Christ” (v. 2b), the witness that comes from the Lord Himself and which centres entirely upon Him. Moreover, he faithfully recorded “all things that he saw” (v. 2c), referring to the Spirit-given visions granted to him. John would ensure that nothing of God’s revealed truths was lost, altered, or distorted, but delivered to the churches with unerring accuracy for their instruction, comfort, and hope.

John’s testimony presents Christ as the supreme Revealer. The message originates with Him, revolves around Him, and reaches the churches through His appointed servant. This pattern follows the way God has worked from creation onwards, always raising up witnesses to declare what they have heard and seen. John stands in that long succession of heralds. Yet his revelation is distinct: he beholds the exalted Christ in His heavenly glory!

## **BLESSING OF THE REVELATION**

Another remarkable point to note, at the very threshold of the Book, is the announcement of a blessing: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein:

for the time is at hand” (v. 3). This opening benediction highlights three striking responsibilities:

First, the blessing on the **reader**. In the early church, a designated reader would stand before the gathered believers and proclaim the Scriptures aloud. This was not a ceremonial duty, but a sacred act. Likewise today, whether in public worship or private devotion, the reading of God’s Word is never to be an empty ritual, but a means of grace. God has bound His grace to His Word, and those who give themselves to its reading will be blessed.

Second, the blessing on the **hearers**. Hearing of Scripture is never passive. It is the attentive, humble, Spirit-enabled reception of God’s voice. Revelation itself repeats this urgent call: “He that hath an ear, let him hear” (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). To hear rightly is to learn and to receive the truth with faith and reverence, and to let it shape the heart.

**John’s testimony presents Christ as the supreme Revealer. The message originates with Him, revolves around Him, and reaches the churches through His appointed servant.**

Third, the blessing on the **keepers**. The ultimate aim is obedience. Revelation was not written to entertain curiosity or fuel speculation, but to produce a consecrated, steadfast people. The blessing falls on those who “keep”, i.e. align their lives with the truths, warnings, and promises recorded in the prophetic Word.

In these opening lines, the Lord signals that there are great blessings in reading, studying and living out the truths of God’s Word. This threefold blessing is deeply pastoral. The Revealer’s aim is not merely to inform His people, but to mould and strengthen them in holiness, perseverance, and hope. Just as God blessed the world’s creation and endowed it with purpose, so He now blesses His new creation (that is, His redeemed people), equipping them with all they need to stand faithful until the end.

## **URGENCY OF THE REVELATION**

John ends v. 3 with a reason for the blessing: “for the time is at hand” (v. 3b). This “time” is not mere chronological time (*chronos*), but a decisive, appointed season (*kairos*). Just as in the world’s creation, God set the times and seasons (cf. Genesis 1:14), so in the end times, He announces that the final season is near. The next major era of God’s redemptive history is drawing nigh. This is not meant to promote date-setting, but to awaken readiness.

In effect, the Revealer is saying to His people: “The decisive moment in My redemptive plan has arrived. Live as those who know that the King is at the door!” The urgency is meant not to provoke panic, but to instil readiness

for His coming by hearing, obeying, and holding fast to His truths.

## **PASTORAL HEART OF THE REVEALER**

Further contemplation of these opening verses shows us something magnificent about the heart of Christ. He is not a distant monarch issuing secret decrees; He is the Shepherd-King who wants His people to know what is coming, so they will not lose heart. He reveals the truth because He loves His servants. He blesses the readers, hearers, and keepers of His truths because He wants His church to be strong. He speaks with urgency because He desires our faithfulness and our comfort.

Oh, what a pastoral heart the Revealer has! This is the same Jesus who walked with His disciples during His earthly ministry, and said unto them, “I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you” (John 15:15). In Revelation, He continues that friendship—making known the Father’s plan until the day He comes again.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the dawn of creation, Jesus Christ has always been the Mediator of God’s self-disclosure. John’s Gospel declares, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). Throughout the Old Testament times, Christ was manifested in types, shadows, and prophetic promises, revealing God’s character, covenant, and purposes. In the fullness of time, He came in the flesh, saying, “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father”

(John 14:9). In His earthly ministry, He revealed the Father’s heart and will. And now, having ascended and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, He continues to reveal the Father’s will to His church by His Spirit and through His Word.

In this Book, Christ unveils the final chapter of God’s plan, assuring His people that all will end in victory. Thus, Revelation is not a departure from the rest of Scripture, but its climax. Indeed, the Revealer who gave the light of creation now provides the light of consummation. For the church, especially in times of uncertainty, hostility, or fear, these opening verses serve to tell us that history is not spiralling out of control, but that Christ Himself is both the Revealer and the Lord of what He reveals. Moreover, blessing rests on those who read, hear, and keep His words. Such revelation is the true light in a dark world. And as we receive it, we join the blessed company of those who await His glorious return. ■



# Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he apostle John anchors the church in the supremacy of Christ, naming Him with three resounding titles in Revelation 1:5a: “And from Jesus Christ, who is **the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.**” Each of these is worthy of our deep contemplation, with our focus here on the first title: ‘Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness’. In this portrayal of the risen, exalted Lord, we meet Him as the One who reveals God with perfect clarity, and whose unwavering testimony forms the foundation of our faith. In a world saturated with deception, distortion, and spiritual confusion, the church desperately needs this vision of Christ.

The Book of Revelation unfolds this theme with striking breadth and majesty. In Revelation 1:5, Christ is introduced as “the faithful witness”, the One whose testimony perfectly discloses the Father, and whose words carry divine authority for His churches.

In Revelation 3:14, He presents Himself to the church in Laodicea as “the Amen, the faithful and true witness”, asserting that He is the final and infallible affirmation of God’s truth, completely reliable in His verdicts and utterly honest in exposing His people’s condition. Finally, in Revelation 19:11, He appears from heaven bearing the very name, “Faithful and True”, executing the truth He has testified, judging in righteousness, and bringing God’s purposes to their consummation. Taken together, these passages unveil a Christ whose witness is unwavering in character, unerring in judgment, and unstoppable in fulfilment. His church must therefore receive His Word with reverence, trust His testimony without hesitation, and remain steadfast to the One who is eternally faithful.

## **WHY IS CHRIST CALLED THE FAITHFUL WITNESS?**

### *He perfectly reveals the Father*

A witness speaks what he knows, though never with perfect understanding. Christ, however, bears witness with

flawless knowledge, proclaiming with perfect knowledge the truth about God and His purposes. He is the eternal Word who “was with God”, and “was God” (John 1:1). No prophet, however faithful, could ever say, “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). Jesus alone can.

The Son alone can reveal the Father fully and perfectly, not merely in concept or proposition, but in Person. His teachings reveal the truth of God the Father. His purity displays the Father’s holiness. His compassion shows the Father’s heart. His mercy unveils the Father’s love. As Hebrews 1:3 declares, He is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person”. To behold Christ is to behold the Father’s character without distortion. Everything the Father is, the Son reveals.

Revelation 1 itself sets forth Christ as the One who reveals the Father and His will with perfect clarity. It begins with “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him” (Revelation 1:1a), showing that Christ is entrusted with the Father’s purposes and commissioned to make them known. He is the Mediator of divine disclosure, the One through whom the Father unveils His plan for judgment, redemption, and the consummation of all things. In Him, there is no contradiction, no inconsistency, no flaw. Christ is the Faithful Witness because He is the faithful One.

*His every word, act and silence is truthful and trustworthy*

The apostle John does not simply call the risen, exalted Christ a witness, but the faithful witness. Christ’s

faithfulness is not partial or occasional; rather, it is absolute, unwavering, and all-encompassing. His words have always been actual. He never exaggerated, manipulated, or shaded the truth to please men (cf. John 7:18; 8:45–46; 12:49–50; Matthew 22:16). Likewise, His actions were always righteous. He never acted out of pride, self-interest or fear (cf. John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 15:10b; Acts 10:38; 1 Peter 2:22). Even His silence bore witness—He kept silent before false accusers, fulfilling Scripture and entrusting Himself to the Father (cf. Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 26:62–63; 27:12–14; 1 Peter 2:23). Undeniably, His earthly ministry had been a continuous testimony to God’s truth in the midst of a world that rejected the truth. He spoke only what the Father commanded (John 12:49). He did always those things that pleased the Father (John 8:29). He completed the work given to Him (John 17:4). He was faithful unto death, sealing His testimony with His blood: “for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37).

The faithfulness Christ displayed in His earthly ministry continues in His heavenly exaltation, as testified to in Revelation. The One who spoke only what the Father commanded now speaks with the authority of the risen Lord. The One who always did what pleased the Father is depicted as walking among His churches with eyes like fire (Revelation 1:14)—seeing all, judging righteously, and calling His people to walk in truth and righteousness (Revelation 2–3). His assessments, whether commendation, correction or warning, are portrayed as entirely true, with no exaggeration, omission, or error. Every promise He utters is

certain: “These things saith he that is holy, he that is true” (Revelation 3:7). Even when He exposes sin, His rebuke is true to His righteous character: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (3:19). When Jesus appears in Revelation 19:11, He bears the very name, “Faithful and True”—demonstrating that every word He has spoken, every act He has performed, and every judgment He has rendered, accords perfectly with the truth of God. In Revelation, Christ is not only a witness—He is the fully faithful, unfailingly truthful Witness, whose testimony stands above every earthly voice!

The statement, “for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10b), affirms that the very heart of all true prophecy is the witness Christ Himself gives. Since He is “the faithful and true witness” (Revelation 3:14; cf. 19:11), every prophetic word ultimately flows from Him and points everyone to Him. Prophecy is not merely prediction; it is the Spirit’s means of exalting Christ by unfolding His Person, His saving work, and His sovereign reign. Thus, the “spirit” (or essence) of prophecy encompasses the truth Jesus reveals, the authority He exercises, and the glory He displays. All of Revelation—its visions, warnings, promises, and judgments—hinge on the faithful witness of Christ. He is both the Source and the Subject of prophetic revelation, ensuring that the church’s hope is anchored in Him alone.

### *He Is the standard of witnessing*

The Old Testament prophets bore witness to the truth of God, even of Christ. The apostles likewise bore witness to Christ and His truth. But

Christ alone is the Faithful Witness in an absolute sense. His witness does not merely report truth; it defines truth. Truth is not ultimately a concept or proposition. Truth is a Person. And that Person is faithful—even Christ, our Lord and Saviour, the soon coming King. In the Book of Revelation, John is a *witness* (Revelation 1:2), the churches are called to *witness* (Revelation 2–3), and the martyrs are honoured for their witness (Revelation 6:9; 12:11). But over and above them all is *Jesus, the Faithful Witness*, whose testimony is flawless, authoritative, and divinely authentic. Revelation reveals the faithfulness of Christ’s witness in at least two distinct ways.

Firstly, His witness to the churches is perfect because He speaks from divine omniscience and eternal authority. When He addresses the churches, He says, “I know thy works” (Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15). He speaks as the One who sees with unerring clarity. His judgments are accurate, His commendations pure, and His warnings just. He is never partial, uncertain, or subject to error. Therefore, the churches must bow before His voice, hearing Him with humility, responding with repentance, and obeying with wholehearted devotion. Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are Christ’s personal messages to His churches. He commends faithfulness (Revelation 2:10), exposes compromise (Revelation 2:14, 20), warns the complacent (Revelation 3:1–3, 15–17), and promises reward to the overcomers (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26–28; 3:5, 12, 21).

Secondly, the connotation of “witness” in Revelation is closely tied to the concept of martyrdom. The Greek

word (*mártus*) for “witness” is the root of the English word “martyr”. Revelation applies this title to Jesus first, and then to His people who follow in His steps. To be sure, Revelation 1:5 presents Christ as the supreme model of a faithful witness. He testified to the truth even when it led Him to the cross. His witness was not diminished by His death; it was sealed and vindicated through it. The cross stands as the ultimate confirmation that He proclaimed God’s truth without compromise, remaining faithful to the Father’s will to the very end. Thus, the martyrs who witness and die “for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held” (Revelation 6:9; cf. 1:2, 9; 12:11, 17b), are patterned after Christ. He is the Faithful Witness; they are faithful because they follow

Him. In a world of deception (cf. Revelation 12:9; 13:14), His testimony alone stands uncorrupted!

## CONCLUSION

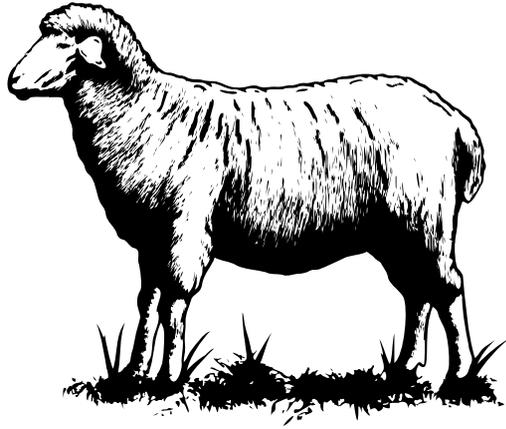
As Christ is the Faithful and True Witness, we can trust all His words without hesitation. He cannot lie, deceive, or mislead. His promises, warnings, and commands carry the very authority of God. In a world prevalent with conflicting voices, the believer must rest on Christ, the sure foundation. As we trust in His witness, we must also follow His example to be faithful witnesses. Truly, to know Him is to know the truth; to follow Him is to walk in truth; to proclaim Him is to bear witness to the Truth that cannot fail! ■

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# Christ, the Slain Lamb Forever!

## **CENTRAL MESSAGE OF CHRIST'S ATONING DEATH**

**I**t is clear to the Bible reader that the Book of Revelation presents dramatic, awe-inspiring visions of the end times—the cataclysmic judgments poured out during the seven-year Tribulation, the return of the Son of man to claim His millennial throne in Jerusalem, the final sentencing of the wicked to the lake of fire, and the glorious inauguration of the new heaven and new earth. Notwithstanding, at the very heart of its message, is “the Lamb that was slain” (Revelation 5:12), even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God (cf. Romans 8:32).

In Revelation, Christ the slain Lamb stands at the centre of God’s unfolding drama: Once slain, now exalted! Once victim, now Victor! In the fullness of time—Redeemer of sinners, and in the consummation of the ages—Sovereign of all creation! His

many appearances as “the Lamb” (27 references!) emphatically tell us that the cross of Christ is not incidental, but foundational for everything that the Book reveals—His people’s deliverance, His cosmic rule, His eternal worthiness, and His people’s confident hope in Him, the coming King.

The idea of Christ’s atonement is a powerful and recurring theme in the Book of Revelation. His atoning work, portrayed most vividly through the image of the Lamb who was slain, is at the heart of the entire message of this final Book of the Bible. Amidst the unveiling of the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments, our attention is unmistakably drawn to the blood-bought atonement of Christ, which is the singular act that justifies those who trust in Him and vindicates His just wrath poured upon the wicked. His sacrifice secures our salvation, and confirms that God is just in judging the unrepentant. As such, the death of Christ on the cross is not merely

a past event among many historical milestones in the annals of human history. Revelation portrays it as eternally significant!

## **REVELATION'S ETERNAL DEPICTIONS OF THE SLAIN LAMB**

The title “Lamb” (which appears 27 times in the Book of Revelation, more than in any other Book of the Bible) carries rich theological meaning and has far-reaching practical implications. From chapter to chapter, the Lamb is the central figure of redemption, triumph, and worship. Following are some depictions of Christ's eternal appearance as the Lamb slain for His people's redemption:

- Christ's appearance as the slain Lamb is revealed in the midst of heaven's throne—“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” (Revelation 5:6). This imagery of the Lamb—whereby the wounds of Calvary remain visible in glory—depicts a perpetual testimony of Christ's sacrifice. The Lamb is portrayed as “slain”, yet standing in glory! This paradox underlines the Christian truth that Christ's redemptive work (His suffering, death and resurrection) is not a mere past event, but the very basis of His present reign and our hope.
- The Lamb is the One who alone is worthy to open the scroll and execute God's purposes—“And they

sung a new song, saying, Thou (that is, **the Lamb** [cf. v. 8]) art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof” (Revelation 5:9a). In that moment, heaven declares that all of history rests on the Lamb's pierced hands. No angel, no elder, no power in heaven or on earth is qualified—only the Lamb who was slain. His worthiness flows from His redeeming work, and His authority guarantees that God's plan for judgment, redemption, and renewal will be carried out to its perfect completion.

- The Lamb's shed blood is the means by which multitudes from every nation are redeemed—“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou (that is, **the Lamb**) wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Revelation 5:9). By the blood of the Lamb, the ransom is paid; the redeemed come from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation! He has also “made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10). The Lamb is not just the atoning sacrifice, but their Shepherd-King who will make them reign with Him.
- The Lamb's praise was sung by the “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” of angels—“...Worthy is the **Lamb** that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Revelation 5:11–12).

- The Lamb's blood is what made the saints in heaven pure—"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the **Lamb**" (Revelation 7:14). The Lamb's atoning blood alone cleanses and qualifies them to stand before God. Every white robe in glory bears witness to the unrivalled power and sufficiency of Christ's sacrificial death.
- It is by the Lamb's blood that believers overcome the enemy—"And they overcame him by the blood of the **Lamb**, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11). It is because of the Lamb's sacrifice that believers are granted access to God's presence, and are eternally secure.
- The Lamb's Book of Life marks out those who belong to Christ, as opposed to those who are unbelieving—"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (Antichrist), whose names are not written in the book of life of the **Lamb** slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). Those who follow the Antichrist do so because their names are absent from the Lamb's Book. It is the Lamb's Book that distinguishes the redeemed from the deceived, revealing that salvation, security, and fidelity ultimately flow from belonging to the Lamb who was slain.
- The Lamb, a symbol of sacrifice, is also the invincible Warrior and the all-conquering King—"These

(the kings of the world) shall make war with the **Lamb**, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14).

- The Lamb is united eternally with His redeemed people in the Marriage Supper—"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the **Lamb** is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7). Here, Christ, the Lamb who was slain and now reigns, welcomes His bride, the Church, into an everlasting covenant of joy and fellowship. This imagery is drawn from ancient Jewish wedding customs, where a bride was betrothed, prepared herself, and was brought to the groom for the wedding feast. This scene portrays the final joy of the redeemed, their everlasting union, delight, and fellowship with the Lamb who purchased them with His blood!

## CONCLUSION

The message of Revelation exalts Christ as both the crucified Redeemer and the triumphant King, showing us that at the heart of Christ's eternal glory is His cross. Indeed, "the Lamb that was slain" reigns forever as the centre of God's eternal, celestial plan and purpose. O, let us also say with the myriads of angels in heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:12)! Amen and amen. ■



# The Prince of the Kings of the Earth

## **A TITLE LADEN WITH SOVEREIGNTY**

**A**t the very threshold of the Apocalypse, the apostle John ascribes to Jesus Christ a threefold glory: “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:5). This article’s focus is on the third title: “the prince of the kings of the earth”. This title is not merely ornamental, but a bold, polemical, and eschatological declaration. In that world dominated by imperial Rome, which persecuted believers and exalted Caesar as *lord*, the opening doxology of the Book of Revelation announces a counter-reality: Jesus Christ already stands in royal supremacy over every earthly ruler!

This title of the exalted Christ affirms His *present* sovereign authority

over all things, while also anticipating the *future* public manifestation of that authority in consummated glory. Christ is sovereign now, yet His kingship will be visibly and politically manifested on earth at His second coming and millennial reign. Revelation repeatedly returns to this truth, unfolding it progressively until it reaches its climactic fulfilment.

## **MEANING OF THE TITLE**

The Greek phrase (*ho archōn tōn basileōn tēs gēs*) means “the ruler, chief, or sovereign over the kings of the earth”. It does not merely say that Christ will one day rule over the kings; it asserts that He already stands above them in rank and authority. This depiction of Christ echoes the Old Testament (O.T.) vision of Messianic kingship, where the coming King was portrayed as possessing divinely granted authority

over all rulers, not merely within Israel but also among the nations. The following selected list of O.T. passages should suffice to corroborate this point:

- **Psalm 2** presents Messianic kingship as divinely established and presently authoritative, portraying the LORD's Anointed as enthroned by God, ruling the nations by sovereign decree, and demanding the submission of the kings of the earth (vv. 7–12).
- **Psalm 72** anticipates the Messianic King as ruling “from sea to sea” (v. 8), with all kings falling down before Him (v. 11).
- **Jeremiah 23:5** declares concerning the Messiah, “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”
- **Daniel 7:13–14** depicts the Messiah as the Son of man having dominion, glory, and an everlasting kingdom that surpasses all earthly powers.
- **Zechariah 9:9** prophesies the Messiah's entry into Jerusalem and how His people exulted in it: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”
- **Micah 5:2** portrays the Messiah as the One “that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting”,

thus affirming that His kingship is eternal in origin and not bound to a temporal beginning.

These passages do not describe a king who waits to rule, but one who already reigns by divine right, whose authority is already established in heaven, and whose majestic glory will inevitably be revealed on earth when all opposition is subdued and every ruler is brought into submission to His rightful reign.

Revelation's use of language deliberately draws on this tradition, proclaiming that Jesus Christ already occupies the supreme rank over earthly kings, even while the full public acknowledgment of His rule awaits its eschatological consummation. Revelation sharpens this truth of Christ's sovereign reign by portraying the risen Christ as not only King of Israel and King of heaven, but also the Lord over all political power structures on earth, whether they acknowledge Him or not.

### **PRESENT SOVEREIGNTY, NOT DEFERRED KINGSHIP**

Revelation 1:5 affirms that Christ's kingship is not contingent upon the yet-future Second Advent, for He already possesses royal authority by divine right and redemptive conquest, having triumphed through His death and resurrection. Thus, although Revelation 1:9 depicts John suffering under Roman persecution, he is comforted by the greater reality that Rome itself stands beneath Christ's sovereign authority. This reality is consistently conveyed by the Book's depiction of the age-old tension between Christ's present reign and the temporary endurance

of hostile earthly powers, with the latter's ultimate subjection to the exalted Lord a foregone conclusion. And this overriding assurance is what sustains John and the persecuted church amid oppression.

At present, the earthly powers often reject Christ's authority, exalting themselves in defiance of His Lordship, yet their resistance does not diminish His rule. The Book of Revelation repeatedly demonstrates that while earthly powers resist Christ's authority, they remain entirely subject to His sovereign rule. Revelation portrays kings, rulers, and empires exalting themselves in defiance of Christ—aligning with the beast (13:1–7), persecuting the saints (17:6), and ultimately waging war against the Lamb (19:19). Yet at every stage, their rebellion operates within divinely set boundaries. Depicted as the enthroned Lord over all (Revelation 4–5), Christ is the One opening the seals of history (Revelation 6), He is the One executing judgment (Revelation 19), and He is the One determining the rise and fall of nations. Even acts of human and satanic opposition are shown to fulfil God's predetermined purposes (17:17). Thus, Revelation proves that Christ's reign is not weakened by resistance to Him. Rather, it unfolds under His providential and judicial governance, ensuring that history moves inexorably towards the triumph of God's sovereign will and the public vindication of Christ's Lordship.

From His exalted throne, He now reigns from heaven with absolute providential and judicial authority—sovereignly restraining, overruling, and directing the nations according to God's decree. One day at His return, this same reign will be openly,

personally, and universally displayed on earth—in power and glory—in the coming Millennial kingdom.

## **“THE KINGS OF THE EARTH” IN REVELATION**

The recurring (*nine times*) expression, “kings of the earth”, in the Book of Revelation serves as a theological motif that exposes the persistent rebellion of earthly authority against God and His Christ. For instance, Revelation 6:15 depicts the kings of the earth as fleeing in terror from the wrath of the Lamb, revealing the inescapable reality that those who once exercised power in defiance of Christ are rendered utterly helpless before divine judgment. Revelation 17:2 further portrays the kings of the earth as being complicit with “Babylon the Great”, symbolising the corruption of political power in their entanglement with false religion and their deliberate alliance in opposition to God. Finally, the climax of this rebellious pattern is seen in Revelation 19:19, as the kings of the earth openly gather to wage war against the returning Christ.

Yet in every instance, their resistance is futile. These passages collectively affirm that while earthly rulers may oppose Christ's authority, they remain fully accountable to it. Their rebellion does not weaken His reign; it only serves to magnify His supremacy when judgment is finally executed.

## **THE CLIMACTIC DECLARATION: KING OF KINGS**

Revelation 17:14 presents the inevitable collision between earthly rebellion and divine sovereignty. Though the

kings of the earth marshal their power against the Lamb, yet their opposition only hastens their defeat. The Lamb overcomes them precisely because He is already “Lord of lords, and King of kings”. What is asserted doctrinally in Revelation 1:5—that Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth—is here manifested judicially and victoriously. The conflict does not determine Christ’s authority; it publicly vindicates it. Human and demonic resistance serves only to display the invincibility of His reign and the certainty of God’s sovereign decree!

This triumph reaches its climactic disclosure in Revelation 19:16, where Christ returns visibly bearing the name, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS”. The exalted Prince now appears as the executing Monarch, personally overthrowing all rival powers. His return is not symbolic, but real and literal. Christ comes to judge the nations, destroy the beast, and inaugurate His Millennial kingdom, bringing history itself into submission beneath His royal feet!

## **MILLENNIAL REIGN OF THE KING OF KINGS**

Revelation 20 unmistakably presents the Millennial reign of Christ as the historical and earthly realisation of His already-established kingship. After the defeat of the beast and false prophet (Revelation 19:20), Satan is bound so that he may deceive the nations no longer (Revelation 20:1–3), indicating a decisive change in the administration of earthly rule.

Christ then reigns for a thousand years, while the saints live and reign

with Him (Revelation 20:4–6), exercising delegated authority under His supreme lordship. This glorious scenario affirms what has been stated in Revelation 1:6, that Christ “hath made us kings and priests unto God”. Believers reign with Him (Revelation 20:4), not apart from Him. His princely authority does not diminish or overshadow the church, but rather raises her to share in His triumph, dignity, and reign under His sovereign lordship!

## **CONCLUSION**

“The **Prince** of the kings of the earth” is none other than Jesus Christ, the crucified, risen, and exalted Son of God. The Book of Revelation never separates Christ’s sovereignty from His sacrificial atonement. The One who rules above kings is the One who has shed His blood for sinners. Revelation assures us that what is now confessed by faith will soon be acknowledged by sight.

Kings may rebel, and powers may resist, but the Lamb will overcome. Christ reigns now from heaven; He will reign upon the earth soon. And when He appears in glory, every crown will fall before Him. “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Revelation 1:7). ■

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FOR TODAY

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# BIBLE TRIVIA—JOSHUA 13–14

SARAH YONG

- A. The previous chapter (Chapter 12) in the Book of Joshua gives a record of the various kings who were defeated by Moses and Joshua. Chapter 13 and onwards give a description of how the Promised Land was to be allocated to the various tribes, as commanded by the LORD. Read chapters 13 and 14, then choose a suitable answer from the passages to complete each statement in the narrative below.

## Land Still to Be Conquered

1. Now Joshua was \_\_\_\_\_ and stricken in years after conquering many cities.
2. Yet the LORD said that there \_\_\_\_\_ very much land in Canaan to be possessed.
3. Nevertheless, God promised to \_\_\_\_\_ out all the inhabitants from before the Israelites.
4. The land would then be divided for an \_\_\_\_\_ unto the other nine and a half tribes.

## The Inheritance East of the Jordan River

5. Moses had earlier given unto the tribes of Reuben and Gad land beyond Jordan, \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Only unto the tribe of \_\_\_\_\_ he gave no land for an inheritance.
7. The coast of the tribe of Reuben would begin upon the bank of the river \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The coast of the tribe of Gad would stretch even unto the edge of the sea of \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The half tribe of Manasseh was given a possession of \_\_\_\_\_ cities.

## The Inheritance West of the Jordan River

10. Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and the heads of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the tribes distributed the land of Canaan to the children of Israel for an inheritance.
11. The Levites would be given certain \_\_\_\_\_ to dwell in.

## Caleb's Request and Inheritance

12. Caleb, the son of \_\_\_\_\_, came unto Joshua with a request.
13. Forty-five years ago, he had been sent to \_\_\_\_\_ out the land and bring word.
14. He had wholly \_\_\_\_\_ the LORD and gave a good report of the land.
15. The LORD had kept him \_\_\_\_\_, even while the children of Israel had to wander in the wilderness.



# George Whitefield (1714-1770) - Part I

Retold by Jenny Lok  
Layout and Art by Andronicus Koshy



Mama,  
I want to quit  
the parish  
school!

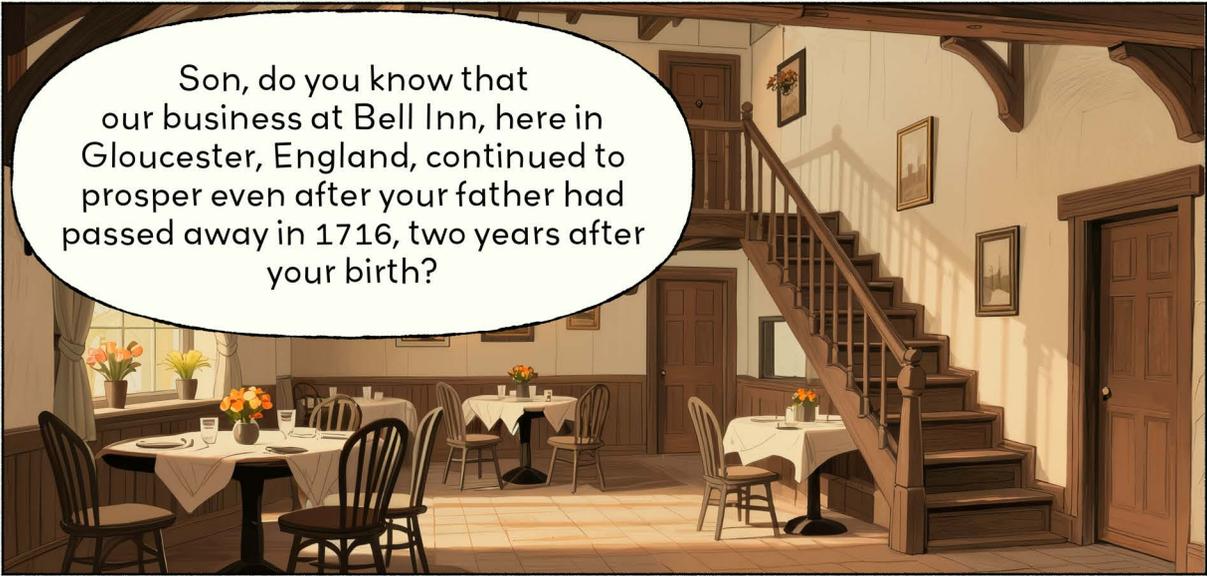
My son,  
what do you mean by  
stopping school at  
St Mary de Crypt?



I thought you love being there?  
Besides, you are an eloquent boy who  
has done excellently in stage plays as  
well as in making public speeches  
before the City Council!  
What's the matter now?

Well, Mama,  
you know very well that our  
family-owned business at the  
Bell Inn is in bad shape.  
Very soon, you'll not be able  
to send me to school, much  
less to the university at  
Oxford!





Son, do you know that our business at Bell Inn, here in Gloucester, England, continued to prosper even after your father had passed away in 1716, two years after your birth?



Nonetheless, six years later, my remarriage to Capel Longden turned out to be a grave mistake.

He mismanaged our family business and caused it to decline rapidly.



However, that does not mean you've to leave school now, at the age of fifteen!

Mother Elizabeth could not be easily persuaded to give up on Whitefield's education.



I'd like to help you at Bell Inn instead.

Your five brothers and only sister are already helping me.

As for you, the youngest of them all, my desire is that you'll be able to attend the university and then enter the ministry after that!



Alright,  
I'll just attend one subject and, for  
the rest of the time, I'm going to put  
on the blue apron and assist in the  
housekeeping of the Bell Inn!

Whitefield decided on a compromise.



My son,  
this can only be a  
temporary measure.

For nearly a year and a half,  
Whitefield worked hard at the  
Bell Inn until one day, he learned  
that there was a way to enter  
university in the near future,  
without having to worry about  
financial constraints.



Son, a young man  
told me that you could attend  
university the way he did –  
by going on a work-study  
programme, that is by  
being a servitor.

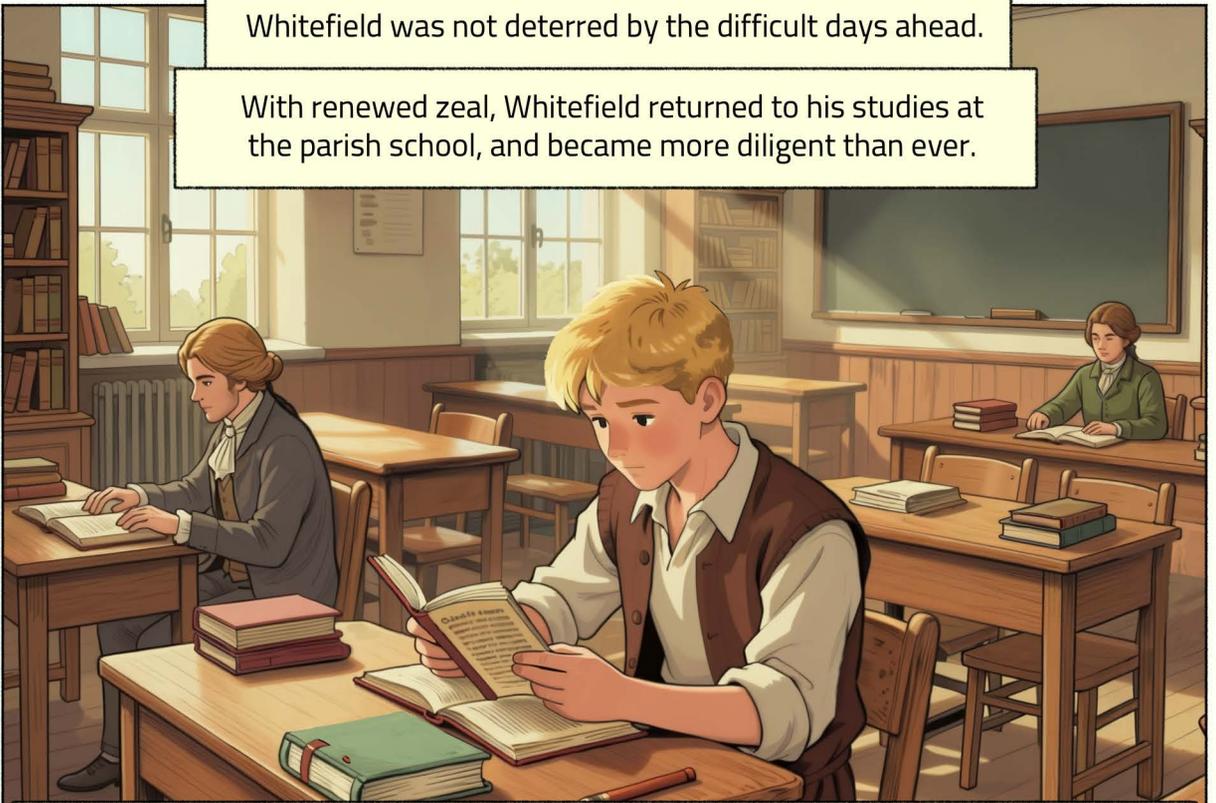
A servitor?

I understand  
that a servitor has to do all  
the menial tasks for the rich  
boys in school in exchange for  
free tuition and board. But  
this can be very humiliating  
for you!

I'm fine with that because  
it would be good training for  
me. Remember, I want to be  
a minister someday!

Whitefield was not deterred by the difficult days ahead.

With renewed zeal, Whitefield returned to his studies at the parish school, and became more diligent than ever.



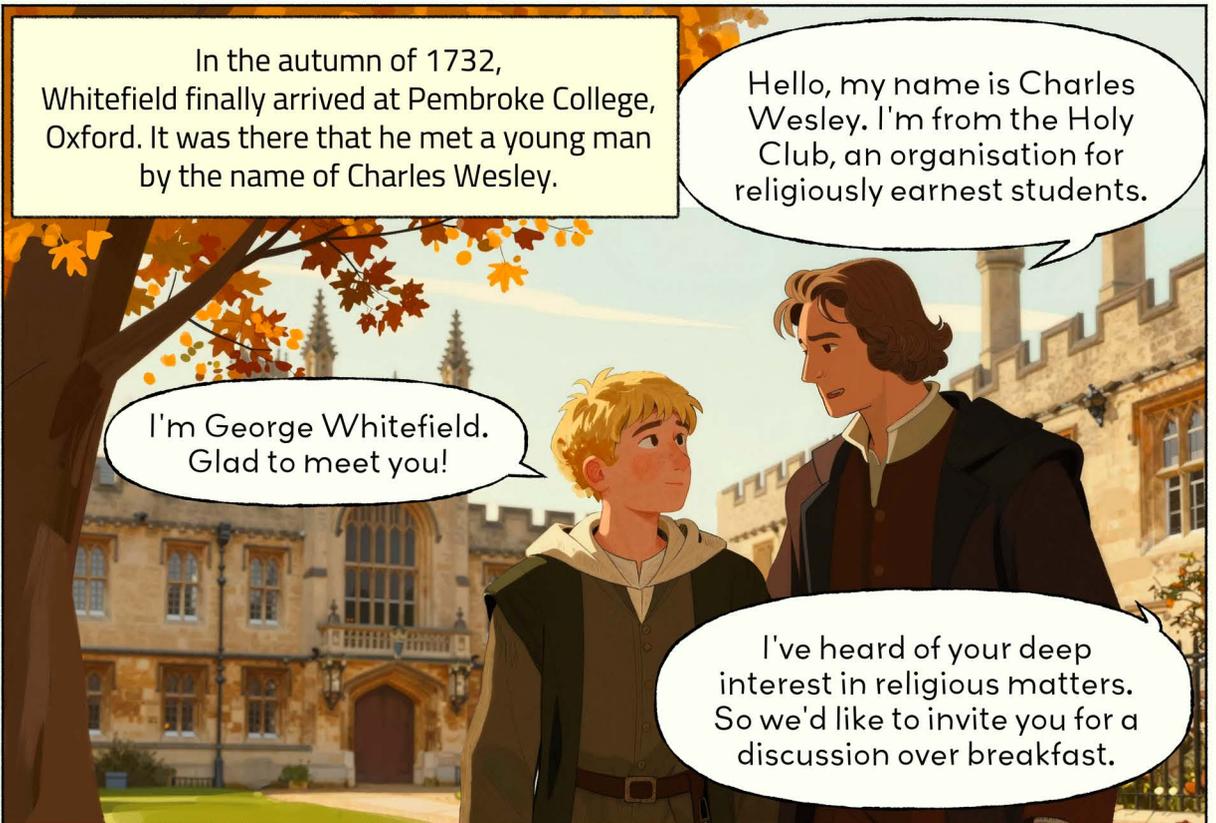
He was determined to live a religious life by keeping his mind, speech and behaviour pure through fasting and prayer. His reading materials were mainly classical works and the Greek New Testament. As for public worship, he would be there twice a day!

In the autumn of 1732, Whitefield finally arrived at Pembroke College, Oxford. It was there that he met a young man by the name of Charles Wesley.

Hello, my name is Charles Wesley. I'm from the Holy Club, an organisation for religiously earnest students.

I'm George Whitefield. Glad to meet you!

I've heard of your deep interest in religious matters. So we'd like to invite you for a discussion over breakfast.



Soon after, Whitefield met up with Charles Wesley and his brother, John Wesley.

From then on, Whitefield was immensely influenced by the Holy Club's strict practice of using all of their time, not in the pleasures of life, but in participating in prayer, fasting, and the Holy Communion.

They also performed many charitable acts, which they believe would help in saving their souls.



One day, Whitefield came across a book – entitled: "The Life of God in the Soul of Man" – by Henry Scougal, a Scotsman.

He read it and discovered that there is "the new birth" in Christ, which awakened his soul to admit:



God showed me that I must be born again, or be damned! I learned that a man may go to church, say his prayers, receive the sacrament, and yet not be a Christian.

The days that followed Whitefield's strong awareness that he "must be born again" caused him to double up on his efforts to find peace with God by denying himself anything that makes life comfortable.

Whitefield even went beyond the strict discipline of the Holy Club by eating "the worst sort of food", and by putting on clothing and shoes that looked poor and dirty.

Gradually, two mature Christians around him noticed his austere life and spoke to him,

Whitefield,  
what you are doing to  
yourself is not right .

To be holy is to be devoted to God and His Word, and not depriving yourself of the basic needs and necessities of life to the point of causing harm to your physical and mental health!

It was after Easter 1735 that Whitefield finally surrendered his life to Christ, and so declared:

God was pleased to remove the heavy load, to enable me to lay hold on His dear Son by a living faith, and by giving me the Spirit of adoption, to seal me, even to the day of everlasting redemption.

However, by this time, Whitefield's health was so affected that he had to return to Gloucester for a time of recuperation at home. Since then, it had become a daily habit for Whitefield to go on bended knees, and pray over "every line and every word" of any Scriptural passage, in mainly English and Greek.

Filled with a great zeal for the Lord's work, Whitefield testified, "God made me instrumental to awaken several young persons, who soon formed themselves into a little society (the first Methodist Society)" at Gloucester.

His fervour for the ministry did not go unnoticed. Many in Gloucester encouraged him to seek ordination.

Map of England, 1700s

To be continued

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