



**THE BOOK OF REVELATION**  
**A STORY OF THE LAST DAYS**

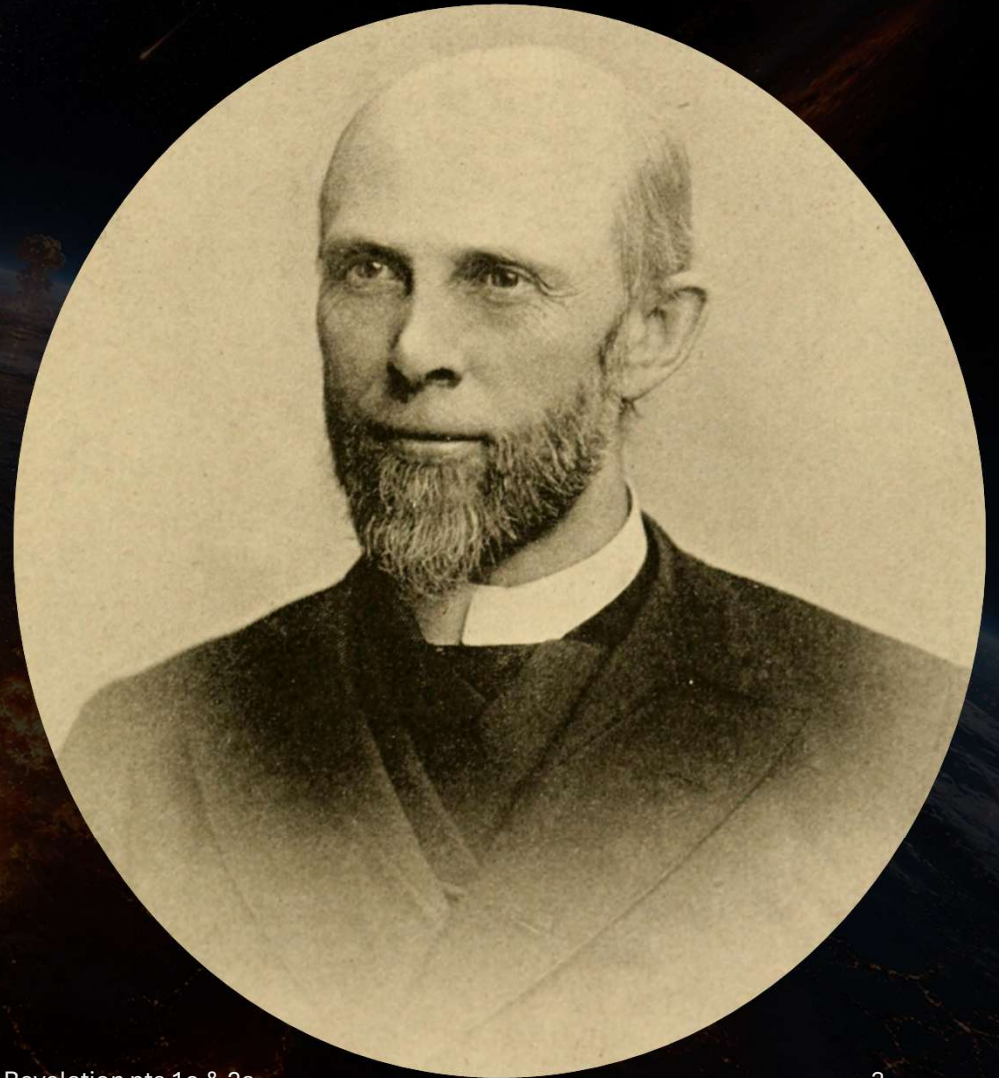
2025May24-Dan Fisher - Revelation pts 1c & 2a



8. Without approaching Scripture as “literal” truth, we cannot make sense of much of it

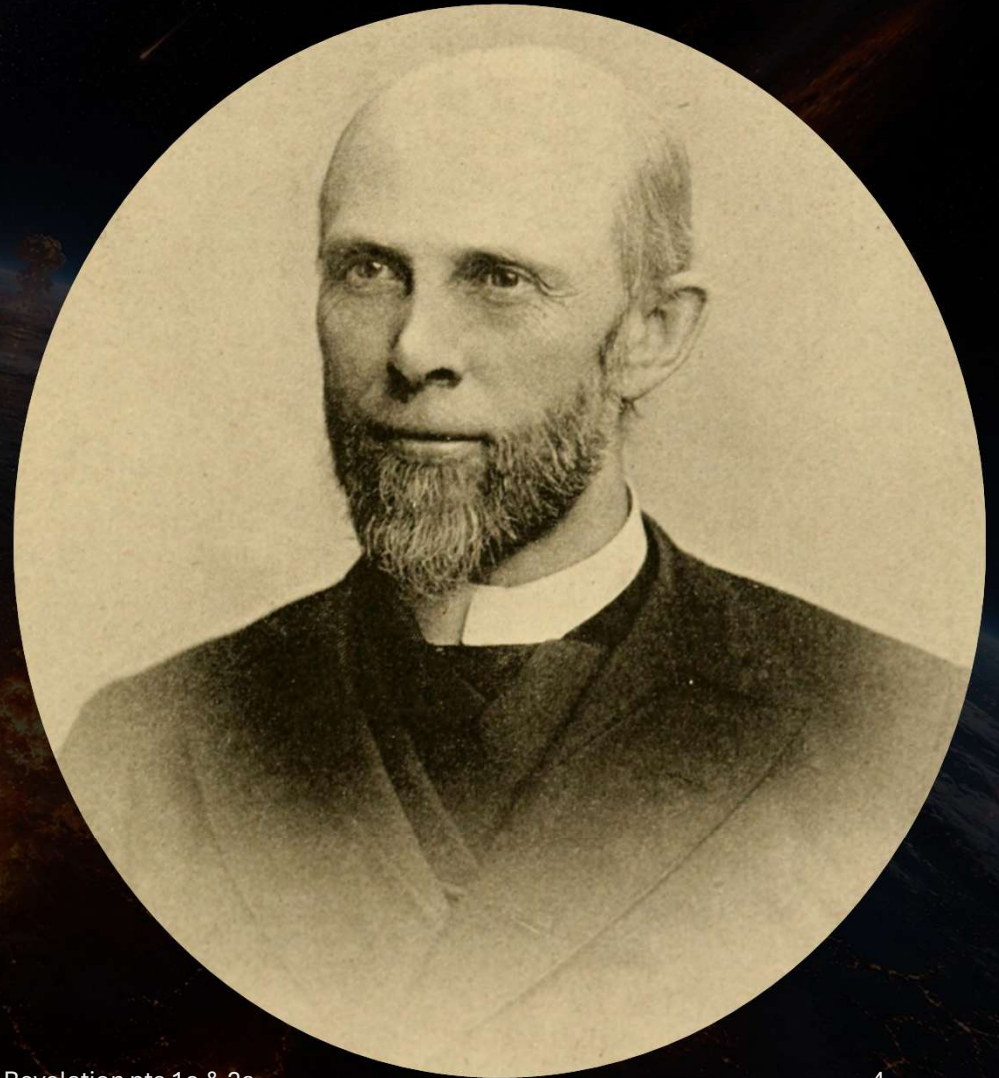
Milton S. Terry, 19<sup>th</sup> century theologian:

“We cannot believe that the sacred writers desired to be misunderstood. They did not write with a purpose to confuse and mislead their readers. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that the Scripture, given by divine inspiration, is of the nature of a puzzle designed to exercise the ingenuity of critics. It was given to make men wise unto salvation, and in great part it is so direct and simple in its teachings that a little child can understand its meaning.



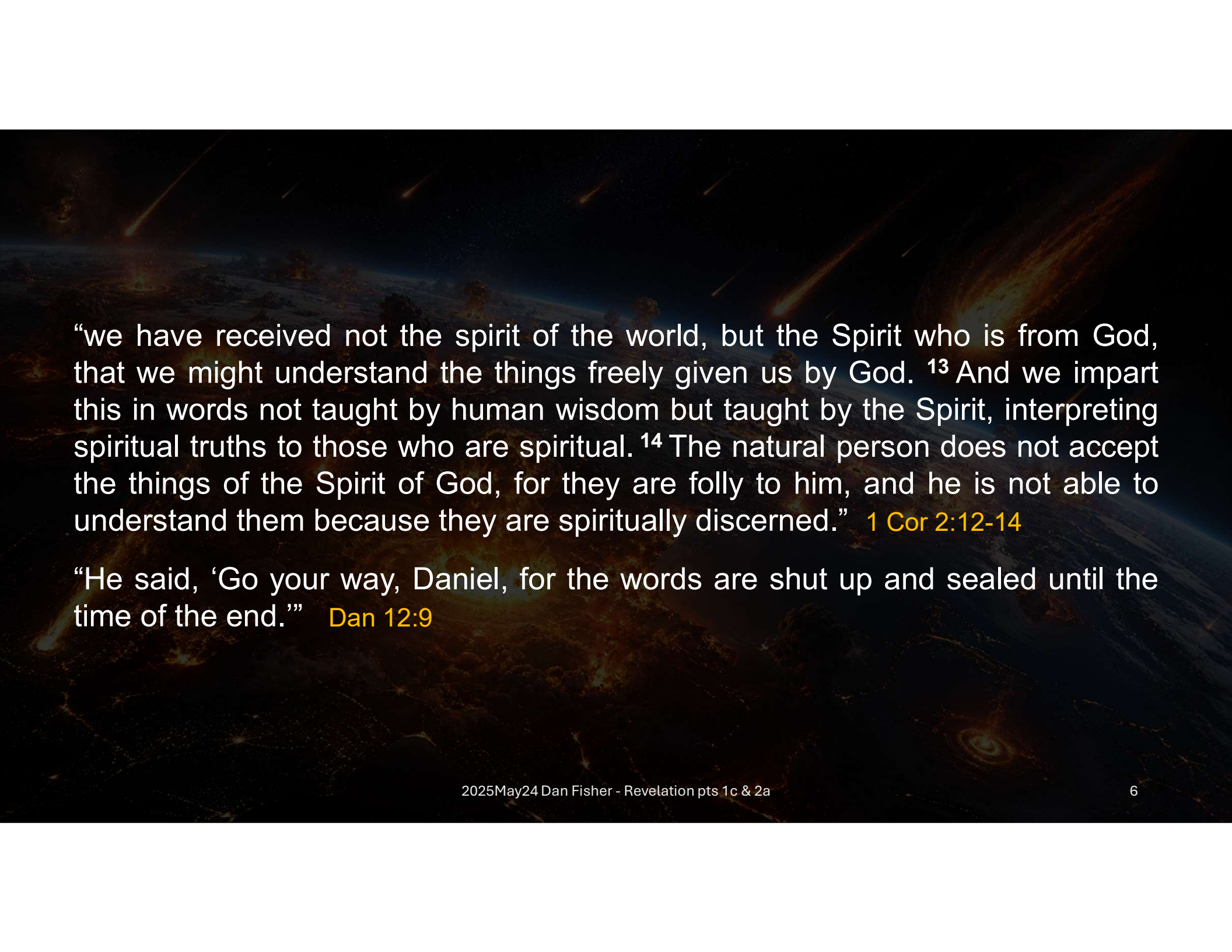
It will be noticed at once that [the allegorical interpretation] is to disregard the common signification of words and give wing to all manner of fanciful speculation. It does not draw out the legitimate meaning of an author's language but foists into it whatever the whim or fancy of an interpreter may desire. As a system therefore, it puts itself beyond all well-defined principles and laws.”

Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic Books, 1883), 161.



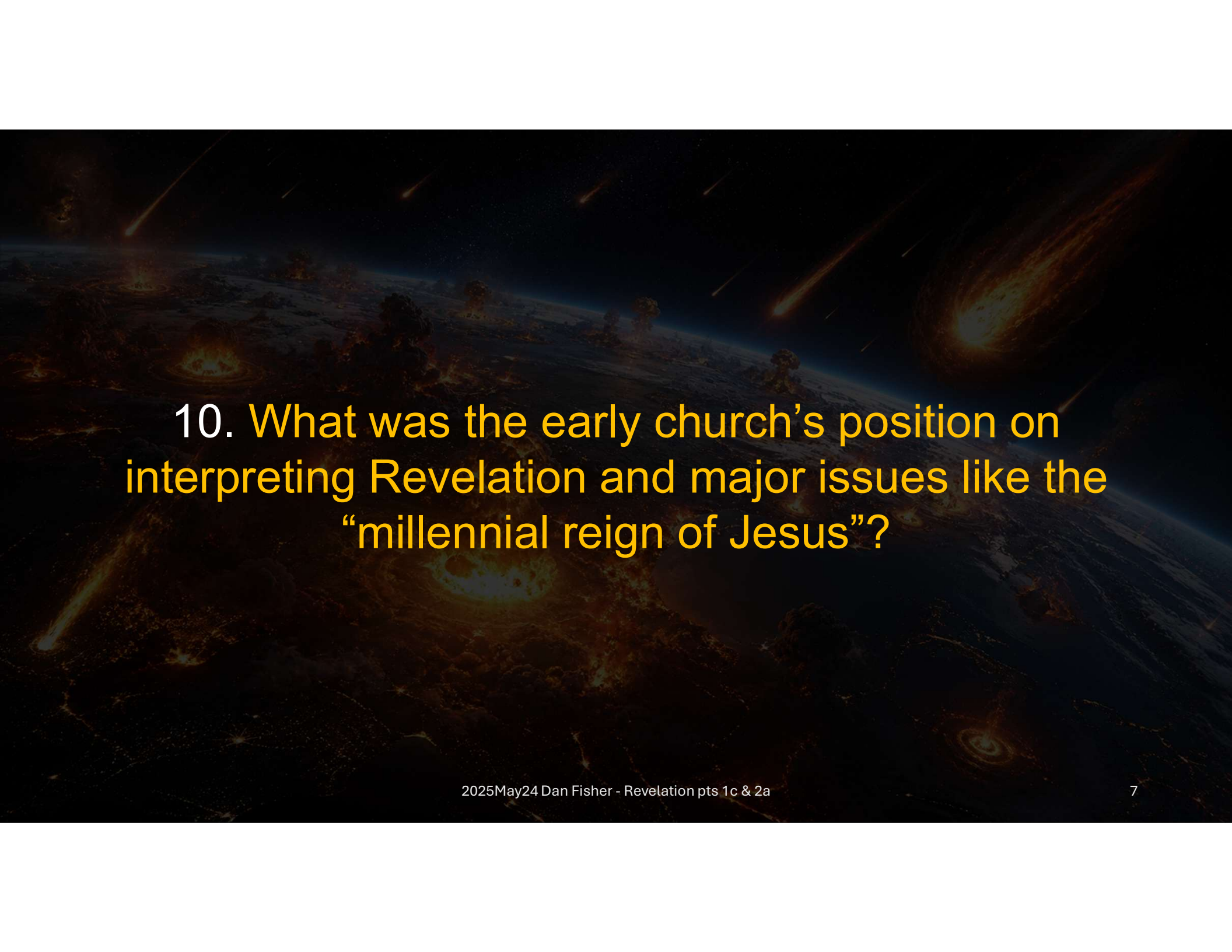


9. We must have the illumination of the Holy Spirit to understand all of Scripture – including prophecy




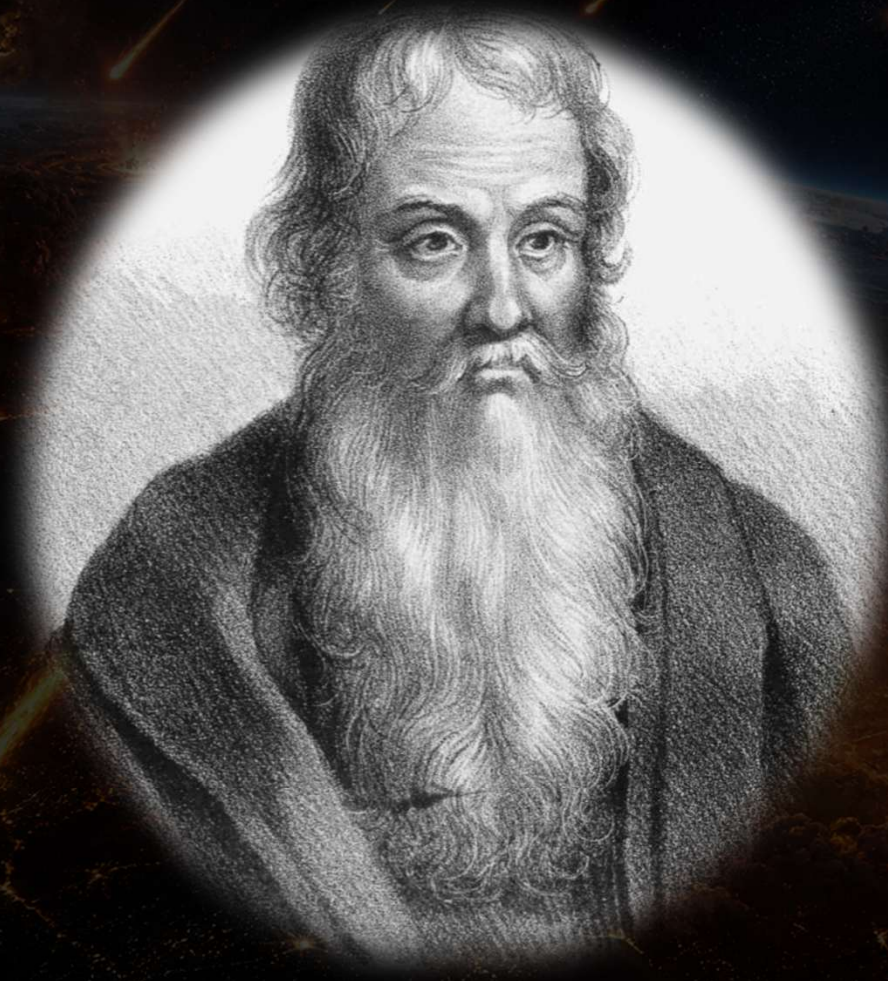
“we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup> And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. <sup>14</sup> The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” **1 Cor 2:12-14**

“He said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.’” **Dan 12:9**



10. What was the early church's position on interpreting Revelation and major issues like the "millennial reign of Jesus"?

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- Mt 24
  - Acts 15:13-18
  - Rom 9-11 where Paul says that the promises to Israel have not been fulfilled and are not being fulfilled right now
  - 2 Thess 2

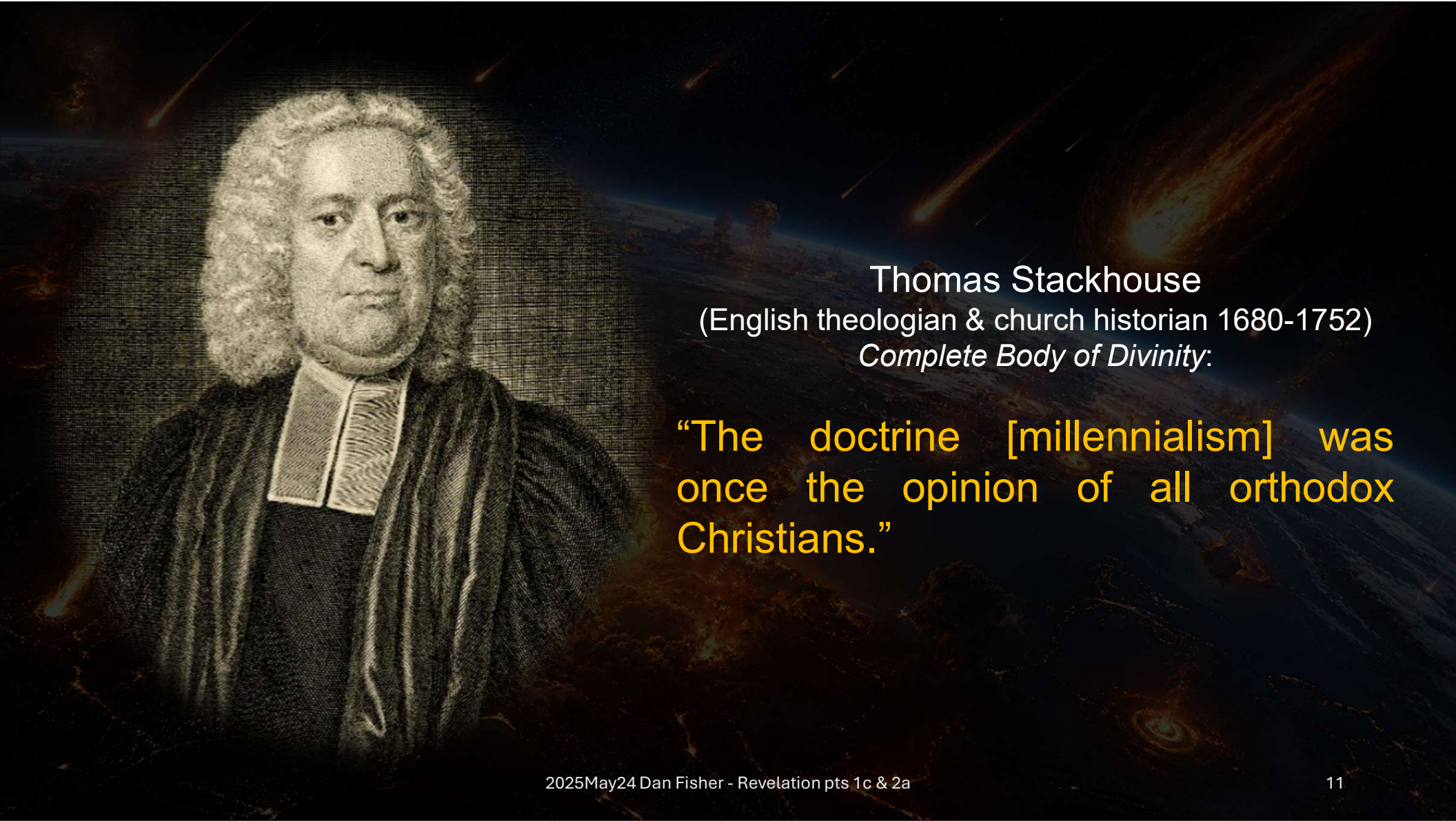


Eusebius (260 – 339 AD), the early historian of the Church, admitted that most of the theologians of his day were millenarians

An engraving of William Chillingworth, an English theologian. He is depicted from the chest up, wearing a dark, textured robe with a white collar. He has long, wavy hair and a prominent mustache. The background is dark and textured.

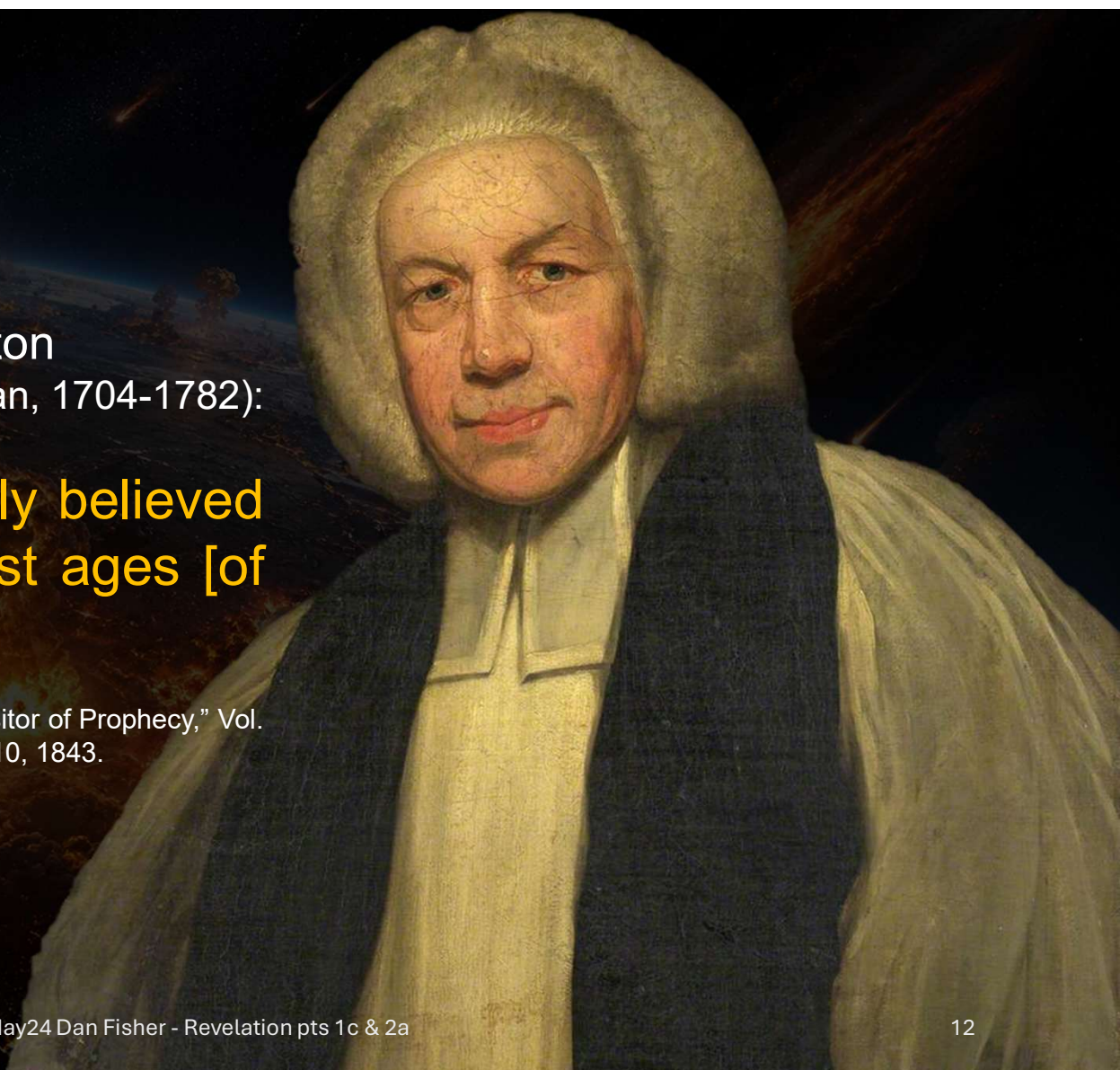
William Chillingworth  
(English theologian outspoken opponent of  
Catholicism 1602 – 1644):

“[T]he doctrine of the millenarians was believed and taught by the most eminent fathers of the age next after the apostles, and by none of that age opposed or condemned, therefore it was the universal doctrine of those times.”



Thomas Stackhouse  
(English theologian & church historian 1680-1752)  
*Complete Body of Divinity:*

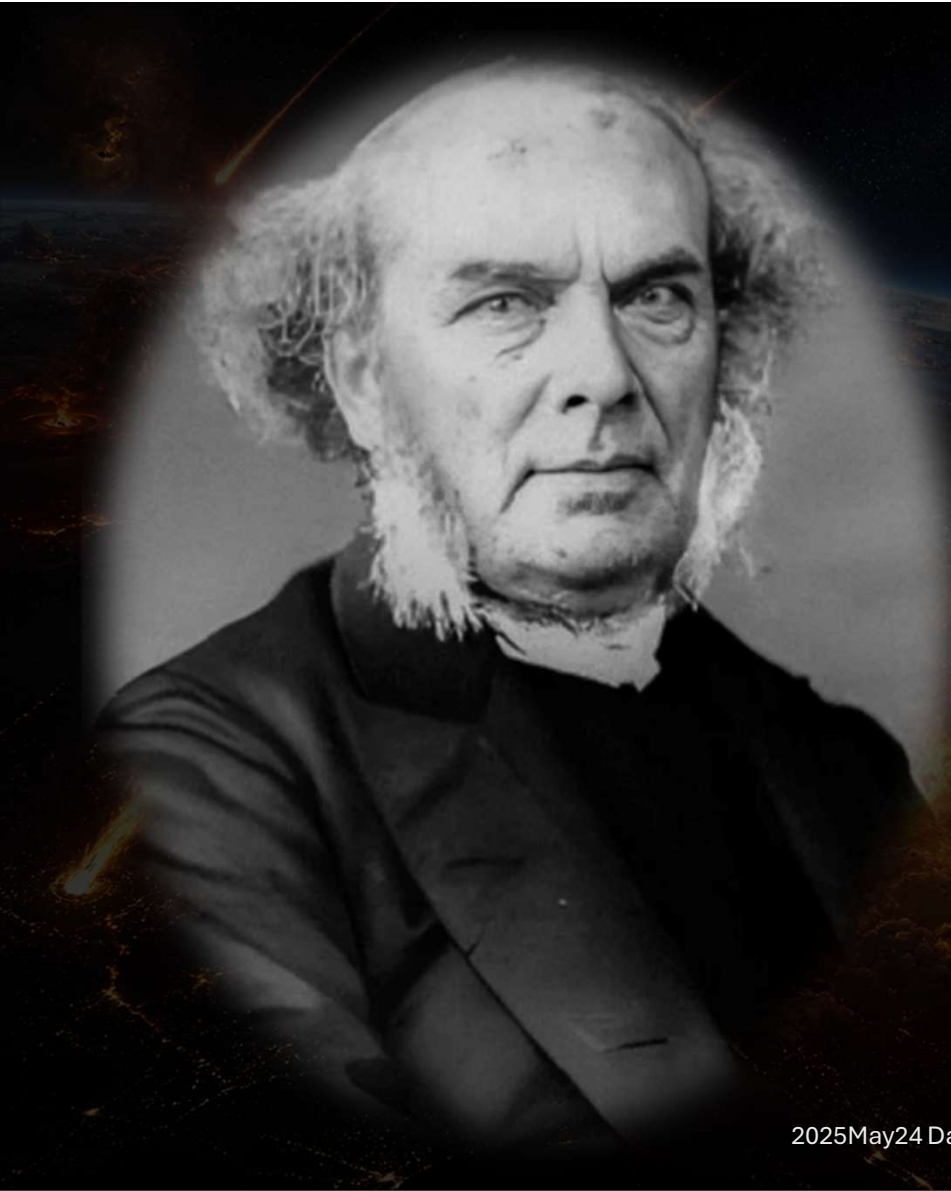
“The doctrine [millennialism] was once the opinion of all orthodox Christians.”

A portrait of Bishop Thomas Newton, an elderly man with a large white wig, wearing a white clerical shirt and a dark blue sash. The background of the portrait is dark with streaks of light, suggesting a night sky or a dramatic setting.

Bishop Thomas Newton  
(Anglican theologian & church historian, 1704-1782):

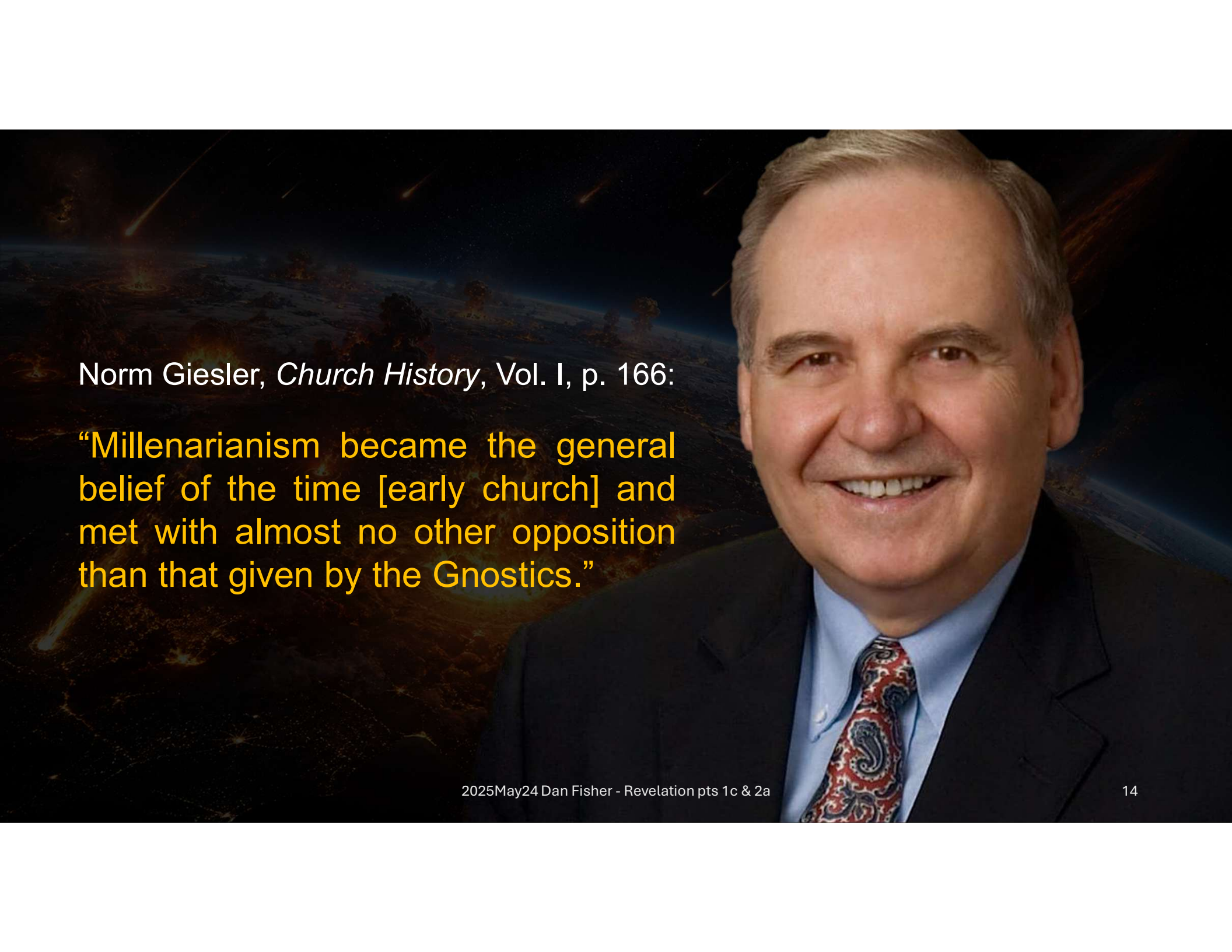
**“The doctrine was generally believed  
in the three first and purest ages [of  
the church age].”**

Joshua V. Himes, “The Signs of the Times, and Expositor of Prophecy,” Vol.  
V, No. 10, Boston, Whole No. 126, May 10, 1843.



Dr. Horatius Bonar  
(Scottish preacher/theologian, 1808-1889)  
*Prophetic Landmarks*

“Millenarianism prevailed universally during the first three centuries. This is now an assured historical fact and presupposes that chiliasm was an article of the apostolic creed.”

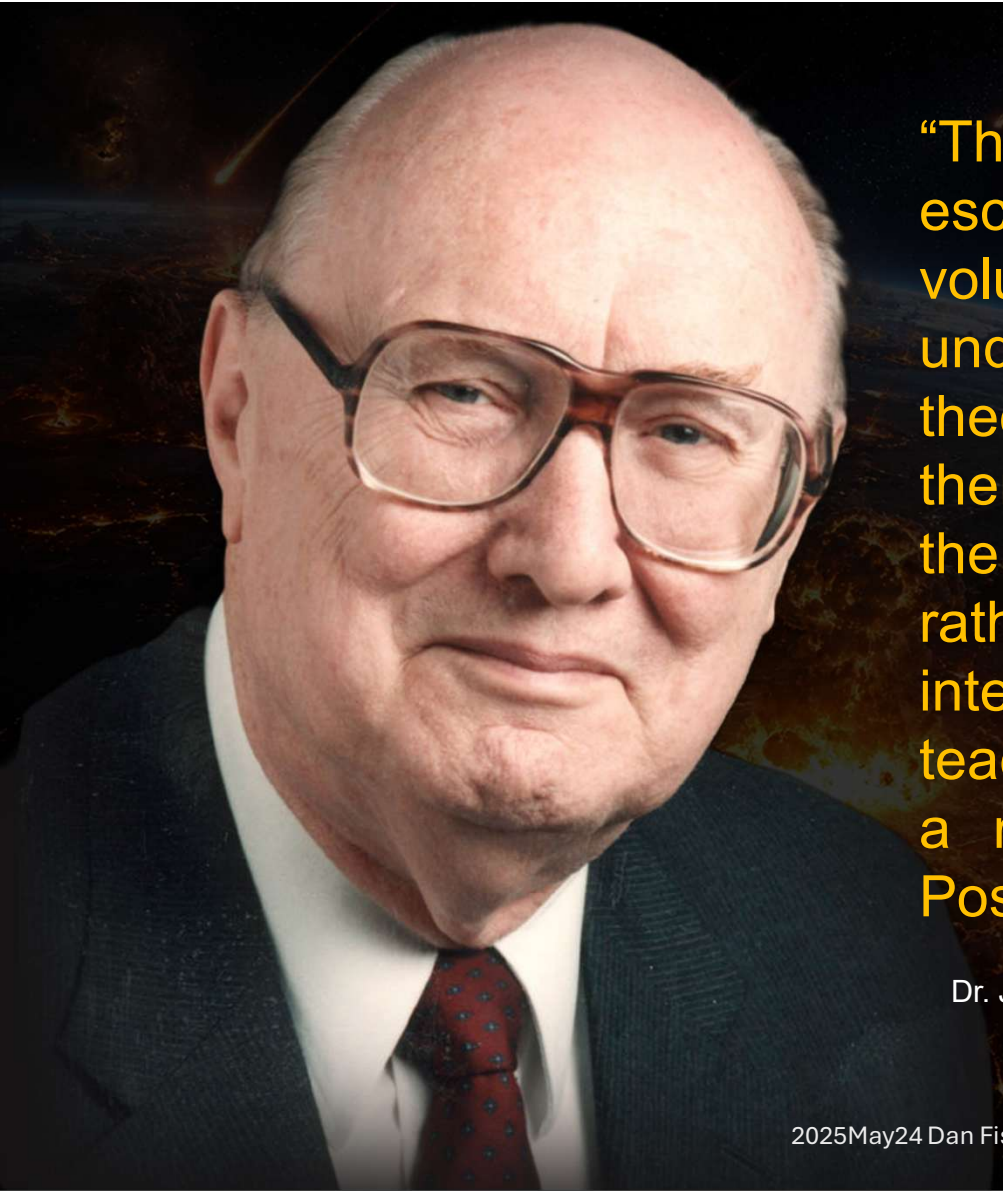


Norm Giesler, *Church History*, Vol. I, p. 166:

“Millenarianism became the general belief of the time [early church] and met with almost no other opposition than that given by the Gnostics.”



11. As it turns out, a literal interpretation of Rev (ex: Millennial Reign) is critical to understanding all of Scripture




“Though millennial truth is essentially eschatological, it is integral to the entire volume of Scripture, and its proper understanding is an important essential to theology as a whole. Millennialism cannot therefore be brushed aside as a dispute on the interpretation of Revelation 20 but is rather the product of a system of Biblical interpretation established as the positive teaching of both Testaments. It constitutes a refutation of both Amillennialism and Postmillennialism.”

Dr. John Walvoord, “The Prophetic Context of the Millennium,” May 24, 2008  
<https://walvoord.com/book/export/html/326>



12. When did the church begin to move away from a literal interpretation of Revelation (Scripture)?



A portrait of Dr. Karl August Auberlen, a German theologian, is shown on the right side of the slide. He is wearing glasses and a dark coat with a white shirt and cravat. The background of the entire slide is a dark, cosmic scene with a blue and orange nebula and several bright streaks resembling meteors or comets.

Dr. Karl August Auberlen (1824-1864)  
German theologian:

“Chiliasm (millennialism) disappeared in proportion as Roman Papal Catholicism advanced.”

Dr. Karl August Auberlen, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 375



**PART 2:** “The why, how, when, & who of Revelation”

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# 1. Why study Revelation?

## Those who neglect the study of Revelation deprive themselves of a great deal of biblical truth:

- It fulfills Jesus' great prayer: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" Mt 6:10
- It promises a blessing to all who read it – 1:3
- It stresses the inspiration of Scripture – 1:2
- Of its 404 verses, 278 allude to the inspired O.T.
- It reveals God the Father in all His glory and majesty
- It illustrates the depths of man's depravity – 16:9,11, 20:7-9
- It presents one of the clearest teachings of redemption in the Bible – 1:5
- It contains approx. 25% of the Bible's references to angels
- It explains the origin of demons and Lucifer's war with heaven – 12:7-9

- It warns the church of the dangers of sin & compromise – **chaps. 2-3**
- It teaches how to properly worship God – **chaps. 4-5**
- It affirms the full deity of Christ
- It pictures the return of Christ like no other biblical book – **chap. 19**
- It portrays Christ's ultimate triumph over Satan – **20:10**
- It reveals the 1000-year earthly kingdom of Christ – **chap. 20**
- It describes the final judgment of the wicked & their doom – **20:11-15**
- It reveals, like no other book of the Bible, the glories of heaven, the New Jerusalem, & the eternal state of the redeemed – **chaps. 21-22**



## 2. Does Revelation reveal the past, present, or future?

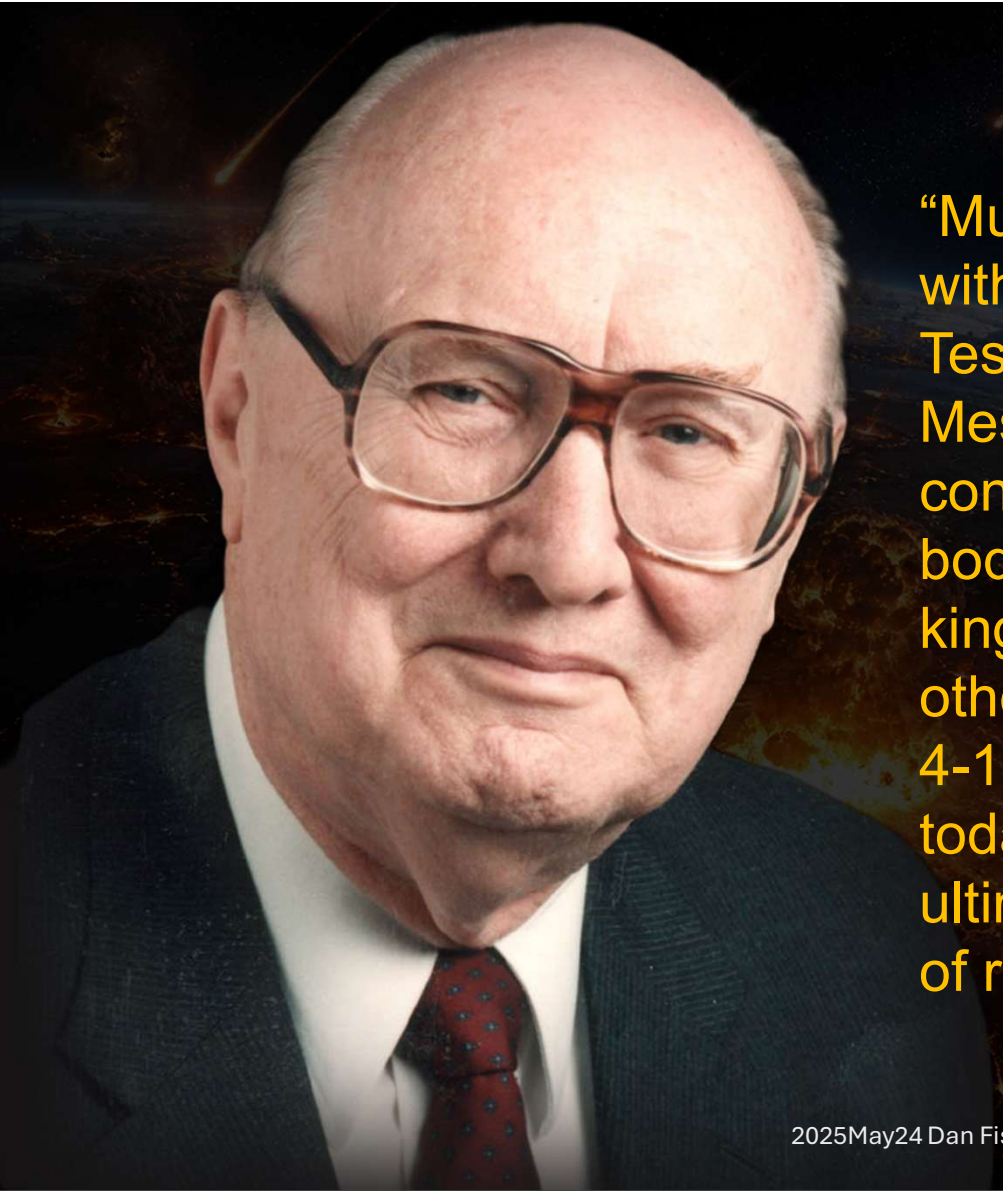
## The 3 main approaches to Revelation (and end time prophecy):

- **Preterist (Post-millennial)** – this view sees Revelation as historical record rather than predictive prophecy.
- **Allegorical (A-millennial)** – this view sees Revelation as an allegory of the timeless struggle between good and evil.
- **Futurist (Pre-millennial)** – this view sees Revelation as primarily predictive prophecy to be fulfilled in the very last days. It takes a literal approach to the Revelation.

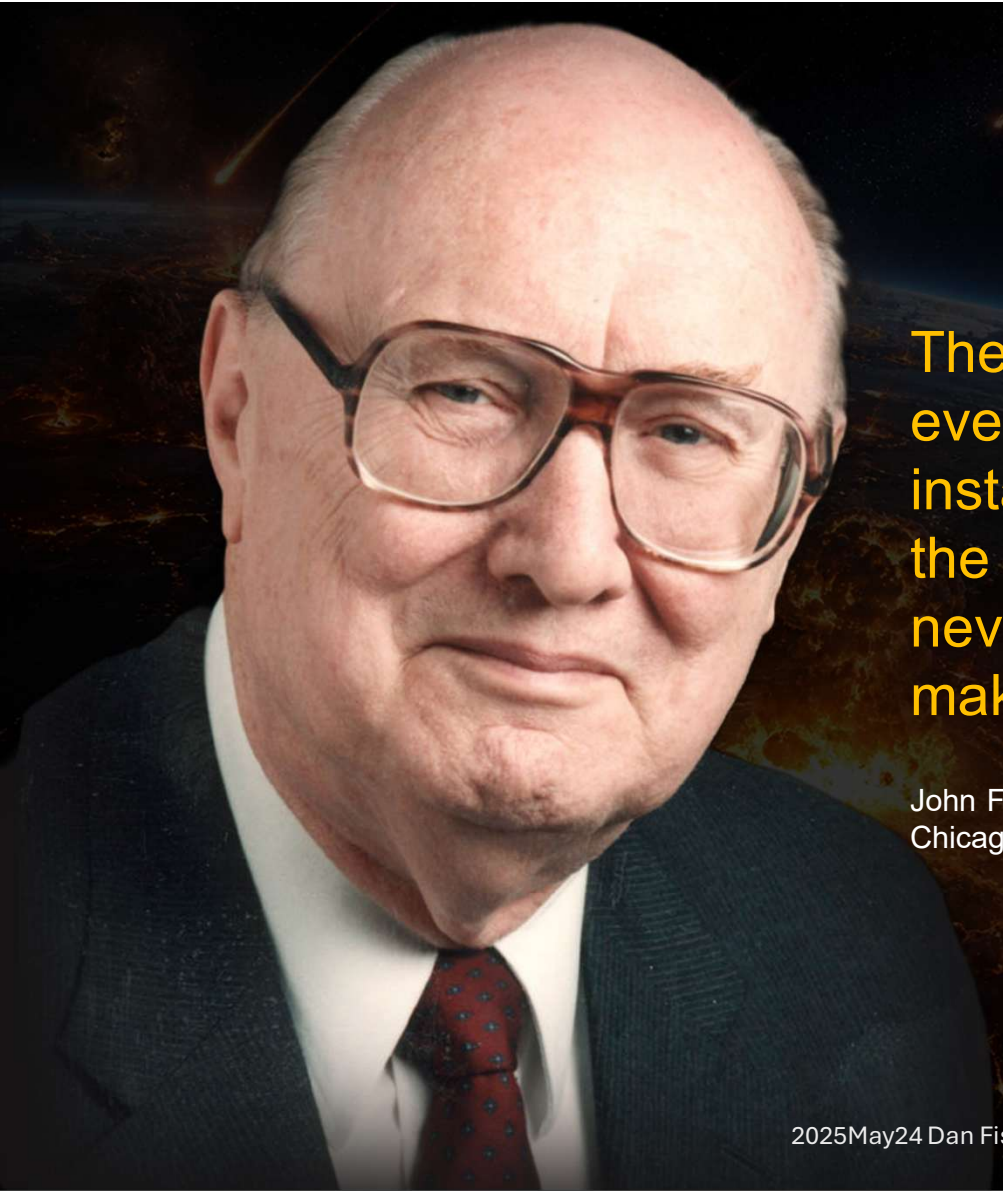
A dramatic space scene featuring a planet's horizon with a blue atmosphere. A large, bright comet with a long tail streaks across the sky from the upper right. Numerous smaller meteors are falling from the top left, creating a meteor shower effect. The background is a dark, starry space with some nebulae and galaxies visible.

For the most part, the early church viewed Revelation futuristically.

The futuristic view of Revelation decreased as the influence of the Catholic church increased.

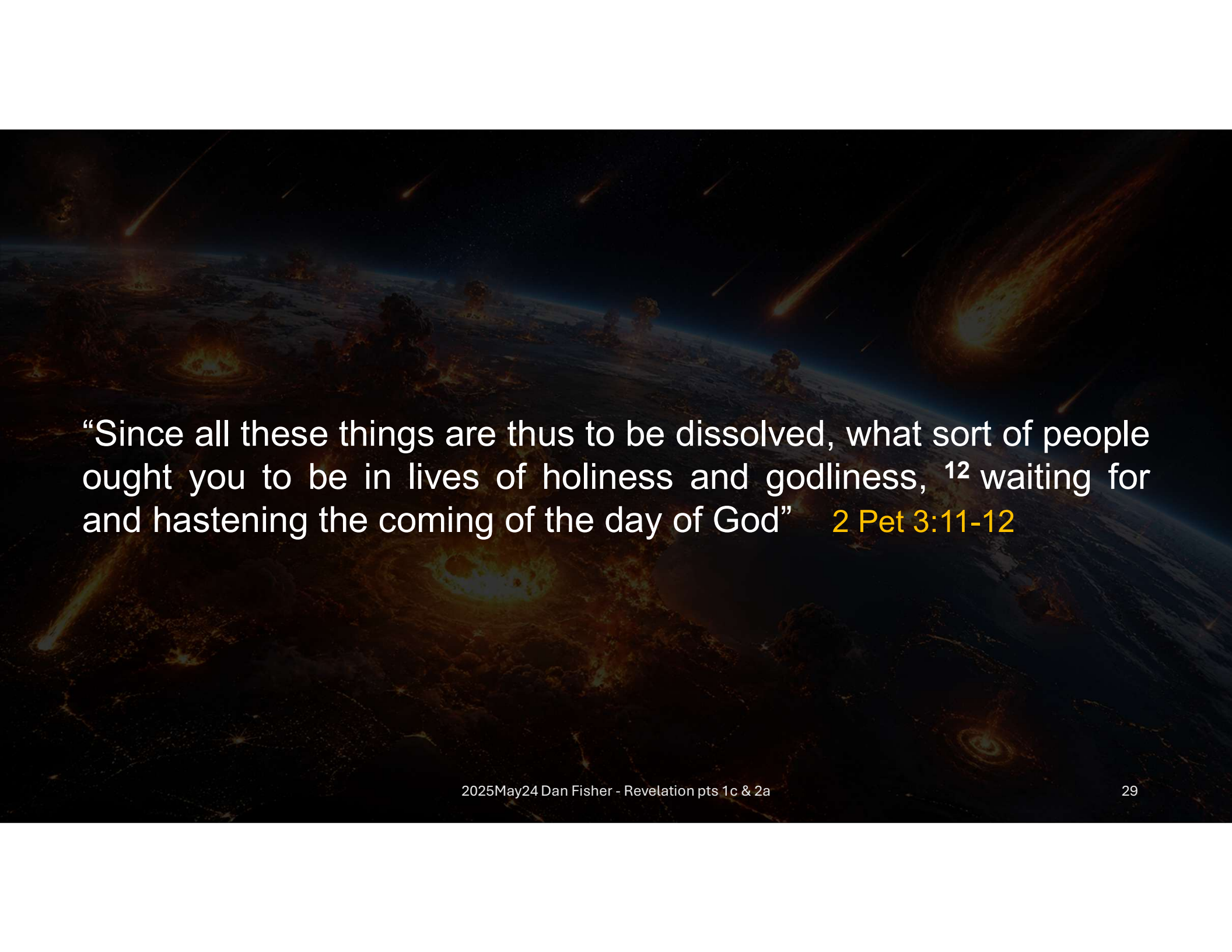


“Much of the prophecy of the Bible deals with the distant future, including the Old Testament promises of the coming Messiah, the prophecies of Daniel concerning the future world empires, the body of truth relating to the coming kingdom on earth as well as countless other prophecies. If the events of chapters 4-19 are future, even from our viewpoint today, they teach the blessed truth of the ultimate supremacy of God and the triumph of righteousness.



The immediate application of distant events is familiar in Scripture, as for instance 2 Peter 3:10-12, which speaks of the ultimate dissolution of the earth; nevertheless, the succeeding passage makes an immediate application.”

John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, (The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago – 1966), p. 22.



“Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup> waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God” **2 Pet 3:11-12**

A dramatic, apocalyptic scene of Earth from space. The planet's surface is dark and covered in a chaotic pattern of fire, smoke, and glowing impact craters. A massive meteor shower is visible in the upper right, with several large, bright fireballs streaking across the dark sky. The Earth's horizon is visible as a thin blue line against the blackness of space.

### 3. Who wrote the Revelation?

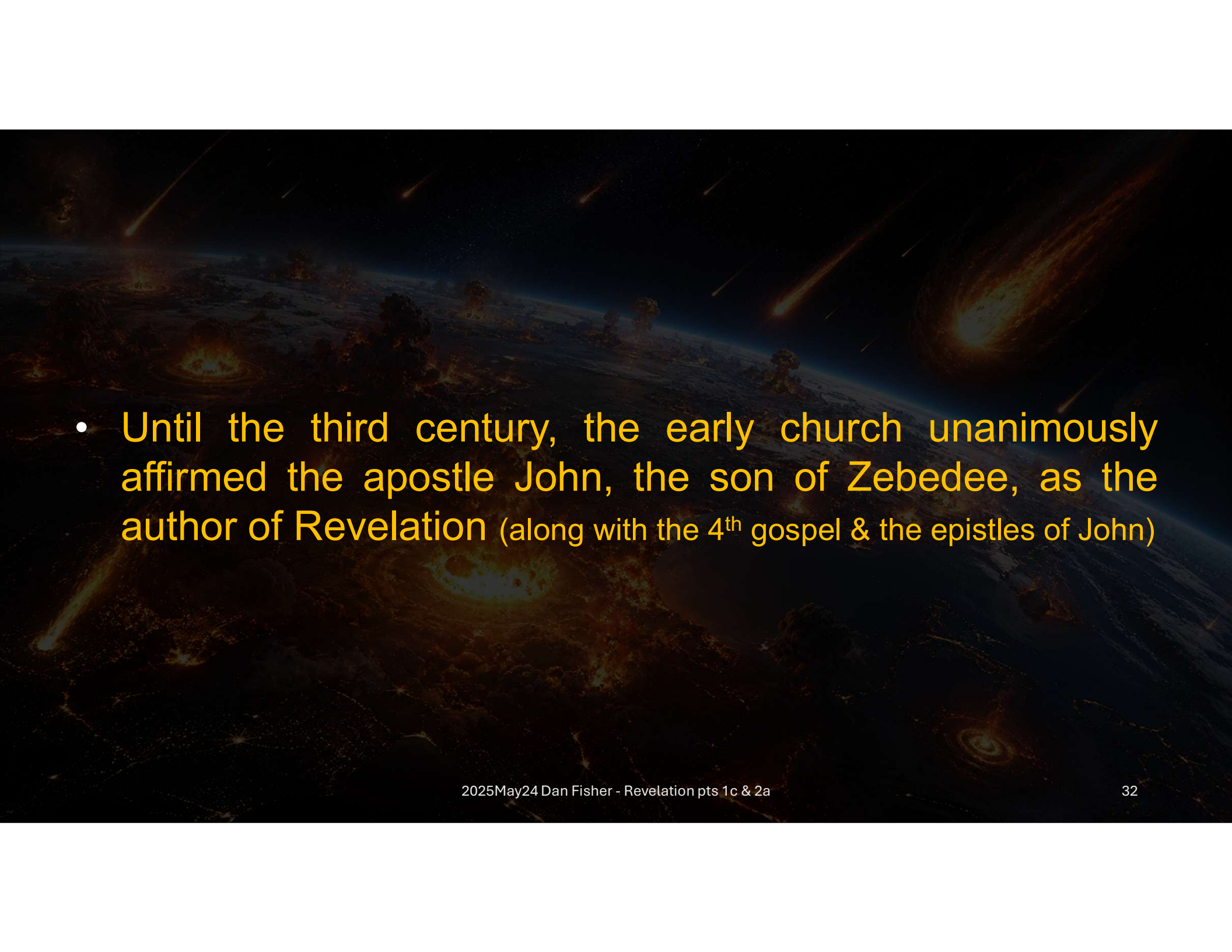
- **The author identifies himself as “John” 4x**

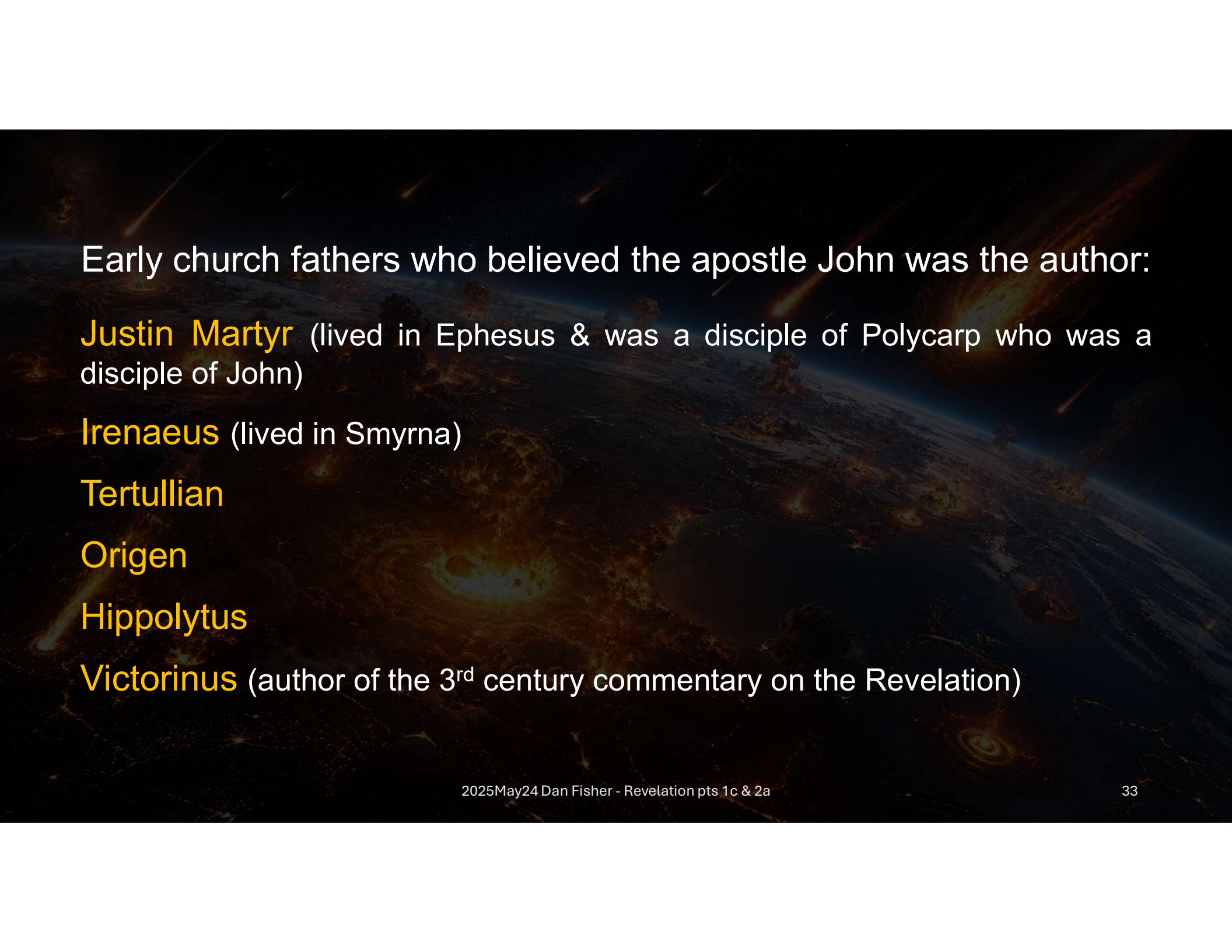
**1:1** – “And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John”

**1:4** – “John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

**1:9** – “I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

**22:8** – “Now I, John, saw and heard these things.”

- 
- Until the third century, the early church unanimously affirmed the apostle John, the son of Zebedee, as the author of Revelation (along with the 4<sup>th</sup> gospel & the epistles of John)



Early church fathers who believed the apostle John was the author:

**Justin Martyr** (lived in Ephesus & was a disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of John)

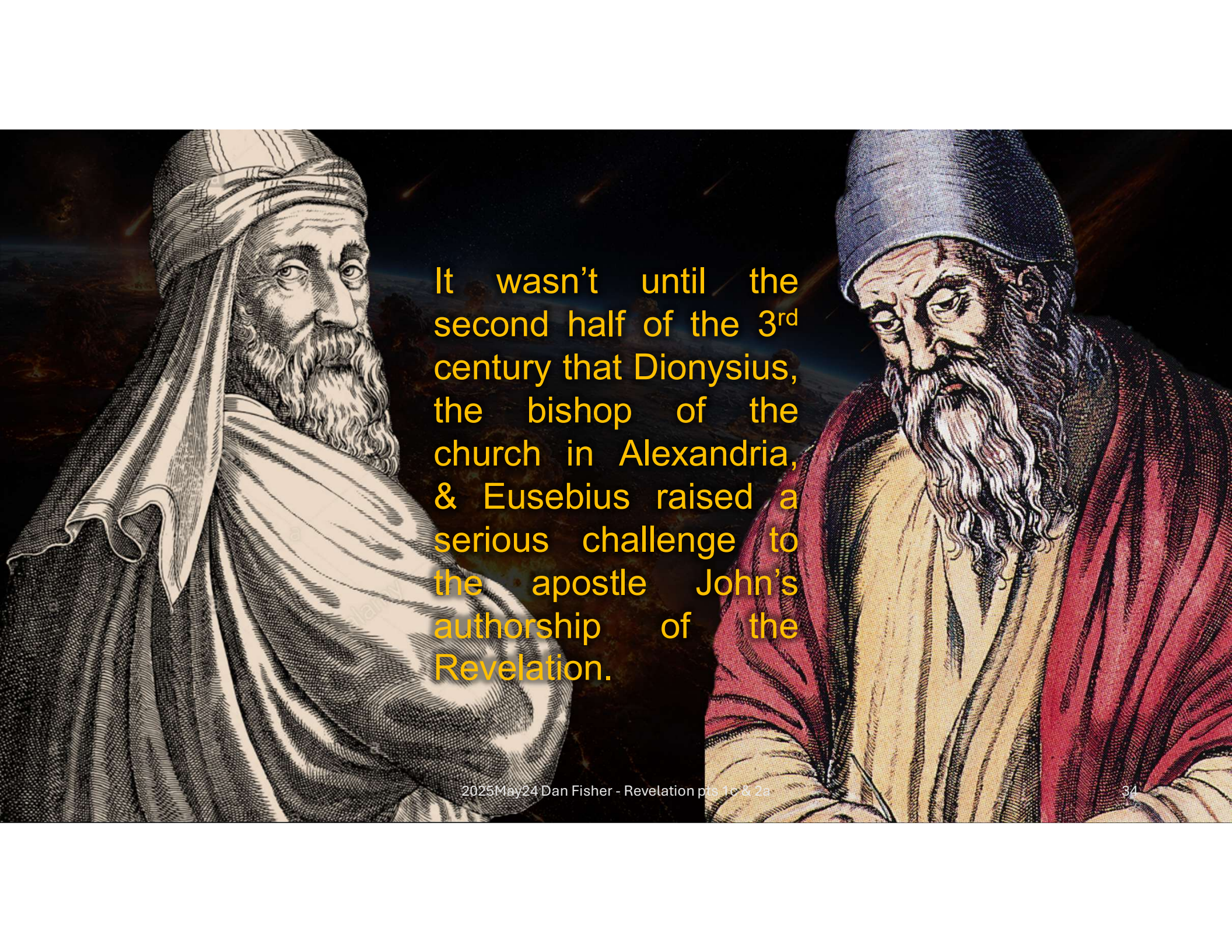
**Irenaeus** (lived in Smyrna)

**Tertullian**

**Origen**

**Hippolytus**

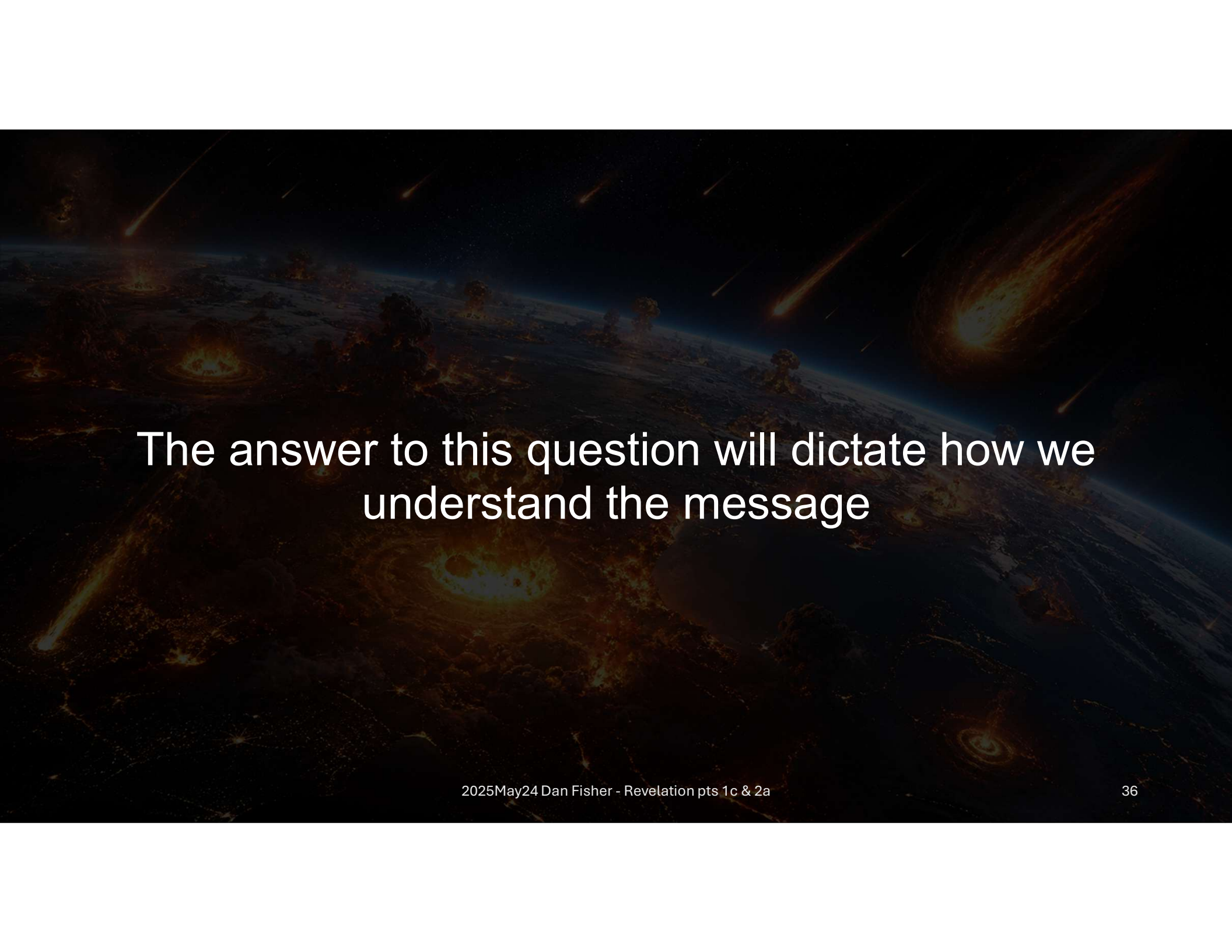
**Victorinus** (author of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century commentary on the Revelation)

The image features two detailed illustrations of bearded men in ancient or biblical attire. The man on the left is shown in profile, wearing a white head covering and a dark robe with a white shawl draped over his shoulder. The man on the right is shown from a three-quarter view, wearing a blue head covering and a red robe over a yellow garment. The background is dark with some light streaks. The text is overlaid in the center in a yellow, sans-serif font.

It wasn't until the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century that Dionysius, the bishop of the church in Alexandria, & Eusebius raised a serious challenge to the apostle John's authorship of the Revelation.



## 4. When was the Revelation written?



The answer to this question will dictate how we understand the message



- **The two main views:**

- It was written during the reign of Nero around 68 A.D.
- It was written during the reign of Domitian around 95 A.D.



- **The effect the date makes**

- A.D. 68 is adopted by those who view the Revelation as history
- A.D. 96 is adopted by those who view the Revelation as future prophecy of the end times.

- Early church fathers who believed in the 95 A.D. authorship:

Irenaeus

Clement of Alexandria

Origen

Victorinus

Eusebius

Jerome

- **Reasons for the 95 A.D. authorship:**

The persecution of the churches in chaps. 2-3 better fits the persecution of Domitian rather than Nero whose persecution of Christians was relatively confined to the city of Rome.

The condition of the churches best fits with A.D. 96 since, during the earlier date (68 A.D.), the churches were relatively healthy as illustrated by Paul's letters.

Paul never mentions the heretical sect of the Nicolaitans that John refers to in Revelation with little fanfare seeming to assume his readers would know exactly who he was talking about.

In A.D. 60, the city of Laodicea was devastated by an earthquake and was in the process of being rebuilt during the remaining part of Nero's reign. Therefore it could hardly have been seen as "rich, wealthy, & having need of nothing" in A.D. 68.

There is evidence that the church of Smyrna was not founded until after Paul's death in about 67 A.D. If so, it would have not had time to grow to a mature church & then decline by A.D. 68.

John did not leave Palestine for Asia Minor until 66-70 A.D. therefore not giving him enough time to become a big enough problem to the Romans for Nero to exile him to the island of Patmos leading us to believe that it was Domitian who exiled him.