

# G P S

## For Grandparents, Parents and Seniors

By Rick Shrader

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### Things Past, Present, and Future

*Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.*  
(Revelation 1:19).

Time, for us, is divided into three perspectives. We live in the present though it only lasts for the moment. We can look at the past as factual history though we may not have all the facts. We know there is a future coming though no human eye has seen it yet. Some have pointed out that these three perspectives force us to ask, “where did I come from, why am I here, and where am I going?” In the book of Revelation God placed these three perspectives before John. It gives us comfort to know that God is in control of all three.

#### The things which we have seen

In Revelation chapter one, John had seen the Lord that day on the isle of Patmos in His resurrected glory. John had also seen the Lord in His incarnation and walked and talked with Him for three years. Now, as John wrote the last of his inspired writings, no one could convince him that Jesus was not the Christ.

Through Scripture we have “seen” the first coming of Jesus the Messiah. Once again we celebrated Christmas and remembered His virgin birth. We have received the great commission and have read about the evangelization of the world by the apostles and then by the church of Jesus Christ. We have kept the ordinances that He left the church that witness of His first coming and also anticipate His second coming.

As we look back on 2024 we can also count our blessings. Many have gone through very difficult trials. Our brethren in dangerous parts of the world have endured their difficulties by God’s grace. The churches remain and still wait for the Lord’s return.

#### The things which are

We take this statement to mean that chapters two and three concerning the seven churches in Asia were, to John, the “things which are.” Of all the places and people to whom Jesus could have appeared, He addressed the local churches of this age and spoke directly to the pastors of those churches. This tells us something about God’s mandate to local churches in the age of grace. We are not in the kingdom of God yet. As we take the Lord’s Supper which He directed to the churches, we anticipate that kingdom which is still to come.

On this new year’s day we should stop and take a look at “the things which are” in our own lives. Where are we in our walk with the Lord? How are we doing in our knowledge of God and His Scripture? Are we faithful to His church and supportive of its ministry? Are we a better witness for the gospel than we were at this time last year?

#### The things which will take place after this

This referred to Revelation chapter four and following, that is, the rapture of the church, the tribulation period, the return and reign of Jesus Christ, and the new heaven and earth. Regardless of what we think of the coming political scene or how we think AI will affect the future, God has seen it all and is in total control of what will happen. All knowledge, human and computerized, is but a drop in the bucket of “the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” May we say with Paul,

*“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).*