

CHAPTER ONE

Revelation 1:1-3 ^{1}*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: {2}Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. {3}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.*

This short section gives us a concise account of how revelation comes to man. The revelation of the truth was given by God to Jesus and Jesus sent it through His angel to John. John, the beloved was not the author of Revelation, he was the scribe. Jesus was the Revealer and therefore the Word comes from God.

Just before His death, Jesus was asked by his disciples, “*When shall these things be?*” (referring to the things Jesus had declared would come to pass **Mark 13:1-3**). He replied, “*Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son (not yet), but the Father.*” After the ascension of Jesus, He received from the Heavenly Father the information the disciples had asked for. And before the close of the 1st century of the Church, while at least one of the disciples (John) was still living, God sent an angel to make known to John (and through Him to the Churches) the information that is unveiled in this great book. Therefore, we see that the Scriptures would be incomplete without this book, without the unveiling of the Lord Jesus and the events that will occur before and during His return to the earth.

I. REVELATION BEGINS WITH GOD!

God is the fountain and the source of all truth. Every truth which men discover is a gift of God. This truth comes by earnest asking and by reverently waiting upon God to respond.

II. GOD GIVES THIS REVELATION TO JESUS CHRIST!

It is God’s truth that Jesus brings to man and that is the precise reason the teaching of Jesus is unique and final, because it is based on the very being of God Himself.

III. REVELATION IS GIVEN BY JESUS THROUGH HIS ANGEL!

My opinion (relates intermediary action of the messenger).

IV. THE MESSAGE (REVELATION) IS GIVEN TO JOHN!

One of the most uplifting things to remember is the part that men play in the coming of the revelation of God. God must find a man to whom He can entrust His truth. A man in whom He can use as his mouthpiece to men for this is the way God has chosen to reveal His truths.

SERVANTS OF GOD!

Twice the word servant appears in this passage. The revelation sent by God was sent to His servants, and it was sent through His servant John. The message really doesn’t make sense or have any meaning to the person who isn’t a servant of the Lord. All Christians are the servants of God. Two things emerge from this:

1. The greatest men regard as their greatest honor the fact that they were servants of God. There was no higher title to which they could aspire. No man can be greater in their station of life than to be the servant of God.
2. We must note the breadth of this service! Moses, Abraham, David, Caleb and Joshua, Elijah, Elisha and Isaiah, Job, the Apostles. Every Christian – all can aspire to be the servant of God. There is none whom God cannot use, if we will submit ourselves to His service.

THE BLESSEDS OF GOD

This passage ends with a threefold message. The man who reads these words is blessed. The preacher or teacher who stands before others must never forget that one of the greatest privileges in the Church is to read the Scriptures to the assembled group.

The man who hears these words is blessed. We would do well to remember what a great privilege is ours to hear the word of God in our own tongue. That was a privilege that was dearly bought with a tremendous price. The man who keeps these words is blessed. To hear God's word is a privilege; to obey it is a duty. There is no real Christianity in the man who hears and forgets, or who hears and deliberately disregards. That is all the more true for us because time is so short. No man knows the time but we can surely observe the times and the signs.

We may note that here there are seven "BLESSEDS" in the Revelation;

1. [The] **Blessedness** of reading, hearing, and obeying.
2. **Blessed** are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth (14:13).
3. **Blessed** is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments (16:15).
4. **Blessed** are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:9).
5. **Blessed** and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection (20:6).
6. **Blessed** is he that keepeth the sayings of this Book (22:7).
7. **Blessed** are they that do His commandments (22:14).

Such is the blessedness which is open to every Christian in Christ.

FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND

Someone may say, "Why, this has been taught for 2000 years." In God's timetable a thousand years is no more than a day.

We have been able to read and watch for the signs and have seen them come to pass. We are now approaching the closing days of time, closer than we have been since Jesus came and died on the cross. Therefore, these things will "*shortly come to pass,*" and truthfully, "*the time is at hand.*"

THE SALUTATION

Revelation 1:4-6: ⁴⁴John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; ⁴⁵And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the Kings of earth. ⁴⁶And hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father: to Him be the glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The whole of Revelation is a letter, and here is the beginning of the letter. It is written to the seven churches which are in Asia. This is not the continent of Asia but the Roman Province of Asia.

He writes to the seven churches, which in *Verse 11* he goes on to name... Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. These were not all the churches of Asia. There was the Church at Colossae, Hierapolis, Troas, Miletus, Magnesia, and Trallis. Then, why did John single out only these seven churches from the whole Province?

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

1. These seven churches might be regarded as the centers of seven postal districts circled around the total province.
2. As noted in the introduction, any reader of John can easily see the use of the number seven. It occurs 54 times in Revelation: seven candlesticks, seven stars, seven lamps, seven thunders, etc. Seven is the perfect number because seven stands for completeness or completion. It is therefore, suggested that John was writing to the whole or complete church. (Remember, from the introduction, the importance of numbers or numerology as illustrated on the “Seven Chart” located on page -x- of the Introduction.)
3. Another possible answer is that John chose those seven churches because he was familiar with them. He had been familiar with the people. Let’s call him a Pastor at one time of those churches.

I. THE BLESSING AND ITS SOURCE:

He begins by sending them the blessing of God. He sends them grace, and grace means all the splendor of the undeserved gifts of the wonderful love of God to men. He sends them peace, (the harmony restored between God and man through Christ.) But there are two extraordinary things in this greeting:

- A. John sends blessings from “*Him who is, and who was, and who is to come.*” Another way of saying “*I was, I am, I will be.*” Another way of saying “Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”
- B. God cannot ever be fully explained in this world nor can He be measured by the time we keep. When you delve into the matter of time travel, you begin to see that it has captivated the minds of some of the most intelligent scientist this earth has ever known and it still eludes us. God gave us the greater light and the lesser light to enable us to measure time for He knew we would need it if we were to survive and we must stop there and realize that God is not bound by our measure of time for He is omnipresent.

II. THE SEVENFOLD SPIRIT:

Anyone who reads this passage must be astonished at the form of the Trinity as Father, Son, and Spirit. But instead of the Holy Spirit we have the seven spirits which are before His throne. What is the explanation of this strange phrase, and who, and what, are the seven spirits? These seven spirits are mentioned more than once in the (*Revelation 3:1; 4:5; 5:6*). Three main explanations have been offered of them.

- A. The Jews talked of the seven angels of the Presence. They were what we would call the ARCH ANGELS and “*they stand and enter before the glory of the Lord*” (*12:15*). Their names are not always the same, but they are often called Uriel, Rafael, Raquel, Michael, Gabriel, Saiquael, and Jeremia. These angels had the care of the elements of the world—fire, air and water. They were the most illustrious and the most intimate servants of God. Some believe that these seven are the ones mentioned but they cannot be for the angels were created beings. Not from them, but only from the uncreated God, could blessings come to men.
- B. The second explanation connects this with the famous passage of *Isaiah 11:2*. There we have the promise: “*The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and pity; by this spirit he shall be filled with the spirit of God.*” (The sevenfold gifts of the spirit). The Spirit is one name but sevenfold in virtues.

- C. The third explanation connects the idea of the seven (7) spirits with the fact of the seven (7) churches. God gives a share of His Spirit to every man. So the idea here would be that the seven spirits stand for the share of the spirit which God gave to each one of the seven churches. It would mean that there is no Christian fellowship and assembly without the presence and the power of God's Spirit.

III. THE TITLES OF JESUS:

In this passage here three great titles are ascribed to Jesus Christ.

- A. **“He is the witness on whom we can rely.”** *“I came to bear witness.”* “We bear witness to what we have seen.”
- B. **“He is the firstborn of the dead.”** Through the resurrection we can believe and may share in His resurrection.
- C. **“He is the ruler of the kings of the earth.”**
 - 1. Once He was the suffering servant.
 - 2. Now, beyond Calvary He is the ruler of the earth.

IV. WHAT JESUS DID FOR MEN:

There are few passages which set down with such splendor what Jesus did for men.

- A. He loves us and He set us free from our sins at the cost of His own blood.
- B. Jesus made us a Kingdom, Priests to God.
 - 1. He has given us royalty.
 - 2. He has made us priests. Before only priests had access to God's glory. Now we also have access.

THE COMING GLORY

Revelation 1:7... “behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and the people who pierced Him will see Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall lament over Him. Yea... amen.”

The second coming of our Lord is a vital part of the Christian doctrine, and there has never been a time of greater need for the preaching of this truth today. It is essential to distinguish the two parts of His second coming. There is definitely a period of time between the rapture (the time when Jesus comes for His saints) and the Revelation (when He comes with His saints). The Rapture is mentioned in *John 14:3; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; and 1 Corinthians 15:23*. All of these scriptures refer to the next great event for Christians... the Rapture of the Church... the time when Jesus comes for His saints, and every living, born again, blood-washed child of God will be caught up to meet Him; the bodies of all the saints who have died will be raised incorruptible, and we will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the clouds in the air.

But there is another group of Scriptures in both the Old Testament and New Testament which distinctly teach another coming, and *Verse 7* in our present chapter refers to this time when Jesus

will come WITH His saints. **Matthew 24: 30...** “*They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory.*” All of these scriptures of **Jude 14**, **Colossians 3:4**, and **Revelation 19:11-14** refer to the Revelation... the time when Jesus will come in the air and every eye shall see. When the Rapture takes place, no person, save and except for the born again child of God, will see the Lord Jesus. He will not come to earth. He will descend in the air, the trumpet will sound, the voice of the archangel will call the saints up to meet Jesus in the air. He will not stand on the earth when He comes in the Rapture, but He will stand on the earth when He comes in the second phase of His return. **Zechariah 14:4** definitely describes the Lord Jesus standing on the Mount of Olives. The prophets throughout the era of the Old Testament had two great prophetic themes: Judgment and Glory. The Old Testament prophet did not see the Church Age... it was a mystery until it was revealed to the Apostle Paul, who makes known that revelation in the book of Ephesians. As the end of the church age draws near, Jews and Gentiles will become wicked as never before on the face of the earth (**Isaiah 60:2**). The nations will be gathered in open rebellion against Jerusalem (**Zechariah 14:2**). Therefore, the earth must be cleared of evil and ungodly men before the Lord Jesus comes back to reign in glory, with His church.

Before leaving this section, let me point out that Christ is nowhere said to come with the clouds to gather the church out of, the earth. On the contrary, the saints go up in the clouds (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**). God provides a royal carriage to convey the saints from the earth to meet the Lord in the air. Clouds in the Old Testament were well known symbols of the presence of Jehovah with His people (**Exodus 13: 21-40**).

Christ is not only said to come “*in the clouds*” (**Mark 13: 26**) but He will come with the clouds (**Revelation 1:7**) and in the clouds. The clouds which attend His coming are symbols of His majesty and glory. Read **Psalms 18:9-12**. The Lord sits on the clouds, as on His throne. We believers will be caught up in the clouds. The Lord Jesus ascended in the clouds and He will come in a cloud. These facts are very interesting to spiritually minded believers.

The statement “*every eye shall see Him*” is to be taken literally. Every eye will not see Him at the same identical split second... but every eye will see Jesus. One class is singled out from the mass of mankind and mentioned as “*they which pierced Him.*” The entire earth will be in open conflict against the Lord God and His anointed (**Psalms 2**) but this group is pointed out specifically. John is the only one who records the incident of the Gentile spear which pierced the Saviour’s side (**John 19:33-37**). Pilate admitted three times that there was no fault in Jesus; but in spite of the fact that Rome knew Jesus to be innocent, they allowed Him to be scourged and then crucified. The Jews screamed loud for His death. They invited His blood to be not only upon them, but upon their children; and their children’s children who have inherited the guilt for generations. “(Jesus) *Whom they pierced,*” they will see! The peoples referred to as “*those who pierced Him*” are the people whom we know today as the Jews.

“*All the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him.*” This coming in the clouds in great glory and power will take place over the entire universe at the same identical time. All the peoples of all the earth will see the Son of God coming in the clouds of Glory. In **Chapter Six** we will learn that a world-wide prayer meeting will immediately be in progress... but the prayers will be unanswered.

Verse 7 closes with the words, “*... even so, Amen.*” This is a double Amen, and certainly carries much weight spiritually. Amen means “so be it.” The Spirit is saying, “*This is true.*” “*It will happen exactly as stated.*”

A DIVINE DECLARATION

Revelation 1:8... *“I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty!”*

The announcement of these divine titles— *“I am Alpha... Omega... Lord God... The Almighty!”* is certainly a fitting conclusion to the introduction of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him. God Himself is the speaker here... the great *“I AM.”* He announces His own titles. The words *“Alpha”* and *“Omega”* refer to the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet. God is the source of all things... He is the beginning of all truths, all life, all creation. He is the ALPHA. But He is also the OMEGA — the end. God’s glory is the ultimate goal of His timetable, everything finds its answer in Jehovah God. God is eternal, He has always been (**John 4: 23-24**). Jesus is God in flesh (**2 Corinthians 5:19; John 1:1,14**). God is one God, manifest in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Trinity has always been. Jehovah God is an eternal spirit. He *was*, He *is*, He *is to come*... He is the Almighty! In Him all things consist and exist. Without Him nothing could continue, either in secular life or in heavenly life. Without Him the solar systems would cease to operate and the earth would fly from it’s orbit to dash through space into oblivion. God is the ALPHA and the OMEGA. He is the Lord... which *is*, which *was*, which *is to come*! He is the ALMIGHTY.

THE PATMOS VISION

Revelation 1:9–18 (KJV) ^{9}*I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.* ^{10}*I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,* ^{11}*Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.* ^{12}*And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;* ^{13}*And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.* ^{14}*His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;* ^{15}*And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.* ^{16}*And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.* ^{17}*And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: ^{18}*I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**

Revelation 1:9 “...John...your brother...companion

I. John Our Brother, Was Not a Super-Human.

- A. He was a man like you and me. John was our brother in the Lord. He was also our brother in persecution and patience, even though we know so little about that.
- B. He lived during the time of the terrible persecution under Nero and later Domitian, and he received the Revelation during his exile to Patmos for his testimony and for the Word of God. With the exception of this John, all the disciples had been killed; but in God’s providence John was exiled because God had a job for him to do.
- C. God’s servant is indestructible... he cannot be destroyed by the devil or all the forces of hell until God is finished with that servant here on earth—the servant is set aside, protected and secured from physical harm for the work of God to maintain the schedule, the Divine plan of our Father.
 1. John was such a servant. He was faithful and true to the Lord God Almighty.
 2. The island to which he was banished was unknown in that day. It was extremely dreary and lonely. It is just off the Aegean Sea and it is only fifteen miles in circumference, and today is inhabited by a small settlement of Greeks.
- D. When the emperor banished Old John, he thought he had destroyed the old preacher, but God made the bitter wrath of the ungodly emperor to praise him.
 1. God will carry out His divine plan, even if He must use an ungodly emperor to do it, or some national leader in our day.
 2. God does not compromise with the devil nor with sin.
 3. God can use vices of the devil to carry out His plan. Such is the case of John—sent to this secluded place for the sole purpose of an uninterrupted life where he could literally be undistracted by anything or anyone.
- E. John was not alone for his stay on Patmos, John knew no dull moments!
 1. Every minute was full of life, John was literally caught up in the spirit undaunted by corporal life as we know it.
 2. He was more alive spiritually than anyone today could possibly understand given the distractions we face everyday in society.
 3. The devil knows quite well how to prevent you or I from growing spiritually—distractions on every hand!
 4. John was alone with God as we should strive to be as often as possible amid the turmoil of life as we know it.
- F. There are three great periods of determined suffering for God’s people:
 1. The sufferings under Pagan Rome.
 2. The persecution under Papal Rome during the middle ages and the dark ages.
 3. The persecution (yet to come) under the power of the two Beasts in ***Revelation 13***– The **Ecclesiastical Beast** and the **Political Beast**.
 - a. These Beasts will be energized by the devil himself.
 - b. It will be a time of such persecution as has not been known in the past, or at any time during man’s stay upon this earth.

- G. John the beloved disciple was not schooled in the ability to trim the word of God to fit the times in which he lived.
1. Some today know how to ease the message so that it (the WORD) will not offend.
 2. John preached the word without apology, and because of this he was banished for his testimony and for the Word of God that he preached.

Allow me to digress here!

When a little persecution comes to some of us, we cry loud and long about what we are called upon to suffer for Jesus' sake. When some of our friends treat us coldly, we call such treatment persecution. Most of us do not know what it means to suffer for Christ's sake. But if Jesus delays His coming much longer, I am sure that some of us will learn the meaning of real persecution for Jesus' sake. If Jesus tarries, I am convinced, there will be some preachers along with their flocks, who will seal their testimony with their blood. It has already begun. The stage is being set. It has already happened in many places of the world. Our young men and women serving in the armed forces stationed in the Muslim controlled countries have witnessed the torture and horrific deaths of young missionaries serving in these countries where the law is simple. Anyone caught trying to convert a Muslim to Christ is sentenced to death. No courtroom with defense attorneys or prosecutors where we are presumed innocent (I pray not! If you were on trial, for being a witness for Christ, would there be enough evidence to convict you? You had better pray so.) till proven guilty, where we are judged by a jury of our peers. People we need to get our heads out of the sand.

These blessed modern-day martyrs for Christ are generally beaten on the scene, dragged on the ground (over a hard gravel-type ground with larger stones that have edges sharp enough to slice open any part of the body that happens to be in contact with it), sometime for miles, hauled into a room where, if they are fortunate enough be in this circumstance, a group of religious Muslims carry out the sentencing and the punishment is instituted—DEATH. Yet the norm for most less fortunate believers [depending upon your perspective] is their mutilation, their beaten bodies and finally their death usually by decapitation. Praise God to be able to suffer for Christ and if need be die for Christ!

See: ***(Romans 8:17-18; Philippians 1:29, 3:10-13; 2 Timothy 2:12-13, 3:12*** [evil men! Its getting worse, they have already knocked on our doors on 9/11/2001] ***1 Peter 3:14-18***, pay close attention to ***1 Peter 4:13-19*** for it summarizes well, this modern enlightened society that we live in and ***Revelation 2:10*** gives us fair warning that has led me to believe that many will see that just prior to the appearing of Christ to call us home.

It's time to wake up, those of you who have slumbered in your beds wrapped in the warm "cumffy" blankets of wrongfully believed and grossly misunderstood teachings of God's whole, I repeat whole Word. God's word is not a "buffet" where you pick and choose what you like and leave what you don't. We must dine on all the Word.

Some preachers have already been banished from their pulpit because they preached the pure whole Gospel instead of some "sweet words" that the people wanted to hear. People don't want to be alarmed to hear that they might have to depend solely upon the Holy Spirit for the correct answer when challenged by all that is evil to bear witness and give the correct testimony of their salvation History along with the Words of God teach us that things will get worse and worse as the end approaches (***Revelation 2:10***). Yet, right now, not in the pleasant, peaceful and safe existence (where many a Christian chooses to live these days) of the past—right now, yes now ... we must stand up for Jesus and for His pure Word [the whole and complete Word].

When “...*the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*” (**John 1:14**) His enemies said, “*He hath a devil.*” They called him illegitimate. They said everything ugly about the pure sinless Lamb of God. They cut off the head of John the Baptist, they killed James, they crucified Peter, they cut Paul’s head off, they banished John to Patmos. If you serve the Lord Jesus, how do you hope to live on easy street if these men suffered for righteousness’ sake? The line of least resistance is the route of the devil. Suffer with Christ and you will certainly reign with Him; but if you deny Him, He will certainly deny you.

*Verse 10... “I was in the Spirit on the **Lord’s Day** and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.”*

II. “THE LORD’S DAY”

A. The term “*The Lord’s Day*” is found but once in the Scriptures. Most authorities agree that the term means of the first day of the week.

B. There is no difference between the “*Lord’s Day*” and “**THE DAY OF THE LORD**”

1. I personally believe that John was in the Spirit on the first day of the week.

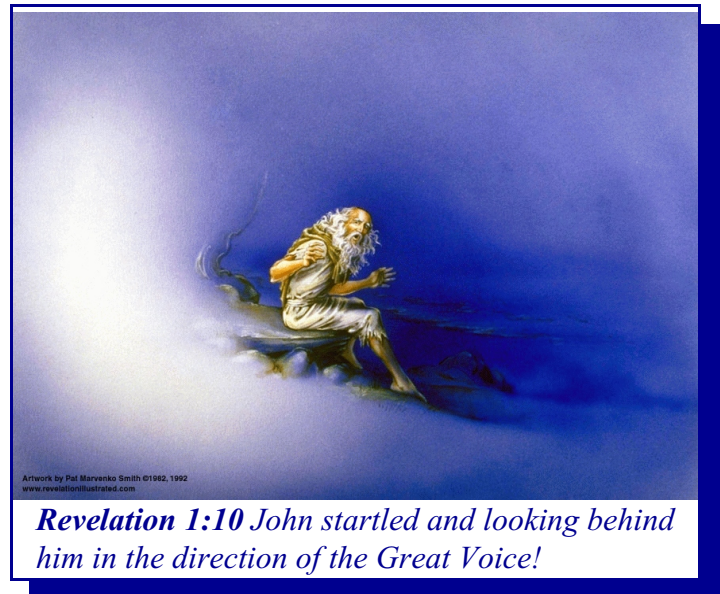
2. I believe the statement here refers to the day Jesus rose from the dead.

C. The first day of the week known as the Lord’s day is very significant in Scripture:

1. Our Lord was resurrected on the first day of the week (**John 20**).
2. The New Testament Church was born on the first day of the week. (**Leviticus 23:16** and **Acts 2**)
3. The Christians of the New Testament Church brought their gifts to God and presented them on the first day of the week (Sunday). (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**)
4. The Lord’s Day is no ordinary day. It is sacred and should be revered by all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

D. “*I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.*” These words are very significant—They make known to us the position of John.

1. His back was toward the Church.
2. His face was towards the Kingdom.
3. John heard the voice behind him.
4. The voice was in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks– the Churches.
 - a. Even in that early date decay and ruin had set in (in the Churches).
 - b. During the days of Paul certain heresies had set in.
 - c. Heresies denouncing the duty of and the grace of Jesus Christ.



- E. *“Great voice as of a trumpet”*
1. This would suggest that a matter of “Public Importance” was about to be communicated to John.
 2. The vision which John was about to witness behind him is introductory to the entire series of visions revealed one-by-one in the remaining chapters of Revelation.
 3. This vision which John is about to see is the first of the visions given to him while there on the Isle of Patmos.
 4. How fitting that the first vision John saw presented the Christ of God in manhood... yet in Power, and Majesty in the midst of the Churches.

Verse 11... “saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Sardis and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.”

III. **Revelation 1:11... “What thou seest, write in a book...send it to the seven Churches**

- A. The seven Churches represent the total church from Pentecost to the Rapture.
1. The messages to these seven Churches were directed to the seven local assemblies there in Asia Minor at the time John received the Revelation.
 - a. They were representative of the “Whole Church,” not only at any given moment during her stay here on earth, but also in the successive moral stages of the history of the Church up to the moment the Church will be caught up to meet the Lord Jesus in the air.
 - b. As we study these Churches one by one we will see that secular history bears out the fact that conditions did exist as they are pointed out in the messages to the seven churches.
- B. After the **Third Chapter** of Revelation, we have no mention of these seven churches. *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches”* is repeated seven (7) times.
1. It signifies that the believer should have a keen ear to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit as long as the Church remains upon this earth.
 2. As long as the Church is on the earth the Spirit will remain on the earth; however, when the Church is caught up to meet Jesus in the air, the Holy Spirit will go out with the Church (**2 Thessalonians 2:7**).
 3. I believe in the local Church. We know the definition of the Church.

Verse 12... “and I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw the seven golden candlesticks.”

IV. **JOHN TURNS TO SEE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS**

- A. John, on turning to see the voice of the Speaker, saw seven golden candlesticks – or, as the literal Greek reads, (*“seven golden lamps”*). **Verse 20** clearly explains the meaning of **Verse 12** as follows *The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks [mean this:] The seven stars are the seven angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*
- B. The fact that the seven churches are pictured as seven lampstands is significant because believers *“are the light of the world”* (**Matthew 5:14**).

- C. Sad, as we shall see, is the fact that the history of the seven churches often diminished that light. I beseech you don't let it be so in your life! Jesus said "*let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*" (**Matthew 5:14**)
- D. Now that we have observed **Verse 12** in the light of **Verse 20**, we can determine that the seven candlesticks are seven assemblies.
 - 1. The number *seven* points to what is morally *complete*... *gold* signifies *Divine righteousness*.
 - 2. In the symbol here upon the earth the "true church" is perfect, and without spot or wrinkle... not the "local assembly"—the visible church, but the "Invisible Church" as described in **Ephesians Chapter 5**.
 - 3. The "*Seven golden lamps*" symbolize the Church in her perfect state.
- E. The seven Asiatic lamps have long since been removed according to the divine threat (**Revelation 2:5**). And a similar judgment is about to overtake the "*Professing Church*" as a whole (**Romans 11:22**). Where are the "*Lamp Stands*" of gold today? This is a solemn and searching question for the church on earth today. But thanks be unto God, the gates of hell shall never prevail against the true church.
- F. In the midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks, John saw a person – *One like unto the Son of Man*. Jesus is the head of the Church (**Ephesians 5:21-30**). Jesus is the foundation of the Church (**1 Corinthians 3:11**). We who are born again are members of His body (**Ephesians 5:30**). Jesus is the head, the heart, the soul, of the New Testament Church. He died for the Church, He purchased it with His own blood, He birthed it. Now that we have observed **Verse 12** in the light of **Verse 20** let us move on to our next passage.

V. THE SON OF MAN STANDING IN THE CHURCH

Verses 13-18 give us the description of the Son of Man whom John saw standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks. (*See the illustration on Page 18 of Chapter Two*)

- A. **Verse 13...** We learn that He was clothed with a garment down to His feet. The color of the robe he wore is not mentioned but one can be assured that He is clothed with the garments of the Old Testament high priest because He is risen and in heaven, performing His ministry of intercession. For this reason, "*...he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them*" (**Hebrews 7:25**). Thus, sixty years after Christ's death and resurrection, John sees Him as the High Priest in the heavenlies. Paul also testified to this blessed fact by stating: [*"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession*" (**Hebrews 4:14**)."] Around His breast (*paps*) He had a golden girdle. The gold signifies His righteousness and faithfulness. These are attributes which characterize the Lord in all ways (**Isaiah 11:5**). Next our Lord is described in detail.
- B. **Verse 14...** the Spirit describes the head and the hair of the Son of Man. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as the driven snow. As pure as God Himself... is set forth and symbolized in the dazzling snow-white hair of the Son of Man. John's description speaks of antiquity and coincides with the vision of Daniel recorded in **Daniel 7:9-13**. This *Ancient of days*, the eternal One, Jesus Christ, is also pictured in terms of whiteness because of His righteousness, "*...for He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*" (**Hebrews 7:26**)."

1. "...His eyes were as a flame of fire. (v.14)" Divine wisdom in all its perfection and absolute purity
 2. "...His eyes like unto flames of fire. (v.14)"
 - a. Burning, penetrating, searching...
 - b. Exposing all sin and evil, no matter how thoroughly covered it may be.
 - (1) The Greek emphasizes the fact that His eyes "shot out fire."
 - (2) Christ is righteously angry concerning the sin of the churches depicted in **Revelation, Chapters 2 and 3**.
 - (3) Who could escape the scrutiny of those burning eyes of fire seen by John?
- C. **Verse 15...** Describe His feet: They [were] "*like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.*" Brass, in the word of God stands for judgment. Christ's feet picture judgment and relate to the events that take place when He returns to the earth in **Chapters 19 and 20**. This verse also describes His voice: "*His voice as the sound of many waters also depicts judgment.*" His voice exceeds the sound of the Niagara Falls. His judgment will not go unheard.
1. It was His voice that brought order out of chaos, light out of total darkness, and life out of death. He spoke and miracles happened.
 2. It was His voice that brought calm to the sea.
 3. It was His voice that called Lazarus from the grave.
 4. His voice spoke to many people throughout His earthly ministry. "*Take up thy bed and walk.*" When that voice uttered a command and the person to whom the command was given obeyed, a miracle followed... ALWAYS, without exception. Do you know that one day you will look into the FACE, you will hear that VOICE say, "*Enter thou into the joys of heaven.*" Or you will hear him say, "*Depart, I never knew you.*"
- D. **Verse 16...** tells us, "*He had in His hands seven stars.*" (See the Illustration found in
1. **Verse 20** enlightens us concerning the mystery of these stars. The seven stars are angels... the angels or messengers to the seven churches. The stars, as a symbol, represent countless multitudes of angels. (**Genesis 15:5**)
 - a. **Hebrews 1:14...** Angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation.
 - b. **Psalms 34:7...** The angel of the Lord encamps round about us who fear God.
 - c. **Daniel 3:28...** God sent His angel unto the fiery furnace.
 - d. **Daniel 6:22...** God sent His angel to close the lion's mouth when Daniel was thrown into the den.
 - e. **Acts 5:19...** God sent His angel to rescue Peter when he was in jail and would have been killed the next day.
 - f. **Matthew 18:10...** Every little child has an angel to represent him before the Father in heaven.
 - g. **Luke 16:22...** The beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom—the bosom symbolizes rest.

The responsibility of a star is to shine. The darker the night, the brighter the star. This is the responsibility of the Church today.

- E. **Verse 16...** continues by saying “... *and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength.*”
1. The two-edged sword is the Word of God as described in **Hebrews 4:12 states:** “*The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*”
 - a. Then the expression, *his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength*, takes our minds back to the transfiguration scene in **Matthew 17:2** and thus pictures the glory of Christ, who is to be the Judge during the Great Tribulation hour, Armageddon, and the Great White Throne assembly of **Revelation 20:11–15**.
 - b. Because of it John is stunned, astonished, and humbled at the experience.
 2. God will judge through the force of His word.
 - a. God never uses His hands or the power of the members of His body against His enemies.
 - b. God simply speaks.
 - (1) His word is powerful and quick, and sharper than any two-edged sword.
 - (2) Jesus said that those who reject (**John 12: 48**) one day will be judged by the word they reject.
 - (3) One day God will speak and judgment will destroy the enemies of the Lord.
 3. The countenance of Jesus was “*as the sun shining in His strength.*”
 - a. This refers to the face of Jesus – the face once covered with spittle.
 - b. John saw that face as the noon day sun.
 - (1) The reason the Holy Spirit uses the brightness of the noon day sun to describe the face of Jesus is because the brightness of the noon day sun is the only thing known to man that will compare in the best degree with the brightness of the face of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) What a glorious vision John had of Christ. The vision John saw is quite different from the Christ we see in the Gospels.
 - (a) He was suffering servant.
 - (b) In this vision, we see Christ clothed in mighty majesty, splendor, and power.

VI. JESUS TOUCHES JOHN

Because John is stunned, astonished, and humbled at the experience of **Verse 16** he cries...

Verses 17 and 18... “*And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*”

- A. The effect of the vision of the Lord Jesus Christ was more than John could see and bear in the flesh.
- B. The sight of Christ glorified was breathtaking, the one who laid his head upon Jesus at the “Last Supper” now falls prostrate at Jesus’ feet.
- C. This was the same John who saw much of Christ while He was on the earth. The vision literally caused John to fall as a dead man. John could not stand on his feet in the presence of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **“And He laid His right hand upon me...”** John.
 - a. That touch removed the fear from him, and even though he fell as a dead man.
 - b. He stood to receive the Revelation and the message God sent through the Lord Jesus.
2. **“Fear not, I am the First and the Last...”**
 - a. This is absolute proof of the duty of Jesus Christ, and of the fact that He was equal with the Father in every respect.
 - b. He was in the beginning with the Father (**John 1:1**).
 - c. Jesus is saying the same to us today. In the midst of wars, rumors of wars, heartaches, and death, the blessed Lord says, *Let not your heart be troubled (John 14:1)*.
3. **“...I am**
4. **He that liveth....”**
 - a. To me, the Spirit is saying in that verse, *“I am the Living One.”*
 - b. He is the source of all life. In Him we live and move and have our being. Other gods die or are dead. Our God is a “LIVING GOD.”
5. **The Living One... “became dead.”** Jesus was the **God – Man**.
 - a. He took the body of flesh, and in flesh did what the law could not do.
 - (1) By God’s grace Jesus voluntarily became dead that we might have life.
 - (a) Jesus completely conquered death.
 - (b) He tore the bars away.
 - (c) He did in the flesh what no man had ever done.
 - (d) He willingly went to the cross.
 - (e) He willingly died.
 - (f) He literally laid down His life.
6. **“Behold I am alive for evermore. ...and have the keys of hell and of death.”**
 - a. He has risen from the dead and lives, and He announces to His saints that He will die no more. In Him, we have eternal life.
 - b. The keys denote complete mastery over the bodies and souls of all.
 - c. Christ has the right to open and to shut;
 - d. He has absolute authority over death and hell.
 - (1) Jesus has promised to go with us through the valley of the shadow, and therefore we will fear no evil.
 - (2) We are not to fear, for *through death ...[Christ destroyed] “...him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And [delivered] them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14-15).”*
 - (3) Not only have we been delivered from the fear of death but from the fear of Hades as well.

Allow Me to Interject at this Point!

Understand, *Hades* was the place where the souls and the spirits of all humans went until the cross. *Sheol* (Old Testament) and *Hades* (New Testament) were one and the same. In *Sheol* and in *Hades* were two compartments, one for the wicked and the other for the righteous. In **Luke 16:22–23**, the rich man and Lazarus went to their respective places—one to suffering and the other to comfort. The thief on the cross went to the comfort side, or paradise, as promised by Christ when He said, *“Today shalt thou be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43).”* This is where Christ went upon His death (**Acts 2:27, 31**). There He ministered to all people who had gone on before (Calvary)

and *led captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8-10)*, literally releasing them for their entrance into the third heaven of *2 Corinthians 12:2*.

(One misrepresented and erroneous teaching is in the salvation experience of the thief on the cross. Understand! Christ had not died, nor had He been resurrected at this pivotal point in the thief's life. Note the conversation recorded in *Luke 23:42b-43* when he, the thief, asked Christ ^{42b}. . .*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* ⁴³ *And Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'*")

As I stated earlier the thief went to the comfort side, or paradise. Salvation under the "New Covenant" was not yet available until Jesus had completed all that was necessary. Ultimately after Jesus ministered to all those who died prior to Calvary, those who accepted His message of salvation through the cross, they were all ushered, by Christ, into their heavenly abode. The thief's salvation experience was as those noted by Paul in *Hebrews, Chapter Eleven*, "*dying in faith.*" We who live now live under the "New Covenant" and our salvation is unique to that covenant. I will surrender to the fact that ultimately the thief did enter into his reward for his faith allowed him to receive it but it was not under the covenant of grace that you and I live under now.)

Presently the comfort side of Hades has been emptied by Him who has the keys of death and Hades (hell), but the torment side is still full. This will be emptied for the Judgment Day when *...death and [Hades] hell deliver up the dead which [are] in them: and they [are] judged... (Revelation 20:19)*.

If your salvation does not take from your heart the fear of dying, if your salvation does not remove from your heart the fear of meeting God, then I would advise you to check again your salvation experience. "*Perfect love casteth out fear.*" (*1 John 4:18*)

VII. Revelation's Organization and Understanding

Verse 19 and 20... ¹⁹ Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; ²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

- A. *Verse 19* gives us the order of the Book of Revelation, which is written chronologically, or as the events happen.
 1. One immediately recognizes the three tenses — past, present and future.
 - a. *Write the things which thou hast seen* – past, **Chapter 1**;
 - b. [Write] *the things which are* – present, **Chapters 2 and 3**;
 - c. [And write] *the things which shall be hereafter* – future, **Chapters 4 through 22**.
- B. *Verse 20* [God explains to John:] *The mystery of the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.* (See the discussion under *Verse 12*)

We now move on to the study of the seven candlesticks, or the history of the seven churches.