

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

A Verse by Verse Study

by

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CHAPTER ONE

The Patmos Vision

1. **The 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:**
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 book is not the book of “Revelations” (plural). It is not “the Revelation of St. John the Divine.” The word “Revelation” is singular - and as the first verse clearly declares, this book is “**the REVELATION OF Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him.**”

In this interesting and only prophetic book of the New Testament, the Lord Jesus is unveiled. The future is made known in a series of visions, beheld by John the Beloved who was on the Isle of Patmos. John saw in the Spirit things that will happen literally. In Revelation we will see light and darkness . . . righteousness and unrighteousness . . . good and evil opposing each other. We will also see Jehovah God, the Lamb Christ Jesus, and Satan. We will see men - saved and unsaved. We will study angels - holy and unholy. We will witness the greatest blood bath and the greatest fire this earth or any planet will ever know.

As we study the book of Revelation, the scenes will change - from time to eternity, from Heaven to earth, from the earth to the lake of fire, from the river of blood (200 miles long, 6 feet deep and ten miles wide) to the appearing of myriads of millions of white horses with their riders in the sky! (Revelation 19:11-16). Yes, the veil is rolled back. The result? God is victorious. The millennium and the eternal glories of Christ shine forth in Revelation in undying beauty and splendor found no other place in Holy Scripture. At the consummation of all things - when all things are made new - then will be the complete fulfillment of the words of the prophet, “**He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied**” (Isaiah 53:11a).

As we move toward the end of the book, we will witness a new Heaven and a new earth (chapters 21 and 22) and we will see the righteous and holy abiding in their eternal dwelling places. As we near the end of the book (chapters 20:10 and 21:8) we will witness the horrible lake of fire and those who will spend eternity in this terrible place of torment.

“The 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” (Revelation 1:1).

The very first words in the book of Revelation clearly reveal to us that these twenty-two chapters contain **“the Revelation of Jesus Christ”**; that this revelation was given BY God, and that it was given for the purpose of showing unto God’s servants (bond-slaves) things which **“must shortly come to pass.”** God’s angel appeared and spoke to John the Beloved, making the Revelation known to him.

It is not just a revelation - or the unveiling - of the person of Christ, although in the book we see His high priestly, kingly glory; but the greater portion of it is given over to the unveiling of those events which will precede and accompany the return of the Lord Jesus to this earth.

This truth is clearly seen from the fact that the Revelation was given to Jesus Christ by God the Father to show unto His servants **“things which must shortly come to pass.”**

Just before His death, Jesus was asked by His disciples, **“When shall these things be?”** (referring to 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** (the Greek word used here for neither literally means 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 first century of the Church, while at least one of the disciples (John the Beloved) was still living, God sent an angel to make known to John (and through him to the churches in Asia) the information that is unveiled in this great prophetic book of Revelation. 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.

Perhaps someone is asking, **“Why did the Holy Spirit say, ‘Things which must shortly come to pass,’ since it has already been more than 1900 years since the words were spoken?”**

II Peter 3:8 answers that question: **“. . . Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”**

We must remember that we are dealing with The Lord God, and even though time may seem long to us, it has only been a little over two days (according to God’s great Time Clock of prophecy) since these words were uttered. Therefore, to those of us who are spiritually minded, who compare spiritual things with spiritual, it has not been a long time. It has only been two days.

It is true that John the Beloved is the writer of the book of Revelation, but he is not the author. The Author of Revelation is the Lord Jesus, Himself. The Apostle John was the scribe . . . the holy man to whom God spoke these words. It seems that the Holy Spirit desires to make this known clearly and unmistakably. Revelation 1:1 and Revelation 22:8 clearly declare that the revelation came from God Almighty-not from man.

Revelation is the only book in the New Testament that Jesus personally closes with His own signature:

“I, Jesus, HAVE SENT MINE ANGEL TO TESTIFY UNTO YOU THESE THINGS IN THE CHURCHES!” (Revelation 22:16). The book of Revelation is not history, as some would have you believe. This book records things past, things present, and things yet to come.

The angel is unnamed. He is simply referred to as **“HIS angel.”** The order of the Revelation is FROM God, TO Christ - then BY Christ’s angel to John, and thence TO US . . . to all believers, servants, bondsmen . . . all who are born again. The first verse closes with the words **“. . . unto His servant, John.”**

John the Beloved always writes in the third person in the four books bearing his name, but here in the book of Revelation he writes in the first person. He names himself three times in the introduction: Chapter 1, verses 1, 4, and 9. He names himself two times in the closing chapters of the book: Chapter 21:2, chapter 22:8.

Verse 2: **“Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”**

The Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ form the sum total of all the visions and revelations beheld by John the Beloved in Revelation. John not only heard the words recorded here, but he also saw the visions.

In the Spirit, John saw what will literally take place upon this earth and in the heavenlies at the consummation of all things.

Verse 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.”**

The book of Revelation promises a blessing - and warns of a curse. The blessing is for those who read the book and keep the things that are written therein. The curse is described in Revelation 22, and will befall those who tamper with the message of this prophecy.

The word **“blessed”** means happy. So in spite of the fact that some preachers declare that this book is a frightening book, a book to be ignored, the Holy Spirit in the very outset declares that it is a blessed book, and that it brings joy and eternal pleasure to the soul that reads it.

One outstanding commentator declares that this verse means that they will be blessed that read this book aloud to the assemblies. That simply means blessed is the man who reads it aloud in the church, and blessed are those who hear the reading and obey the message. Be that as it may, the book carries a definite blessing for those who read it, those who hear it and who keep these verbally inspired communications which came from God, through the angel to John.

The blessing is stated in Revelation 1:3 and again in Revelation 22:7. The curse is clearly set forth in Revelation 22:18-19. **God have mercy on some of the men who tamper with the book of Revelation in this day of liberalism and lying prophets!**

Paul admonished Timothy, “. . . **Give attendance to reading**” (I Timothy 4:13). For many years in the first centuries of Christianity, the Scriptures were read aloud in the assemblies, but this has been completely done away with today, with the exception of a small portion at the beginning of most Sunday morning services. Some churches today do not even have what is known as “responsive reading.” However, those who read Revelation - whether in public or in private, whether they read it aloud or silently, may rest assured of the Lord’s blessing because it is promised here, and God cannot break His promise. In the Jewish assemblies the Law declared that wherever as many as ten persons were gathered together, they could indulge in public reading of the Word of God. You will see this clearly set forth in Luke 4:16-20, Acts 13:14-27, Acts 15:21.

Verse 3 closes with the words, “. . . **for the time is at hand.**” Again, someone may be saying, “The writer John must have been mistaken, or he must have misunderstood, because it has been 2000 years since those words were dictated to John the Beloved.” But again - let me remind you that ever since Jesus came to this earth, was crucified, buried and rose again, ascended back to the Father where He is now seated at the right hand of the Father to mediate for us (I Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 1:3), we have been living in the last days.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1,2). Here the Holy Spirit clearly testifies that these are the last days. I emphasize the statement: Since the Church began, we have been living in the last days.

To further substantiate that statement, listen to these words: **“Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”** (Hebrews 9:25, 26).

Jesus came to this earth literally in the “end time,” or - the end of the world. Since Jesus came and died on the cross, we have been living in the closing days of time.

Again we read, **“Now all these things are happened unto them for ensamples (examples) and they are written for our admonition, UPON WHOM THE ENDS OF THE WORLD ARE COME.”** Surely these three Scriptures will satisfy the mind of anyone who cares to know the truth concerning this age. We are now living in the closing days of time and 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:

4. **John 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;**
5. **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, Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,**

6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The salutation is addressed to “**the seven churches which are in Asia.**” The statement does not refer to the great continent of Asia, nor does it refer to the whole of Asia Minor. These seven churches were located in the western end of Asia Minor, bordering on the Aegean and the great Mediterranean seas. The area referred to here is about the size of the state of Pennsylvania. Reference to “**the seven churches which are in Asia**” does not mean that there were only seven churches in that particular district.

The Word of God clearly teaches us that there were at least three other churches in that area:

- The church at Colosse (Colossians 1:2),
- The church at Hierapolis (Colossians 4:13),
- The church at Troas (Acts 20:6, 7).

The seven churches named in the second and third chapters of Revelation represent the churches throughout the church age. They are representative churches, chosen by the Spirit because of certain characteristics typical of the character of the Church of Christ - not only in the day when John wrote, but on down through the centuries until the Church is raptured to meet the Lord in the air. These seven churches represent periods of time clearly defined in both sacred and secular history. We will see this very clearly as we study the churches individually.

The capital of this area was the city of Ephesus.

We learn from the book of Ephesians that Ephesus was the capital of idol worship in the first century of Christianity.

Someone may ask, “Why did the Holy Spirit name seven churches? Why not six . . . or why not name ALL of the churches in that locality?”

In the book of Revelation you will notice that “seven” is used frequently . . . seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven personages, seven vials, seven dooms, and last but by no means least, the seven new things. We will study each of these as we come to them in the different sections of Revelation. There are numerous other places in Scripture where that number is used, as when referring to the seven feasts of the Lord in Leviticus 23, and the seven kingdom parables in Matthew 13. Seven is the number of perfection . . . God’s number. The Lord God labored six days, and rested on the seventh day. It is the number of completion.

In the first six churches in our study, you will note an overcoming company of true believers, truly born again saints. However, in the seventh (the Laodicean church) there is no saved group; all are spued out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus. In the message to the churches, true believers are repeatedly assured of safety and blessing from God.

Before the terrible hurricanes and tornadoes of God’s great judgment begin to sweep across this earth, the Church will be raptured out of the earth and caught up to meet Jesus in the clouds in the air. The Church will have a grandstand seat in the sky when the last great judgments fall upon the wicked on this earth.

God did not judge Sodom until Lot was safe outside the city walls (Genesis 19). Nor did God utterly destroy Jericho until Rahab was saved (Joshua 6). This will be just as true in the future; God will not judge this earth, nor the wicked in the final judgment, until the Church is taken out of the earth. That promise is clear: **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”** (Revelation 3:10). This verse definitely refers to the great Tribulation period. The Rapture takes place at the beginning of chapter four. A door is opened in Heaven and a Voice cries out, **“Come up hither!”** And the Church is raptured out of the earth to meet the Lord in the air. Read I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

“John 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” (verse 4).

The common need among all the redeemed is GRACE AND PEACE.

Without the grace of God we would all burn in hell. Without the peace of God in our hearts, we would all be miserable. Grace is the source of all blessing. Peace is the rightful and happy possession of every born again, blood-washed child of God (John 14:27). Grace and peace come by and through **“Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.”** This clearly sets forth the eternal existence of the Lord God. God is an eternal Spirit. God has always been, God always will be.

Perhaps someone is saying, “Mr. Greene, explain that.” I thank God that I cannot explain it. If I could I would be as great as God is, and I am so happy that my God is greater in wisdom and in power than I am. I would not serve a God whom I could explain.

I want a God who is greater than human explanation. I want a God who is too great to be defined in the language of man. God IS, God has always been, and God always will be. God lives in the eternal present. The grace of God brought salvation down to man (Hebrews 2:9) and it is only through the grace of God that we have peace with God (Romans 5:1).

In this verse, John mentions **“the seven Spirits which are before His throne.”** Please read Isaiah 11:1-5 in connection with this, and we will discuss it more completely a little later in the study.

Verse 5: **“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. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”**

Certainly it was Jesus Christ who came into the world, and He was **“the Faithful Witness”** . . . He was the Word in flesh (John 1:1, John 1:14). He was also the first begotten of the dead (I Corinthians 15:1-30), and He will be the Prince of all kings in the sweet by-and-by (Isaiah 9:6, Luke 1:28-35). It is the blood of Jesus Christ that **“cleanseth us from all sin”** (I John 1:7). **“Without the shedding of blood is no remission”** (Hebrews 9:22). We are redeemed by the precious blood (I Peter 1:18-23).

Certainly in this day of liberalism and modernism, we should cry out as never before that it IS the blood of the Lamb that washes away our sins.

Verse 6: **“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”**

Through the writer, John, the Spirit is here glorifying the Lamb who left the Father’s bosom, came into the world and shed His blood on the Cross that we might have remission of sins.

Those of us who are born again are kings and priests:

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Peter 2:9). This verse definitely refers to Gentile believers . . . those of us who in times past were without God and without hope, but who through the death of Jesus are made sons of God.

Those of us who are members of the New Testament Church, born again believers, have been washed white in the precious Blood of Jesus. The moment we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ we become Sons of God and have access to God through the Blood. We are kings, we are priests . . . and we approach God through our Mediator, the Lord Jesus (I Timothy 2:5).

Therefore, in this day and age there is no such thing as priesthood separate from laity . . . we are ALL priests when we are born of God’s Holy Spirit and washed in the Blood of the Lamb. We approach the throne of God only through a new and living way, purchased by Jesus on the Cross (Hebrews 10:19, 20).

A PROPHETIC DECLARATION

Revelation 1:7:

“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.”

The second coming of our Lord is a vital part of Christian doctrine, and there has never been a time of greater need for the preaching of this truth than 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; I Thessalonians 4:15-18; and I Corinthians 15:23.

All 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 all 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 and New Testaments which distinctly teach another coming, and verse 7 in our present chapter refers to this time when Jesus will come **WITH** His saints. (In connection with this read Jude 14; Zechariah 14:5; Colossians 3:4 and Revelation 19:11-14).

The statement, “**Behold, He cometh with clouds**” agrees with Daniel’s statement “**I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven**” (Daniel 7:13). This also corresponds with the prophetic utterance of the Lord on the Mount of Olives: “**They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory**” (Matthew 24:30b).

All these Scriptures refer to the Revelation - the time when Jesus will come in the air and EVERY EYE shall see Him. When the Rapture takes place, no person will see the Lord Jesus. He will not come to the 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 the Lamb of God (Revelation 19:19) and they will fight 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 (I 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 the well-known symbol of the presence of the Lord with His people (Exodus 13:21-40; Exodus 40:34-38; Luke 9:35).

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 (Matthew 24:30). The clouds which attend His coming are symbols of His majesty and glory. Read Psalm 18:9-12.

The Lord sits on the clouds, as on His throne. We believers will be caught up in the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:17). The Lord Jesus ascended in the clouds (Acts 1:9) and He will come in a cloud (Luke 21:27). 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 (read Psalm 2), but this one 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 (John 18:38-19:6); but in spite of the fact that Rome knew Jesus to be innocent, they allowed Him to be scourged and crucified. The Jews screamed aloud for His death. They invited His blood to be not only upon them, but upon their children; and their children have inherited that guilt for generations. They will see Him “**whom they pierced**” (read Zechariah 12:10).

The peoples referred to as **“those who pierced Him”** are the people whom we know today as 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.”** That is a double **“amen,”** and certainly carries much weight spiritually. Amen means **“so be it.”** The Spirit is saying here, **“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 and 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 things. He is the beginning of all truth, 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 program. Everything finds its answer in Jehovah God.

God is eternal. He has always been (John 4:23,24). Jesus is God in flesh (II 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. The Lord God is an eternal Spirit. He was, He is, He is to come . . . He is the Almighty! In Him all things consist. 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 its 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!

“THINGS THOU HAST SEEN” - THE PATMOS VISION

Revelation 1:9-18

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.**

In verse 9 we learn that John was not a superhuman.

He was a man just like you and me. John was our brother in the Lord. He was also our brother in persecution and in patience. He lived during the time of terrible persecution under Nero, and received the Revelation during his exile to Patmos for his testimony and for the Word of God.

With the exception of John the Beloved, all of the disciples were martyred; but in God's providence John was exiled to the lonely island of Patmos because God had a job for him to do.

God's servant is indestructible . . . he cannot be destroyed by the devil and all the forces of hell until God is finished with that servant here on earth. John was such a servant. He was faithful and true to the Lord God Almighty. The island to which he was banished was almost unknown in that day. It was extremely dreary and lonely.

It lay in the Aegean Sea, just off the coast of Asia Minor.

It is only fifteen miles in circumference, and today it is inhabited by a small settlement of Greeks.

When the emperor banished John to the Isle of Patmos, he thought he had destroyed the old fanatical preacher; but God made the bitter wrath of the ungodly emperor to praise Him! God will carry out His program, even if He must use an ungodly Herod, Pharaoh, Nero - or, in our day, a Khrushchev to fulfill His plans. God does not compromise with the devil nor with sin, and many times God causes the devil's program to backfire and in the end bring honor and praise to God. Such was the case with John and his exile to Patmos. The devil sometimes gets his wires crossed, and what he thinks will hurt, actually helps God's saint. The devil slipped up in his plans when he caused the emperor to exile John to the lonely, barren island of Patmos. For John, his stay there knew no dull moments. Every minute was alive.

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 coming persecution under the power of the two Beasts in Revelation 13 - the Ecclesiastical Beast and the Political Beast. These Beasts will be energized by the devil himself. 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. The Jews will suffer most during the reign of the two Beasts.

John the beloved disciple was not schooled in the ability to trim the Word of God to fit the times in which he lived.

The modernists and liberals of today are trained in our preacher- manufacturing plants - known as schools of theology. They are trained exactly how to preach a gospel that will suit the times and the people to whom they preach. But John preached the Word without apology, and because of his true Gospel he was banished for his testimony and the Word of God which he preached.

The Word of God declares, **“If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus he shall suffer persecution”** (II Timothy 3:12). The only reason some of us are not exiled or thrown into prison is simply because we do not preach as fervently and as sternly as did Paul, John, Peter and others. This modern “Santa Claus” religion that is sweeping the country today is not the religion Jesus taught and John practiced. Jesus did not say, “Follow me and I will put a big automobile in your garage, money in your bank, and give you a host of friends and a flowery bed of ease!” Jesus said, “Follow me - and I will give you a Cross to carry! I will let you walk beside me in my yoke. I will let you come after me and see where I live . . . no place to lay my head. And if you are willing to carry the cross, you can be my disciple, but if you are not willing to carry the cross, you cannot be my disciple, you cannot share my crown. If you refuse to suffer with me, you cannot reign with me. If you put your hand to the plow and look back, you are not fit to be my disciple.

“If you deny me, I will deny you!”

That does not sound like the modern, easy-going, happy-go-lucky, chocolate-covered, streamlined religion of today. Certainly it does not. Every saint will suffer for his testimony if he or she is godly and lives a godly life. But **“the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us”** (Romans 8:18).

We have the blessed promise that if we suffer with Him we will reign with Him. Thank God, the sufferings of this present day are insignificant compared to the glory we will share with Jesus!

The John to whom God gave the Revelation on the Isle of Patmos is the same beloved John to whom Jesus entrusted His mother on the day of His crucifixion. This is also the same John to whom God gave the marvelous salvation message (John 20:30, 31).

He is the same John to whom the Holy Spirit dictated the three Epistles that bear his name - I, II, and III John. This is the John **“whom Jesus loved”** . . . the John who laid his head on Jesus' breast at the last supper and asked, **“Is it I, Lord?”** He was a man just like you and me - but he was a man entirely yielded to the will of God.

He served God with all of his heart and soul, with all of his strength. He was perfectly contented to suffer whatsoever he was called upon to suffer for the sake of the Word of God. He did not mention the trial, the condemnation, the parting with friends (if he had any friends . . . I wonder if he had even one friend except Jesus! Not one word of reproach or complaint fell from the lips of John the Beloved. His arrest, trial, and the proceedings before his cruel exile, are passed over in complete silence, not even worthy to be mentioned by him. He simply says, **“I was in the Isle called Patmos.”**

When a little persecution comes to some of us, we cry long and loud 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 the meaning of the word.

We 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 sure there will be ministers of the pure Gospel of Grace who will seal their testimonies with their life's blood. This has already happened in South America and in other places outside the United States, but I doubt not that we here in America will see such persecution if Jesus tarries.

Some dear young preachers have already been banished from their churches by the denominational bosses because they preached the pure Gospel instead of the gospel of the machine. Some preachers have been banished from their denomination because they refused to deny their convictions, they refused to conform to the denominational dictators. I am sure it will get worse and worse as the end approaches . . . but say! Preachers and Christians - if they do throw you out, do not compromise. Stand up for Jesus and for His pure Word!

In the ninth chapter of John's Gospel we have the story of the blind boy whose eyes Jesus opened. The Pharisees cast the boy out of the synagogue, but Jesus was standing nearby to comfort and cheer him! If you are thrown out one door, God will open a bigger door for you to enter. **“If God be for us, who can be against us?”** If we love the Lord, if we are in His will, whatever may come our way is for our good and for God's glory.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad when you are persecuted for righteousness' sake. God has greater things in store for those who can bear persecution. Thank God for saints who can suffer and never complain!

The enemies of Jesus said, **“He hath a devil.”** They called Him an 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.”**

The term “**the Lord’s Day**” is found but once in the Scriptures. Most outstanding Bible authorities agree that the first day of the week is meant by the statement here in verse 10. The reason is found when we faithfully compare Scripture with Scripture.

There is a difference between “**the Lord’s day**” and “**the day of the Lord.**” The day of the Lord refers to a prophetic day. Read carefully I Corinthians 5:5, II Corinthians 1:14, I Thessalonians 5:2. It seems evident that “**the Lord’s day**” here refers to the first day of the week because of the character of the first vision.

In verses 12 through 20 in our present chapter we see Christ glorified in the midst of the churches, and certainly this could not refer to the period of coming judgment spoken of in both the Old and New Testaments as the “**day of the Lord.**” I personally believe that John was in the Spirit on the first day of the week. I believe the statement here refers to the day Jesus rose from the dead . . . the day the New Testament assemblies met to worship, pray and present their gifts. I do not believe it refers to the day of the Lord which is definitely yet future.

If you would like to know more about “**the day of the Lord,**” read Isaiah 2:12; Joel 1:15; Joel 2:1; Joel 3:14; Ezekiel 13:5; Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20; II Corinthians 1:14; I Thessalonians 5:2; II Peter 3:10. In these Scriptures you will read of the day in which the Lord returns to this earth in mighty judgment.

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

- Our Lord Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week (John 20).
- The New Testament church was born on the first day of the week (Leviticus 23:16 and Acts 2).
- The saints in the New Testament church brought their gifts to God and presented them on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1, 2).

The Lord’s Day is no ordinary day; neither is the Lord’s Supper an ordinary supper. Both are extraordinary, in that both the DAY and the SUPPER are HIS. They are sacred in character and should be revered by all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

“**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: His back was toward the church, his face was toward the Kingdom. John heard the voice behind him. The voice was in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (or lampstands) - the churches.

Therefore, we know John’s back was to the churches and his face was toward the kingdom of God, even at that early date.

Ecclesiastical ruin and decay foretold by the Apostle Paul (Acts 20:28-32; Romans 11; I Timothy 3) had already set in. During the days of Paul, certain heresies had already crept into the church, which heresies Paul denounced in his Corinthian and Colossian letters. Heresies were much more fully developed in John’s day, and in the second century of Christianity they had their own distinctive schools and in all boldness openly fought the person of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, denouncing His deity, His grace, and His blood.

In John’s day not only were the heresies very prominent, but added to these church dangers was the terrific persecuting power of the ungodly emperors and their henchmen.

Certainly we do not wonder that the eyes of the aged apostle and honored prisoner of the Gospel were directed onward to the glory and the strength of the coming kingdom . . . the kingdom when righteousness will cover the earth as the waters now cover the sea, and wickedness will be put down. Right will be vindicated, wrong will be punished, and King Jesus will sit on the throne in Jerusalem.

The Church was not put in the world to convert the world. The Church was put here for a testimony. One day there will be peace on earth and good will toward men, but the Church will not bring about this peace nor the good will. King Jesus will bring peace to earth when He sits on the throne of David in Jerusalem and the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters now cover the sea.

The “**great voice as of a trumpet**” would suggest that a matter of public importance was about to be communicated to John the Beloved, in which the whole Church should be definitely interested. 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. This vision which John is about to see is the first of the visions (or revelations) given to John while there in exile on Patmos. 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 Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia and unto Laodicea.**”

The trumpet-voice of the Lord Jesus signified that something of great importance was about to be announced.

The trumpet voice instructed John to write in a book what he was about to hear and see. The book was to be sent to the seven churches in Asia. The seven churches were named by the voice. As I have already pointed out, there were other churches in Asia Minor. But the Spirit of God had a moral end in view when He chose these seven churches to whom the message was directed.

Seven times the Spirit admonishes, “**Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.**” But notice: In the first three churches - Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos - the statement is made before the promise to the overcomer (Revelation 2:7; 2:11; and 2:17).

In the last four churches - Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea - the command to hear “**what the Spirit saith to the churches**” is given after the promise to the overcomer (Revelation 2:29, Revelation 3:6, Revelation 3:13, Revelation 3:22).

Thus the seven churches are divided into two distinct groups. The first group, three churches; the second group, four churches. The seven assemblies named exhibit certain marked characteristics which separately stamp their character on the church universal, in successive stages of the history of the Church from its beginning to the Rapture. Collectively, these seven features distinguish the Church throughout the earth at any given time.

Then the very day John received the Revelation, and also in this day and hour in which we live, these seven assemblies give us the history of the Church in its entirety until the Rapture.

Two of the churches (Smyrna and Philadelphia) are commended and there is not one word of reproof spoken against them. However, there is no word of commendation to the church at Laodicea.

The messages to these seven churches were directed to the seven local assemblies there in Asia Minor at the time John received the Revelation; but it is equally clear that 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.

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.

After the third chapter of Revelation, we have no mention of nor allusion to these seven Asiatic churches.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches” is seven times repeated and signifies that the believer should have a keen ear to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit as long as the Church remains here upon this earth. As long as the Church remains on earth, the Spirit will remain on earth; however, when the Church is caught up to meet Jesus in the air, the Holy Spirit will go out with the Church (II Thessalonians 2:7).

Born again believers are led by the Spirit in this day of grace, and every born again person is indwelt by the Spirit (Romans 8:9; Romans 8:14; Romans 8:16). I believe in the local church . . . I believe in the local assembly of believers - but brick and mortar do not make a church. The Church is made up of born again individuals, each individual saved by grace, baptized into the body of Christ and kept by the power of God. Each individual is responsible to God for himself or herself. In this day, God deals with individuals. Every child of God has the Spirit of God to guide him (Romans 8:14). Every born again child of God has the Spirit to teach him (I John 2:27). Therefore, it is the business of the believer in this day to **“hear what the Spirit says.”**

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

John, on turning to see the voice of the speaker, saw seven golden candlesticks - or, as the Greek word means, “lamps.” What these lamps signified is made known in verse 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.”** We see clearly that the seven candlesticks (or golden lamps) are seven assemblies. The number seven in the Word of God points to what is morally complete . . . gold, the most precious of metals, signifies divine righteousness.

Therefore, in the symbol of seven golden lamps, we have the Church in its completeness and perfection 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 5.

Study that entire chapter carefully and you will clearly see that the Church of which Jesus is the head will be presented to the Lord Jesus, a Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. So the “**seven golden lamps**” symbolize the Church in its perfect estate. 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 lampstands of gold today? This is a solemn and a searching question for the church on earth today. But thanks be unto God, the gates of hell shall never prevail against the true Church (Matthew 16:18).

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 (I 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 (Acts 20:28).

One glorious day the Church will be displayed in the heavenlies . . . “**and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: THAT IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHOW THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus**” (Ephesians 2:6,7).

One day God will display the Church, the bride of Christ, the Lamb’s wife, in the heavenlies, and all God’s new creation will gaze upon the exceeding riches of God’s grace, through which He purchased the Church and kept it and made it possible to present it unto Himself without spot or wrinkle.

Verses 13 through 18 give us the description of the Son of man whom John saw standing in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

In 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. Around His breast He had a golden girdle. The gold signifies His righteousness, the girdle itself sets forth righteousness and faithfulness. These are attributes which characterize the Lord in all His ways (Isaiah 11:5).

In verse 14 the Spirit describes the head and the hair of the Son of man. His head and hairs were white like wool, as white as the driven snow. His eyes were as a flame of fire. This person is the “**Ancient of Days**” (Daniel 7:9). Divine wisdom in all of its perfection and absolute purity . . . as pure as God Himself . . . is set forth and symbolized in the dazzling snow-white hair of the Son of man. His eyes like unto flames of fire . . . burning, penetrating, searching . . . exposing all sin and evil, no matter how thoroughly covered it may be. Who could hope to escape the scrutiny of those burning eyes of fire seen by John?

Verse 15 describes His feet: They were “**like unto fine brass, AS IF THEY BURNED IN A FURNACE.**” His dazzling feet looked like brass would look, burning in a furnace. Brass, in the Word of God, stands for judgment. This verse also describes His voice: It was as the sound of many waters. Read Ezekiel 43:2. The grandeur of His mighty voice exceeds the noise of Niagara Falls with all of its thunderous roar. “**The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea**” (Psalm 93:4).

It was His voice ten times repeated which brought order out of the terrible chaos, light out of total darkness, and life out of dust in Genesis Chapter One. Ten times in the first chapter of the Bible God spoke and mighty miracles happened! It was HIS VOICE that calmed the stormy sea and hushed the boisterous winds and waves into the calm and quietness of a sleeping baby (Matthew 8:23-27). When the winds stopped blowing and the sea became as calm as glass, the disciples were made to cry out, “**What manner of man is this?**”

It was that same voice that said, “**Lazarus, come forth!**” and a man dead for four days came out of the grave alive (John 11:43, 44).

That same voice spoke to many people throughout HIS earthly ministry, commanding them to . . . “**stretch forth thine hand . . . go to the Pool of Siloam and wash . . . show thyself to the priest . . . 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.

Dear reader, do you know that one day you will look into that face, you will hear that VOICE say, “**Enter thou the joys of thy Lord,**” or you will hear Him say, “**Depart, I never knew you!**”

Verse 16 tells us, “**He had in His hand seven stars.**” Verse 20 enlightens us concerning the mystery of these stars. The seven stars are angels . . . the angels of the seven churches. The stars, as a symbol, represent countless multitudes (Genesis 15:5). There are countless multitudes of angels.

Hebrews 1:14: Angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation.

Psalms 34:7: The angel of the Lord encamps round about those of us who fear God.

Daniel 3:28: God sent His angel into the fiery furnace.

Daniel 6:22: God sent His angel to close the lion’s mouth when Daniel would have been devoured had not God sent the angel to take care of the situation.

Acts 5:19: God sent His angel to rescue Peter when he was in jail and would have been killed the next day, but God delivered him through the ministry of a mighty angel.

Matthew 18:10: Every little child has an angel to represent him before the Father in Heaven.

Luke 16:22: The beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom - Paradise - the place of rest. The “bosom” symbolizes rest.

The responsibility of a star is to shine. The darker the night, the brighter the star. During this night of sin while the Lord is absent from the earth, the assemblies are God’s light-bearers. The local church should be a light on a hill, and the darker the night becomes, the brighter the church should shine for Jesus. Sad but true, in this dark hour there are very few churches shining forth, and giving out the light of the glorious Gospel of salvation.

Verse 16 continues by saying, “. . . **and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.**”

God will judge through the force of His Word. God never uses His hands or the power of the members of His body against His enemies. God simply speaks. “**His Word is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword**” (Hebrews 4:12).

Jesus said that those who reject His Word will be judged by the Word they reject (John 12:48). All God need do is speak the Word - and His enemies melt in death. “**HE UTTERED HIS VOICE THE EARTH MELTED**” (Psalm 46:6). The Lord God Almighty does not need any guided missiles, hydrogen bombs or jet bombers; He does not need the force known to man. One day God will speak - and judgment will destroy the enemies of the Lord God Almighty - and this earth will literally melt. The power of the Word of God!

Beloved, one day you and I will stand before Him and hear His words. What will they be . . . for you and for me? Will He say, “**Well done,**” or will He say, “**Depart!**” God help me to ask myself that solemn, eternal question. The countenance of Jesus was “**as the sun shining in his strength.**”

This refers to the face of Jesus - the face once covered with vile spittle. John saw that face shining as the noonday sun. No person can look at the sun at high noon without black spots coming before the eyes. The reason the Holy Spirit uses the brightness of the noonday sun to describe the face of Jesus is because the brightness of the sun is the only thing known to man that will compare in the least degree with the brightness of the face of the Lord Jesus.

John 8:12: Jesus is the light of the world.

Malachi 4:2: Jesus is the sun of righteousness to Israel.

Revelation 22:16: Jesus is the bright and morning star to the Church.

There is a great contrast between the glory of the sun and the glory of the stars (I Corinthians 15:41). Jesus is the sun to the Church. His ministers are stars. We, the ministers of Christ, are reflectors of His light. The Church, made up of all born again individual believers, is a light-bearer in a dark, sinful world. The Church is here to reflect the light of Jesus, who is the Light of the world.

What a glorious vision John had of Christ!

The vision John saw is quite different from the Christ we see in the Gospels. In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we read of a Christ who is tender, humble, holy, loving, kind, compassionate, longsuffering. In this vision, we see Christ clothed in majesty, splendor and power.

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.**”

The effect of the glorious vision of the Lord Jesus Christ was more than John could bear in the flesh.

The vision caused him to fall as a dead man.

- This is the same John who pillowed his head on the bosom of Jesus at the last supper (John 13:23).
- This is the same John who outran Peter on the resurrection morning in a race to the sepulchre (John 20:4).
- This is the same John who worshipped Jesus after He arose from the dead (Matthew 28:17).
- This is the same John who witnessed the ascension of the Lord Jesus (Acts 1:9,10).

Now he lies as a dead man at the feet of Jesus! You will remember on the Mount of Transfiguration, the transfigured Christ was an object of fear to the favored three - Peter, James and John (Matthew 17:6,7). Isaiah was broken down in the presence of the glory of Christ. While the Seraphim covered face and feet, while the glory was too bright to look upon and the place too holy to tread upon, Isaiah cried out, "**Woe is me!**" Read Isaiah chapter six in its entirety, and read John 12:41.

The prophet Ezekiel also fell on his face before the glory of God's Christ (Ezekiel 1:28).

Daniel more than once fell before the glory of the Lord (Daniel 8:17,18; Daniel 10:7-10).

Here in Revelation we behold the incarnate Son of man in all His glory, and John fell at His feet "**as dead.**"

Probably John was the most loving - and the most loved - of the disciples, but he could not stand on his feet in the presence of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here human weakness is answered by divine consolation:

The glorified Saviour, "**touched with a feeling of our infirmities**" and always displaying His grace and tenderness, laid His right hand upon John.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, the touch of the hand and the voice of the Lord Jesus had instantly removed all fear from the hearts of the disciples (Matthew 17:6,7). Again, the touch of His hand and the voice of the glorified Lord removed the fear from John the Beloved, and even though he fell as a dead man, he stood to receive the Revelation and the message God was sending to him through the Lord Jesus.

To John the Beloved, the Lord Jesus spoke the two words He often uttered while here on earth: "**Fear not!**" (On several occasions Jesus spoke these words to His disciples.)

Jesus said, "**I am the First and the Last.**" This is a divine title, used three times in Isaiah (Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12). The Lord God is referred to in Isaiah. Christ uses the same term three times in Revelation (Revelation 1:17, 2:8, 22:13). The application of this title used by the Lord in the Old Testament is absolute proof, beyond a shadow of doubt, of the deity of Jesus, and of the fact that He was equal with the Father in every respect. Jesus is equal with the Father in eternal self-existence. He was in the beginning with the Father. He is the first and the last.

He is before all and above all - and from Him all things proceed. He is the last; consequently, He is after all, and in Him all things center. He is the source and the Sum of all creation. We might say that Jesus is the hub of the wheel of all things. Everything from eternity through eternity points to Jesus Christ.

There is no wonder that the Word of God cries aloud, "The whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments!"

In verse 18 we read, "**I am He that liveth.**" To me the Spirit is saying in that verse, "**I am the Living One.**" This, too, is a divine title. Jesus is the author of all life. He is the source of all life. In Him we live, and move, and have our being. He is the Living One from eternity through eternity. The incarnation did not originate the life of Jesus . . . He was in the beginning with the Father. But the incarnation was the manifestation of the Christ who had existed from all eternity. Read John 1:1 and 14.

The title, "**The Living One,**" was used by the Hebrews to distinguish the Lord God from false gods. There IS but one true God . . . the Lord. He is the Living One.

We have eternal life because our God is eternal our Christ is eternal. Our inheritance is "**incorruptible: undefiled, It fadeth not away and is reserved in Heaven for us.**" Read carefully I Peter 1:4-6. What is said of God in the Old Testament is true of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament. Read Jeremiah 10:10 and I Timothy 3:15.

The Living One - "**became dead.**" Jesus was the God-man. He took a body of flesh, and in the flesh did what the Law could not do (Romans 8:1-3). But even as man is flesh, death (the wages of sin) had no claim upon the sinless Son of God. But by God's grace Jesus voluntarily BECAME DEAD that we might have life. Jesus did not just die - but became truly and really dead in our place! Jesus literally laid down His life. Matthew tells us that Jesus "**yielded up His Spirit**" (Matthew 27:50). Mark tells us that Jesus "**gave up the Ghost**" (Mark 15:37).

Luke tells us that Jesus committed His Spirit to the Father and "**gave up the Ghost**" (Luke 23:46). John tells us that Jesus bowed His head and "**gave up His Spirit**" (John 19:30).

Jesus, "**the first and the last,**" in one gigantic step came from glory. He had existed from eternity - but He became man, lived upon this earth a little over thirty years, and "**the Living One,**" the One who is the originator of life, stepped into death of His own free will, that by His death He might destroy him who had the power of death - the devil; and through His (Jesus') death He delivered the captives of the devil. (Read Hebrews 2:9, 14, and 15.) Jesus completely conquered death.

Death's bands were broken by the Lord Jesus Christ. He tore the bars of death away. He conquered death, hell and the grave. He did in the flesh what no man had ever done, what no man could have ever done. He willingly went to the cross, He willingly died, He literally laid His life down . . . God smote Him (Isaiah 53:4).

It is very interesting to note that there were no angels at the Cross. In the Garden of Gethsemane, God sent an angel to strengthen the Lord Jesus (Luke 22:43).

And after Jesus had conquered death, hell and the grave, the angels appeared both outside and inside His tomb (Matthew 28:2-7, John 20:11-13). When the Rapture of the Church takes place, it will be announced by the shout of victory . . . **“O, death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory!”** (I Corinthians 15:55). In I Corinthians 15:30 Paul tells us, **“The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”** Death is a defeated foe, even at this moment; but in the sweet by-and-by there will be no more death. In the land that is fairer than day there will be no crepe on the doorknobs, no funeral trains in the sky! Thank God! And may He hasten that day, is my prayer.

“Behold, I am alive for evermore!” Remember, John saw Jesus standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, representing the seven assemblies, and it was there that the victor over death announced the fact that He is alive forevermore, He will die no more, He has emerged from the darkness and the domain of death, He has conquered death, He has risen from the dead, and He announces to the saints in the Church that He will die no more.

In Him, we have eternal life. **“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”** (Romans 8:1). Because HE lives, WE live. Thank God, salvation is **“Christ in you”** (Colossians 1:27). As believers we are **“hid with Christ in God”** (Colossians 3:3).

Verse 18 closes with the victorious announcement **“Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death!”** The keys denote complete mastery over the bodies and souls of all. Christ has the right to open and to shut; He has absolute authority over death and hell. Jesus took from Satan the keys to death and hell (Hebrews 2:14) and Satan does not now have the power of death.

The force of a key is the symbol of undisputed authority. Read Isaiah 22:22 and Matthew 16:19. The man who holds the key to a building or to a room is the man who has authority to enter that building and to shut all others out by locking the door. Thank God, Jesus personally attacked Satan and took away from him the keys to hell and death!

I fear God. I am not afraid of God . . . I FEAR God in the same manner that my boys fear me, their earthly father. We should fear God - but we should not be afraid of God.

If you are genuinely born again, you do not fear meeting God. Perfect love removes fear, and if you are saved by God’s grace, then the Holy Spirit removes the fear of dying and of meeting God. **“We have not received the spirit of bondage to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption and we cry, “Abba, Father!”** (Romans 8:15). The Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are the sons of God. If we know that we are the sons of God we know that God loved us long before we ever loved Him.

Two lovers do not fear meeting; therefore, it stands to reason, forgetting the Scriptural facts laid down in the Word of God, that a born again child of God will not and does not fear meeting God. Jesus has removed the stinger from death. Death has no sting for the Christian. Jesus has promised to go with us through the valley of the shadow, and therefore we will fear no evil.

My dear friend, 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 and see if you are genuinely saved. It could be that the devil slipped you a counterfeit.

“Perfect love casteth out fear” (I John 4:18).

JOHN IS COMMANDED TO WRITE

Revelation 1:19-20:

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.**

Here we have the threefold division of the book of Revelation. In the Amplified New Testament, verse 19 reads, "Write therefore the things you see, what they are (and signify) and what is to take place hereafter." Notice the word "therefore."

John was first commanded to write (verse 11): "**What thou seest, write in a book.**" Between verses 11 and 19, John saw the glorious vision of the Lord Jesus standing in the midst of the golden lampstands which represent the churches, and John was told to write what he had just seen. Thus, the word "therefore" connects the command to write, with the Speaker whom John had just seen in all of His glory. In the vision, John had witnessed DIVINE GREATNESS. Combined with divine greatness he had also witnessed HUMAN TENDERNESS in the Lord Jesus.

John had met Jesus as no other living soul on this earth had ever known Him. "Therefore," John was ready to write what he had just seen - namely, the glorified Lord.

The things that were taking place (the "**things that are**") refer to the church age which was in progress at the time John was exiled to Patmos. John wrote about 96 A. D., near the end of the first century of Christianity, and "**the things that are**" are recorded in chapters two and three. Chapters four through 22:5 record the third division, "**the things which shall be hereafter,**" and this division has to do with the world and the Jews, and with the Corrupt, apostate church that will be spued out when the true Church is caught out.

Here, then is the key to Revelation which will unlock this prophetic book for you. As we have already stated, we find in this book things past, things present, things yet future. You cannot take events out of the future (the third division of Revelation) and put them in the second division. Each of the three divisions of this book has its own group of events, and to remove these events from one division to another is to wrongly divide the Word of truth. We are admonished to rightly divide the Word.

The three divisions of Revelation do not overlap. The first is a complete vision in itself, and by itself.

The first division does not overlap into the second division. The vision of the glorified Lord standing in the midst of the seven golden lampstands does not pour over into chapters two and three, which comprise the second distinct division of Revelation. The second division does not overlap the third. It is impossible to fit the prophetic events of the third division into this present church age. When any minister attempts to take events from chapters 4 through 22:5 and place those events in chapters one, two, or three, that person is misusing God's holy Word - and that is dangerous.

In verse 20 the mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden lampstands is revealed. The word “**mystery**” as used in the New Testament signifies “*something that is secret and hidden until revealed and made known.*” Then, of course, it ceases to be a mystery. It is then a revelation.

In the New Testament certain great truths, even after their revelation, are still spoken of as mysteries. Only believers who are spiritually minded and who are taught by God can understand the mysteries of the Bible. The mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, spoken in parables by the Lord Jesus and recorded in Matthew 13, were clear as sunlight to the disciples, but dark as midnight to the Pharisees and unbelievers. Read Matthew 13:11-13. Even today the masses of church people are dreaming of a Utopia. They are trying to improve the world. They are trying to clean up what God gave up in the Garden of Eden . . . namely, the flesh. Many ministers pervert the Gospel by misusing the word “**leaven.**” Leaven denotes evil - not righteousness (I Corinthians 5:8, Galatians 5:9, Matthew 16:6). Even in Paul’s day, he declared “**the mystery of iniquity doth already work**” (II Thessalonians 2). Paul did not say, “The mystery of good is already at work,” but “**the mystery of iniquity.**”

Again Paul said, “**Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse**” (II Timothy 3:13). The Bible nowhere teaches that the world will get better and better before the end, but on the contrary the Word of God teaches that evil men and seducers will wax worse, and that as it was in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the days when the Son of Man shall be revealed from Heaven.

The secret and undermining scheming of the evil one will continue working evil until fully ripened and the “**man of sin**” appears. Believers who study their Bibles know the truth of the conditions that will exist before the end of the age of grace, just before the Church is raptured to meet the Lord in the air, and then the Antichrist takes over here on earth.

Why are the stars in His right hand termed angels?

The stars represent spiritual leaders in the church - persons responsible to God in giving forth the message of life, witnessing for God in this present dark night of the history of the Church. The word “angel” does not denote nature, but office. Angels are messengers, or “**ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation**” (Hebrews 1). The way “angel” is used in this particular Scripture denotes the mission and ministry of the one referred to as an angel. (Read Luke 7:24; Luke 9:52; II Corinthians 12:7; James 2:25).

In these verses angel or angels is used referring to those sent as messengers to deliver various messages. The great host of spiritual beings spoken of as angels are servants, and they do service for God and minister to God’s creatures. (Read Psalm 103:20, 21; read Hebrews 1:13,14.)

Angels represent little ones before God - “**See that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you THAT IN HEAVEN THEIR ANGELS DO ALWAYS BEHOLD THE FACE OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN**” (Matthew 18:10).

“**The stars are the angels.**” As the stars shine in the heavens above us, the messengers and ministers in the churches should shine for Jesus. “**Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.**” Jesus spoke these words in the Sermon on the Mount.

The seven golden lampstands signify that the Church is spiritually complete before God, and one day it will be presented to the Lamb without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5:26-30).

Before ever God laid the foundation of this universe - before God made Adam, before God created anything - the Church was predestined to be spotless. The Church of the living God of which Jesus is the Head and the Foundation is perfect, sinless, without mar or scar, without a wrinkle, without a spot. The local assemblies are full of spots, but the true Church, the invisible body made up of all blood-washed believers, is spotless. The Church of the living God is perfect. Jesus is the Head and the Lord adds daily to the Church those who are being saved. (Acts 2:47).

In verse 20, the seven lamps are seven assemblies. These seven assemblies were in Asia Minor; but as we have already seen in our study, the messages to these seven local assemblies have to do with the Church from its beginning to the Rapture. In chapters two and three, we will study each of these churches and we will see that the nature of each church has to do with a period of time from the time John wrote until this present hour. And anyone who will open his eyes and look; anyone who will hear with his ears, can readily pinpoint the Church today, in respect to the churches named and described in chapters two and three of Revelation.

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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