

1A. “THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAS SEEN” - Christ in Glory, (1)

1B. Title Of The Book (1.1)

(1.1) 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:

1. Notice six words in this verse before we step back and look at the verse as a whole.

“Revelation” Comes from the Greek word ἀποκάλυψις, which means “unveiling, revealing, revelation.”<sup>1</sup> Standing as the first word in this last book of the Bible, the apocalyptic nature of John’s Revelation is now declared.

“servants” The things to be revealed are to be shown to His servants, or bond slaves, δούλοις. In our world, where people do not want to be told what to do by anyone, the Lord’s people loudly proclaim themselves to be His bond slaves. Moreover, remember, slaves are obedient.

“must” We are about to examine things that **must** happen. The Greek δεῖ, refers to items that are “binding” or “necessary.”<sup>2</sup> Why? Because God said so, that is why. Everything that God purposes to happen happens.

“shortly” Indicates a brief time, τάχει, “quickly, suddenly, soon.”<sup>3</sup> But remember, what is quick to God is not necessarily short to man (Second Peter 3.8: “But, 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.” The Greek term our word tachometer is derived from a device that measures an engine’s rpm or the number of revolutions it turns per minute.

“signified” Δειξαι, means to exhibit something that can be apprehended by one or more of the senses, *point out, show, or make known*.<sup>4</sup> It refers to indicating or showing something by a sign. It translates the word the Greeks used to refer to communication from the gods to men. John used this same word when he wrote First John 4.1: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” However it was done, you can be sure that it had to be **proven**

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<sup>1</sup> Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 811.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Bauer, Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), page 214.

to John that the message he received was from God. He was not about to naively or eagerly walk into some trap set by Satan, as do many today who say that they have received a special message from God.

“angel” Does anyone know what the word “angel” means, ἀγγέλου? Very simply, the term “angel” means “messenger.” The word can refer to a supernatural being from heaven or a human errand boy. In this verse, I take it to refer to a supernatural being from heaven. In other verses, we must carefully determine whether a human or a supernatural messenger is in view. It should be noted, “no other book in the New Testament speaks more often of angels than Revelation. They are the principle vehicle of communication to John of the truth he is recording.”<sup>5</sup>

2. Who is John who describes himself as “his servant John”? “There is no question that the John mentioned in the Revelation is the son of Zebedee and Salome and the brother of James (Mark 1:19-20; 15:40). His occupation was that of a fisherman (Matthew 4:21). He heard John the Baptist preach and became a follower of Jesus Christ (John 1:35, 40). He was one of the three whom Jesus took with Him on several special occasions (Matthew 17:1; 26:37; Mark 5:37). John also was one of the two sent by Christ to prepare the Passover (Luke 22:8). He is referred to as “that disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20), and is mentioned three times in the Acts (Acts 3:1; 4:13; 8:14). He wrote five books of the New Testament, and only he uses Christ’s title of “the Word” (Logos). (See John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; 5:7; Revelation 19:13).”<sup>6</sup>

## 2B. Method Of Revelation (1.1-2)

3. Having examined various essential words, let us step back and consider the broad view of this verse. We are here told this is an unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ to John via a messenger angel from God and that it concerns future things, which must happen in a relatively brief period by God’s standards. We are about to see history written in advance.
4. This Revelation brings to light things never before seen. Our subject matters are issues the Lord Jesus Christ had earlier been asked about. Some things He was unwilling to reveal during His earthly ministry will be revealed in this book. Consider Mark 13.4, 32:
  - 4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? ...
  - 32 But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”

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<sup>5</sup> John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), page 32.

<sup>6</sup> Lehman Strauss, *The Book of the Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1964), page 22.

Perhaps 50 or 55 years have passed since the Lord Jesus made the statements we have just read. He is ready to speak to His beloved John on some of these subjects.

(1.2) Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

1. A brief look at some individual words in this verse.

“Who” The Greek word is ὄς. From what we considered in verse 1, remember that we are reading the words penned by John the Beloved. This apostle leaned on the Savior’s breast in the Upper Room during the Last Supper.<sup>7</sup> Reference was so made in John 13.23, in John’s peculiar way of noting his presence at an event: “Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.” John humbly referred to himself in this fashion.

“bare record” This phrase comes from a single Greek verb, ἐμαρτύρησε, an epistolary aorist, meaning that John is placing himself with the readers who consider the writing as taking place in the past.<sup>8</sup> It is the word we get “martyr” from, μαρτυρέω, , and it means to give witness to something you have seen.<sup>9</sup> The term has undergone a transition in its use over the centuries and has come into English, referring to suffering death rather than renouncing your religion.<sup>10</sup> In the Bible, however, and especially here in John’s Revelation, the word means to tell what you saw or to pass on what you were given without distortion or introducing inaccuracies.

“testimony” Translated from the word for “martyr.” Therefore, the phrase “bare record” and the word “testimony” are from the same word, and both mean to give witness to something or someone.

2. We turn our attention to the phrase “the word of God.” This phrase appears 45 times in our Authorized Version, including three times in the Old Testament. However, it is the Greek phrase that should drive our inquiry, τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ. An example of this phrase is in Mark 7.13, where the Lord Jesus Christ said, “Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition,” using this exact Greek phrase. By my count, 38 of the 42 places where the English phrase “the word of God” appears in the New Testament translate this Greek phrase. In

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<sup>7</sup> William Steuart McBirney, *The Search for the Twelve Apostles*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1973), page 109.

<sup>8</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures In The New Testament, Vol VI*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1930), page 284.

<sup>9</sup> Rienecker & Rogers, page 811.

<sup>10</sup> *Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1996), page 1180.

addition, by my estimation, this phrase always refers to “the word given by God.”<sup>11</sup> The English Baptist, John Gill, wrote in this connection, “Of the essential and eternal Word of God, his only begotten Son.” thus, John claims to be the agent by which God’s Word was transmitted. However, no one should ever sever the intimate relationship between God’s Word and God’s Son, Who is described by this same John as ὁ λόγος, “the Word,” in John 1.1, which “was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” John 1.14.<sup>12</sup>

3. Consider the phrase “the testimony of Jesus Christ.” About this phrase, John Gill wrote, “*And of the testimony of Jesus Christ; that is, the Gospel, which testifies of the person of Christ, of the truth of his divinity, and reality of his human nature; of the union of the two natures, divine and human, his person: of his several offices, of prophet, priest and King; of what he did and suffered for his people; and of the blessings of grace which they receive by him.*”<sup>13</sup> This phrase is replicated two other times in the Revelation, 1.9 and 12.17. As well, the phrase “the testimony of Jesus” appears twice in 19.10: “And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, *See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*”
4. The last phrase reads “of all things that he saw.” John was particularly well suited to be an eyewitness. Not only was he the beloved disciple and the last surviving apostle of Jesus Christ, but his character and reputation were unimpeachable, as we see attested in three passages: John 19.35: “And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.”; John 21.24: “This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.”; Third John 12: “Demetrius hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record; and ye know that our record is true.”
5. Remember, from verse 1, that John was given a message. To make sure John knew it was a message from God, the Lord “signified” it, as verse 1 indicates. That is, He gave John irrefutable proof of the message’s authenticity. How did He accomplish that? He allowed John to “see” the message he was to record. John has written what he saw as a most credible witness.
6. As we journey through the book of Revelation, you will notice that John was an on-sight observer of what he wrote about. He straightforwardly wrote down the things of the prophetic future that he saw with his eyes. Thus, he was qualified to use the word “martyr” because he was a witness.

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<sup>11</sup> Robertson, *WP*, page 284.

<sup>12</sup> John Gill, *The Baptist Commentary Series Volume I, John Gill’s Exposition Of The Old And New Testaments, Vol 9* (Paris, Arkansas: the Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., reprinted 2006), page 683.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

7. Let us gather the information from verses 1 and 2 regarding communicating this message to John.

Notice: God gave the message unto Jesus Christ, and He sent and signified it by an angel unto John.

Therefore, it happens this way: God to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ to an angel, and that angel to John, with proof of the message's authenticity.

Looking back over verses 1 and 2, who is the primary Author of this book? It is God, the Father. It is His unveiling of His Son.

8. Since Scripture admonishes us to look “unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith,” Hebrews 12.2, we might at this point anticipate that this book of the Bible can be profoundly beneficial to the Christian if it is used appropriately.

### 3B. Beatitude Of Studying This Book (1.3)

(1.3) 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.

1. “Andrew Fuller has said concerning this mysterious book:--‘It is that to the New Testament church which the pillar of the cloud was to the church in the wilderness, guiding it through the labyrinth of anti-Christian errors and corruptions. It must not be neglected under a notion of its being hard to be understood. As well might the mariner, amidst the rocks, neglect his friendly chart, under an idea of its being difficult to understand it.’

Ver. 1-3 ‘To induce us to give the most serious attention to the subject, a blessing is pronounced on those who ‘read, and hear, and keep,’ the words of this prophecy, especially as the time of its fulfillment was at hand. There does not appear to be any other part of Scripture that is prefaced with such an inducement to read, and understand, and practically regard it.’”<sup>14</sup>

2. Let us focus our attention on five words in this verse before looking at the final phrase:

“Blessed” Μακάριος is the same word that was used by the Lord Jesus Christ in His beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5.1-11:

- 1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:
- 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

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<sup>14</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Devotional Commentary*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

- 3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
- 5 Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
- 7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
- 8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
- 9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
- 10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

This is the only place in God's Word where a blessing is pronounced on those who read and hear read a book of the Bible. Yet this is only the first of seven beatitudes in Revelation. The other six are 14.13, 16.15, 19.9, 20.6, 22.7, and 22.14.

“readeth” The Greek compound word ἀναγινώσκων, the basic word, means to read. The prefix attached to the word, ἀνά, “in a position in the middle.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the term refers to reading something amidst an audience or reading something aloud so people can hear you.<sup>16</sup> Paul referred to this when he wrote, in First Timothy 4.13, “Till I come, give attendance to reading.”

“hear” The Greek root word is ἀκούω, the typical Greek word for hearing. Perhaps it would be good, here, to point out that the word “readeth,” this word “hear,” and the word “keep” are present participles. Thus, John pronounces a blessing upon the one who continually reads this book aloud and repeatedly hears and keeps what is written herein. Benefits, then, are directly tied to staying in this book of the Bible.

“prophecy” There is a significant dispute over the proper interpretation of this book of Revelation, as I pointed out earlier. Some believe this entire book is history that has already occurred, while others believe that John is writing of the future that has not yet happened. This single word, προφητείας, when taken at face value, goes a long way toward settling that dispute. Prophecy, by definition, concerns the future. When the pen was put to paper, virtually everything in this book was in the future.

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<sup>15</sup> Bauer, page 57.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., page 60.

“keep” From a word that means to “watch over, to preserve, to keep,” τηροῦντες, from τηρέω, refers to more than a mere acknowledgment of the truth.<sup>17</sup> John refers to people being moved to action and ordering their lives after what he writes about, which is not how most people ordinarily approach a study of prophetic Scriptures. It has been my experience that prophecy is attractive to many people precisely because they can study prophetic portions of the Bible without addressing challenges to how they live and their consecration. That is not how this book of the Bible should be investigated.

3. The phrase “for the time *is* at hand.”

Since more than 2,000 years have passed since this book was penned, it is evident that this phrase does not suggest that the book’s prophecies will be fulfilled quickly. That is not what this phrase means. Instead, this phrase means that the next time in God’s chronology will be when these prophecies will be fulfilled. However, since it has been over two millennia since this was written and Romans 13.11 reads, “*now is our salvation nearer than when we believed,*” we are nearing the end. What this means is that we are right up against it.

4. What John indicates in verse 3 is this: Blessing is pronounced on three activities related to this book of Revelation. The blessing will fall upon the person who reads this book amid others, the blessing will fall upon those that hear the words of this prophecy, and the blessing will fall upon those who keep or respond to the things written herein for the time is at hand.
5. Verses 1 through 3 introduce this last book of the Bible, this capstone of Scripture. John tells us the things referred to here are at hand, near, ἐγγύς.<sup>18</sup> Not that the predictions contained herein will necessarily happen soon, but that the next chapter of events will be the chapter described by this book.
6. The world is about to unravel. You can already sense that we are approaching the end of something, the culmination of something, the climax of something. Someone can get so wrapped up in the turmoil of the world’s events that they lose their perspective. However, with the book of Revelation, we are blessed. We see chaos in the world but order in this book.
7. As events unfold in the Middle East, Far East, Eastern Europe, the United States, and other parts of the world, a person can become profoundly discouraged. Then we look at Revelation again and are reminded, “It’s happening just like God said it would happen.” In addition, when you get seriously concerned, you can skip to Revelation chapter 22 and see that our side won.

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<sup>17</sup> Rogers, Jr., Cleon L. and Rogers III, Cleon L., *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: ZondervanPublishingHouse, 1998), page 611.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

### 1C. Grace and peace from the Triune God (1.4-5)

(1.4) 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

#### 1. “John to the seven churches which are in Asia.”

- a. “John - the apostle. None, but he (supposing the writer is honest) would sign himself nakedly without addition. As the sole surviving representative of the apostles and eye-witnesses of the Lord, he needed no designation save his name, to be recognized.”<sup>19</sup>
- b. Here is a portion of the remarks of the old Texas Baptist, B. H. Carroll, from his classic *An Interpretation of the English Bible*: “From verses 4-6 we have John’s greeting to the seven churches of Asia to whom the entire book is addressed. Not only all of chapters 2-3 are specifically devoted to special messages for the churches named, but at the end of the book, 22:16, we have these words referring back to the whole book, ‘I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches.’

“It is important to note in this connection our Lord’s use of the word *ecclesia*. In Matthew 16, he says: ‘I will build my church,’ using the term to signify the institution. In Matthew 18, he says, ‘tell it to the church,’ referring to whatever particular congregation the decision of the case of discipline belongs. Many times in the book of Revelation, he uses the word ‘church,’ and in every case, the reference is to particular churches. Our Lord’s usage of the word knows nothing of a now existing universal church, whether visible or invisible. He does not say to the church of Asia, but the seven churches of Asia. There is nothing in his use of the word to indicate the existence of church in any provincial, national, worldwide, or denominational sense. On the contrary, he seems to guard very carefully against such a use of the term.”<sup>20</sup>

Note: B. H. Carroll’s ecclesiology is a view I wholeheartedly agree with as reflecting what the Bible says about the Church. When a person comes to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, he does not become a part of the Church of Jesus Christ. By the new birth, he becomes a part of the family of God. However, it is only by employing the Church ordinance of believer baptism that a convert becomes part of the body of Christ. Only Baptists hold this view of the Church and distinguish Baptists from Protestants. To the degree some Baptists depart from this view of the Church, those Baptists have become Protestants.

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<sup>19</sup> *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Vol 3, Part Three*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), pages 655-656.

<sup>20</sup> B. H. Carroll, *An Interpretation Of The English Bible, Volume VI*, (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2001), Revelation, pages 28-29.



- c. Roman Asia in John's time was not the great continent to the north and east, where the eastern portion of the Russian Republic and the whole of China and Mongolia are located. In John's day, Asia was a province on the peninsula that we now refer to as Asia Minor.<sup>21</sup> This is seen on Bible maps that show the Apostle Paul's missionary journeys.
  - d. John refers to seven distinct local assemblies in the Roman province of Asia. This reality helps to clear up the notion that some religious groups have that there are supposed to be denominational hierarchies over churches in which some regional bishop exercises authority over a local congregation. No evidence in the New Testament supports such practices as commonly exist among the Protestants and Catholics. John's communications to these seven Churches verify there was no hierarchy over them. They were autonomous congregations, which is the pattern throughout the New Testament.
  - e. "This is the first of fifty-four uses of the word 'seven' in the book of Revelation. While these are symbolic of 'completion,' they are also literal references to various series of sevens that transpire in this prophecy."<sup>22</sup>
2. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was and which is to come,"
    - a. What is grace? Ephesians 2.5 reads, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." "Grace" translates from the Greek word χάρις, "favor."<sup>23</sup> The way χάρις is used in the New Testament, always being a gift, associates "grace" with salvation. Salvation is a gift given by God since no man can earn or merit God's favor. God's grace is what you want, what you need, and what you must have.
    - b. What is peace? Peace certainly includes the idea of the absence of hostility, but it is more than that. Peace has to do with the concept of prevailing goodwill. From Romans 5.1, we know that peace with God is the result of being justified by faith in Christ. Romans 5.10 shows us that he is His enemy before someone is reconciled to God. However, once a person has experienced the grace of God and has been justified by faith and saved from his sins, he can then enjoy the peace of God in his life and can enjoy peace with God for the first time.
    - c. Notice from where this grace and peace comes. "From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come." This refers to God, the Father, the First Person of the Trinity. Exodus 3.14: "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM

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<sup>21</sup> Footnote on Revelation 1.4, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1992.

<sup>22</sup> Footnote on Revelation 1.4, *Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible*, (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), page 1359.

<sup>23</sup> Bauer, page 1079.

hath sent me unto you.” In this verse, God speaks to Moses from a burning bush and describes Himself as the “I AM,” which means “He Who always is.” Grace and peace, then, comes from the One Who always is.

Note: There is a habit every Bible student should cultivate to understand the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Did you note how we found out who was referred to by the last phrase we examined? We looked for the answer in the Old Testament. If you remember to look to the Old Testament to interpret difficult-to-understand symbols, pictures, and phrases, Revelation will come alive for you. Notice how this works in the last phrase of verse 4.

3. “And from the seven Spirits which are before His throne.”

Here we have a second source of grace and peace described to us. So far, we know that grace and peace come from God. We are told grace and peace come from “the seven spirits” before God’s throne. If you want to know what “the seven spirits” means, return to the Old Testament. Isaiah 11.2 provides the likely answer: “And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.” Notice the listing given:

#1 The Spirit of Jehovah, Jehovah being what “LORD” means.

#2 The Spirit of wisdom.

#3 The Spirit of understanding.

#4 The Spirit of counsel.

#5 The Spirit of might.

#6 The Spirit of knowledge.

#7 The Spirit of the fear of Jehovah.

Because Revelation shows God superintending the affairs of mankind, and because Isaiah’s description of the Holy Spirit shows His sevenfold attributes, it is usually held that John’s is a description of the Holy Spirit. I am convinced, however, that John is referring to Isaiah’s description of the Holy Spirit of God. I am also confident that he is telling us, in as impressive a manner as possible, that grace and peace come from God the Father and the Holy Spirit of God, Who is before the Father’s throne. If you are unwilling to accept this explanation, you can start your religion with the Divine Godhead being the Father, the Son, and the seven Holy Spirits.

(1.5) 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,

1. “And from Jesus Christ”

The Lord Jesus Christ is also the source of grace and peace. John 14.27 records the words of the Lord just before His crucifixion: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

2. If God, the Father, is the source of grace and peace, and if the Holy Spirit is the source of grace and peace, and if the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of grace and peace, is not that evidence to support the tri-unity of God? Of course, it is. God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the source of grace and peace.

**2C. Description of Christ as prophet, king, and priest (1.5)**

3. “Who is the faithful witness”

Jesus is the faithful witness Who always spoke those things that are true. He never compromised or slighted the truth in any way. Is not this the function of a prophet, to give forth truth from God to man? Did not our Lord Jesus do that? Who would step forward and truthfully accuse Him of compromising or slighting the truth in any way? No one. Since that is so, why do people not believe He is Who He said He is? The problem lies not with the One Who speaks the truth, but with those who hear it and refuse to believe it or act upon it.

4. “And the first begotten from the dead”

This phrase tells us that others will follow the Lord Jesus in the resurrection, though being first, He will always be preeminent. In addition, do you know what will happen when those who are Christ’s are resurrected? In part, we will get new bodies suited for heaven and eternity.

5. “And the prince of the kings of the earth”

Jesus Christ is the ruler over all the kings of the earth. The word “prince” translates from the Greek word ἄρχω, for “ruler.”<sup>24</sup> He has not yet come back to earth to exercise that rule, but it is His right to do so. In addition, someday, He *will* come back to rule. Oh, what an exciting event that will be.

6. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His Own blood”

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<sup>24</sup> Rogers, page 611.

- a. Revelation has much to say about God's wrath falling on a wicked and gainsaying world. Because of that, the reader of Revelation might lose track of a great and comforting truth ... "Him that loved us." In English, the verb "loved" appears in the past tense. In the Greek text, however, it is a present active participle, ἀγαπῶντι, indicating He continually and ever-presently loves us.<sup>25</sup>
- b. How does our Lord demonstrate His ever-present love? By washing our sins away in His precious blood, which was shed for remission. Let me ask you a question. Who is it that offers sacrifices unto God for the remission of sins? Is it a priest? Jesus Christ is our Great High priest Who cleanses our sins in His blood. Therefore, we see the glorified Christ as our prophet, king, and great high priest.
- c. This portion of verse 5 is very timely in light of the assertion made by John MacArthur that when the Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross, His blood ran down into the dirt and decayed. Hebrews 9.12: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*."
  - 1) In *The MacArthur Study Bible*, we find this statement in the notes for Hebrews 9.12: "Nothing is said which would indicate that Christ carried His actual physical blood with Him into the heavenly sanctuary."<sup>26</sup>
  - 2) MacArthur's note is consistent with his belief that while He was on the cross, the blood of Jesus Christ ran down into the dirt and was corrupted. It is also compatible with MacArthur's frequently stated position that the blood of Christ is a metonymy for the death of Christ. That is, what Christ wrought, He wrought by His death rather than with His blood.
  - 3) In his commentary on Hebrews, we find this paragraph: "It is possible to become morbid about Christ's sacrificial death and preoccupied with His suffering and shedding of blood. It is especially possible to become unbiblically preoccupied with the physical aspects of His death. It was not Jesus's physical blood that saves us, but His dying on our behalf, which is symbolized by the shedding of His physical blood. If we could be saved by blood without death, the animals would have been bled, not killed, and it would have been the same with Jesus."<sup>27</sup>
  - 4) I am a bit taken aback by this remark considering the author of the letter to the Hebrews mentioned blood twenty-one times in chapters 9-13 and

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Footnote on Hebrews 9.12, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1910.

<sup>27</sup> John F. MacArthur, *Hebrews: An Expository Commentary*, (The Moody Bible Institute Of Chicago, 1983), page 237.

twelve times in chapter 9 alone. For this reason, morbid is not a term that is appropriate for such an emphasis on blood, whether in Scripture or by a devout Christian.

- 5) Why do I bring these points out in our study of Revelation 1.5? Look at Revelation 1.5 again and see the Apostle John's declaration about the blood of Jesus Christ approximately 60 years after the crucifixion. How can we understand this verse if the blood of Jesus Christ ran into the ground as He hung between heaven and earth and then dried and rotted?
- 6) Let us carefully look at the word "washed" and proceed from there. The Greek word is λούω, which refers to using water to cleanse a body of physical impurity.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, this verse uses the term to refer to the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing sinners from their sins.
- 7) If the blood of Jesus Christ ran to the ground while He hung on the cross, and if it later dried up and disintegrated, and if no blood remained in His body, how are my sins cleansed some 2000+ years later? In addition, how are sins continually washed, as First John 1.7 declares, if there is no more blood of Jesus Christ? These questions cannot be satisfactorily answered if all the blood of Christ ran into the ground and is no more.
- 8) Additionally, would not Christ's resurrection include one of the largest organs of His human body, His blood? Although the Lord Jesus Christ's blood was shed, He did not die from exsanguination.<sup>29</sup> The blood and water from His side resulting from the Roman soldier's spear thrust establish that.<sup>30</sup> Rather than exsanguination, the Lord Jesus Christ gave up the ghost, John 19.30.<sup>31</sup>
- 9) If John MacArthur is mistaken about the blood of Christ and the death of Christ, *not* precisely the same thing, and if the blood of Christ is in heaven as I speak, then there are no tricky questions that cannot be answered. I am persuaded that the blood of Jesus Christ was resurrected along with the rest of His physical body and that His glorified body and His precious blood are now in heaven.
- 10) What is the basis for my asserting this? There are several bases: *First*, I claim that the death of Christ and the blood of Christ are not the same, that the blood of Christ is more than a symbolic representation of the death of Christ, based upon the fact that the communion of the Lord's Supper is celebrated with two elements, not one. We serve wine and bread, wine commemorating His shed blood, and bread commemorating His

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<sup>28</sup> Bauer, page 603.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.epainassist.com/blood-diseases/exsanguination>

<sup>30</sup> John 19.34

<sup>31</sup> <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/exsanguination>

sacrificed body. If blood was supposed to represent Christ's body, why are there two elements in the communion of the Lord's Supper? The blood and the body of Christ are not the same and should not be understood to be the same.

- 11) *Second*, I believe the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead without His body seeing corruption. This requirement is stated in Psalm 16.10 and was referred to by Simon Peter in his Pentecostal sermon in Acts 2.27: "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." However, was this prediction fulfilled if Christ's blood ran into the ground and rotted? In addition, would anyone assert that Christ's blood was not a vital and integral part of His physical body? Therefore, if Christ's blood was not raised incorruptible with the rest of His body, the prediction of Psalm 16.10 was not fully realized.
- 12) For the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse away sins, for the blood of Christ to wash us, there must be blood. The blood must continue to exist. Moreover, the only possible way the blood of Christ continues in its existence and continues in its efficacy is if it was raised after three days and three nights with the rest of our Savior's human body glorified.

7. In summation, this verse tells us,

- a) With the word "and" at the beginning of the verse, John connects the Lord Jesus Christ with God the Father and the Holy Spirit as the source of grace and peace. That is evidence supporting the Biblical doctrine of the tri-unity of God.
- b) The verse illustrates the Lord Jesus Christ functioning in His prophetic office, kingly office, and priestly office. Being the One Who is at the same time prophet, priest, and king, this same Jesus must be, of necessity, the Messiah of Israel.
- c) Oh, how glorious it is that the eternal Son of the living God has loved us and has washed us from our sins in His blood. What advantage does the believer in Jesus Christ have. What deliverance the believer in Jesus Christ has. What blessings the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has.
- d) But it does not stop here. The next verse continues elucidating Christ's blessings for the believer.

### 3C. Exalted believers (1.6)

- (1.6) And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

1. John introduced us to the triune God as the source of grace and peace in verses 4 and 5. Beginning with the last half of verse 5, John focused our attention on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why he mentions the persons of the Godhead in the sequence of the Father, the Spirit, and then the Son instead of the more usual Father, Son, and Spirit.
2. Verse 6 is, appropriately, a continuation of the sentence in verse 5. We read the sentence that spans these two verses: “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, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”
3. We know that Christ “loves” us and “washed” our sins away in His Own blood. We now turn to the additional proof of His love for us and more evidence of our cleansing.
4. “And hath made us kings and priests ....” Numerous passages show our future reign in the millennial kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. A few observations are in order at this point:
  - a. The phrase “hath made us kings” appears to be past tense in English, but “hath made,” ἐποίησεν is a Greek aorist tense verb. Time is not a consideration in John’s mind since the aorist tense was the usual tense used by the Greeks to indicate some action without being specific about when or how.<sup>32</sup> Why is this important to note? We are not yet kings, are we? Though believers shall undoubtedly be kings someday, this phrase reveals that John is looking into the distant future to see something “which must shortly come to pass.”
  - b. Consider First Peter 2.9: “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 marvellous light.” Here we see that a future priesthood is planned for Jewish Christians in the Diaspora, based upon Peter’s choice of words in First Peter 1.1: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,” where the word “strangers” translates the Greek word διασπορά, meaning dispersed, and here refers to scattered Jewish Christians.<sup>33</sup>
  - c. What about reigning as kings? In addition, what about Gentile Christians? To address those questions, we look to Revelation 5.10: “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Chapters two

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<sup>32</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar Of The Greek New Testament In The Light Of Historical Research*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1934), page 831.

<sup>33</sup> Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link In Systematic Theology*, (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries Press, 1994), page 993.

and three of Revelation address seven angels of congregations, which included Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians as members. Therefore, Jewish and Gentile Christians have a future as kings and priests.

- d. We will rule alongside our glorified and exalted Savior as He rules this world. Such a privilege is a part of our great salvation. We who were once slaves to sin and under the devil's domination will preside over whole populations. Consider the possibility (however remote) that there are unfallen and un sinful inhabitants who populate other planets in God's vast creation. If that is so, and I have no proof that it is so, I imagine us someday ruling over them.

5. "And hath made us kings and priests"

Unbelievably, Christians are priests! What group of Christians throughout history have been the only ones to believe and strongly affirm the priesthood of the believer? Not Roman Catholics, with their frocked priesthood. Not Protestantism, with their sometimes-frocked clergy and refusal to espouse and stand by the doctrine of the believer's priesthood. Only Baptists have historically affirmed the believer's priesthood while all too infrequently practicing the principle.

6. In the Word of God, a priest performs varied functions to represent the people to God.

#1 The priest offers up sacrifices for sins.

#2 The priest offers up prayers on behalf of others.

#3 The priest approaches God when others cannot.

Since our Lord Jesus has offered Himself up for our sins, there is no more need for a priesthood to offer sacrifices for sins:

Hebrews 9.24-28:

- 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:
- 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;
- 26 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.
- 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:



28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Hebrews 10.11-18:

- 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:  
12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;  
13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.  
14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.  
15 *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,  
16 This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;  
17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.  
18 Now where remission of these *is, there* is no more offering for sin.

Thus, one priestly function is no longer required, the function of offering a sacrifice for sins. However, we can approach God. We can also pray on behalf of others and ourselves as priests. What a great High priest we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has made us priests.

7. What is to be said about a Savior Who gives grace and peace? What is to be said about a Savior Who is shown to be a coequal member of the triune Godhead? What is to be said about a Savior Who not only loves us and washes our sins away but Who has also elevated us to the position of kings and priests?
8. Notice that He “made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.”

What does this phrase suggest? Why did John not say that Jesus made us kings and priests unto God and *our* Father? Because the Lord Jesus Christ’s relationship with God the Father is unlike our relationship with God can ever be and is unlike our relationship with the Father can ever be. God is my God by creation. The Father is my heavenly Father by adoption. However, the Lord Jesus Christ’s relationship with God and His Father is a peer-to-peer relationship since they two, with the Holy Spirit, are one God. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ exercised His divine prerogative by elevating believers to be kingly and priestly. It has not yet happened in time, but it will undoubtedly happen at the right time because these things “**must** shortly come to pass” Revelation 1.1.

9. What is to be said about such a Savior as this? John said it for us, did he not? “to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

- a. “Glory” is a frequently used word in the Bible. The lexicon describes the word in this context as “fame, honor, recognition, or prestige.”<sup>34</sup> Thus, John reckons that His servants should acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ’s fame, honor, and prestige.
  - b. “dominion,” translated from the Greek word κράτος, refers to exercising ruling ability, power, and sovereignty.<sup>35</sup> John does not fear the lordship of Jesus Christ. He is unconcerned about the omnipotent exercise of Jesus Christ’s rule or the demonstration of His sovereignty. He rejoices in it. He delights in it. He is thrilled by it.
  - c. “for ever and ever” is a phrase used 21 times in the Greek New Testament, 14 times in Revelation alone, as the particular designation of eternity.<sup>36</sup> It should then be asked, For how long will the Lord Jesus Christ’s fame, honor, prestige, and sovereign rule be acknowledged, be praised?
    - 1) “The LORD shall reign for ever and ever,” Exodus 15.18, so it will be for as long as God reigns.
    - 2) “The LORD is King for ever and ever,” Psalm 10.16, so it will be for as long as God is king.
    - 3) I could go on, but I think the point is made. John writes of eternal things here, things that are timeless and beyond the scope of our understanding, which have to do with our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. However, throughout all eternity, the Lord Jesus Christ will be praised, adored, worshiped, and His sovereignty will be celebrated.
  - d. The verse ends with the word “Amen.” This word is more important than most people think it is. Fritz Rienecker says, “The word is acknowledgment of that which is valid.”<sup>37</sup>
10. Pause and spend time in self-examination and reflection. All John has written about the elevation of the believer to the status of king and priest is based upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, having washed your sins away in His precious blood. However, has He washed your sins away? Have you come to Christ and trusted Him to do that for you? Unless you have personally trusted Him, His sacrifice does you no good, and you are not saved, much less are you a king or a priest.

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<sup>34</sup> Bauer, page 257.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., page 565.

<sup>36</sup> William R. Newell, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1935), page 13.

<sup>37</sup> Rienecker & Rogers, page 812.

11. I would like you to reflect on whether you are washed from your sins in His blood. Consider your standing before God. Rehearse in your own mind and heart whether you know Him, Who to know is life everlasting.

#### 4C. The second coming glimpsed (1.7)

(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.

1. “Behold, He cometh with clouds ....”

- a. John gets the reader’s attention with ἰδοῦ, “Behold!” Then he makes an announcement. “This guarantees that Jesus is coming again literally and physically accords with 317 other promises of His coming again. The second coming of Jesus is mentioned more frequently than any other subject except salvation itself. The prophets mentioned it, apostles, angels, and even Jesus Himself (see John 14:1-4; Matt. 24:27-30).”<sup>38</sup>
- b. Do you remember the scene when Jesus ascended? Does not Acts 1.9 mention clouds associate with His ascension into heaven? It reads, “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.” In the Old Testament, are clouds not associated with the Shekinah glory of God? Sure. Leviticus 16.2: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy *place* within the vail before the mercy seat, which *is* upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.” And Job 22.14 reads, “Thick clouds *are* a covering to him.”
- c. John here referred to the glorious Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in all His majestic glory and regal splendor. The phrase, “cometh with clouds,” “... echoes the promise of Daniel: The Son of Man will come with the clouds of heaven (Dan. 7:13) – not ordinary clouds, but clouds of glory.”<sup>39</sup>
- d. Notice this from *The Remarkable Revelation*, written in 1930 by L. Sale-Harrison:<sup>40</sup>

**Clouds** (v. 7) - **Sign of Jehovah’s Presence**. A Symbol of **His Majesty and Glory**.

**The cloud** went before the Israelites to lead them (Exod. 13.21).

When **the cloud** abode on the Tabernacle Israel journeyed not (Exod. 40.36).

The Lord descended in **the cloud** (Exod. 34.5).

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<sup>38</sup> See footnote for Revelation 1.7, *Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible*, (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), page 1361.

<sup>39</sup> See footnote for Revelation 1.7, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1992.

<sup>40</sup> L. Sale-Harrison, *The Remarkable Revelation*, (New York: Sale-Harrison Publications, 1930), page 37.

The Lord said, “I will appear in **the cloud** on the Mercy Seat” (Lev. 16.2).

On the Mount of Transfiguration **the cloud** overshadowed Him (Luke 9.36; Matt. 17.5).

Our Lord at His ascension, **a cloud** received Him (Acts 1.9)

We are going to be caught up in **the clouds** (1 Thess. 4.17).

When the Lord comes to judge He will come with clouds (Chap. 1.7).

**The cloud** left Palestine and did not return until the Lord appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. It again left Palestine when the Lord ascended and will not return until the Lord stands on the Mount of Olives.

2. What will happen when Jesus comes again? “and every eye shall see Him”

- a. There used to be a day when no one could imagine how everyone could see Christ’s Second Coming at once. This prediction is relatively easy to imagine fulfilled in this age of live satellite relays of television broadcasts, with on-the-scene minicam reports. When my Lord comes back, people will know about it. It is not the Rapture, but the Second Coming, seven years after the Rapture that John shows here.
- b. I do not think it will be technology that will enable every eye to see Him when He comes again. Instead, I think it will be a great miracle of God, Jesus in His glory, coming in a way that those on earth cannot help but see. It will be glorious for some and terrible for others.

3. “and they also which pierced Him”

- a. “St. John is the only evangelist who records Christ’s *piercing*. This allusion identifies the author of the Apocalypse.”<sup>41</sup>
- b. I am convinced that John put this additional phrase in for a particular effect. He has already stated that everyone will see the Lord at the time of His glorious Second Coming, but he seems to want to point out that a particularly guilty group will see Him return. Who are they that pierced Him? Is John referring to lost people, in general, or is he referring to Jewish people?
- c. Zechariah 12.9-11 gives us a powerful clue, keeping in mind that the reference to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem can only refer to the Jewish people:

<sup>9</sup> And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup> And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for

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<sup>41</sup> *J-F-B*, page 657.

him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

<sup>11</sup> In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

- d. Though the sins of all mankind sent Jesus Christ to Calvary's cross, the Jewish people are a particularly culpable group. Why? Because to them were committed the oracles of God. To them were sent the prophets. To them was sent God's Presence. To whom much is given, much is required.<sup>42</sup> This prophecy, given six centuries before Christ's first advent, predicts the response of the Jewish people to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>43</sup>
  - e. The Lord God Jehovah spoke the words recorded by Zechariah. Again, John leads his readers to a passage that strongly evidences the deity of his Lord Jesus Christ. This is a pattern that will hold true throughout Revelation.
4. "and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."

Why will all people wail when Jesus comes again? To "wail," κόπτω, is literally to beat upon your breast as an act of mourning.<sup>44</sup> Why will men do that? Because Jesus will return not to bless and reward the inhabitants of the earth but to punish and smite them, to subdue them, and to banish them to everlasting Hellfire. This is not the wailing of the repentant, as you will see during our study, but the wailing of those who are guilty of their sins and fear punishment.

- 5. What a contrast there is between verses 6 and 7. Those who have trusted Christ are exalted by being made kings and priests. Those who do not trust Christ will wail because of Him. How much better a fate awaits those who have trusted Christ.
- 6. What is John's response to these two divergent fates? "Even so, Amen." "Amen" is Hebrew for "so be it." It is a term of agreement, of finality. John is siding up, once again, on the Lord's side. How about you? Does your life and your testimony say "Amen" to the impending reward of the saint and the impending retribution of the damned?

## 5B. Greetings From Jesus Christ (1.8)

- (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.

This fascinating verse is one the Jehovah's Witnesses do not like and try very hard to distort. You will see how they try to distort this verse as we proceed.

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<sup>42</sup> Luke 12.48

<sup>43</sup> *Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible*, (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), page 981.

<sup>44</sup> Bauer, page 559.

1. First, the phrase “I am.”

“Εγώ εἰμι” Who is speaking? We should investigate who has demonstrated a tendency to use this phrase in the Gospel record. In John 6.48, John 6.51, John 8.58, John 11.25, and John 14.6, the Lord Jesus Christ used this phrase. Here are the verses:

John 6.48: “I am that bread of life.”

John 6.51: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.”

John 8.58: “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”

John 11.25-26: “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

John 14.6: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

It is our Lord Jesus Christ Who is speaking in Revelation 1.8. However, why should you consider this short phrase important? For two reasons:

- a. *First*, because this short phrase, ἐγώ εἰμι, is the Greek counterpart to the phrase found in the Hebrew Scriptures, Exodus 3.14, which is translated “I AM.”
- b. *Second*, in John 8.59, the Lord Jesus Christ’s enemies interpreted His use of this phrase: “Then took they up stones to cast at him.” Why did they take up stones to cast at Him? They correctly understood His words to be a claim of divinity. Albert Barnes wrote, “The fact that the Jews understood him in this sense is strong proof that his words *naturally* conveyed the idea that he was divine.”<sup>45</sup>

2. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending”

- a. Again, Albert Barnes: “Among the Jewish Rabbins, it was common to use the first and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet to denote the whole of anything, from beginning to end... The language here is that which would properly denote *eternity* in the being to whom it is applied, and could be used in reference to no one but the true God. It means that he is the beginning and the end of all things;

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<sup>45</sup> Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes’ NT Commentary*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com.

that he was at the commencement, and will be at the close; and it is thus equivalent to saying that he has always existed, and that he will always exist.”<sup>46</sup>

- b. Having established that the Lord Jesus Christ was speaking, let us read Isaiah 48.12: “Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I *am* he; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last.”
  - c. This is a strong statement of His deity. Do you understand why the Jehovah’s Witnesses, predisposed to object to Christ’s claims of deity no matter what the Bible declares, object to the plain teaching of Scripture?
3. “saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come”

Who is this phrase referring to? Look back to verse 4. This is the Father. He is the One Who is, Who was, and Who is to come. However, is it not Christ Who is speaking? Is not He the one the word “Lord” refers to in verse 8?

4. The verse finishes with the phrase “the Almighty.”

Following are several verses to examine:

Second Corinthians 6.18: “And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Revelation 4.8: “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”

Revelation 11.17: “Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.”

Revelation 15.3: “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.”

Revelation 16.7: “And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.”

Revelation 16.14: “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

Revelation 19.15: “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

- a. The word translated “the Almighty” in Revelation 1.8, and these verses are παντοκράτωρ.<sup>47</sup> It means having all power. But in each of the verses we have just read, it is God the Father to Whom all power is ascribed with the very same word.
  - b. In this verse, we have all power ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ, using the same word to ascribe all power to God the Father.
5. This verse contains irrefutable evidence of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He that has the eyes to see can see. Those who deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ are victims of satanic delusion. He is God!

#### **6B. What John Saw (1.9-18)**

(1.9) 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.

1. “Here begins the narrative of the visions and prophecies of this book.”<sup>48</sup> “This vision of Christ is equaled in grandeur only by the vision of His final return as King of kings and Lord of lords (19:11-16).”<sup>49</sup>
2. “I John”
  - a. This is the third time that John has identified himself. It must be vital that we know who the man was that this Revelation of Jesus Christ was given to so that he might pass it on to the seven Churches. Let us not doubt that this is the apostle.

With this opening statement in the vision, John saw he stands with Daniel as the only other Scripture writer who refers to himself in this way. The prophet writes similarly in Daniel 7.2 and 28, 9.2, 10.2, and 7.

3. “I John, who am also your brother”
  - a. Notice something quite essential but which is frequently overlooked. John was the only surviving apostle of Jesus Christ when Revelation was penned.

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<sup>47</sup> Bauer, page 755.

<sup>48</sup> Gill, page 687.

<sup>49</sup> See footnote for Revelation 1.9-17, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1992.



Nevertheless, notice that he refers to himself, despite his high office and calling, as “your brother.” Why does he not refer to himself as a prince of the church? Because there is no such thing as a prince of the church, that is why. In God’s plan for His family, we are all peers. This does not deny the prominent leadership roles some have been called to. Still, it denies any so-called spiritual hierarchy, such as in Roman Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and far too many ministries that identify as Baptist.

- b. The fact that John emphasizes his spiritual kinship with his readers rather than emphasizing his apostolic office may serve to reinforce that his role in receiving and passing on this Revelation is not as one who is an apostle of Jesus Christ but as one who is a seer, faithfully recording what he has seen.

4. “and companion in tribulation”

- a. Do you see the word “companion”? Συγκοινωνός. The term is a form of the word for the Greek word communion and means partners, co-sharers. John is a brother in Christ who has shared in three things which are mentioned in this verse:

#1 Tribulation. From θλίψει, a word which refers to affliction or pressing. “John is not referring to the Great Tribulation, but to the persecution already befalling the believers.”<sup>50</sup> His brothers and sisters in Christ were being persecuted, so he was being persecuted. Second Timothy 3.12 declares, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

#2 The kingdom. This might reference that even amidst great trials and persecutions, Jesus Christ rules supreme as Lord of all.

#3 Patience. James uses this same word in 1.3-4:

<sup>3</sup> Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

<sup>4</sup> But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

It comes from ὑπομονή, meaning “to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty.”<sup>51</sup> It refers to a problematic situation that you might be able to avoid, but you do not because you know it’s God’s will for your life. We usually think of this as endurance or perseverance. John could have knuckled under the Romans, burned just a pinch of incense to worship Caesar, and been freed. After all, others who professed to be Christians compromised in that way.

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<sup>50</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Reveling Through Revelation, Part 1*, (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), page 15.

<sup>51</sup> Bauer, page 1039.

- b. Why did John not knuckle under? Why did he not give in to the intense pressure and persecution? Because the hardship he endured came as a direct result of his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. To avoid the trouble, he would have had to deny his relationship with his Lord and Master. He would have had to compromise himself. That he would not do, by God's grace.
  - c. As a Christian leader, he was sent to the isle of Patmos because of his stand for the Word of God and his testimony (the witness, if you will) concerning Jesus Christ. He was not only willing to die for Christ, but he was also willing to live for Christ.
  - d. Ask yourself from time to time, "What pressures will I resist to stand for Christ?"
5. "and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ"
- a. As John shared with his readers the afflictions they endured for Christ's sake, so will he share with them life in Christ. This does not refer to the coming millennial kingdom here on earth but to that aspect of the kingdom, kingdom citizenship, which exists presently when the believer is born again.<sup>52</sup>
  - b. John's companionship in grace is not to be forgotten with present suffering and future blessing. "Patience" refers to what we usually describe as endurance, as mentioned above.
6. "was in the isle that is called Patmos"

The exile of John to the Isle of Patmos is a moving story of devotion to Christ crowned with suffering. This small island, rocky and forbidding in its terrain, about ten miles long and six miles wide, is in the Aegean Sea southwest of Ephesus, just beyond the Island of Samos. Early church fathers such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius state that John was sent to this island as an exile under the ruler Domitian. According to Victorinus, though aged, John was forced to labor in the mines at Patmos. Early sources also indicate that about A.D. 96, at Domitian's death, John was allowed to return to Ephesus when Emperor Nerva was in power.

It was in these bleak circumstances, shut off from friends and human fellowship, that John was given the most extensive revelation of future things shown to any writer of the New Testament. Though men could circumscribe his human activities, they could not bind the Spirit of God or the testimony of Jesus Christ. John's experiences paralleled those of the Old Testament prophets. Moses wrote the Pentateuch in the wilderness. David wrote many psalms while being pursued by Saul. Isaiah lived in difficult days and died a martyr's death. Ezekiel wrote in exile. Jeremiah's life was one of trial and persecution. Peter wrote his two letters shortly before martyrdom. Thus in the will of God the final written revelation was given to John while suffering for Christ and the gospel.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> McGee, page 15.

<sup>53</sup> Walvoord, page 41.

7. “for the word of God”

Has anything ever happened to you “for the word of God”? Have you ever taken a stand “for the word of God”? Have you ever wondered why you have not if you have not? A person should not have to be a Christian for very long before something happens in their life “for the word of God.” Would you not agree?

8. “and for the testimony of Jesus Christ”

This is somewhat different than “for the word of God.” I might add that it is one thing, and quite commendable, to suffer the consequences of taking a stand for the Word of God. But it is quite another thing to suffer the consequences “for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Have you noticed how ecumenical groups get together and are willing to pray to God but are troubled when someone prays “in Jesus’ name”? When John refers to suffering “for the testimony of Jesus Christ,” he has gone to a higher spiritual ground than when suffering, and I say this respectfully, “for the word of God.” It is commendable to suffer “for the word of God.” Do not think I am denigrating the Word of God. Yet, it is better to suffer “for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

(1.10) I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

1. What is “in the Spirit?” The Greek phrase here is ἐν Πνεύματι. Although Christians and even pastors, as a way of categorizing someone who is in a particularly spiritual frame of mind or heart, frequently use “in the Spirit,” the phrase as John uses it here seems to have been a particular spiritual condition that certain apostles and Old Testament prophets were in when God revealed truths to them. Since the revelation of God’s Word is complete, such trances seem to occur no longer, at least not the genuine ones.
2. When someone talks about being “in the Spirit,” one should be careful to ensure he knows what he is talking about. In one sense, every child of God is “in the Spirit” (see Romans 8.9). When someone attempts to convince you that they have received extra-biblical revelation, mark it down that they are likely in error (see First John 4.1).
3. Here are some examples of being “in the Spirit” in the sense of being prepared by God to receive supernatural revelation:

Ezekiel 3.11-27:

- <sup>11</sup> And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.
- <sup>12</sup> Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place.

- 13 *I heard* also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing.
- 14 So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.
- 15 Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.
- 16 And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.
- 18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.
- 19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.
- 20 Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.
- 21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.
- 22 And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.
- 23 Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face.
- 24 Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.
- 25 But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them:
- 26 And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they *are* a rebellious house.
- 27 But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they *are* a rebellious house.

Acts 10.1-20:

- 1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*,
- 2 A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.
- 3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.
- 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.
- 5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter:
- 6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.
- 7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;
- 8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.
- 9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:
- 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,
- 11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:
- 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.
- 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.
- 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.
- 15 And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.
- 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.
- 17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,
- 18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.
- 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.
- 20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Acts 22.17-21:

- 17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;
- 18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.
- 19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:
- 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.
- 21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.
4. The Spirit of God is described as doing His office work here.<sup>54</sup> It was in John 16.13-14 that the Lord Jesus Christ told His apostles of the kind of work John now describes:
- 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.
- 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.”
5. With a better idea of what “in the Spirit” was in that special sense, what does John mean by the phrase “the Lord’s day?” Some explanation is called for here. The most common interpretation of “the Lord’s day” is that it refers to Sunday, the first day of the week, and was so-called by Christians in the first century because they refused to call Sunday what some in the Roman Empire called “imperial day.”<sup>55</sup> Opinions are divided.<sup>56</sup> My belief is not strong enough to argue with anyone on this issue, but I think the phrase “the Lord’s day” should *not* be interpreted as referring to a Sunday for three reasons:
- a. *First*, because there is no indication anywhere in the Bible that the phrase “the Lord’s day” refers to Sunday. Sunday is referred to as “the first day of the week” in First Corinthians 16.1-2:
- 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.
- 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

But “the first day of the week” is not the same as “the Lord’s day.”

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<sup>54</sup> McGee, page 15.

<sup>55</sup> Jim Combs, *Rainbows From Revelation: How To Understand The Apocalypse*, (Springfield, MO: Tribune Publishers, 1994), page 23.

<sup>56</sup> Rienecker & Rogers, page 813.

- b. *Second*, because the Greek word for “Lord” is an adjective here, Κυριακῆ, not a possessive noun.<sup>57</sup> If John were referring to a day of the week that was the Lord’s, the word for “Lord” would have to be a possessive noun. We have the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament, “the day of the LORD.” I understand that John is telling us that “in the Spirit,” he was transported to that future time the Old Testament prophets referred to as “the day of the LORD.”<sup>58</sup> From that future perspective, most of John’s Revelation is given, which fits with his statement of being “in the Spirit.”
  - c. *Third*, I do not think these visions revealed to John could have been given to him within a 24-hour period, which the “Lord’s day” is if it refers to a Sunday.
6. In that setting, John heard behind him “a great voice, as of a trumpet.”

Remembering that John was a Jewish believer in Christ, what significance would you attach to John’s description of the great voice that he heard behind him, remembering that “throughout Revelation, a loud voice indicates the solemnity of what God is about to reveal”?<sup>59</sup> Consider several passages with me:

- a. *First*, Exodus 19.13, 16, 19, where we see the sound of trumpets associated with God’s presence among His people:

<sup>13</sup> There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

<sup>16</sup> And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled.

<sup>19</sup> And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

- b. *Next*, Numbers 10.1-10, where the sounding of trumpets signifies gladness, or alarm, or the issuance of marching orders:

<sup>1</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

<sup>2</sup> Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.

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<sup>57</sup> Walvoord, page 42.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> See footnote for Revelation 1.10, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1993.

- 3 And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.
  - 4 And if they blow *but* with one *trumpet*, then the princes, *which are* heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.
  - 5 When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward.
  - 6 When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys.
  - 7 But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm.
  - 8 And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations.
  - 9 And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.
  - 10 Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the LORD your God.
- c. *Finally*, Zechariah 9.14-17, where trumpets signal the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ:
- 14 And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.
  - 15 The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, *and* make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, *and* as the corners of the altar.
  - 16 And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they *shall be* as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.
  - 17 For how great *is* his goodness, and how great *is* his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.
7. When John used the symbolism of trumpets, he knew that Jewish minds, and Gentile Christians who had been taught the Hebrew Scriptures, would run wild with possibilities of what might be occurring. Whatever was happening in the reader's



imagination, he was sure to know from what John had written that some spectacular event was about to transpire.

(1.11) 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.

1. Our expectations are heightened following verse 10 because John was “in the Spirit,” and the voice was likened to a trumpet. Does something significant happen, as we expect? It does. Until this verse, John told us things about the Lord he knew. Now he begins to describe something he experienced, events that he both heard and saw in this vision.
2. What did John hear behind him? Remember, verse 10 indicates he listened to the voice behind him saying, “I am the Alpha and the 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.”
3. All this was said while John’s back was turned to the speaker. It is not until verse 12 that John was turned around. However, before he turned around, we can discover from what he heard Who was speaking.
4. “I am the Alpha and the Omega”

Who said that in verse 8? Was it not the Lord Jesus Christ? Yes, it was.

5. “The first and the last”

This closely parallels what the Lord Jesus said in verse 8. However, remember that in that verse, John related what the Lord said. In this verse, John hears Him speak. Is there not a passage in the Bible where these words seem to be mirrored? Yes, there is, Isaiah 48.12:

“Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I *am* he; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last.”

Can we hazard a guess concerning the speaker’s identity in Isaiah 48.12? We can. We have yet another instance in which the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is established. It was the God of Israel speaking.

6. “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.”

- a. This speaker, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord God of Israel, commanded John to write his observations down and send them to seven Churches in the Roman province of Asia.
- b. Mind you, no mention is made of denominational headquarters. These letters were not even sent to the head office of a parachurch ministry. Nor were these letters to be dispatched to a synod or a diocese. Why not? Because none of these types of organizations existed in those days. They are extra-biblical inventions.
- c. Jesus founded His Church, a congregation that established other congregations. Moreover, my understanding of the Bible is that congregations like ours are the only organizations scripturally authorized to conduct God's business. Call me narrow, but that is what I find in the Bible.
- d. By the way, the "book" that our glorified Lord directed John to write would not be in the form or appearance of a book as we see today. It was not a book like the construction of our Bibles or the hymnals we sing from, for such a thing had not been invented at that time and would not be developed for centuries. "The Greek word refers to a scroll made of parchment formed from papyrus, a reed that grows plentifully along the Nile [River]."<sup>60</sup>

(1.12) And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

1. "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me."
  - a. John turned to see the voice which spoke to him. John does not turn to see a voice. John is using a figure of speech, a metonymy. That is, he is using a word to represent another word. The term "voice" represents the one whose voice was heard.
  - b. It is like a news article that reads, "The White House commented on the Ukraine affair." Since the White House cannot speak, those represented by the designation "White House" can speak. This is a legitimate figure of speech. It serves to illustrate that when we interpret the Word of God, we need to exercise diligence.
2. John's description takes several verses, so he describes the details first to focus on the main feature of his observation.
3. What detail does he describe in verse 12? "Golden candlesticks," which are large lampstands. A candlestick would be a stand that had oil lamps on it or as an integral part of it. During John's day, candles had not been developed as we usually think of them.

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<sup>60</sup> See footnote for Revelation 1.11, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1993.

4. A Jewish menorah is likely what is meant by the term “candlestick.” A menorah is a single lampstand with seven branches; what is spoken of here are seven lampstands.<sup>61</sup>
  5. John used the “seven golden candlesticks” to represent the seven congregations in Asia to whom the seven letters will be sent. This will be brought out in verse 20, but several comments are warranted at this point:
    - a. *First*, a comment on the number of the “golden candlesticks.” “Throughout Scripture, seven is the number of completeness, so these seven lampstands represent all the churches.”<sup>62</sup>
    - b. *Next*, though a lampstand is meant by the word “candlestick,” witness-bearing is the main thought. The lampstand in the Tabernacle was to give light and was never to go out, according to Exodus 27.20 and 35.14. Its light source was the oil, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The source of a congregation’s shining is the Holy Spirit. Churches are the light-bearers of the world. Their testimonies were never to go out. Christ said: “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5.14). This word is used seven times in Revelation. Six times in the plural (Chap. 1.12, 13, 20, twice; 2.1; 11.4), and once in the singular (Chap. 2.5), where the Lord tells Ephesus that unless she repents, He will remove her candlestick (testimony), or her right to stand as a church, out of its place.<sup>63</sup>
- (1.13) 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.
1. Here, John begins to concentrate on the most essential details he observed, the Son of Man, amid the candlesticks. If you were Jewish, schooled in the Hebrew Scriptures, you would likely turn to Daniel 7.13-14, where reference was made to the Son of Man.
    - <sup>13</sup> I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.
    - <sup>14</sup> And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

Verses 13 and 14 make good background reading. Bear in mind what Daniel wrote here.

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<sup>61</sup> McGee, page 15.

<sup>62</sup> See footnote for Revelation 1.12, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1993.

<sup>63</sup> Sale-Harrison, pages 37-38.

2. Though John did not mention the color of Christ's garment, it resembles a description of the garments worn by the high priest of Israel. The golden girdle gives an even more vital clue that these are priestly garments.
  - a) Most garments Jewish men wore included a girdle about the loins. However, this one is higher, around the paps or the breasts. Such placement permitted greater ease of movement than ordinary clothes would offer and signified a higher office by the wearer. A kingly, priestly-type robe is suggested.<sup>64</sup>
  - b) The golden girdle is different than the one worn by the Aaronic priests of Israel in this respect. Where the high priest of the Aaronic priesthood wore a girdle made with golden thread, Christ's is described as golden, solid gold, or embroidered with many golden strands.

These clothes show us, or at least suggest, that John saw the Lord Jesus Christ as our great High Priest whose presence in heaven means a great deal to believers here on earth. Notice what Hebrews 4.12-16 says:

- <sup>12</sup> For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- <sup>13</sup> Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.
- <sup>14</sup> 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.
- <sup>15</sup> For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, *yet* without sin.
- <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Because of our High Priest, believers in Christ have standing before God to pray and have access to obtain the mercy and grace we need.

3. John describes our great High Priest more fully in the next verse. Let us now consider the verse before us more closely. The phrase begins with the words, "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks."

Because we recognize that "the seven candlesticks" are not the seven Churches of Asia but symbolically represent the seven Churches of Asia, let us also acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is not literally amid the Churches but is

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<sup>64</sup> Gerhard Albert Raske, *A Complete Grammatical Blueprint Of The Book Of Revelation*, (Simcoe, Ontario: Fundamental Baptist Publishing House Canada, 1996)

represented as being “in the midst of the seven candlesticks” in a symbolic way. This use of symbolic language is to remind John’s readers of the continued interest and involvement of the Lord Jesus Christ in the affairs and well-being of His Churches.

4. “one like unto the Son of man”

As we have already seen, this phrase reminds us of Daniel 7.13. According to the Gospels, “Son of man” is the title Christ used most often of Himself during His earthly ministry (81 times in the Gospels). It is an implied claim to deity from the heavenly vision in Daniel 7.13.<sup>65</sup>

To see the contrast between Christ’s two titles, “Son of God” and “Son of man,” take note of John 5.25 and 27:

<sup>25</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

<sup>27</sup> And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

5. “clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle”

This description is a symbolic representation of the attributes of Christ in a special relationship to the events portrayed in the book of Revelation. His being clothed with a garment to His feet is best explained by the clothing of a priest and judge, like Aaron’s robe being designed “for glory and beauty” (Exodus 28:2). The golden girdle corresponds to that used by the high priest to bind his garments higher on the body than at the loins. Josephus, a first-century Jewish general and historian,<sup>66</sup> explained this as keeping with the high priest’s dignity and majesty and being designed to allow greater freedom in movement. The golden girdle corresponds to the high priest’s girdle, which has golden thread but is made entirely of gold here. The somber presence of Christ in His role as judge and priest amid the Churches is a significant introduction to chapters 2 and 3.<sup>67</sup>

(1.14) His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire

1. The color of our Lord’s hair is crucial for us to notice. Attend to Daniel 7.9, where is Daniel’s description of the Ancient of Days, Who is the Lord God Almighty:

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<sup>65</sup> See footnote for Revelation 1.13, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1993.

<sup>66</sup> *Webster’s*, page 1034.

<sup>67</sup> Walvoord, page 44.

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire.”

Do you notice anything here? The descriptions found here and in Revelation 1.14 seem to be identical. The Ancient of Days is God, but Jesus is the Ancient of Days! What does that mean? It means this is another proof of Christ’s deity.

2. Back to Revelation 1.14. “And His eyes were as a flame of fire.” In the Word of God, fire speaks of judgment. This might be symbolic of Christ being that priestly judge of sin since we know He is the Righteous Judge.
3. Revelation 19.12 shows His eyes as flames of fire. However, in that chapter, His eyes are wrathful for those who have rejected Him. In this chapter, He has eyes of judgment. Instead of His eyes being the fiery eyes of wrath against unbelievers, they are the fiery eyes of holiness that seek out sin in the lives of His Own. We see this as we continue, with Psalm 11.4 corresponding to what I have just stated:

“The LORD *is* in his holy temple, the LORD's throne *is* in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.”

4. Sale-Harrison’s book addressed the symbolism of this verse.

## II. Eyes as a Flame of Fire (v. 14).

A. **Fire** is the element which consumes. In scripture it is a symbol

### 1. Of God’s Presence.

The Burning Bush (Exod. 3.2).

Pillar of Fire (Exod. 13.21).

Descended in Fire (Exod. 19.18; Acts 2.3).

### 2. Of God’s Glory.

The glory of the Lord is like devouring fire (Exod. 24.17).

### 3. Of Judgment on Wicked.

On Sodom and Gomorrah-Fire (Gen. 19.24).

Our God is a Consuming Fire (Heb. 12.9).

Fire came Down from Heaven (Rev. 20.9).

Cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20.15).

Fire of My Wrath (Ezek. 21.31).

### 4. Of Judgment for Blessing.

Fire from the Lord consumed the Offering (Lev. 9.24; 2 Chron. 7.1).

I will bring a third part through the fire (Zech.13.9).

Fire shall try every man’s works (1 Cor. 3.13).

B. **Eyes** are used to penetrate or search. Therefore the whole expression, “Eyes as a flaming fire,” speaks of His attributes of penetrating judgment. Eyes are also a symbol of intelligence,

which reveals the fact that the Lord has perfect understanding and discernment.<sup>68</sup>

(1.15) And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

1. Brass speaks of judgment in God's Word. This adds to the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ being the judge. The altar in front of the tabernacle in the wilderness, which contained the Ark of the Covenant, was a brass altar.<sup>69</sup> The laver the priests cleaned themselves with before entering the tabernacle was also brass.<sup>70</sup> This speaks of recognizing, judging, and dealing with sin in the believer's daily life.

2. "and His voice as the sound of many waters"

a. Imagine the sound on a gray, windswept beach just as a storm was brewing. Or the sound of a hurricane or a tornado when you are close enough to hear it. Or the sound of a giant waterfall. What impression is given in each of those situations? Do you not get the sense of raw power? That is the image John conveys here. Great power. Infinite power. It is this infinite power which is God's through His Word.

b. Psalm 29:

- 1 Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.
- 2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.
- 3 The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD *is* upon many waters.
- 4 The voice of the LORD *is* powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.
- 5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
- 6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.
- 7 The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.
- 8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
- 9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of *his* glory.
- 10 The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.
- 11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

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<sup>68</sup> Sale-Harrison, pages 38-39.

<sup>69</sup> Exodus 27.1-8

<sup>70</sup> Exodus 30.17-21

Imagine John's readers, especially his Jewish readers, remembering this psalm. When John described the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, his reader's minds might have gone to this psalm and the six verses describing the voice of the LORD. This is another allusion to Christ's deity.

- c. When professional strong men do feats of strength for their audiences, they are usually accompanied by a lot of grunting and groaning. From having once been a weightlifter and a discus thrower myself, I am pretty sure that when someone begins to approach the limits of his strength, he groans as he exerts. Or, when charlatan faith healers perform their circus acts before large crowds, they usually display great effort. Have you ever noticed that?
- d. By contrast, God works by merely speaking. God speaks, and worlds come into being. When God speaks, all creation, except for humanity, listens. However, in time, even humanity will attend to the words of the Son of Man. In our study of John's Revelation, we will learn of that time when the following passages will be fulfilled: Isaiah 45.23; Romans 14.10-12; Philippians 2.9-11.

Isaiah 45.23: "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."

Romans 14.10-12: <sup>10</sup> But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.  
<sup>11</sup> For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.  
<sup>12</sup> So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Philippians 2.9-11: <sup>9</sup> Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:  
<sup>10</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;  
<sup>11</sup> And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

(1.16) 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.

1. "And he had in His right hand seven stars"



In Scripture, the right hand is the hand of power, the hand of favor, the hand of honor and prestige. We will return to this phrase as we see the significance of the seven stars. Whatever the seven stars are, they are in a special place.

2. “and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword”

- a. What is this sword? In the haste to resort to Hebrews 4.12, we deprive ourselves of the benefit of resorting to the Old Testament. First, consider Hebrews 4.12:

“For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

- b. In Hebrews 4.12, μάχαιρα implies a sword for doing fine work. It is like a small, sharp blade that discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. The sword in Revelation 1.16 is an entirely different tool. In the verse we are examining, John uses the term ῥομφαία, an instrument of death, a long and heavy broad sword used by barbarians, and symbolizes the irresistible power of divine judgment.<sup>71</sup>
- c. In the Roman world, there were two ways of using a sword: the wrong or the Roman. According to the Romans, the wrong way to use a sword was to slash and hack with the sword, which would only wound an adversary most of the time. The Roman practice, which proved to be the most lethal way, was to thrust, thrust, thrust, continuously thrust.
- d. Used so the sword would do its job quickly and efficiently. Therefore, will the Word of God, coming from the mouth of the Son of God, do its job quickly, precisely, and efficiently. We will see it in John’s Revelation, executing judgment upon all unbelievers.
- e. This two-edged sword proceeding from Jesus’ mouth is based on the prophecies of Isaiah 11.4 and 49.2, which add further to His depiction as the fulfillment of the eschatological judge.<sup>72</sup>

Isaiah 11.4: “But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.”

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<sup>71</sup> Rienecker & Rogers, page 814.

<sup>72</sup> G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary On The New Testament Use Of The Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), page 1092.

Isaiah 49.2: “And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me.”

3. “And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength”

a. Countenance speaks of facial appearance. It is not beauty or looks but the outward glow of an inner fire. For Christians, it is supposed to be the countenance that is the crucial thing, not beauty. An ugly person can have a radiantly beautiful countenance, just as a beautiful person can have a fallen and sullen countenance.

b. Consider some of the significant countenances in the Bible.

1) First, there is the fallen countenance of Cain, Genesis 4.6:

“And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?”

2) Then, there is the glowing countenance of Moses, Exodus 34.29:

“And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses’ hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.”

3) Third, Stephen’s angel-like countenance, Acts 6.15:

“And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.”

4) Finally, the Lord’s countenance on the Mount of transfiguration, Matthew 17.1-2:

<sup>1</sup> And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

<sup>2</sup> And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

c. In Revelation 1.16, the countenance of the Lord Jesus Christ is as the sun, but more so. The bright blinding light is lovely to His Own, but those who are of the darkness will try to hide from this radiance of holiness and judgment.

(1.17) 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:

1. John is an average Christian man. When he sees the glory of the risen Savior, he does what we who read the Bible have come to expect. He falls on his face like a dead man. Are you familiar with the phrase Pentecostals and Charismatics use, “slain in the Spirit?” Have you seen folks supposedly overcome by God falling backward, only to be caught by someone standing conveniently behind them? What happens in the Bible when someone is overwhelmed in the presence of God? There are several examples I want you to consider:

- a. Genesis 17.1-4 and Abram’s experience:

- <sup>1</sup> And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.
- <sup>2</sup> And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.
- <sup>3</sup> And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,
- <sup>4</sup> As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

In the presence of Almighty God, Abram falls. Here are two questions for your consideration: Did Abram fall forward or backward? To fall on your face, you have to fall forward. Right? Next, was Abram, a friend of God or a foe? He was a friend, James 2.23.

- b. Joshua’s experience in Joshua 5.13-15:

- <sup>13</sup> And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, *Art* thou for us, or for our adversaries?
- <sup>14</sup> And he said, Nay; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?
- <sup>15</sup> And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so.

Joshua fell before the captain of the Lord’s host, Who is the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. Two questions: Was Joshua God’s friend or foe? In which direction did he fall, forward or backward?

- c. The third passage is Judges 13.20-21:

- <sup>20</sup> For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the

altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.

- <sup>21</sup> But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the LORD.

The “angel of the LORD” is yet another appearance of the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. Again, two questions: Did the future parents of Samson fall on their backs or their faces? Moreover, were they friends or foes of God?

- d. The final passage before we return to our text is John 18.1-6. Again, read the passage and consider the questions:

- <sup>1</sup> When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.  
<sup>2</sup> And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.  
<sup>3</sup> Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.  
<sup>4</sup> Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?  
<sup>5</sup> They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.  
<sup>6</sup> As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

In the presence of the incarnate Son of God, did these men fall forward on their faces or backward? Second question. Were they friends or foes?

- e. Is it not interesting that every time we see a friend of God overwhelmed in His divine presence, the friend of God falls on his face before God, just as we will see them do in heaven as we continue studying Revelation? But the single time we see men falling backward, as so many seem to be doing on television when they are supposedly overwhelmed by God, or in Charismatic or Pentecostal healing services, they are not God’s friends, but those who have come to arrest Christ and then crucify Him. It seems to me there needs to be a little Bible study done by those who participate in these so-called ministries that feature so much falling backward. It seems to me they show by their behavior that they are no friends of God.
2. Back to our text. Why do you suppose John fell at Christ’s feet as dead? He was frightened. Probably for the same reason Joshua and Abram and Samson’s parents fell on their faces.

- a. I do not believe John was manifesting that proper fear of the LORD that is mentioned so many times in God's Word in connection with wisdom and knowledge. If he had feared as wisdom, or as knowledge, or as understanding dictated, he would not have been gently admonished to "Fear not."
  - b. Remember that this is the disciple who leaned on the Savior's breast the night of the Last Supper. This man was more intimately intimate with the Lord Jesus Christ than any other. Yet he was so overwhelmed by the glory of the Lord Jesus that he fell on his face in terror.
  - c. Did he display familiarity with the Lord Jesus here? No, he does not. He does not run up and say, "Hey, Jesus." No, he is awestruck. John Bunyan remarks that John fears the Lord Jesus here because "His presence is dreadful." Specifically, "His most comfortable and joyous presence" is dreadful.<sup>73</sup> He goes on to comment, regarding the fear of God, "Take note: if the presence of God is not a dreadful and a fearful thing even in his most gracious and merciful appearances, how much more so, then, when He shows Himself to us as one that dislikes our ways, as one that is offended with us for our sins?"<sup>74</sup>
  - d. In other words, if the Lord Jesus Christ is so dreadful to John with such a gracious and merciful appearance, what must His appearing be like to those He disapproves of, to those He will come to judge?
3. "And He laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last"
    - a. Everything in Scripture is significant. Therefore, note that the Lord Jesus laid His *right* hand upon the terrified John. As I have observed before, it is the hand of favor and honor. It is also the hand in which He, moments before, held the seven stars, verse 16. With this gesture of comfort and reassurance, we see the Lord Jesus Christ's affection for His beloved John.
    - b. Have you counted the times the Lord Jesus told people to "Fear not" in the Gospel record? Seven times our Lord directed individuals to "Fear not." If you correctly fear Him, you need not fear anyone or anything else. No matter the worry, whether it is a storm on the Sea of Galilee, financial concern, or a sick child, He always says to His Own, "Fear not."
    - c. You might wonder, "Why did He tell John not to fear if the Bible tells us to fear God and to fear Him?" There are different kinds of fear. One kind of fear drives a man away from God, the way Adam and Eve were motivated by fear to hide from God. Another kind of fear is the cowering fear that an enslaved person has for a brutal master. God does not want these kinds of fear from His Own. He

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<sup>73</sup> John Bunyan, *The Fear of God*, (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1999), pages 3 and 5.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. page 5.

wants the kind of fear a child has for his loving and tender father, who will chastise him for his good.

- d. The wrong kind of fear overcame John, and the Lord Jesus Christ gently rebuked him for it so that John would have an instructed fear, a spiritual fear, and not an ignorant and cowering fear.
4. And again, let us not overlook that when He said, “I am the first and the last,” He was reasserting His deity. Isaiah 48.12 confirms this:

Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I *am* he; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last.

What means this comment about being first and also being last? “Idols will come and go. He was before them, and He will remain after them.”<sup>75</sup> Another observation. Who told Abram to “Fear not” in Genesis 15.1? Was it not Jehovah? So, you see, the cumulative weight of evidence attesting to the deity of Jesus Christ in this book of Revelation is crushing.

5. Before taking up verse 18, observation and application are in order. Upon John’s reaction to seeing the majestic Savior, “The terrible splendour of such majesty was more than the apostle could bear, and he fell down deprived of his senses.”<sup>76</sup> “So fallen is man that God’s manifestation of His glorious presence overwhelms him.”<sup>77</sup> Consider. Suppose the godliest man on earth, the last living apostle of Jesus Christ, John the beloved apostle, who had leaned on the Savior’s breast in the Upper Room the night before His crucifixion, could not stand before Him. What will you do when you find yourself standing before Him?
  - a. In Psalm 24.3, the psalmist asks, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?”
  - b. In Psalm 130.3, the question is asked, “If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”
  - c. Finally, Malachi 3.2 asks, “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.”

You need to ask yourself, “Will I stand?” Will you stand in God’s holy place? On the day of His coming, when Christ appears, will you stand? Only if you are converted if you know Him personally, and if His precious blood has cleansed your sins.

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<sup>75</sup> See footnote for Revelation 1.17, John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1993.

<sup>76</sup> Adam Clarke, *Clarke’s Commentary, Vol VI*, (New York: Abingdon Press), page 974.

<sup>77</sup> *J-F-B*, page 659.

(1.18) 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.

1. Can there be any doubt, after this verse, that the One to Whom deity is ascribed in the last several verses is the Lord Jesus Christ? Does this not prove, beyond any doubt, that the Lord Jesus Christ died a literal and actual physical death and was then literally and physically raised from the dead?
2. But He is now alive forevermore. And the keys, symbolizing authority, show He has authority over Hell and death. Hell is a place, while death is a state. Hell has to do with the souls of men, while death has to do with the bodies of men. Thus, Jesus has authority over your body and your soul. Allow me to explain some things concerning this subject that may be unclear to you:
  - a. In Luke 23.43, we read, “And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” In this verse, Jesus responds to the thief on the cross next to Him, who said, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” He asked the Savior for a future blessing, but the Lord Jesus Christ promised Him an immediate benefit. Jesus was going to paradise when He gave up the ghost and took the thief with Him.
  - b. Remember that paradise is not the same place as heaven. In John 20.17, we read, “Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” Jesus said this *after* He had risen from the dead. So, we know from Jesus, Himself that He had not gone to heaven until He had first taken His shed blood to offer as our great high priest for our sins.
  - c. So, where is this paradise if it is not heaven? Turn to Acts 2.31: “He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.” When Jesus died on the cross, this place we call Hell had two compartments. One portion of Hell was reserved for unsaved people who died and is a place where they suffer great torment. However, the other part of Hell, the additional compartment of Hell, which Jesus referred to as paradise, and which He also referred to as Abraham’s bosom, was where saved people were sent when they died before Jesus ascended to heaven.
  - d. You might think of it this way before Jesus ascended into heaven: Except for two men, Enoch and Elijah, who were translated into heaven by God without ever dying, everyone who died went to Hell. Everyone! Sinners went to Hell, and saints went to Hell. Believers went to Hell when they died, and unbelievers went to Hell. But you must understand that Hell has two parts, regions and compartments. The excellent part is called paradise, or Abraham’s bosom, and is a lovely place. A bad part is a horrible place of pain and torment. Therefore,

when Abraham died, he went to the paradise part of Hell. When David and Daniel died, they went to the paradise part of Hell. But, when Cain, who murdered his brother, died, he went to that portion of Hell that is the place of fire and torment.

- e. When Jesus died, He went to paradise. That is, His soul went to paradise. I think He was in paradise for three days and three nights while His body was in the tomb. Then He came back and was reunited with His body, which was then glorified, and He rose again in His now glorified body and was seen by His disciples on several occasions. Then, when He gave His disciples the Great Commission, He ascended to heaven to sit at His Father's right hand. Mark 16.19: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."
  - f. There is something else that Jesus did when He ascended to heaven. He took all those believers who were in paradise to heaven with Him. Ephesians 4.8: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive...." So, when Jesus ascended to heaven, he took Daniel, David, Joshua, Moses, Jacob, Abraham, Rahab, Sarah, Hannah, and all the others who had been in Hell but were in the paradise part of Hell.
  - g. Now that Jesus is in heaven with the Father, everyone who is a Christian who dies goes straight to heaven. The excellent part of Hell is now empty, with no one there. Only the terrible part of Hell, the place of fiery torment, is still occupied. And whenever sinners die, they still go to that bad part of Hell, where they will stay until the Last Judgment and are cast into a far worse place, the lake of fire.
  - h. Jesus' soul did not go directly to heaven when He died. His soul went directly to Hell, the good part of Hell, the place called paradise. He remained with people like David, Abraham, Daniel, Sarah, and Joseph for three days and nights. Then He rose from the dead, and His soul rejoined His body, which was now glorified. He appeared among His disciples on several occasions, and then He went to heaven and took everyone from the good part of Hell with Him. That is where they all are now, in heaven, with Jesus.
3. What words of comfort and consolation to a frightened Christian man. "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." But what words of foreboding and pending disaster to a lost man.

## **7B. The Outline Of The Book Of Revelation (1.19)**

**Chapter 1            The unveiling of His Person            (His glory)**



**Chapters 2 & 3    The utterances of His purpose    (His grace)**

**Chapters 4-22    The unfolding of His power    (His government)**

(1.19) Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

1. John is restored to somewhat normal composure and directed to write what he has already seen, what things are, and what shall be hereafter.
  - a. This verse gives us the general outline of the entire book of Revelation. This is the only place in the whole Word of God in which such an outline is given. By giving us this outline for Revelation, the Lord Jesus Christ reveals to us how essential it is to understand and interpret this significant portion of Scripture correctly.
  - b. How vital is this outline? Those who follow this key to interpreting Revelation invariably believe that the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for His Own will be pre-tribulational and pre-millennial, which is to say, before the Tribulation before the Millennium. Those who deviate from this outline develop all kinds of deviant prophetic schemes.
  - c. Only when you follow this three-point outline can you have any hope of making sense of Revelation can you do justice to this great book. So, you can see how vital this outline is to understand.
2. The first point concerns the things John has seen and the unveiling of Jesus Christ in His glory in chapter one. Therefore, we have again emphasized that John functions as a seer rather than a prophet.
3. The second point covers chapters two and three and deals with the things that are, that is, the churches of this present age.
4. The third point, referring to what is, by far, the lengthiest portion of this book, has to do with those things that come after the churches are gone from the earth. Of course, this will be when the Rapture of the Church Age believer occurs in the imminent future.
5. Before we move to verse 20, I must point out a crucial technical phrase that first appears in Revelation at the end of verse 19. Translated in this verse as “hereafter,” the Greek phrase *μετὰ ταῦτα* is a technical term that appears nine times in Revelation, each time referring to a significant break between what actions happened before and what action comes after the phrase is used.

**8B. The Meaning Of The Seven Stars And Seven Lampstands (1.20)**

(1.20) 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.

1. Here, we can learn an important lesson about using symbols in this great book. As mentioned before, this book has a great deal of symbolism, and some of it will be very difficult for us to decipher. Still, we must understand the purpose of John's use of symbols. Symbols are helpful tools to improve our understanding of this book. This book uses symbols not to conceal but to reveal the truth. Once we decipher a symbol's meaning, great understanding is available.
2. The seven Churches are the seven Churches of Asia. John tells us that. With the Churches described by the Lord Jesus Christ as golden candlesticks, we see the mission and function of a New Testament Church described marvelously. Candlesticks do not give off light. Instead, candlesticks hold the light up so all will be illuminated by the glow emanating from the light.
3. So, here at Calvary Road Baptist Church, as a Church, lifting up Christ so that all may see Him are merely instruments. Since our function is solely to lift up the glorious Savior, all activities that we engage in at this Church should, in some way, aid in proclaiming the Gospel to others or in preparing our people so that they can get the Gospel out.
4. What about the seven stars? The stars are angels, from the word ἄγγελοι. But angels mean messengers and can refer to either human beings or supernatural beings who wait upon the Lord, depending upon the context in which the term is used.
5. In Daniel 12.3, the word "star" describes those who turn many to righteousness. This clue would point toward these angels being men since heavenly beings do not participate in the Great Commission of winning lost souls to Christ, as First Peter 1.12 suggests, and the entire body of Scriptural truth attests to:  
  
"Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."
6. Also, we might notice, in Daniel 12.1, that Michael the archangel is mentioned. We know that heavenly angels were guardians of the nation of Israel. Further, we know that holy angels guard little children (Matthew 18.10) and those who will be but are not yet, believers (Hebrews 1.14). However, what about Churches? Who protects Churches?
7. Angels, both natural and supernatural, seem to have a twofold ministry as we see their function in the Bible. They give messages (remember, the word "angel" means messenger), and they protect those under their oversight from harm.

8. But the question is, do the heavenly beings we usually think of when thinking of angels minister to Churches in the way they ministered to Israelites and in the way they minister to children and those who shall be the heirs of salvation? From all of my studies of God's Word, I would answer "No." All evidence overwhelmingly points to men having the responsibility and duty of protecting Christ's Churches, not heavenly angels.
9. Bible teachers agree that the stars held in the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, the angels of the seven Churches in Asia, are mortal men. They are the pastors of the seven Churches in Asia. Suppose the pattern from Revelation chapters 1, 2, and 3 holds to our present era, and I am convinced it does. In that case, a congregation's pastor is seen to be in Christ's right hand, the hand of His favor, and the place where He exercises control over their lives and ministries.
10. Why the term "angel?" Referring to His men as angels is a powerful reminder by our Lord Jesus Christ that pastors are charged with transmitting messages from Him to His Own, men responsible for protecting His flock, are given to Churches by Him, and are answerable to Him. This seems to line up with the kind of ministry Paul recognized pastors to have in Acts 20.17, 27-30:
  - 17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.
  - 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.
  - 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.
  - 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.
  - 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.
11. So, as we close out our study of Revelation chapter 1, we have seen several things we need to remind ourselves of:
  - a. We have seen numerous indications that the risen and glorified Lord Jesus is God,
  - b. We have seen indications that Christ plans to use pastors (who are themselves shown to be in His right hand) to protect His Churches from spiritual harm, which is termed a mystery,
  - c. We have seen the mission of the Churches as light bearers portrayed marvelously,
  - d. And we have seen genuine believers described as priests and kings.

How do these truths affect and influence how we live and serve God. Amen.