



– an uncluttered approach –

SIMPLIFYING

REVELATION

APOCALYPSE

αποκαλυψις

A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involved another, supernatural world.

– The Apocalyptic Imagination

A prophetic revelation, especially concerning a cataclysm in which the forces of good permanently triumph over the forces of evil.

– dictionary.com

A great disaster.

– m-w.com

What is **REVELATION**?

- What is Revelation?
- The **GREEK WORD** is ap-ok-al-ooop-sis, which is sometimes transliterated Apocalypse.
- Modern definitions of Apocalypse have skewed people's perception of the book.
 - **M-W.COM**, "A great disaster." **NO**.
 - **DICTIONARY.COM**, "...a cataclysm..." **NO**.
 - **THE APOCALYPTIC IMAGINATION** (John Collins).
- **WHAT??**
- The word literally means "*disclosure, appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed, revelation*" (Strong's).
 - The intent of the book is to reveal something to us, not hide something from us.
 - It is not an uncommon word or exclusive to Revelation. It is also used in Romans 2:5; 16:25; 2 Corinthians 12:7;

Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 3:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:7.

- The meaning of a word doesn't change just because it is used in Revelation. We'll see the same is true of the word "tribulation."



“...to give a sign,
to signify, indicate”
STRONG’S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE
...sent and signified...

- 1:1 – the message has been “...sent and signified...”
- The images we encounter are figures, signs, symbols. they are **NOT TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY.**
 - When we read about strange creatures in the book,
 - When we are presented with numbers,
 - When places are mentioned,
 - When events take place
 - These are not literal, they are signs.
- If we look for a literal fulfillment of them,
 - In the historical record, or in future events, we will mess ourselves up.
 - It is faulty to look for literal fulfillments of what has been symbolically presented.
- We want to understand the message being revealed through the images.

...things which must shortly take place. (1:1)

...for the time is near. (1:3)

...things which must shortly take place. (22:6)

...the time is at hand. (22:10)

Revelation was **SIGNIFICANT**
to the original **RECIPIENTS!**



- 1:4 states the book was written to the seven churches of Asia. The book was important & applicable to them.
- We find **FULFILLMENT TIMESTAMPS** at the beginning & the end.
 - If something will take place shortly, is near or at hand, it is not 2000 years away.
 - These timestamps reveals to the original recipients that the book was for them.
- This doesn't mean everything spoken of was fulfilled in the days of the original recipients.
 - Some things were to come (the final judgment, the casting of Satan & his hosts into hell; the glorification of God's people in heaven), but
 - There would be temporal judgments to give relief & comfort.

- Of the judgment & accompanying events – like us, they did not know when it would be, nor did the Lord Jesus.
 - There are NT books (ie. 1 & 2 Thess; 1 & 2 Pet) which speak about the judgment as being at hand;
 - We need to keep that in mind as well.

SEVENS IN REVELATION

- » Seven churches (1:4)
- » Seven Spirits (1:4)
- » Lampstands / stars (1:12)
- » Seals (5:1, 5)
- » Trumpets (8:2, 6)
- » Bowls (15:7)
- » Heads, mountains, kings (17:9-10)



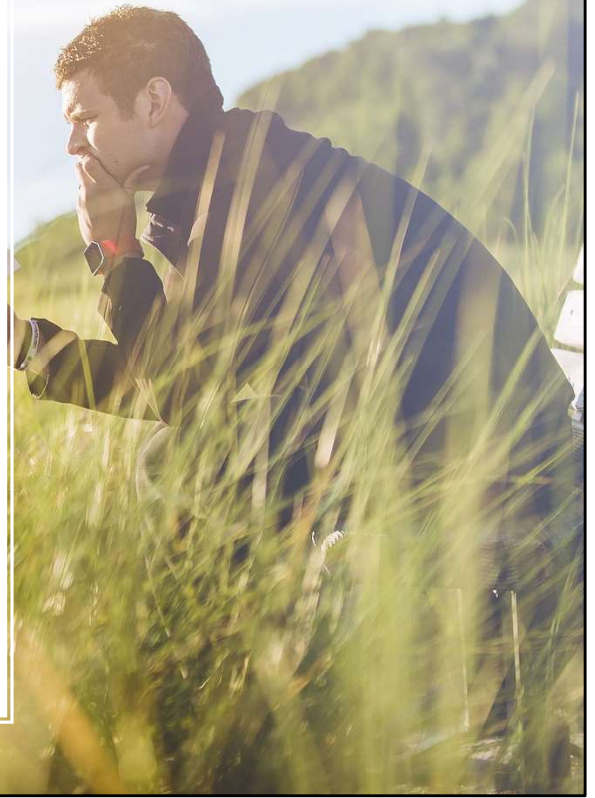
- The number “7” is prevalent in the book.
 - Some of them are clearly seen, some are not so obvious.
 - Here are **SEVEN** examples...
 - Written to 7 churches of Asia;
 - Seven Spirits is a reference to the perfect of the Holy Spirit;
 - Seven lampstands are the seven churches (v 20)
 - The seven stars are the angels (messengers) of the churches (v 20)
 - Seven seals of ch. 5
 - Seven trumpets of ch. 8
 - Seven bowls of ch. 15
 - Seven heads, mountains & kings (figures of authority) in ch. 17
 - Some sources say there are 49 groupings of sevens in

the book, which is interesting (7x7).

- Other “sevens” that show up include:
 - Seven horns, seven angels, seven thunders, seven crowns,
 - Prophets are mentioned seven times;
 - Reference to earthquakes seven times;
 - Reference to Christ’s sword seven times;
 - Reference to Christ’s blood seven times;
 - Reference to the book of life seven times.
- In fact, there are seven beatitudes in the book, the first being here in 1:4...

7 BEATITUDES

- Read, hear & keep the word (1:3)
- Those who die in the Lord (14:13)
- Watchful & pure (16:15)
- Marriage supper of the Lamb (19:9)
- First resurrection (20:6)
- Keep the word (22:7)
- Keep the commandments (22:14)



- Seven beatitudes of Revelation...
- 1:3, *"Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near."*
- 14:13, *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*
- 16:15, *"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."*
- 19:9, *"Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"*
- 20:6, *"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power..."*
- 22:7, *"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps*

the words of the prophecy of this book."

- *22:14, "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."*

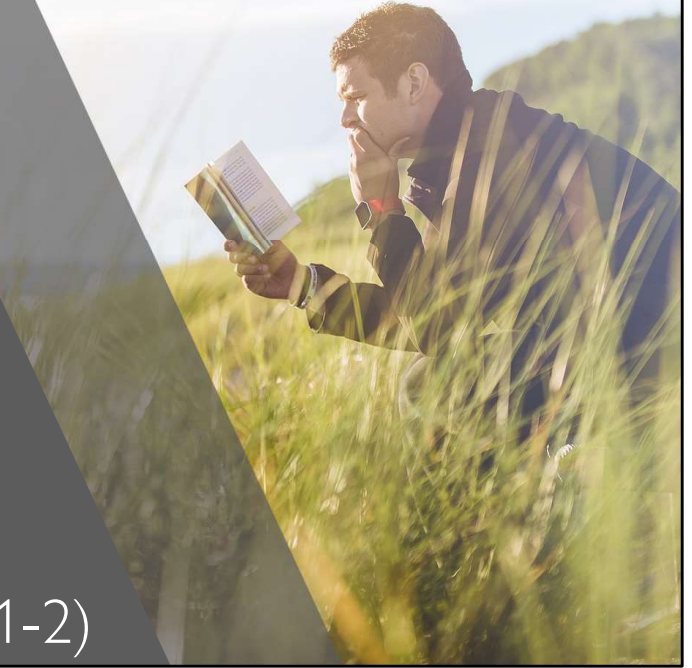


- The book is addressed to the seven churches of Asia.
- From reading elsewhere in the NT, we know there were churches established in these cities.
- However, there were **MORE THAN 7** churches in Asia. Christians also met in:
 - Colosse (Colossians 1:2)
 - Hierapolis (Colossians 4:13)
 - Troas (Acts 20:6-7)
 - Miletus (Acts 20:15)
 - Perga (Acts 14:25)
 - Derbe, Lystra, & Iconium (Acts 14:21)
 - And perhaps other cities.
- So why only write to seven churches?
 - The number seven is used time and again to represent perfection, completeness.

- It is used as a number of God.
- Thus, the seven letters, though written to specific churches (and applicable to the situation of those specific churches), are representative of a message to the whole church, both then and now.

THREES IN REVELATION

- » John's relationship to us (1:9)
- » Glory, honor & thanks (4:9)
- » Glory, honor & power (4:11)
- » 3 occasions of praise (5:8-13)
- » 3 woes (8:13; 9:12)
- » 3 plagues (9:17)
- » Temple, altar & worshipers (11:1-2)



- “7” is not the only number used throughout the book. The number “3” appears a lot too.
 - It also is used as a number to represent perfection, completeness, & God Himself.
 - I’m not sure how many groupings of “3” there are in the book – a lot!
- Examples...
 - 1:9 – John is our brother & companion in the “tribulation & kingdom & patience of Jesus Christ”
 - 4:9 – the 4 living creatures give “glory and honor and thanks” to Jesus
 - 4:11 – all of God’s people exclaim him worthy of “glory and honor and power”
 - 5:8-13 – the throne room scene has 3 occasions of praise;

- 3 woes are spoken of in 8:13; 9:12
- 3 plagues are mentioned in 9:17
- 11:1-2 – three things, the temple, the altar & worshipers, are used to represent God's people.
- proclaim “glory and honor and praise” Just as the number “7” is used throughout the book, the number “7” is prevalent in the book.
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 - Here are **SEVEN** examples...
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THE GREETING

...grace to you and peace from Him **1** who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven **2** Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus **3** Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth... (1:4-5)



- In the greeting of the book, all 3 persons of the Godhead are mentioned (1:4-5).
 - The **FATHER** is identified as “*Him who is and who was and is to come*” – eternal nature.
 - The **SEVEN SPIRITS** is not quantitative, but qualitative; picturing the perfection of the Holy Spirit.
 - The **SON** is revealed to be the trustworthy conqueror of death who is given all authority. Three traits of the Christ are revealed:
 - The “...faithful witness...” – the book is His testimony, it is truth...
 - The “...firstborn from the dead...” – this points to our hope...
 - The “...ruler over the kings...” – King of kings (17:14; 19:16; cf. Ps 2), He is the supreme authority.

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. (ISA 53:5)

Throughout the book, Jesus is identified as **the Lamb of God**.

5:12-13; 6:1; 7:10, 14; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1; 17:14; 19:9; etc.



...washed us from our sins in His blood...

- 1:5 – Blood is important throughout the Bible.
- In Genesis 9:4 (cf. Lev 17:14; Deut 12:23), blood is equated with life.
 - The sacrifices of the OT pictured the animal's life being given for the sinner.
 - So it is with the sacrifice of Christ. The difference, of course, is the animal sacrifices couldn't give full atonement (Heb 10:4); Jesus' blood does.
- We are washed in the blood of the **LAMB OF GOD** (John 1:29, 36). Several times in Revelation, Jesus is referred to as the Lamb.
- He is the fulfillment of several OT prophecies, including the suffering Saviour pictured by **ISAIAH**.

KINGS & PRIESTS

...a **kingdom of priests**
(EXODUS 19:6)

...a **royal priesthood**
(1 PETER 2:5, 9)

A few translations of 1:6...

- » "...to be a kingdom, to be priests..." (ASV)
- » "...a kingdom, priests..." (RSV, NASB, ESV)
- » "...to be a kingdom and priests..." (BBE, NIV)



- V 6 – "...has made us kings and priests..."
- A great image that finds its origin in **EXODUS 19:6**, "...you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."
- The same image is used by Peter in **1 PETER 2:5, 9** to refer to Christians.
- Notice a few **TRANSLATIONS** of 1:6.
 - "kingdom of priests" is perhaps a better description than "kings & priests."
 - Neither the image in Exodus 19 nor that in 1 Peter 2 say they were kings (ie. granted authority or rulership).
 - The same is true here in Revelation 1:6.
- We have access to God's kingdom, we are not kings (Jesus is the king).
 - Jesus is the king, we are of the royal family.
 - Our citizenship is heavenly (Philippians 3:20)

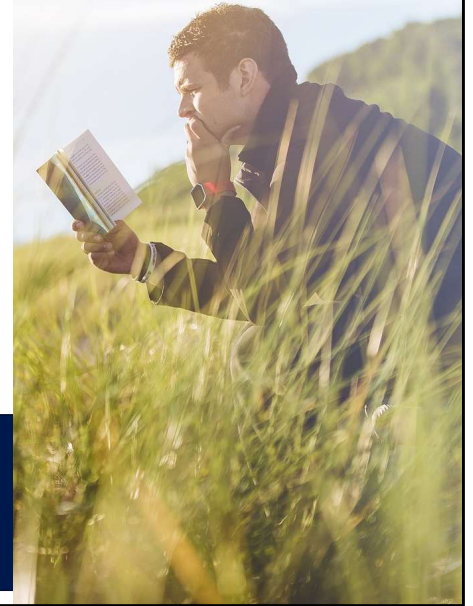
What **coming** does this refer to?

Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven. (ACTS 1:11)

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (MATTHEW 24:30)

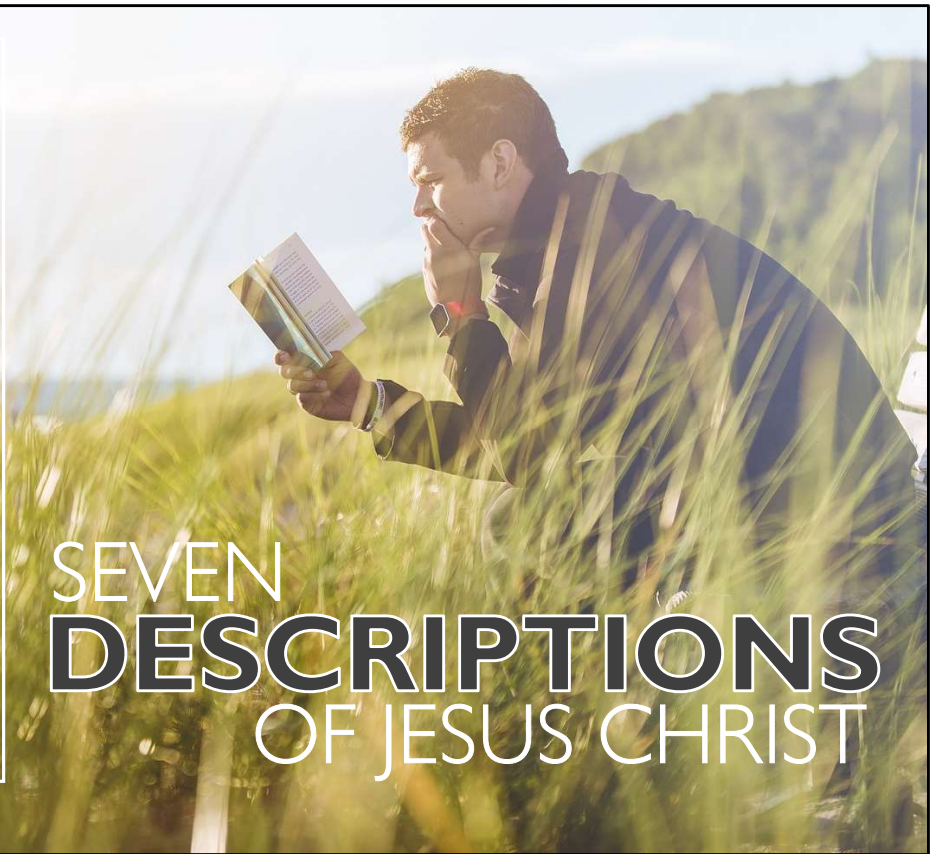
Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. (1:7)

He is
COMING



- 1:7 – what coming is spoken of here?
 - Most think it is the 2nd coming of Christ.
 - It does match the words of the angels to His disciples (**ACTS 1:11**).
 - But there is another possibility.
- The language is the same as **MATTHEW 24:30**, which is about the destruction of Jerusalem (see v 1-3, 35-36).
 - Similar language is used about temporal judgments against Egypt (Isaiah 19:1) and Jerusalem (Jeremiah 4:13).
 - Revelation 1:7 may be a promise of His second coming, but it may be more generic, a temporal judgment of the enemies of God's people.
 - Keep in mind the context of Revelation 1:7
 - V 1, "shortly"
 - V 3, "time is near"
 - V 4, "seven churches"

The Faithful Witness
Firstborn From The Dead
Ruler Over The Kings
Alpha And Omega
Beginning And End
Is ... Was And Is To Come
The Almighty



- We noted already the 3 descriptions of Jesus in v 5.
- He is,
 - The **FAITHFUL WITNESS** (Gr. martos). He died but rose again!
 - The **FIRSTBORN** from the dead. Never to die again. His resurrection is the message of the gospel (Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:41; 13:31)
 - The **RULER** over the kings. He is “King of kings” (1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14; 19:16)
- These three are part of a group of seven descriptions in ch. 1. He is also...
 - The **ALPHA & OMEGA**. First & last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a statement of deity, eternal existence – He is God.
 - The **BEGINNING & END**, same as the previous image (cf.

1:11; 2:8).

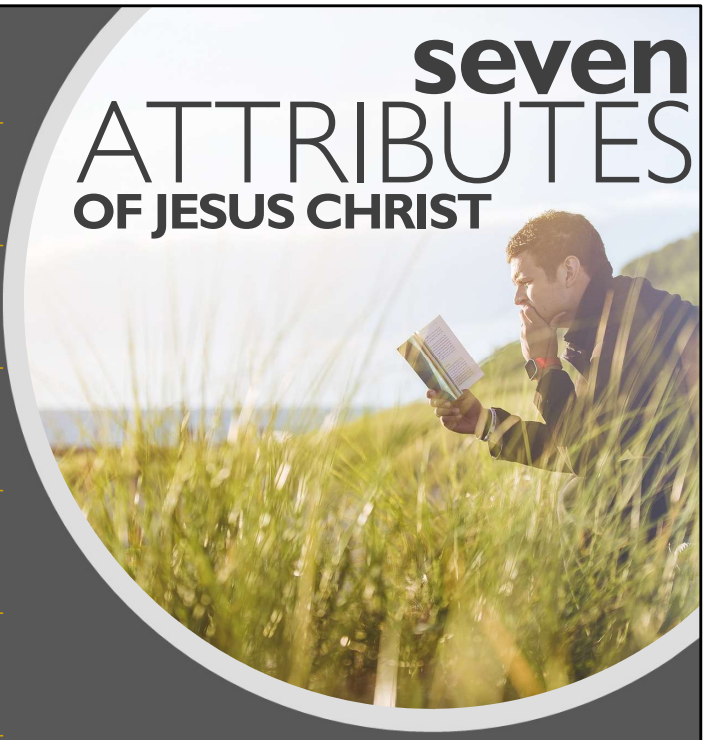
- Who **IS AND WAS AND IS TO COME**. Was used of the Father in 1:4. another statement of His divine nature; equal to the Father (John 10:30).
- The **ALMIGHTY**. He is the all-powerful one; again a reference to His nature as God.



- V 9 – John wrote from the island of Patmos.
- John identifies himself as our brother & companion in **3** **THINGS**:
 - Tribulation – John knew tribulation. He was in exile on Patmos!
 - Tradition (via Tertullian) states John had been submerged in boiling oil (yet unharmed), and then exiled to Patmos by Domitian.
 - This is not a “misery loves company” statement, but intended to give confidence (much like Paul’s statement in Acts 14:22).
 - The kingdom – the kingdom of God, the church (Matthew 16:18-19).
 - In the preaching of John the Baptist, Jesus, the 12 and the 70, the kingdom was at hand.

- John speaks of it as a reality (Mark 9:1; Col 1:13), as being present.
- Patience – we are called upon to be patient while the Lord exercises His patience (2 Peter 3:9).
 - In 6:10, the dead saints ask, “...how long, O Lord...”
 - We must wait till all is ready.

Voice	"...I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet ... and His voice as the sound of many waters... " (1:10, 15)
Countenance	"...One like the Son of Man ... His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength... " (1:13, 16)
Clothing	"...clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. " (1:13)
Face	"His head and hair were white like wool , as white as snow , and His eyes like a flame of fire... " (1:14)
Feet	"His feet were like fine brass , as refined in a furnace..." (1:15)
Right Hand	"He had in His right hand seven stars... " (1:16)
Mouth	"...out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword... " (1:16)

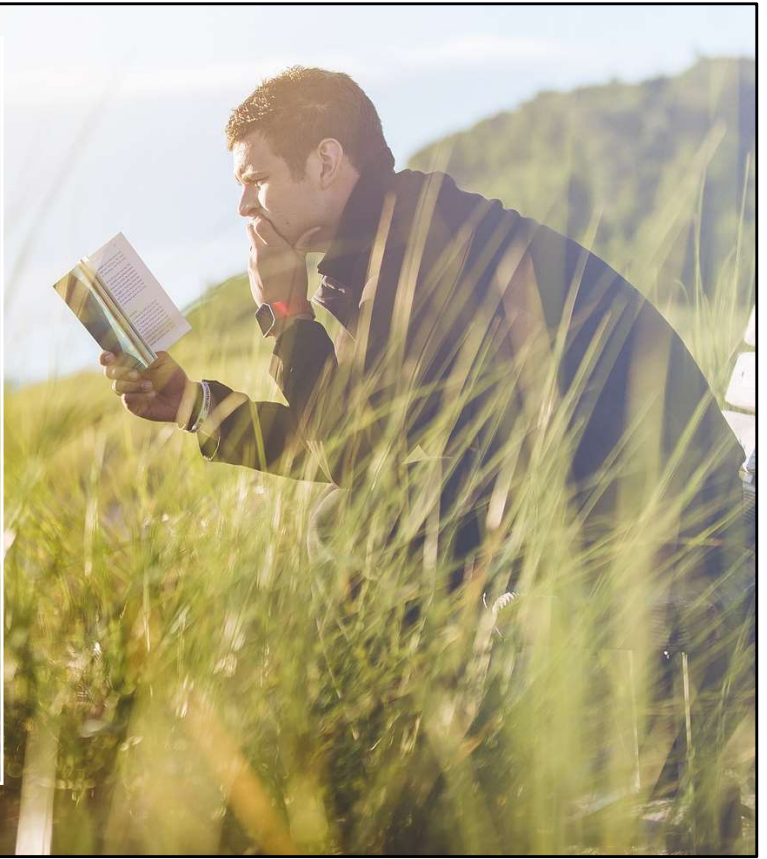


- V 10-16 give a marvelous description of the Lord Jesus.
- V 10 – John was in the Spirit (presumably meaning he received a vision – not just he was “spiritual”)
- V 10 – he heard the Lord’s **VOICE**.
 - The imagery conveys the power & clarity of the Lord’s voice (His word).
 - V 11 – He commissioned John to write & send out the book to the churches.
- V 12 – John turned around to see the Lord.
 - V 12 – His **COUNTENANCE** was like the Son of Man (a reference to the divine being pictured in Daniel 7:13; 10:5, 16).
 - V 13 – Like the shining of the sun in its strength.
 - Both images speak of radiance.
- V 13 – His **CLOTHING** is majestic.

- A garment down to his feet;
- His chest girded with a golden band.
- V 14 – His **FACE** demonstrates purity.
 - White – a brilliant white, like the glistening of snow;
 - Eyes – flame of fire. Fire is used to purify.
- V 15 – His **FEET** are firm.
 - Like fine brass.
 - Strong, unbreakable, tested.
- V 16 – His **RIGHT HAND** shows authority.
 - The seven stars are in His hand.
 - He has charge over them.
 - They're identified as the messengers of the churches (v 20)
- V 16 – His **MOUTH** demonstrates power.
 - A two-edged sword.
 - Eph 6:17 – the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.
 - Heb 4:12 – the word of God is two-edged sword.
 - Isa 59:2 – “...He had made My mouth like a sharp sword...”

I FELL AT HIS FEET AS DEAD

“...do not be afraid; I am the first and the last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. (1:17-18)



- V 17 – what an overwhelming and awesome image John saw. He was terrified & fell at Jesus’ feet.
 - The Lord comforted him, “Do not be afraid.”
 - John was one of 3 apostles who saw Jesus’ glorious appearance at the mount of transfiguration. The Lord said the same thing to him there (Matthew 17; Mark 9; Luke 9).
- Jesus affirmed His identify for John.
 - “the first and the last” – deity. Same image as Alpha & Omega; Beginning & End.
 - “...lives, and was dead...” – He is the one who has conquered death! Recall, John was one of the disciples who ran to the tomb, finding it empty.
- Having been victorious over death, Jesus now possessed the keys of hades & death.

- If someone has the key, they have the right to open the door.
- Jesus can give us victory over death.

Individually we are lights
(Matthew 5:14-16)

**COLLECTIVELY WE
ARE A LAMPSTAND**

mystery
REVEALED

ANGEL – gr. αγγελος

a messenger

...Behold, I send My **messenger** before Your face,
who will prepare Your way before You. (MATTHEW 11:10)

- V 19 – John, write. Write what you have seen.
 - Write about how things are now;
 - Write about what will happen.
- V 20 – revealing the mystery of the seven stars & the seven golden lampstands. If John asked about them, we're not told.
 - The lampstands are the **CHURCHES**.
 - Individually we are lights, collectively we are a lampstand.
- V 20 – the seven stars are angels. Angel (Gr. aggelos) is **A MESSENGER**.
 - Who are these messengers?
 - It would seem awkward for Jesus to tell John to write letters to heavenly beings.
 - The word can be used of heavenly beings, but also of humans.

- It seems more likely these are humans – perhaps evangelists in the churches.
- **MATTHEW 11:10** is an example of aggelos being used of a man (John the Baptist).
- James 2:25 is another example...
- *“...was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another rway?”*

Next week...

- ❖ Letters to the churches
- ❖ Jesus' identity
- ❖ Assessment of church
- ❖ Recommendation
- ❖ Promise to overcomers

REVELATION 2-3

