

Revelation 01 - Vision of the Risen Christ; Divine Outline

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Revelation 1

I. Prologue (Rev 1:1-8)

(A) Title (1:1a)

(B) Chain of custody (1:1b-2)

1 The **Revelation of Jesus Christ**, which **God gave Him to show to His bond-servants**, the things which **must soon** take place; and He sent and **communicated it** by His **angel** to His bond-servant **John**,

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John,

1 This is the revelation of Jesus the Messiah, which God gave him to show his servants the things that must happen soon. He made it known by sending his messenger to his servant John,

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by his angel unto His servant John:

- "...Revelation" - *apocalypse*, "unveiling"; the name of the book comes from the first noun in the book, *apocalypse*

- It's a disclosure; refers to something previously concealed or hidden; used 18x in NT

- Notice the "Revelation" is singular, not plural: Revelation describes a singular vision in one day, at one sitting. It does not describe multiple visions over a long period of time, like Daniel's experience.

- Jesus visited John on Patmos and gave him a command to "write" (12x in Revelation) what he would see and hear

- Many pastors today believe that we are unable to understand the book of Revelation, so they completely avoid it. Many even believe that the book was purposefully written as *impossible* for man to understand it. But if we are unable to understand it, why is it called the book of "unveiling"?

- Much of what is disclosed or unveiled in this book is information that if it wasn't presented here, there would be no other means for us to know it

- Revelation does not have the meaning that many modern scholars attach, linking it with the "apocalyptic literature" genre that was popular during the intertestamental period through the time of John's writing

- "...of Jesus Christ" - the unveiling is of Jesus Christ, not John; Revelation is all about Jesus, period.

- Any attack on the book of Revelation is an attack on Jesus Christ (Cf. 19:10)

- Revelation unveils the final phase of Christ's redemptive program

- Jesus Christ is the Giver of this revelation (Cf. Matt 11:27; John 1:18; 5:19-23; 12:49; 17:8) and the main subject. The fact that Jesus could be both the Giver (subjective) and the main subject (objective) is consistent with the genitive in the Greek, which is probably both objective and subjective here.
- "...God gave Him" - the vision goes from the Father (who originated the vision) to the Son, then to an angel, then to John. See note: **Seven-Fold Method of Communication of Revelation** below.
- "...to show" - *deiknyo*, aorist tense meaning a single showing; the singular title of the book, Revelation, also indicates that John saw the contents of Revelation (4:1—22:21) as a single vision
- "...His bond-servants" - the readers of Revelation. Later in the verse, John is also called a "bond-servant."
- "...soon" - *tachos*, short, quickly; rapidly in execution (from where we get the word "tachometer"); used 8x in Rev (1:1; 2:16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:6,7,12,20).
- This word is often mistranslated and used to discredit the Bible because it's been over 1900 years since John wrote that these events will take place "soon." However, that's not what *tachos* means. John is not saying these events will take place "soon" or "quickly" in the sense of tomorrow or next week. He's saying "soon" or "quickness" in the sense of once the events begin, they will take place in rapid succession.
- It's akin to saying "once the race begins, it will be over quickly." In this case, as we know from numerous other passages, "quickly" means seven years. "The things" that will take place, when they begin, will happen quickly (in a short amount of time, one after the other, without much delay); see note: **Timing Texts** below
- Once the 1st Seal is opened in Rev 6, it will be one judgment after another in rapid-fire succession until the King arrives in Glory in Rev 19
- To the consternation of preterists, who contend that Revelation's predictions that its prophecies will come to pass "shortly" or "quickly," *tachos* is an "adverb of manner" rather than an "adverb of time"; it describes the "manner" in which tribulational events will occur, not their timing
- Preterism bases their entire belief system on this word (*tachos*), assuming it means something that must happen in a short amount of time. Thus, they believe that much, if not all, of Revelation was fulfilled in 70 AD.
- The "time-texts" words used in Revelation (see chart below) can mean an event that will occur within a short period of time, such as within the lifetimes of the apostles, but these words do not have a "one-size-fits-all" definition. These "time-text" words mean different things depending on the context in which they are used.
- *tachos* can be used to describe an event within the lifetime of the apostles (Cf. 1 Tim 3:14); but *tachos* can also be an adverb (modify a verb), referring to something that when it

happens, will happen quickly (Cf. Acts 22:15). This allows for a delay in time before the events begin, but once they begin they will happen in quick succession. This is how *tacos* is used here.

- "...communicated" - *sēmainō*, signified, to give a sign; to render into signs or codes (symbols); the "symbols" point to reality
- This does not mean that everything that follows is symbolic, though much of it is
- No prophecy is of private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20)
- "...angel" - *angelos*, a messenger; angels are referenced 67x in Revelation. The message went from God to Jesus to this angel, who communicated the vision to John.
- The "Chain" of Revelation: God —> Jesus —> angel —> John —> Scroll —> Pastor (*angelos*, messenger) —> Listener (see note: **Seven-Fold Method of Communication of Revelation** in Rev 1:10)
- John is so overwhelmed by this vision that he saw that he fell down to worship the angel (Rev 19:10)
- "...John" - named 5x in Revelation (1:1,4,9; 21:2; 22:8)
- From the first century to today, nearly all orthodox scholars have concluded that this refers to the Apostle John
- Early church fathers (Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Irenaeus, and Victorinus) wrote that the Apostle John experienced exile on the island of Patmos during Domitian's reign (1:9)
- John wrote five NT books (the Gospel of John, 1-2-3 John, Revelation)
- John wrote Revelation at the very end of his life, in his late 80s to early 90s
- The most fruitful time of John's lifelong ministry was at the very end of his life, at least in terms of his writing.
- They wrote that the government allowed John to return to Ephesus after Emperor Domitian's death in 96 AD. Consequently many conservative interpreters date the writing of this book near 95-96 AD.
- Preterists argue that John wrote Revelation in the late 60s AD, and that all the "prophecy" in this book was fulfilled in 70 AD. Several writers have refuted this view.

[OT reference: Dan 2:28-29]

Timing Texts

Revelation's timing texts do not limit the scope of its fulfillment to the first century (as preterism believes). It is possible to understand the timing texts qualitatively rather than chronologically. In other words, these texts could indicate the *manner* of Christ's return rather than *when* He will return. Thus, when the action comes, it will come suddenly with great rapidity. Moreover, the action is to be regarded as impending as if it could be fulfilled at any moment. The NT allows for such a usage. For example, while it is true that Scripture

often uses "shortly" or "quickly" (*tacos, tachy*) in a chronological sense to indicate when something will happen (1 Tim 3:14), Scripture also uses the same word in a qualitative sense. For instance, Acts 22:18 uses *tacos* to indicate manner when it says, "Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem *quickly*, because they will not accept your testimony about me." The preterist errs in assuming that these words are technical expressions that always have the same definition every time they are used. In fact, each of these terms has a broad semantic range and therefore its meaning must be determined by its context rather than through the imposition of an artificial "one size fits all" grid.

In addition, the LXX often uses *tacos* qualitatively in prophetic passages. It is obvious that the use of *tacos* in the following passages cannot be chronological and therefore must be qualitative because contextually these prophetic passages would not find their fulfillment for hundreds and even thousands of years after they were written. For example, Is 13:22 says, "Her (Israel) fateful time will soon come" This verse was written around 700 BC and predicted Israel's destruction under Babylon that did not occur until 539 BC. Is 51:5 says, "My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, And My arms will judge the peoples; The coastlands will wait upon Me, And on My arm they will trust." Many scholars believe that this passage will not be fulfilled until the millennium. Similar LXX uses of the timing phrases utilized in Revelation can be found in Is 5:26; 13:6; 58:8; Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14. Given the broad semantic range of these terms, "context is king" in determining whether the chronological or adverbial meaning is applicable. Because the context of Revelation involves global events that have not yet come to pass, an adverbial rather than a chronological meaning should be assigned to these words.

It is also possible to understand other "timing texts" in Revelation in terms of imminency: *eggys* ("at hand," 1:3; 22:10) and *mellō* ("about to" or "shall come," 1:19; 3:10). In other words, rather than chronology, these terms could be communicating that the prophesied events could happen at any moment.

While Revelation's "timing texts" pose no obstacle to the futurist interpretation, these texts pose considerable problems for the preterist interpreter. A partial preterist has problems are created by the fact that Revelation's "timing texts" are found at the end of Revelation as well as the beginning (22:6,7,10,12,20). The partial preterist system still wants to hold to a future bodily appearing and final judgment (20:7-15). However, the use of *tacos/tachy* and *eggys* in Rev 22 is injurious to the partial preterist system, because the existence of these words at the end of the book logically leads to the conclusion that the entire Book of Revelation was fulfilled in 70 AD rather than just most of it. If the use of *tacos/tachy* and *eggys* in the early chapters of Revelation lead partial preterists to conclude that most of the book's prophecies were fulfilled in 70 AD, then surely these identical words found at the end of the book should also lead to the conclusion that the entire book was fulfilled in 70 AD.

2 who **testified** to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, everything that he saw.

2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

2 who testified about this message from God and the testimony about Jesus the Messiah.

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

— "...testified" - *martyreō*, to witness, an eyewitness; John faithfully recorded the vision given to him by the angel

— It's in the epistolary aorist tense: he's projected to where we are, looking back... His frame of reference is from our time frame looking back

— John wrote "I saw" 45x in Revelation. He "saw" many things and passed this revelation ("all things that he saw") on to the church

(C) Blessing (1:3)

3 **Blessed** is the one who **reads**, and those who **hear** the words of **the prophecy** and **keep** the things which are written in it; for the **time is near**.

3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

3 How blessed is the one who reads aloud and those who hear the words of this prophecy and obey what is written in it, for the time is near!

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.

— "Blessed" - *makarios*, there are seven blessings in Revelation (see list below)

— We're never told what the blessing is...we're only told that if we become a student of Revelation we'll be blessed, but we don't know exactly how.

— Since 278 of Revelation's 404 verses allude to the OT, to understand Revelation you must have an understanding of the OT. That in and of itself is a blessing. Revelation forces you to become a student of the other 65 books of the Bible, especially the 39 books of the OT.

— "...reads...hear...keep" - the blessing is not for those who read or hear it, but to those who "keep" it (Cf. John 13:17; see notes there)

— We're not blessed for reading or hearing Revelation, but only when we do what it says, we heed (apply) it (James 1:22-24)

— This is the first of seven blessings that John mentioned in Rev (14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14; Cf. Luke 11:28)

— Blessing conveys the idea of a person flourishing as they study and apply this book

- "...the prophecy" - the literary style of Revelation is prophecy, history written in advance that is designed to change the moral outcome of people
- Liberal scholars will call Revelation "apocalyptic literature" which is essentially a fancy term to mean that you can't interpret it literally because the other apocalyptic books are not literal
- Revelation was written about the same time as some other books in the "apocalyptic literature" genre, but none of those books are the inspired Word of God (see differences below)
- Revelation claims to be prophetic end-to end: at the start of book (1:3), in the middle (10:11), and at the end (22:7,10,18-19)
- Conservative scholars believe that one must read Revelation in conjunction with the NT books that precede it, as well as the Whole Counsel of God; not as contradictory, but complementary
- "...time" - *kairos*, a period of time rather than a point in time; if, as Preterism believes, the events of the Tribulation period described in Revelation occurred in the first century, it would have made a lot more sense for John to use the Greek word *chronos*, which represents chronological nearness. The Greek word *kairos*, used here, does not carry a chronological requirement.
- The time when God would fulfill these prophecies was "near" when John wrote this book (Cf. 22:10)
- "...near" - *engys*, imminent; fulfillment could begin at any time; the same Greek word used in Matt 24:32-33. Ironically, Matt 24:34 and Rev 1:3 are both referring to the same thing: the events surrounding the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Revelation's Seven Beatitudes (*makarios*)

1. Rev 1:3 - reader
2. Rev 14:13 - dead
3. Rev 16:15 - those looking for Christ's return
4. Rev 19:9 - Marriage Supper participants
5. Rev 20:6 - first resurrection
6. Rev 22:7 - reader
7. Rev 22:14 - partakers of the Tree of Life

Deriving Interpretation from Non-Biblical Writings?

Dispensational interpreters often categorize various prophetic books of the Bible (Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation) as "apocalyptic literature." Using this category simply means that these books unveil or disclose God's future prophetic program. Defining apocalyptic literature as biblical material that unveils is in harmony with the meaning of the Greek word

(*apokalypsis*) from which "apocalyptic" is derived, which simply means to unveil or disclose.

Recently this term has been assigned new meaning, to equate the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation with a host of non-canonical, extra biblical writings that flourished from the inter-testamental period into the second century AD. Examples include *Enoch*, *Apocalypse of Baruch*, *Jubilees*, *Assumption of Moses*, *Psalms of Solomon*, *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and *Sibylline Oracles*. These writings possess a common cluster of attributes, including: extensive use of symbolism, vision as the major means of revelation, angelic guides, activity of angels and demons, focus on the end of the current age and the inauguration of the age to come, urgent expectation of the end of earthly conditions in the immediate future, the end as a cosmic catastrophe, new salvation that is paradisal in character, manifestation of the kingdom of God, a mediator with royal functions, dualism with God and Satan as the leaders, spiritual order determining the flow of history, pessimism about mans' ability to change the course of events, periodization and determinism of human history, other worldly journeys, the catchword glory, and a final showdown between good and evil.

It is argued that Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation share many of these same characteristics. On this basis, these canonical books are also categorized as apocalyptic literature. The Book of Revelation in particular is categorized with the apocalyptic writings. Not only does the Revelation share many features with these extra biblical books, but it also was composed during the same general time period when the apocalyptic writings were composed. Although numerous similarities exist, John's writing also has some clear differences from these writings, and these differences must not be overlooked. One must however read Revelation in conjunction with the NT books that preceded it, not as contradictory but complementary.

However, categorizing Revelation with the apocalyptic writings significantly challenges the traditional interpretation of Revelation. The decision to classify Revelation with the apocalyptic genre alters the hermeneutical principles that one uses in interpreting the book. Consequently, numerous hermeneutical doors seem to open to the extent that Revelation's character is viewed as apocalyptic.

Unlike the Jewish and Jewish-Christian apocalyptic books, the *Apocalypse of John* clearly claims to be a book of prophecy (1:3; 22:7,10,18–19), the effect of which is to identify the message, as in the OT prophetic tradition, with the Word of God (1:2; 19:9). The Jewish apocalypticists used the literary form of prophecy to trace the source of history from ancient times to their own day. John does not follow this method. He clearly places himself in the contemporary world of the first century and speaks of the future eschatological consummation. While extra-biblical apocalypses are clearly pseudonymous, the last book of the NT is plainly attributed to John. It does not, however, explicitly identify him as being

well known or as an apostle. Many of the non-canonical apocalyptic books are ethically passive; they blame the immediate plight of God's people not on their unfaithfulness but on the pervasive presence of evil in the world. While Revelation is not lacking in words of encouragement to the faithful, it also strongly urges the churches to repent.

Finally, and more importantly, these apocalypses are pessimistic concerning the outcome of God's present activity in the world, and for hope they look wholly to the eschatological end, when God will once again intervene and defeat the evil in the world. Though

Revelation is often read in this manner, there are great differences between it and the non-canonical apocalypses. In the latter, the turning point of history is the future event of the Messiah's coming as a conquering warrior king. In Revelation, the climactic event has already occurred in the victory of the slain Lamb (chapter 5). Now, however, the Lamb's victory is being worked out in history in the obedient suffering of his followers.

By viewing history in this way, the author makes clear the source of Christian hope is not imminent in history itself but relates to a transcendent future.

Nowhere can it be demonstrated that John depends on the assumed knowledge among his readers of the Jewish apocalypticists for clarity of meaning. On the other hand, he is everywhere dependent on the OT canonical books, especially those where symbol and vision play a dominant role. Much more important than the late-Jewish apocalyptic sources is the debt John owes to the eschatological teaching of Jesus. The parallelism is striking and certainly not accidental. Therefore, the writer believes that the ultimate source of John's understanding of the future, as well as his interpretation of the OT, lies not in his own inventive imagination but definitely in Jesus Christ. See:

[Woods-Apocalypticism](#)

[Woods-A Case for the Futurist Interpretation of Revelation](#)

Apocalyptic Books

- Enoch
- Apocalypse of Baruch
- Jubilees
- Assumption of Moses
- Psalms of Solomon
- Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs
- Sibylline Oracles

Apocalyptic Genre vs Revelation

Adapted from Thomas, Evangelical Hermeneutics, 338

APOCALYPTIC GENRE	REVELATION
Pseudonymous	Not pseudonymous
Pessimistic about the present	Not pessimistic about the present
No epistolary framework	Epistolary framework
Limited admonitions for moral compliance	Repeated admonitions for moral compliance
Messiah's coming exclusively future	Basis for Messiah's coming is past
Does not call itself prophecy	Calls itself prophecy
<u>Vaticina ex eventu</u>	Futuristic prediction
Primarily concerns a future generation (1 Enoch 1:2)	Concerns both the present generation of the author (Rev 2-3) and a future generation (Rev 4-22)

- (D) Author (1:4a)
- (E) Audience (1:4b)
- (F) Greeting (1:4c)
- (G) Source (1:4d-5a)

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: **Grace** to you and peace **from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come**, and from the **sevenspirits** who are before His throne,

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

4 From John to the seven churches in Asia. May grace and peace be yours from the one who is, who was, and who is coming, from the seven spirits who are in front of his throne,

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;

- "John" - John wrote a total of five NT books (John [the gospel], 1-2-3 John, Revelation)
- He was a man so dominated by hatred that when Jesus entered a Samaritan village and they rejected His teaching, John asked Jesus if he could call down fire from heaven to wipe

them out for rejecting the message (Luke 9:51-56)

- Yet God worked so strategically in John's life that he became known as the "love Apostle." Jesus transitioned a man of hate to a man of love by loving him, so much so that John called himself "the disciple that Jesus loved."
- John didn't understand everything there was to know about Jesus, but he knew that Jesus loved him
- When you understand that you're unconditionally accepted by God, it's easy to let others off the hook, it's easier to let things ride that would otherwise bother you
 - "...Grace" - unmerited favor; once a person receives grace from God, they have peace
- Before a person is saved, they have no peace with God (Cf. Rom 5:10); they are enemies of God
- But when a person hears the gospel, hears what Jesus did for them through His death, burial, resurrection and ascension, and receives that as a free gift, they experience *reconciliation*, meaning the conflict between sinful man and a holy God is called off.
- "...from Him" - from the Father
- The first source of the blessings from Revelation is God the Father
- "...who is and who was and who is to come" - a Name of Christ; He is the self-existent One; He is outside of time
- Describes the continuity of God's sovereign dealings with mankind
- "...seven spirits" - the Holy Spirit; Is 11:2 outlines the seven genitive expressions of the fullness of the Holy Spirit (of the LORD, of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, strength, of knowledge, and the fear of the LORD)
- Used as a description of Christ to the dead church at Sardis (Cf. 2:1)
- Many people interpret the "seven spirits" as angels because angels are called "ministering spirits" in Heb 1:14

[OT reference: Is 11:2]

(H) Subject (1:5b-8)

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood

—

5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—

5 and from Jesus the Messiah, the witness, the faithful one, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To the one who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood

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.

- "...from Jesus Christ" - from the Son
- John mentions Jesus last because He is the point of the whole book (Cf. v1)
- The worst thing you can do when reading and studying the Book of Revelation is to lose the main character (Jesus Christ) through all of the symbolism and crazy events that will take place.
- "...faithful witness" - refers to Jesus' 1st century prophetic ministry of revealing the Father (John 17:25-26)
- "...firstborn of the dead" - Jesus was the first Person to be resurrected from the dead into an immortal body (1 Cor 15:20-23)
- "...ruler of the kings of the earth" - describes His future role once the events of Revelation are concluded (Ps 89:27); He will rule the earth for 1000 years when He returns in glory
- Revelation describes the process of transitioning this world from Satan's domain to God's domain
- "...who loves us" - a present tense participle, indicating His *continuous* love for us
- We are loved by God, even after I committed the sin I committed yesterday, or have yet to commit the sin I will commit tomorrow
- Love is always demonstrated by its actions (Cf. Rom 5:8)
- "...released us from our sins" - redemption, the releasing of someone from bondage through the procurement of a ransom
- Jesus' past work secured our future victory: His past work did two things for us today: (1) Released us from our sins by His blood (v5f); and, (2) Made us into a Kingdom of Priests (v6)

[OT reference: Gen 49:11; Ps 89:27]

Christ's Atoning Death

- Role of Christ's blood in the atonement
 - Acts 20:28
 - Rom 5:9; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Col 1:20
 - Heb 9:12,22; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:7
 - Rev 1:5; 5:9; 12:11
- Free to us but expensive to Him
- Significance of the Lord's Table (1 Cor 11:23-26)

The origination of all three names of Christ from Ps 89 shows an intention to direct attention to the fulfillment of promises made to David regarding an eternal kingdom in 2 Sam 7.

Tenses of Redemption

	Past	Present	Future
God Rev 1:4	Which Was Col 1:15-17; Jn 8:58	Which is Heb 7:25	Which Is to Come Rev 1:7
Jesus Christ Rev 1:5	The Faithful Witness Jn 14:1-3; Jn 8:14	First Begotten of the Dead Col 1:18-20	Prince of the Kings of the Earth Mt 25:31f; 1 Cor 15:24f
Unto Him That Rev 1:5	Loved Us Gal 2:20; Jn 3:16	Washed Us from our sins in His blood Heb 7:25; 9:14	Made Us Kings & Priests 1 Pet 2:9; Lk 19:17; Rev 2:26; 5:10; 20:4; 22:5
Write Rev 1:19	The Things Which Thou Hast Seen Rev 1:12-18	The Things Which Are Rev 2 & 3	The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter Rev 4-22

6 and He **made us into a kingdom, priests** to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

6 and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

6 and has made us a kingdom, priests for his God and Father, be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

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

— "...made us *into* a kingdom, priests" — the second half of salvation...not only did He release us from our sins and eternal punishment, but He in turn has blessed us and raised us up to rule and reign with Him (Cf. 5:10; 11:15)

— How sad that after He has both delivered us from our sin and blessed us to be priests, with direct 24/7/365 access to Him, that we are too busy to pray, too busy to seek Him, too busy to take the time to take the time to present our burdens to Him in prayer.

— Too frequently we live beneath the privileges we've been given as believers and as priests

- This does not imply that because believers are a kingdom, and priests, that we are in the kingdom today
- Church Age believers are “a kingdom, priests” (two blessings) now, but in the future, faithful Christians will also *reign with Jesus Christ* on the earth (Cf. 5:10)
- There are only three people in Scripture who are kings & priests: Melchizedek, Jesus Christ, and Church Age believers; in the OT, kings and priests were separate offices [OT reference: Ex 19:6; Is 61:6]

One of the major problems is that people get impatient with Revelation, in their interpretation of it. In many, many cases, Revelation is its own interpreter (i.e. the Dragon in Rev 12 is Satan, because he is identified as the Dragon later in the same passage).

There are 26 symbols in Revelation that are identified within the same (immediate) context. If we’re patient in our interpretation early in the book, many words and phrases are defined later in the book. So the key is to be patient and allow Revelation to interpret itself, rather than using our sanctified imagination to come up with our own interpretation.

For example, Rev 5:10 sheds some light to the “kingdom and priests” issue: “You have made them *to be a kingdom and priests* to our God; and **they will reign upon the earth.**” So Rev 1:6 tells us that we are a kingdom of priests (our identity), and Rev 5:10 tells us that we are not reigning now, but rather will “will reign” (future) upon the earth. Rev 5:10 completes the notion of a kingdom of priests, and answers the questions of *when* we will reign and *where* we will reign.

Our destiny as believers is to reign alongside Jesus Christ, over this earth. We don’t reign because Jesus somehow needs our help...we reign because He shares His delegated authority with us and *allows* us to reign with Him.

7 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and **every eye will see Him**, even **those who pierced Him**; and all the **tribes of the earth will mourn** over Him. So it is to be.

Amen.

7 Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

7 Look! He is coming in the clouds. Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of him. So be it! Amen.

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.

- “BEHOLD” - *idou*, occurs 26x in Revelation; it indicates special divine intervention and draws special attention to what follows; this verse is the motto of Revelation

— This text announces the climactic event in Revelation and of all history: the return of Jesus Christ to earth at the Second Coming

- All that occurs between this verse and 19:11-16 leads up to and culminates in that event
- "...HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS" - not the Rapture (not every eye will see Him at the Rapture; see Rapture/Second Coming differences below) (Cf. Matt 24:29-30). The Rapture has already long taken place by this point.
- He will return physically to earth, just as He ascended physically to heaven
- "...every eye will see Him" - His revelation to the Gentiles
- "...those who pierced Him" - His revelation to the Jews (Cf. Zech 12:10)
- "...tribes of the earth will mourn" - a reference to Matt 23:37-39

[OT reference: Dan 7:13; Zech 12:10-14]

Rapture Distinct from Second Advent

Rapture (1 Thess 4:13-17; 1 Cor 15:51-57)	Second Coming (Rev 19:11-16)
Christ comes in the air (1 Thess 4:16)	Christ comes to the earth (Zech 14:4)
For His saints (1 Thess 4:15-17)	With His saints (Rev 19:14)
Blessing (1 Thess 4:18)	Judgment (Rev 19:15)
Effects only believers (1 Thess 4:16)	Effects both believers and unbelievers (Rev 19:15)
Invisible (1 Thess 4:16)	Visible to all (Rev 1:7)
Announced only by an archangel (1 Thess 4:16)	Involves myriads of angels (Jude 14)
Resurrection (1 Cor 15: 51)	No resurrection
Rescue of the church (1 Thess 1:10)	Rescue of Israel (Matt 23:37-39)

8 "I am the **Alpha and the Omega**," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," declares the Lord God, "the one who is, who was, and who is coming, the Almighty."

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.**

- "...Alpha and Omega" - the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; denotes comprehensive control of all things, including time. All of history revolves around the self-

existent One, Jesus Christ (Cf. Rev 22:14,16).

— This Name of Christ signifies God's comprehensive control over all things, including time (Cf. 21:6; 22:13)

— God is the originator and terminator of all things. He is "Lord of the future" and knows and controls future events. He is also powerful enough to bring about what John has predicted and will predict to come to pass, to perfectly fulfill His prophetic words about the future.

[OT reference: Is 41:4]

II. Things Which You Have Seen (Rev 1:9-20)

(1) Circumstances of the vision (1:9-11)

(A) Place: Patmos (1:9)

9 I, John, your brother and fellow participant in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance *which are* in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

9 I am John, your brother and partner in the oppression, kingdom, and patience that comes because of Jesus. I was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony about Jesus.

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.

- "I, John" - introduces a change in speaker; he now addresses the seven churches to which he sent this prophecy

- "...fellow participant" - *synkoinōnos*, fellowship, partnership, partaker; this compound word intensifies John's solidarity with his audience

— John, to his audience (the seven churches), refers to himself as a "fellow participant." By identifying himself as a "fellow participant" John is stating that he is on even ground with his audience, the seven churches.

— It's important to understand this idea in order to understand and interpret the rest of the book, especially Rev 2-3

— John was obviously saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, so by labeling him as such, John is confirming that his audience in these seven churches are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit also.

— Many interpreters go through Rev 2-3 and state that the sin of some of these churches is so bad that they just can't be saved. That would contradict what John says here.

- John states that he is a "fellow participant" in the following:
- "...tribulation" - *thipsis*, not referring to the time period of the Tribulation, but rather ordinary troubles and trials that believers go through while living in this world
- Just because Christians will not be present on earth during the Tribulation period does not mean that believers will not encounter trials and tribulations in life (Cf. Acts 14:22)
- In fact, the Bible tells us that believers will encounter the following: trials (John 16:33), man's wrath (2 Tim 3:12), Satan's wrath (Eph 6:11-12), and the world's wrath (John 15:18-19)
- "...kingdom" - *basileia*, the millennial kingdom, described more fully in Rev 20 (Cf. 5:10; 11:15; 20:4)
- John obviously was not in the kingdom when he wrote Revelation...he was marooned on a desert island in the Mediterranean Sea
- Kingdom Now believes that John was a "partaker in tribulation" on the island of Patmos, so in the same way he was also a partaker in the kingdom
- The rationale is: John was a partaker in the kingdom, we are a partaker in the kingdom, so the kingdom must be present now
- However, since "kingdom" is left undefined here, as always, we must import the OT revelation of the kingdom for the meaning, which is future and earthly, after Jesus Second Coming
- So when John says he's a "partaker in the kingdom" he's saying that he's a citizen and participant in the kingdom, which will come to earth in the future
- "...perseverance" - *hypomonē*, something God is trying to develop in all of our characters: the capacity to bear up under difficult circumstances
- The only way God can develop this trait in our lives is to put us into difficulties. I can't learn to bear up under difficulty if I don't undergo difficulty.
- "...island called Patmos" - a Roman penal colony for workers in the mines
- John was in a very remote location, yet he was in the will of God. While he was exiled on this remote island, God gave John an astounding vision of the events of the final years of human history.
- Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius and Victorinus all wrote that the Romans sent John to Patmos as an exile from Ephesus, where he pastored, in 95 AD. He was released after about 1-1/2 years, shortly after Emperor Domitian died in 96 AD. Domitian's successor, Nerva, allowed John to return to Ephesus.
- "...because of" - *dia*, indicates the result of an action, not the purpose of an action
- While he was exiled on this remote island, God gave John an astounding vision of the events of the final years of human history
- "...the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" - John was exiled to Patmos in his old age because he was a trouble maker for the emperor Domitian

- John consistently preached a coming kingdom where Jesus Christ will rule and reign from Jerusalem over planet earth (Cf. 5:10). John was a premillennialist.
- This message was so much a part of John's preaching and ministry, that Domitian didn't know what to do other than exile him to a far off island
- Before exiling John to Patmos, Domitian tried to boil him to death in oil, but was unsuccessful (see quote from Tertullian below)

"...where the Apostle John was first plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil, and thence remitted to his island-exile!" — Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heresies*, 36



(B) Content: Day of the Lord (1:10)

10 I was **in the Spirit** on the **Lord'sday**, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound of a trumpet*,

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like *the sound of a trumpet*,

10 I came to be in the Spirit on the Day of the Lord, when I heard a loud voice behind me like a trumpet,

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,
 - "...in *the* Spirit" - John, like all other biblical authors, was "carried along" (*phero*, Cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21; Acts 27:15,17) by the Holy Spirit to write this book
 - "...Lord's day" - *kyriakos*, literally, "a Lordian day": "The Day of the Lord" —a key term in eschatology; this is not referring to the Sabbath Day; see Day of the Lord.
 — The Greek word is used only one other time in the NT (1 Cor 11:20) to describe communion
 — The Day of the Lord is where God intervenes in human history and settles accounts. There have been past "days of the Lord" (Noah's flood, the Babylonian captivity, etc.), and there will be a future Day of the Lord.
 — In the Creation account (Gen 1), Genesis describes each of the six days as "evening and morning"; in Revelation, there will be an evening (the Tribulation) and a morning (inauguration of the kingdom) as well

Seven-Fold Method of Communication of Revelation

1. From the Father
2. to Christ the Son
3. to an angel
4. to John
5. written in a book (scroll)
6. to a reader or preacher (*angelos*, 2:1)
7. to a listener of the seven churches

Rev 1:1: The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which **God** (1) gave **Him** (2) to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by **His angel** (3) to His bond-servant **John** (4),

Rev 1:11: saying, "**Write on a scroll** (5) what you see, and to the seven churches: to **Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.**"

Rev 2:1a: "**To the angel** (6) of the church in Ephesus write:

- "...angel" - *angelos*, a messenger from God; it also could refer to the pastor or bishop of that particular church (John the Baptist was referred to as *angelos* in Matt 11:10).

(C) Purpose: Communicate to the Churches (1:11)

11 saying, "**Write on a scroll what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.**"

11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send *it* to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

11 saying, "Write on a scroll what you see, and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

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.

- "...Write" - a divine command from Jesus Himself

— John was going to see things in this vision, and the Lord told him to write them down

— "...send" - once he had written down what he saw, John was to send the scroll to the seven churches

— The entire book of Revelation was sent to these 7 churches, not just the letter for each church. So each church received every other church's letter, including their own, as well as the rest of the book of Revelation (22:16).

— The Lord strategically picked these seven smaller churches, as opposed to the church in Rome or Jerusalem, because these churches had problems that the Lord wanted to address

— The problems in these seven churches would happen over and over again in churches around the world throughout history. Jesus wanted to give us His prescription for dealing with these problems.

— There is a part of each of these seven churches in every church. There's some of Ephesus in every church today; there's also a slice of Thyatira and Laodicea in every church. Every church has a little bit of all of these seven churches.

— You could even take it further and say that every Christian has a little bit of Ephesus in them, a little bit of Laodicea, a little bit of Sardis.

(2) Content of the vision (1:12-16)

(A) His appearance among the churches (1:12-13a)

12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And after turning I saw **seven golden lampstands**;

12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

12 Then I turned to see who was talking to me, and when I turned I saw seven gold lamp stands.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden lampstands;

- When John turned to see the Person who spoke, he saw a majestic Figure (v13) clothed in a long robe, standing among seven golden lampstands (Cf. Ex 25:31-40; 1 Kings 7:49; Zech 4:2,10; Matt 18:20)
 - This description resembled a priest in Israel ministering in the tabernacle or temple. The high priest had the sole oversight of the menorah. He lighted the lamps, trimmed the wicks, poured the oil.
 - "...seven golden lampstands" - the seven churches (Cf. v20)
 - 26x in Revelation the interpretation of a symbol is given within the same chapter (immediate context)
 - Here, these seven golden lampstands are on the earth (Asia Minor); in Rev 4:5, the seven lamps are in heaven
 - Every local church is the bearer of God's light in this dark world (Cf. Dan 7:9-14)
[OT reference: Ex 25:37; 37:23]



NINAN

Nov 2003

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION



(B) His clothing (1:13b-c)

(a) His robe (1:13b)

(b) His sash (1:13c)

13 and in the **middle of the lampstands** / saw one like a son of man, clothed in a **robe reaching to the feet**, and wrapped around the chest with a golden sash.

13 and in the middle of the lampstands / saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

13 Among the lamp stands there was someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash around his chest.

13 And in the midst of the seven lampstands one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

- "...middle of the lampstands" - because Jesus is the founder of the Church (Matt 16:18), the chief cornerstone of the Church (Eph 2:20), the Groom of the Church (Eph 5:22-25), and the Head of the Church (Col 1:18), and He has purchased the Church with His own blood (Acts 20:28)

- "...one like" - the Person looked like a human man, with clothing similar to a priest

— Jesus' present office is that of our High Priest (Heb 4:14); see [Present Ministry of Christ](#).

— Jesus' current tasks during His Present Session include: intercession (Heb 7:25), cleansing us (1 John 1:9), advocacy (1 John 2:1), and inspection (Rev 2-3) [largely ignored]

by the church!]

- "...son of man" - Jesus Christ
- "...robe reaching to the feet" - a sign of rank or dignity in those who wore it (Cf. 1 Sam 18:2-4; 24:5,12; Ezek 9:2; 26:16; Dan 10:5)
- John saw Jesus wearing priestly clothing because Jesus is currently serving as High Priest of the order of Melchizedek. Here, He is pictured as our Great High Priest, in charge—and in control—of His Church.
- Garments often symbolize righteousness: our garments are used menstrual cloths (Is 64:6); His are clothed with light (Ps 104:12)
- The following physical description is reminiscent of the descriptions found in Matt 17 (Transfiguration) and Dan 7 (Ancient of Days)

[OT reference: Dan 7:13; 10:5,16]



(C) His body (1:14-16)

- (a) His hair (1:14a)
- (b) His eyes (1:14b)

14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and **His eyes were like a flame of fire.**

14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

14 His head and his hair were white like wool, in fact, as white as snow. His eyes were like flames of fire,

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

- His head and hair were white like wool, similar to how Daniel described the Ancient of Days (God the Father, Dan 7:9)

— White hair often represents wisdom, purity, and the dignity of age in Scripture

— Note: just because John used this OT description of God the Father to describe this Person, doesn't necessarily mean that he's describing God the Father here. John simply meant that the Person with the white hair is wise.

— John referred the *images* of God the Father in the OT to Jesus Christ, thus granting to Jesus the attributes and titles previously reserved for the Father (Cf. v18; 2:8; 5:12; 22:13). This is one way of stressing the equality of Jesus with the Father, here specifically His eternal pre-existence and sinlessness.

- "...His eyes were like a flame of fire" - "like" (a simile, meaning "similar to") a "flame of fire," an allusion to His piercing judgment and omniscient understanding, introspection (Cf. 2:18; 19:12; Dan 10:6; Mark 3:5,34; 10:21,23; 11:11; Luke 22:61)

— Jesus sees in people, to people, and through people (Cf. John 1:47)

— One glance from the Savior's eyes pierces through all deception and impurity

[OT reference: Dan 7:9; 10:6]

(c) His feet (1:15a)

(d) His voice (1:15b)

15 His **feet were like burnishedbronze** when it has been heated to a glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the **sound of many waters**.

15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

15 his feet were like glowing bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of raging waters.

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

- "...feet were like burnished bronze" - to stamp out judgment

— This is why judgments in Revelation are described as a winepress that was trodden down

- This is an allusion to His purity as He moves among the churches (Cf. Luke 1:79; Acts 5:9; Rom 3:15; 10:15; Heb 12:13)
- His feet of judgment seem ready to inspect the seven churches and the church throughout history
- "...sound of many waters" - either tranquil and soothing like a waterfall, or loud and destructive like pounding waves

[OT reference: Ezek 1:7,24; 43:2; Dan 10:6]

- (e) His right hand (1:16a)
- (f) His mouth (1:16b)
- (g) His face (1:16c)

16 In His **right hand** He held **sevenstars**, and out of His mouth came a **sharp**two-edged **sword**; and **His face was like the sun** shining in its strength.

16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword. His face was like the sun when it shines with full force.

16 And he had in his right hand sevenstars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

- "...right hand" - the symbol of official honor and sovereign control
- "...seven stars" - symbolize the angels or messengers of the seven churches; He held them in His hand protectively (Cf. 9:1; 12:3; Job 38:7,31; John 10:28)
- "...a sharp two-edged sword" - *hromphaia*, the type the Romans used to kill with (2:12,16; 6:8; 19:15,21)

— His Word and words, both written and spoken, will judge His enemies (Is 11:4; 49:2; Eph 6:17; 2 Thess 2:8; Heb 4:12; Rev 19:13-15). Jesus will simply speak and the entire empire of the Antichrist will be violently destroyed (Rev 19:15; Cf. Is 11:4; 2 Thess 2:8).

— "...His face was like the sun" - a picture of pure holiness and righteousness

— John was present at the Transfiguration to see something very similar (Matt 17:2; Cf. 1 Tim 6:16; 1 John 1:5)

[OT reference: Judges 5:31; Is 49:2]

Is 49:2: And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me.

Eph 6:17: And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Heb 4:12: For the word of God is quick [alive], and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged 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.

This first vision of John included an indication of Jesus' Messianic office with its associated functions: judgment of the unrighteous and comfort of the suffering righteous, His high rank that fits Him as an agent of imposing divine wrath, His activity in imposing that wrath, His preexistence along with God the Father, His penetrating intelligence that enables Him to perform righteous judgment, His movement among the churches to enforce standards of moral purity, His identification with the Father in the power of His utterance, His authority over the seven messengers and the churches they represent, His power to overcome His enemies and pronounce judgment upon them, and His return to earth to implement judgment upon mankind.

(3) Communication from Christ to John (1:17-20)

(A) John's reaction to Jesus (1:17a)

(B) Jesus' comfort of John (1:17b-18)

17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed **His right hand** on me, saying, **"Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,**

17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, **"Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,**

17 When I saw him, I fell down at his feet like a dead man. But he placed his right hand on me and said, **"Stop being afraid! I am the first and the last,**

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:**

- The revelation of Jesus Christ in His unveiled glory took all of John's strength. He could not longer stand in the presence of such a One.

— This is the same John who was part of Christ's inner circle during His earthly ministry; John was probably Jesus' closest friend and confidant during Jesus' time on earth

— Even this John, in the presence of the risen Christ, falls down as if he had died in His presence; Isaiah had a similar reaction when seeing the pre-incarnate Christ (Is 6:5)

— Paul had a similar experience on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:4)

— Daniel, as well, to the vision God gave him (Dan 10:7-9)

— John realized his depravity compared with the holiness of God. This is why we need the imputed righteousness of Christ in order to stand before God (Phil 3:9).

- "...His right hand" - in a moment of extreme fear, Jesus gives the hand of honor to touch and encourage John

- "...Do not be afraid" - not a suggestion, but a command

— You don't have to fear the future if you know Who holds the future. If you are living in fear of the future, you're living beneath your privileges from God.

— Fear is not the normal posture of a Christian...it's the normal posture of a pagan (Prov 28:1; Rev 21:8)

— 365x in Scripture we're commanded to "Fear not" or "Do not be afraid"

- "...first...last" - Jesus is the entire purpose of history

— Jesus introduced Himself as the self-existent, eternal One "the First and the Last," essentially the same as "the Alpha and the Omega" (v8) or "the beginning and the end" (22:13)

[OT reference: Is 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Dan 8:17-18; 10:9-10,12,15,19]

18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

18 the living one. I was dead—but look!—I am alive forever and ever! I have the keys of Death and Hades.

18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and Death.

— "...I am alive forevermore" - Jesus also presented Himself as the resurrected One, with authority over the state of death and the place of the dead

— The destiny of human souls is entirely under the jurisdiction of Jesus Christ

— John now saw his beloved Teacher of Galilee, on whose chest he laid his head, in an entirely different light now that he had seen Him before (except briefly at the Transfiguration)

— "...have the keys" - access, control over entry

— "...death" - one of the eight reasons for the incarnation of Christ: to remove the fear of death (Cf. Heb 2:15; see note: **Eight Reasons God Became a Man** below)

— "...Hades" - the intermediate state after death for unbelievers (Luke 16:23)

— Because Jesus has the keys to Hades, one day He will take Hades and cast it into the Lake of Fire for all eternity (Cf. 20:14)

[OT reference: Job 3:17; Hosea 13:14]

"First and the Last" (A Path to Lead Jehovah Witnesses)

- Is 41:4 - "...I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he." - Jehovah God
- Is 44:6 - "...I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." - Jehovah God
- Is 48:12 - "...I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." - Jehovah God
- Rev 1:11 - "...I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last..." - Jehovah God
- Rev 1:17-18 - "...I am the first and the last...behold, I am alive forevermore..."
- Rev 2:8 - "...These things saith the first and the last, **which was dead, and is alive;**"

- Rev 22:13 - "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."
- First and Last - 3x in Isaiah, 4x in Revelation = 7x

Eight Reasons God Became a Man (Heb 2:5-18)

1. To restore God's original purpose for man
2. To taste death for every man
3. To bring many to glory
4. To break Satan's rule over humanity
5. To remove the fear of death
6. To become our merciful high priest
7. To make a complete purification for sin
8. To sympathize with those tested

Vision in Rev 1: Seven Features

1. Hair & head (Dan 7:9)
2. Eyes (Heb 1:13; 4:13); Flame of fire (1 Cor 3:13; Mal 3:2)
3. Feet (symbol of walk); Brass - symbolic of judgment
4. Voice—as many waters (Ezek 1:24; 43:2; Dan 10:6)
5. Right hand: holds 7 stars (in His hand) and 7 lampstands (in the midst of)
6. Mouth—two-edged sword:
 - Heb 4:12; Eph 6:17; Is 49:2
 - Judges unbeliever (John 12:48)
 - Earth smitten (Is 11:4)
 - Antichrist consumed (2 Thess 2:8)
7. Countenance - sun (Matt 17)
 - These "descriptors" will be used as identities throughout the rest of the Book

(C) Jesus' command to John (1:19-20)

19 Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

19 Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

19 Therefore, write down what you have seen, what is, and what is going to happen after this.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

- "...write" - Jesus repeated His instruction to "write down" the things that God (through the angel) was revealing to him (v11)
- "...things which you have seen" - *ha eides*, the vision of Christ (v12-16)
- John didn't see Jesus as how he remembered Him, in His incarnation, but now John saw Jesus in His glory
- John's reaction to seeing the glorified Christ is not to say, God's rad, He's my dad. Instead, he fell on his face in abject fear because holiness had come into the presence of sin.
- John was the closest disciple to Christ, yet when John saw Him 60+ years after His ascension, He had a completely different reaction
- "...things which are" - *he eisi*, exemplified by the seven churches (Rev 2-3)
- Jesus dictates seven epistles to seven literal, functioning churches. Jesus actually writes a letter to seven different churches.
- "...things which will take place after these things" - *ha mellei genesthai*, after the completion of the church (Rev 4-22)
- Rev 4:1 begins and ends with "After these things" indicating the beginning of Part 3 of Revelation. The Lord begins telling John about future events, namely the events in and around the Tribulation period.
- "will take place" - *mellō ginomai*, see note: **Timing Texts** on 1:1
- The significance of this outline is important in that it strongly suggests that the recapitulation idea (so prevalent in amillennial exegesis) is incorrect

The Keys are Self-Contained

20 As for the **mystery** of the **seven stars** which you saw in My right hand, and the **seven golden lampstands**: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

20 As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

20 The secret meaning of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven gold lamp stands is this: the seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches."

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: And the seven lampstands which thou sawest are the seven churches.

- "...mystery" - *mystērion*, that which is outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, which can only be made known by divine revelation

- The parables of Matt 13 are referred to as mysteries (Matt 13:11; Cf. 13:10,35), which cover the entire Church Age. The entire Church Age dispensation is referred to as a mystery (Col 1:26-27).
 - "...seven stars" - messengers (pastors) of the seven churches (see note on v16)
 - "...seven golden lampstands" - the seven churches (the completed church)
- When you get to Rev 4:5, there are seven lamps of fire in heaven? If the lamps (representing the fullness of the Holy Spirit) are in heaven, doesn't it make sense that the "lampstands" are in heaven as well?

The titles of Jesus Christ found in the introductions to six of the seven messages in Rev 2-3 are drawn largely from this vision of v12-20 and its descriptive phrases. Only the message to Laodicea (3:14-22) is devoid of one of these. One of the titles is used in two messages (Cf. 2:1; 3:1). It is apparent that the appearance of Christ in this vision is designed to emphasize the aspects of His nature that are most relevant to the needs and circumstances of the seven churches who are the primary recipients of this book.