

Revelation 1

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

1:1 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,

I. Context

- A. This is a revelation from God to Jesus to John - about the inner workings of Heaven.
 1. Revelation (Apocalypse) is actually the word used when a curtain is opened to show what is on the other side.
 - a) So this is God's revealing of the world from His side.
 2. The revelation comes from God to Jesus to John because Jesus is our High Priest.
 - a) It was believed that if a man was to see God directly, he would die.
 - b) So there was always a "priest" between God and man
 - (1) to carry the words of God to man
 - (2) and to carry the words of man to God.
 - c) Jesus is the perfect High Priest because He is both God and man, so He can bridge the difference between us both.
 3. Bond-servants are technically slaves by choice - they want to serve a master so they give their lives to him. This is a term that most of the leaders in the NT used.
 4. The things that will "soon take place" are the things that started in the time of John and have continued to our day - and will go until the end of the world.

II. Notes

- A. Daniel 2:28 *But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the latter days. Your dream and the visions that came into your mind as you lay on your bed were these:*
- B. Exodus 21:1-6 - *Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them: "If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment. If he comes alone, he shall go out alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone. But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,' then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.*
- C. He receives from the Father all that He has or knows. - *Cambridge Bible for*

- D. Properly so called; for things covered before, are here revealed, or unveiled. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- E. John is the writer, but Jesus Christ is the author, - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- F. the words of God are of perpetual fulfilment: they are not only to be fulfilled; they have not only been fulfilled; but they have been and they are being fulfilled; and they yet will be fulfilled; and the principles which are enunciated by the Prophet, though "shortly" fulfilled, are not exhausted in the immediate fulfilment, but carry still lessons for the succeeding generations of mankind. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

1:2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

I. Context

- A. God is revealing Heaven to John
- B. John is attempting to write it all down as faithfully as he can.

II. Notes

- A. John 1:1 - [In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.](#)
- B. 1 Corinthians 1:6 [because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you.](#)
- C. He regarded himself merely as a "witness" of what he had seen, and claimed only to make a fair and faithful "record" of it. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

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.

I. Context

- A. John is writing down the vision he received from God about Heaven.
- B. Anyone who reads or hears this message should take it seriously and do what it says.

II. Context

- A. Luke 11:28 [But He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."](#)
- B. It is, however, more in accordance with the usual meaning of the word rendered "read," to suppose that it refers to the act of one's reading for himself; to learn by reading. So Robinson (Lexicon) understands it. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- C. Any declaration of the principles of the divine government, with indications of their exemplification in coming history, is a prophecy. Sometimes the history which exemplifies these principles is immediate, sometimes more remote; in other cases (as, I venture to believe, is the case with the predictions of this book) the events are both immediate and remote. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- D. who not only read, and hear, but put in practice what they read and hear; for there are some things in this book which are of a practical nature - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

Message to the Seven Churches

1:4 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,

I. Context

- A. John is writing down the vision he had about Heaven.
- B. He introduces himself and the audience - all Christians everywhere (as symbolized by the seven churches in Asia Minor).
- C. This message is from God the father
 - 1. "Him who is and who was and who is to come"
 - a) The Greek rendering of YHWH - I AM.
- D. and from God the Holy Spirit
 - 1. "the seven Spirits who are before His throne"
 - 2. Seven is the Hebrew number that symbolized complete wholeness (something in which nothing else could be added)
 - a) so 7 churches means all churches everywhere.
 - b) and the 7 fold Spirit would be the Holy Spirit
 - 3. The Holy Spirit is depicted as split into seven parts to match the 7 churches to show that the Holy Spirit is at work in the God's churches.

II. Notes

- A. John the Apostle
 - 1. was the brother of the apostle James;
 - 2. he was also the son of Zebedee (a fisherman of Galilee.)
 - 3. His mother's name was Salome who is believed to be a sister of Jesus' mother Mary.
 - 4. John, his brother James and the apostles Peter and Andrew were all partners in a fishing business prior to their calls by Jesus to follow Him (Zebedee was also a partner.)
 - 5. It is said that John owned a home in Jerusalem and that it is possible that the interview Nicodemus had with Jesus was held there.
 - 6. The apostle John rose to a position of influence within world-wide Christianity and shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, he moved to Ephesus (in modern day, Turkey.)
 - 7. He became the pastor of the church in Ephesus and had a special relationship with other churches in the area (as we know from the letters to the Seven Churches in Asia, in the book of Revelation.)
 - 8. John's brother, James, was the first of the apostles to die; on the other hand, John was the last.
 - 9. All of the apostles met a violent death, however, John died peacefully in Ephesus (at an advanced age, around the year 100 AD.)
 - 10. There is a church tradition, which says, that while John was living in Ephesus, John had with him Mary, the mother of Jesus, for a few years.
 - 11. While in Ephesus, by order of the Roman emperor Domitian, John was exiled to an island called Patmos. In what is known as the cave of the Apocalypse (located on this island), the sacred text of the book of Revelation was given

to the apostle John by Jesus (it is here that John recorded what is written in the New Testament book of Revelation.)

12. Other New Testament books accredited to John are the Gospel of John, along with 1st, 2nd and 3rd John.
 13. When he was released from exile, he returned to Ephesus and lived till the time of the Roman emperor Trajan.
 14. It is said that John, "Founded and built churches throughout all Asia, and worn out by old age, died in the sixty-eight year after our Lord's passion and was buried near the same city (Ephesus)."
 15. There is a church tradition, which says, that when John was evidently an old man in Ephesus, he had to be carried to the church in the arms of his disciples. At these meetings, he was accustomed to say no more than, "Little children, love one another!" After a time, the disciples wearied at always hearing the same words, asked, "Master, why do you always say this?" "It is the Lord's command," was his reply. "And if this alone be done, it is enough!"
 16. There is, also, a Church tradition which says that John was in Rome for a time. - <http://www.biblepath.com/john1.html>
- B. John the disciple of Jesus - and later Apostle.
1. He wrote: The gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation.
 2. He called himself the "one that Jesus loved" — He heard the heartbeat of Jesus at the last supper.
 - a) John 21:20 - Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?")
 3. Most likely the youngest disciple
 4. He was the brother of James - the first disciple killed for his faith
 - a) Acts 12:2 - And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword
 5. He was a son of Zebedee
 - a) Matthew 4:21 - Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them,
 - b) Jesus called him a son of Thunder because he and James wanted to command fire to rain down on a village that did not welcome Jesus
 - (1) Mark 3:17 - James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder"),
 6. He was the only Disciple at the cross with Jesus.
 - a) John 19:26 - When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman,[a] here is your son,"
 7. He took care of Mary until she passed away - because Jesus commanded him to.
 - a) John 19:26 - When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman,[a] here is your son,"
 - b) Legend has it that he was arrested with Peter, James, and Paul by King Herod. James was beheaded and the others sent to Rome, where Peter

was crucified upside down and Paul was beheaded. Nero tried to have John boiled in oil, but that did not work, so he was exiled to the island of Patmos to work in the slave mines. This is where he saw the vision of Revelation.

c) Jesus said that he would not be executed like Peter -

(1) John 21:20-23 - Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

d) Note: When he was released, he lived in Ephesus for the rest of his life. He most likely died some time after 98AD (which would have made him about 100 years old) and of natural causes. He was the last disciple to die. His tomb is located near Ephesus.

C. Seven

1. Note - Seven means "completion" because God completed the world on the seventh day

a) Genesis 2:2 - By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

b) The number seven means that something has everything it needs and cannot be added to - it is "complete" - it also can represent all. So by saying "seven churches" it represents all churches for all time.

D. Seven churches in Asia

1. the Seven Churches represent "the Holy Church throughout all the world. - Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

2. From the earliest times it has been pointed out that the number seven here is not exact, but symbolical; it does exclude other Churches, but symbolizes all - Pulpit Commentary

3. It is the province of Asia (comp. Acts 2:9-10; Acts 16:6-7), which was under a Roman proconsul, and embraced the western portion of Asia Minor.

a) In St. John's time it consisted of a strip of sea-board, some 100 square miles in extent.

b) Its boundaries varied at different periods; but roughly, and for the present purpose, they may be regarded as the Caycus on the north, the Mæander on the south, the Phrygian Hills on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west. - Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

E. Grace and Peace

1. This is a common greeting from the Apostles (especially Paul)

a) Romans 1:7 - to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Grace is “something you receive that you don’t deserve” - such as eternal life.
 - a) Mercy is “something you don’t get that you do deserve” - such as punishment.
- F. Him who is and who was and who is to come
 1. this is a greek rendering of the Hebrew word “YHWH” - the name of God: “I AM”
 - a) Exodus 3:14 - God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”
- G. Seven Spirits who are before His throne
 1. Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him--the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
 2. The context makes it impossible to admit any other meaning than that the greeting which comes from the Father and the Son comes also from the Holy Spirit
 - a) sevenfold in His operations,
 - b) whose gifts are diffused among all the churches,
 - c) and who divides to every man severally as He will.
 - (1) For corresponding thoughts in the Old Testament, compare the seven lamps and seven eyes of Zechariah (Zechariah 3:9; Zechariah 4:2; Zechariah 4:10), “the symbols of eternal light and all embracing knowledge.” - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

1:5 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—

I. Context

- A. John is writing down the vision he had of Heaven
 1. which came from God the Father and from God the Holy Spirit.
- B. And also from Jesus
 1. The faithful witness (Martyr) - who was ready to die rather than deny His own testimony.
 2. The firstborn of the dead - who was the first to die and be resurrected, leading the way for all His followers who will also be resurrected with Him.
 3. Ruler of the kings of the earth - the true King of Kings.
 4. Who loves us
 5. And released (washed) us from our sins by His blood

II. Notes

- A. Psalm 51:2 Wash me clean of my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.
- B. Proverbs 14:5 An honest witness does not deceive, but a dishonest witness pours forth lies.
- C. Isaiah 40:23 - He *it is* who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless.
- D. Acts 26:23 that Christ would suffer, and as the first to rise from the dead, He would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles.”

- E. John 3:16 - For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
- F. John 8:14 Jesus replied, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is valid, because I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I came from or where I am going.
- G. 1 Corinthians 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
- H. Colossians 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and firstborn from among the dead, so that in all things He may have preeminence.
- I. it has been suggested by Prof. Plumptre, to the bow in the cloud, which is described in Psalm 89:37 as the faithful witness. The coincidence of expression is remarkable: "I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth; he shall stand fast as the sun before me, and as the faithful witness in heaven." - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- J. Christ was the first who was born to eternal life after the death which ends this life - [Pulpit Commentary](#)
- K. The message does not come from One who will be, but who is the true ruler of all earthly potentates. The disposition to dwell on the future and more visibly recognised reign of Christ hereafter has tended to obscure the truth of His present reign. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- L. Instead of "washed us," some MSS. read, "loosed us." There is only one letter's difference in the two words in Greek. The general tone of thought would lead us to prefer "washed" as the true reading. On a solemn occasion, which St. John remembered clearly, our Lord had said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." The thought of the "cleansing blood," intensified by the recollection of the water and blood which he had seen flowing from Christ's pierced side, often recurred to his mind (Revelation 7:13-14; 1John 1:7; 1John 5:6-8). - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

1:6 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.

I. Context

- A. John is writing down His vision of Heaven
 - 1. that He received from God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and God the Son (Jesus).
- B. God wants us (those that follow Him and that live this message) to be a part of Jesus' kingdom and share this message with the world.
 - 1. To bring people to God
 - 2. and to worship God.

II. Notes

- A. Exodus 19:6 And unto Me you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you are to speak to the Israelites."
- B. 1 Peter 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- C. 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, to proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.
- D. 1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should speak as one conveying the words of God. If anyone serves, he should serve with the strength God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.
- E. The symbol of washing in the last verse naturally leads on to the thought of consecration, accompanied by blood-sprinkling, to the work of the priest (Exodus 19:6; Exodus 19:10; Exodus 24:8; Hebrews 9:21). - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- F. "Kingdom," not "kings," is the right reading. Christians are nowhere said to be kings. Collectively they are a kingdom - [Pulpit Commentary](#)

1:7 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.

I. Context

- A. We are being commissioned to share this message with the world.
- B. Because Jesus is coming back in God's power (the clouds)
 - 1. Everyone will see His return
 - a) Even those that fight against Him
 - b) and they will regret this decision.

II. Notes

- A. Isaiah 19:1 This is an oracle concerning Egypt: Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud; He is coming to Egypt. The idols of Egypt will tremble before Him, and the hearts of the Egyptians will melt within them.
- B. Isaiah 45:23 - "I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear *allegiance*."
- C. Daniel 7:13 In my vision in the night I continued to watch: And I saw One like a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence.
- D. Amos 5:18 - Alas, you who are longing for the day of the Lord, For what purpose *will* the day of the Lord *be* to you? It *will be* darkness and not light;
- E. Zechariah 12:10 Then I will pour out on the house of David and on the residents of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and prayer, and they will look on Me, the One they have pierced. They will mourn for Him as one mourns an only child, and weep bitterly for Him as one grieves a firstborn son.
- F. Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man will come in His Father's glory with His angels, and then He will repay each one according to what he has done.
- G. Matthew 24:30 At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.
- H. Mark 13:26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

- I. Luke 21:27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
- J. John 19:37 And, as another Scripture says: "They will look on the One they have pierced."
- K. Romans 14:11 - For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God."
- L. Philippians 2:10 - so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
- M. 1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.

1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

I. Context

- A. We need to share the message of this book, because Jesus is coming back in God's power and those that are not on His side are going to be in trouble.
- B. Because Jesus is
 - 1. the reason for everything (the Alpha and the Omega)
 - 2. unchanging God (who is and who was and who is to come)
 - 3. and the supreme ruler of everything (Almighty)

II. Notes

- A. Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"
- B. Isaiah 41:4 Who has performed this and carried it out, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD--the first and the last--I am He."
- C. Isaiah 44:6 Thus says the LORD, the King and Redeemer of Israel, the LORD of Hosts: "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God but Me.
- D. Alpha is the first, Omega the last letter in the Greek alphabet. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- E. Thus in this verse, omnipotency, eternity, and immutability, are all applied to God, and particularly predicated of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

The Patmos Vision

1:9 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.

I. Context

- A. We must share this message because Jesus is returning with authority and we need to be on His side.
- B. John has been persecuted for his faith
 - 1. and was in exile on Patmos

II. Notes

- A. Patmos: A desolate island in the Archipelago, now called Palmosa, mountainous, but moderately fruitful, especially in wheat and pulse, though defective in other commodities. The whole circumference of the island is about thirty miles; and on one of its mountains stands a town of the same name, having on the top of it a monastery of Greek monks; and on the north side of the town the inhabitants, by tradition, show a house in which the Apocalypse was written, and, not far off, the cave where it was revealed; both places of great esteem and veneration with the Greeks and Latins. To this island, after he had come unhurt out of a caldron of boiling oil, he was banished for the word of God — **Namely, for preaching it; - Benson Commentary**
- B. One of the Sporades, the south-eastern group of the islands of the Aegean. According to the tradition, as given by Victorinus, he was condemned to work in the mines—which, if trustworthy, must mean marble quarries, as there are no mines, strictly speaking, in the island. Christians were sent to the mines (Roman Christians to those of Sardinia) at least as early as the reign of Commodus, and this was much the commonest punishment during the Diocletian persecution in which Victorinus suffered himself. In St John's time it was commoner to put Christians to death; but the tradition is probably right; 'deportation,' confinement without hard labour on a lonely island was then and afterwards reserved for offenders of higher secular rank. - **Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges**

1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,

I. Context:

- A. John is in exile for his faith - on the island of Patmos.
- B. He has a vision while he was worshipping God on Sunday
 - 1. He heard a loud voice behind him.
 - a) The voice sounded like a trumpet, which would announce the arrival of the King.

II. Notes

- A. Numbers 24:2 **When Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came upon him,**
- B. Matthew 22:43 **Jesus said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him Lord? For he says:**
- C. Acts 20:7 **On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Since Paul was ready to leave the next day, he talked to them and kept on speaking until midnight.**
- D. 1 Corinthians 12:3 **Therefore I inform you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.**
- E. in a trance, a prophetic vision; so overwhelmed with the power, and filled with the light of the Holy Spirit, as to be insensible of outward things, and wholly taken up with spiritual and divine. - **Benson Commentary**
- F. A few commentators have proposed to translate, "I was, in spirit, on the day of the Lord," i.e. was carried away in spirit to the Great Day of the Lord's Coming;

but the reference to Revelation 4:2 refutes this. - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)

- G. On this our Lord rose from the dead. On this the ancients believed he would come to judgment. It was therefore with the utmost propriety that St. John on this day both saw and described his coming. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- H. The expression occurs here only in the New Testament, and beyond all reasonable doubt it means "on Sunday." This is, therefore, the earliest use of the phrase in this sense. That it means Easter Day or Pentecost is baseless conjecture. The phrase had not yet become common in A.D. , as is shown from St. Paul writing, "on the first of the week" (1 Corinthians 16:2), the usual expression in the Gospels and Acts (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:19; Acts 20:7; comp. Mark 16:9). But from Ignatius onwards, we have a complete chain of evidence that ἡ Κυριακή became the regular Christian name for the first day of the week; and Κυριακή is still the name of Sunday in the Levant. "No longer observing sabbaths, but fashioning their lives after the Lord's day" - [Pulpit Commentary](#)
- I. [trumpet sound] Which was peculiarly proper to proclaim the coming of the great King, and his victory over all his enemies. - [Benson Commentary](#)

1:11 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."

I. Context

- A. While praying on Sunday, John has a vision
 - 1. He hears a voice like a trumpet announce the arrival of The King.
- B. The voice tells him to write down his vision and send it to the seven churches in Asia minor.

II. Notes

- A. Revelation 1:3 - [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.](#)



- B. Acts 16:14 Among those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.
- C. Acts 18:19 When they reached Ephesus, Paul parted ways with Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue there and reasoned with the Jews.
- D. Colossians 2:1 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me face to face, Write in a book
- E. Make a fair record of it all; evidently meaning that he should describe things as they occurred, and implying that the vision would be held so long before the eye of his mind that he would be able to transfer it to the "book." - Barnes' Notes on the Bible
- F. There were more than seven churches in Asia Minor; but the number selected indicates completeness. Thus, though having special reference to the conditions of those churches, the epistles may be regarded as epistles conveying ever appropriate lessons to the churches of succeeding ages. The names of the seven churches are enumerated, as they would naturally be by a person writing from Patmos. "First, Ephesus is addressed, as the Asiatic metropolis, and as the nearest church to Patmos; then the other churches on the western coast of Asia; then those in the interior" (Wordsworth). - Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

1:12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

I. Context

- A. John is having a vision in which a voice tells him to write down everything he sees and send it to the 7 churches of Asia Minor.
- B. He turns around and sees 7 candlesticks
 - 1. Either it is 7 individual candlesticks in a circle - representing the churches on a map
 - 2. or (more likely) the 7 candles in a menorah, showing that John is in the temple
 - a) the holy room holds the menorah that lights the way to the Holy of Holies in which rests the ark of the covenant - symbolizing the throne of God.



II. Notes

- A. Exodus 25:37 Make seven lamps and set them up on the lampstand so that they illuminate the area in front of it.
- B. Zechariah 4:2 "What do you see?" he asked. "I see a solid gold lampstand," I replied, "with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven spouts to each of the lamps.
- C. It has been observed that there is a difference in the two visions. In Zech., as in Exodus 25:31-32, the seven branches are united, so as to form one candlestick; here there are said to be seven candlesticks; and from this supposed difference it is argued that we have a hint of the variety of the Christian churches, as distinguished from the singleness of the Jewish church. But is it not more probable that what St. John saw was the old familiar seven-branched

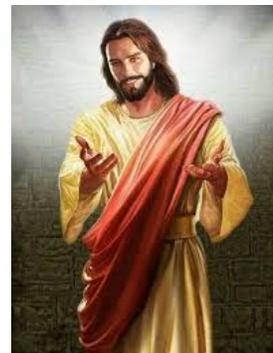
candlestick, identical in form with that which has been rendered familiar to all by the Arch of Titus, but that as the mention of the seven churches was then fresh in his mind, his eye fell rather upon the seven limbs and seven lights than on the whole candlestand, especially if, as Prof. Plumptre suggests, the figure of the Christ concealed part of the main stem? - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

- D. Alford notes the change from the seven-branched candlestick of the temple, as symbolizing the loss of outward unity, so that “each local church has now its own candlestick.” So Trench: “The Christian Church is at once ‘the Church’ and the ‘churches.’ ” Plumptre: “What he needed was to bring out clearly the individuality of each society.” Tait: “These candlesticks were of gold, to denote the preciousness of every thing connected with the Church, and, we may add, the beauty of the Church and her holy services.” - [Meyer's NT Commentary](#)
- E. The function of the churches is to embody and express the light of the divine presence upon earth, so high is the prophet’s conception of the communities (cf. on Revelation 2:4-5); their duty is to keep the light burning and bright, otherwise the reason for their existence disappears (Revelation 2:5). - [Expositor's Greek Testament](#)
- F. They were seven in number; not one branching into seven, but seven standing apart, and so far from each other that he who appeared to John could stand among them - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

1:13 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.

I. Context

- A. John is having a vision in which he is told to write down everything he sees and send it to the 7 churches of Asia Minor.
 - 1. The first thing he sees is a menorah with 7 candlesticks - showing that he is in the temple outside the Holy of Holies.
- B. In front of the candle is Jesus - representing the High Priest.
 - 1. the middle candle of a menorah (sometimes the eighth candlestick) is the candle that all the other lights are lighted off of. Jesus is standing as that candle - to give light to all the other candlesticks.
 - 2. “one like the son of man”
 - a) Daniel used this expression to denote the coming Messiah.
 - (1) He is like a man and like God at the same time.
 - (2) The bridge between God and man.
 - b) Jesus called Himself the “Son of Man.”
 - 3. Clothed in a robe reaching the feet
 - a) Since clothing was expensive - the greater the length the higher the status.
 - (1) long robes were meant for kings and high priests.
 - 4. girded with a gold sash across his chest
 - a) Religious leaders wore sashes across the chest
 - (1) Rabbi's (like Jesus) usually wore red.



- (2) The High priest wore a blue sash that was interwoven with gold.
- b) This sash was all gold, which showed that Jesus was greater than the high priest — He is the Highest High Priest.

II. Notes

- A. Ezekiel 1:26 *Above the expanse over their heads was the likeness of a throne with the appearance of sapphire, and on the throne high above was a figure like that of a man.*
- B. Ezekiel 44:18 - *Linen turbans shall be on their heads and linen undergarments shall be on their loins; they shall not gird themselves with anything which makes them sweat.*
- C. Daniel 7:13 *In my vision in the night I continued to watch: And I saw One like a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence.*
- D. Daniel 10:16 *And suddenly one with the likeness of a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and said to the one standing before me, "My lord, because of the vision, I am overcome with anguish, and I have no strength.*
- E. Zechariah 4:2 *"What do you see?" he asked. "I see a solid gold lampstand," I replied, "with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven spouts to each of the lamps.*
- F. Standing among them, so as to be encircled with them. This shows that the representation could not have been like that of the vision of Zechariah, where the prophet sees "a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon." - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- G. This was evidently the Lord Jesus Christ himself, elsewhere so often called "the Son of man." The idea would seem to be, that he whom he saw resembled "the Son of man" - the Lord Jesus, as he had seen him in the days of his flesh though it would appear that he did not know that it was he until he was informed of it, - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- H. Whether we should translate "a son of man" is a question rather of taste than of grammar: the words of themselves mean no more than "I saw a human figure," but their associations make it plain to anyone acquainted with the Book of Daniel, that it was a superhuman Being in human form; and to a Christian, of St John's days as of our own, Who that Being was. - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)
- I. A robe reaching down to the feet, or to the ankles, yet so as to leave the feet themselves visible. The allusion here, doubtless, is to a long, loose, flowing robe, such as was worn by kings. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- J. Certainly a garment of dignity. probably in particular of priestly dignity, as Exodus 28:31 - [Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges](#)
- K. It was common, and is still, in the East, to wear a girdle to confine the robe, as well as to form a beautiful ornament. This was commonly worn about the middle of the person, or "the loins," but it would seem also that it was sometimes worn around the breast. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- L. As the high priest was with the girdle of the ephod, which was made of gold, of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, Exodus 28:8; and with which the priests were girt about the paps, or breast, as Christ is here described: it is said

of the priests in Ezekiel 44:18, "they shall not gird themselves with anything that causeth sweat"; which some render "in sweating places": and so some Jewish writers interpret it, which will serve to illustrate the present place," says R. Abai they do not gird themselves in the place in which they sweat; according to the tradition, when they gird themselves they do not gird neither below their loins, nor above their arm holes, but over against their arm holes; the gloss says, upon their ribs, against their arm pit, that is, about their breast, or paps; and which is still more plainly expressed by the Targum on the above place, which paraphrases it thus, "they shall not gird about their loins, but they shall gird , "about their heart". - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

- M. This would naturally suggest the idea of one of rank, probably one of princely rank. The raiment here assumed was not that of a priest, but that of a king. It was very far from being that in which the Redeemer appeared when he dwelt upon the earth, and was rather designed to denote his royal state as he is exalted in heaven - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

1:14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

I. Context

- A. John has a vision in which he is in the temple "holy room"
 - 1. He sees the Menorah which leads to the Holy of Holies
 - 2. He sees Jesus appearing as the Highest of High Priests to lead him
- B. Jesus' hair was white like wool or snow
 - 1. showing both purity and eternal wisdom
- C. His eyes were like flames of fire
 - 1. penetrating to the soul and difficult to look at.

II. Notes

- A. Isaiah 1:18 - **Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.**
- B. Daniel 7:9 **As I continued to watch: Thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.**
- C. Daniel 7:10 - **A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.**
- D. Daniel 10:6 **His body was like beryl, his face like the brilliance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.**
- E. Jude 1:7 - **just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.**
- F. Revelation 20:9 - **And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.**

- G. The white head is never in public sentiment other than the venerable sign of ripe knowledge, mature judgment, and solid wisdom; and as such it well betokens that full wisdom and authority which is wielded by the Ancient of Days, - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- H. The color is the point of comparison; signifying purity and glory. - [Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)
- I. for our God is a consuming fire, purging away sin from those who forsake sin, and consuming in their sin those who refuse to be separated from it. (See Revelation 20:9; Daniel 7:9-10; Jude 1:7.) - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- J. Bright, sharp, penetrating; as if everything was light before them, or they would penetrate into the thoughts of people. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

1:15 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.

- I. Context
 - A. John has a vision of Jesus as the high priest standing by a Menorah in the Holy room of the temple.
 - B. His feet are like burnished bronze - showing that He had been refined in the fire (cross) and been made pure.
 - C. His voice was like the sound of many waters - showing that He speaks through His church (the multitude of Christians that are His voice in the world)
- II. Notes
 - A. Ezekiel 1:7 *Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the hooves of a calf, gleaming like polished bronze.*
 - B. Ezekiel 1:24 *When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings like the roar of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings.*
 - C. Ezekiel 40:3 *So He took me there, and I saw a man whose appearance was like bronze. He was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand.*
 - D. Ezekiel 43:2 *and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of many waters, and the earth shone with His glory.*
 - E. Daniel 3:25 - *He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"*
 - F. Daniel 10:6 *His body was like beryl, his face like the brilliance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.*
 - G. [waters] meaning his Gospel, as preached by his apostles and ministers, which was heard far and near - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

1:16 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.

- I. Context

- A. John has a vision of Jesus standing in the Holy room, dressed like the High Priest and pointing past the menorah to the Holy of Holies.
- B. In His right hand he holds 7 stars
 - 1. The right hand represented strength in two ways
 - a) They are protected by Him
 - b) They are used by Him
- C. Out of His mouth came a sharp two edged sword
 - 1. He spoke the truth - that cuts through the lies and harms those that oppose it.
- D. His face was like the sun shining in tis strength
 - 1. He is glowing with the holiness of God - as Moses did when He entered the presence of God and as He did when He was transfigured before John during His earthly ministry.

II. Notes

- A. Isaiah 49:2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword; He hid me in the shadow of His hand. He made me like a polished arrow; He hid me in His quiver.
- B. Matthew 17:2 There He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.
- C. Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it pierces even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- D. Christ is said to hold them in his right hand, as to signify the dignity he hath put upon them and the favour he hath showed them, so also to show his resolution to protect them, according to his promise - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- E. Emblematic of the angels of the seven churches. How he held them is not said. It may be that they seemed to rest on his open palm; or it may be that he seemed to hold them as if they were arranged in a certain order, and with some sort of attachment, so that they could be grasped. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- F. The two edges were designed to cut both ways; and such a sword is a striking emblem of the penetrating power of truth, or of words that proceed from the mouth; and this is designed undoubtedly to be the representation here - that there was some symbol which showed that his words, or his truth, had the power of cutting deep, or penetrating the soul. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

1:17 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,

I. Context

- A. John has a vision of Jesus as the High Priest standing in the temple holy room, pointing past the Menorah into he Holy of Holies.
- B. John is overwhelmed by the sight of Jesus and begins to faint, but Jesus catches him with his right hand.
 - 1. Jesus uses the hand that carries the stars - which suggests that Jesus uses the Church to catch the falling.
- C. Jesus tells him not to be afraid - the same words He said to John many times while they were traveling together — giving him a sense of comfort.

D. Jesus also tells Him that He is the “first and the last” - meaning that He hold complete power over everything, so there is no reason to fear anything.

II. Notes.

- A. Exodus 3:6 Then He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.
- B. Isaiah 41:4 Who has performed this and carried it out, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD--the first and the last--I am He."
- C. Isaiah 44:6 Thus says the LORD, the King and Redeemer of Israel, the LORD of Hosts: "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God but Me.
- D. Isaiah 48:12 "Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I have called: I am He; I am the first, and I am the last.
- E. Ezekiel 1:28 The appearance of the brilliant light all around Him was like that of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell facedown and heard a voice speaking.
- F. Daniel 8:17 As he came near to where I stood, I was terrified and fell facedown. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end."
- G. Daniel 10:9 I heard the sound of his words, and as I listened, I fell into a deep sleep, with my face to the ground.
- H. Matthew 14:27 But Jesus immediately spoke up: "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."
- I. Matthew 17:7 Then Jesus came over and touched them. "Get up," He said. "Do not be afraid."
- J. astonished at the majesty and glory of the appearance - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)
- K. He placed His right hand on me even the same in which he had, and held the seven stars - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- L. [Do not be afraid] language which John had heard from him in the days of his flesh, and might therefore be chose now on purpose that he might the sooner know who he was and be comforted; - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)
- M. This is stated to be one of the reasons why he should not fear - that he was eternal: "I always live - have lived through all the past, and will live through all which is to come - and therefore I can accomplish all my promises, and execute all my purposes." - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

1:18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

I. Context

- A. John faints when He sees Jesus dressed like the High Priest in the Holy room of the temple.
 - 1. Jesus catches Him and tells him not to fear because He has power over everything.
- B. Even life and death - because He had been dead, but now He has conquered death and has full control over who lives and who dies.

II. Notes

- A. 1 Samuel 2:6 The LORD brings death and gives life; some He brings down to Sheol, and others He raises up.
- B. Job 38:17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Have you seen the gates of the shadow of death?
- C. Matthew 16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
- D. John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies.
- E. Romans 6:9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.
- F. Romans 14:9 For this reason Christ died and returned to life, so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

1:19 Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

I. Context

- A. John faints when he sees Jesus dressed as the High priest in the temple, but Jesus assures them that there is no reason to fear - He is in total control.
- B. So John needs to write down everything he sees in his vision.

II. Notes

- A. Habakkuk 2:2 Then the LORD answered me: "Write down this vision and clearly inscribe it on tablets, so that a herald may run with it.
- B. This vision is to be described for the benefit of the Church of Christ, that she may never forget Him who is the foundation on which she rests; the true fountain of her life; and in whom she will find the source of that renewing power to which the last Note alludes - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- C. designed to represent the condition of the seven churches - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- D. o the end of the world - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

1:20 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.

I. Context

- A. John is told to write down everything Jesus shows him.
- B. Jesus reveals the symbols he has already seen.
 - 1. The 7 stars are the lights of the churches (the Holy Spirit shining out of the leadership of these churches)
 - 2. The 7 candlesticks are the churches spread out around the world.

II. Notes

- A. Matthew 5:14 You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.
- B. The meaning of these "angels" has been very much disputed. The common explanation that they are the bishops of the Churches is attractive on account of its simplicity. - [Pulpit Commentary](#)