



Revelation 1¹

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy,
and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it,
because the time is near. 1:3

Ordinarily the future is hidden from the eyes of men, the knowledge of events that are yet to transpire is a matter of God's foreknowledge. But as He did in other cases, so He here made a revelation, a disclosure; he drew aside the veil which hides the mysteries of the future from the eyes of the believers. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary*, p.590

Read Revelation 1:1-3

1:1 Revelation

"The revelation of Jesus Christ" - The opening phrase provides the title of the Book, thus "Revelation" in most English Bibles although some simply transliterate the Greek word and title the Book "The Apocalypse".



† The Greek word ἀποκάλυψις means "to remove the cover from" or "to reveal." **The term pertains to uncovering that which is hidden or concealed and comes to refer to the action of God in revealing that which could not naturally or normally be known by men.**

† The Book of Revelation clearly teaches the doctrine of **VERBAL INSPIRATION**. Note the order of the revelation (1:1-4):

God → Jesus → Angel → John → Seven Churches → Us

† This revelation does not originate with John; he merely "testifies to everything he saw." This is "the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus." Note the emphasis on the *visual nature* of that which is to be revealed. The seven visions/scenes of Revelation are the "Word of God", and the "witness/testimony" of Jesus! *This "visual Word" is the nature of apocalyptic literature.*

† Since John was very old (tradition says he lived to be 100), this vision and Revelation which John received on Patmos may be regarded as **the final fulfillment of the Apostolic signs and miracles** spoken of in Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17: *Your old men shall dream dreams.*

Urgency

That which is to be uncovered in this divine revelation is "**what must soon take place.**" This thought is reinforced in the next sentence: "**because the time is near.**" Note the sense of imminence. These are not far distant events. The last days foretold by Daniel (2:28) have arrived. **The final era of human history has begun.** Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.20

¹ One of the major and most helpful commentaries consulted was Dr. L.L. White's *Revelation*. It is a thorough and lengthy commentary from a solid Lutheran perspective. This 840 page, 3-part download is available for free at <http://www.osl.cc/study/books.cfm>

As Luther says, this is no time for being slothful and sleeping. Prayerful vigilance must characterize the Christians in these last days of sore distress. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary*, p.591

Beatitudes *Blessed* is the one who reads the words of this prophecy...

This is the first of **Revelation's seven beatitudes**, pronouncements of blessing. As the Word of God, Revelation carries the power and the promise of the Almighty. "And those who hear it" reflects the practice of the New Testament church in that these apostolic letters were read in the worship service of the congregations, much like the Scripture readings of our liturgy today. Those who not only hear it but also keep it ("take it to heart") will truly be blessed (cf. **LUKE 11:28**). Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.

The book of Revelation is the only book of the Bible so singled out with such a unique blessing, although Scripture makes clear that reading and study of all Scripture brings blessing. Rev. Paul Bartz, *Revelation*

† **1:3a** *Blessed* is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

† **14:13** Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this: *Blessed* are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

† **16:15** "Look, I come like a thief! *Blessed* is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed."

† **19:9** Then the angel said to me, "Write this: *Blessed* are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

† **20:6** *Blessed* and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

† **22:7** "Look, I am coming soon! *Blessed* is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll."

† **22:13-14** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. "*Blessed* are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

Read Revelation 1:4-8

1:4 Salutation

The writer identifies himself simply as "**John**." The recipients of the letter are designated as "**the seven churches in the province of Asia**." (Biblical "Asia" is modern day Turkey.) The reason for the selection of these particular churches is much debated. These were not the only churches in the



region. Surely the fact that seven are chosen is no accident, the use of the perfect number indicating completion and thus signally that this is a message intended for the entire church. It is likely that these particular churches were singled out because they were representative of the specific spiritual situations and characteristics that the Lord wished to highlight.

The seven congregations are representative of the church until the end of the world, for that is their only function relative to the content of Revelation as a whole. Georgi, *Revelation*, p.4

1:4 Grace and Peace

Martin Luther aptly notes that Scriptural blessings like this one are more than mere wishes; by the power of God's Word they actually accomplish that which they express: *"But this blessing is more than an empty sound of words or some verbal wish in which one person wishes another good things... In Holy Scripture, however, there are real blessings. They are more than mere wishes. They state facts and are effective. They actually bestow and bring what the words say."* 1 Corinthians, OSL, p.20

GRACE OF GOD → **PEACE OF GOD**

The **grace of God** that saves them through Jesus Christ, who redeemed them; the **peace of God** they enjoy because now all is well with them. PBC, p.11

- The gifts of **grace** and **peace** inspire Christians to live **graceful** lives of **peace**.
- **Grace** summarizes the whole salvific act of God accomplished in Christ for believers Scott, p.21
- **Peace** not only refers to inner contentment and serenity, but rather to wholeness and well-being that encompass the whole person Scott, p.21

13/27
NT books
Rom 1:7
1 Cor 1:3
2 Cor 1:2
Gal 1:3
Eph 1:2
Phil 1:2
Col 1:2
1 Thess 1:1
2 Thess 1:2
Titus 1:4
1 Peter 1:2
2 Peter 1:2
Rev 1:4

1:4-6 The Triune God, identified in the phrases which now follow, is **the source of the grace and peace** which we enjoy as the people of God.

† **God the Father** is identified as "He who is, and who was, and who is to come." The threefold designation stresses the timelessness of God and reminds us of "**Yahweh - I AM**" the sacred name of God in the Hebrew Old Testament.

† **God the Holy Spirit** is mentioned here as "The Seven Spirits before His throne." The perfect number seven refers back to the traditional **sevenfold gifts of the Spirit** outlined in **Isaiah 11:2** (which is also used today as the "Confirmation blessing" in the Confirmation service).

- Another interesting parallel to this description of the Holy Spirit is found in Zechariah 4 where the prophet urges the leaders of Israel to rely upon the power of the Spirit:

“Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord Almighty.” (Zechariah 4:6) In the vision which surrounds that admonition the prophet sees “a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights...These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range throughout the earth.” (Zechariah 4:2,10)

† **God the Son** is labeled with three designations - “**The Faithful Witness, The First-Born From The Dead,** and **The Ruler Of The Kings Of The Earth.**” Each of these three descriptive titles is drawn from **Psalm 89** which affirms the messianic promise of a royal king from the line of David.

- “**The faithful witness**” is an allusion to Psalm 89:37, and serves to describe Christ’s role as our divine prophet who reveals the truth of God’s love for men in word and deed.
 - “witness” is the Greek word “**martyr**”
- “**The firstborn from the dead,**” is drawn from Psalm 89:27, and references the resurrection of Christ, who demonstrated His total victory over sin, death, and the devil by His resurrection from the grave on the third day. The language is virtually identical to that of St. Paul in Colossians 1:18 - “**He is...the first born from among the dead.**”
- “**The Ruler Of The Kings Of The Earth,**” also comes from Psalm 89:27. All of the petty kings, emperors, and rulers of this world are but pawns in the hand of this mighty ruler, for Jesus is “**King of kings and Lord of Lords.**” (Revelation 19:16). On the last day, His rule over all will be revealed as all of humanity bows down before Him. Many commentators see in these three titles a sequential reference to the work of Christ past (“faithful witness”); present (“firstborn from the dead”); and, future (“ruler of the kings of the earth”).
 - Christ, in his kingly office, grants entrance into his spiritual kingdom through faith, and to them he will someday lead into his kingdom of glory above. On the other hand, to those who refuse to enter his spiritual kingdom through callous unbelief and who lead a life of unrighteousness, he will in his power and glory be an unrelenting Avenger. In his kingly office the Lord Jesus will, despite all wicked worldly principality and false prophecy, despite all afflictions and plagues evoked upon earth, bring all human history to a victorious end for himself. Georgi, Revelation, p.4
- NOTE the corresponding offices of Christ:

▪ Faithful Witness	PROPHET
▪ Firstborn from the Dead	PRIEST (<i>sacrifice</i>)
▪ Ruler of the Kings of the earth	KING

1:5-6 Doxology

The description of Jesus Christ now naturally flows into triple doxology, a spontaneous song of praise and thanksgiving to God in three parts.

1. **Loves us!** The *agape* of God is seen in His Son, Who gave His life because of His *agape* towards us!
2. **Freed us!** The **blood** of the Redeemer poured out in saving abundance upon the cross has **freed** us from the curse and dominion of sin.

3. **Made us!** Now we reign with Him in His kingdom and enjoy direct access to God as His **priests**. The Old Testament theme of the people of God as a kingdom and priests is repeated several times in Revelation (cf. Revelation 5:10; 20:6). The language closely reflects that of 1 Peter 2:9: *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.”* (Cf. Exodus 19:6)
4. **DOXOLOGY!** *“To Him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.”* The recitation of that which God has done provokes an irrepressible outburst of praise. The only fitting response to that which God in Christ has accomplished is doxology, an endless, eternal song of praise.

1:7 *Parousia*

This verse is based on **Daniel 7:13** and **Zechariah 12:10**. Jesus cited the same combination of texts in the “Little Apocalypse” of Matthew 24:30. The Christ once scorned and crucified will return in majestic splendor before the eyes of all mankind. The true meaning of his ignominious death will then be clear to all and the response from those who conspired to murder the Son of God will be profound mourning and bitter regret.

† **This verse serves as a summary of the whole book of Revelation.** "Behold" occurs 27 times in the book and serves to draw our attention to an especially important point. The coming of Christ will be personal and visible, seen by all at once. Clouds are symbolic of Christ's majesty and power. Rev. Paul Bartz, [Revelation](#)

† Its visible and public: No one will miss it; it will not be a “secret rapture”

† Note how Revelation opens (1:7) and closes (22:20 – 3x!).

† The Tribes of the earth will mourn not in repentance – but sorrow and fear. The Parousia will happen suddenly and without warning: it will be too late to repent.

- The enemies among all the nations of the earth will because of Christ the King wail in evident despair. Indeed, they will perceive how they, as a result of their persistent denial of the redeemer of the world, have drawn upon themselves an evil portion from the hand of him who is the judge of the world. Georgi, [Revelation](#), p.6

† **Eternal Law:** “So shall it be, Amen!” This is the way it will be. No second chance for unbelievers, no last moment opportunity. Excuses to God and denials of God's Truth shall be instantly transformed into the realization of eternal damnation with no appeal. Rev. Paul Bartz, [Revelation](#)



† **Historical note:** These verses were incorporated into the 5th Century Liturgy of St. James from Antioch in Syria. In the prayers which precede the consecration of the bread and wine for Holy Communion the priest intones: *“Let all mortal flesh be silent, and stand with fear and trembling, and meditate nothing earthly within itself: For the King of kings and Lord of lords, Christ our God, come forward to be sacrificed, to be given for food to the faithful; and the bands of angels go before Him with every power and dominion, the many eyed cherubim, and the six winged seraphim, covering their faces, and crying aloud the hymn, Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!”* **This ancient liturgy is preserved in the modern hymn “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence. (LW #241)”** Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.24

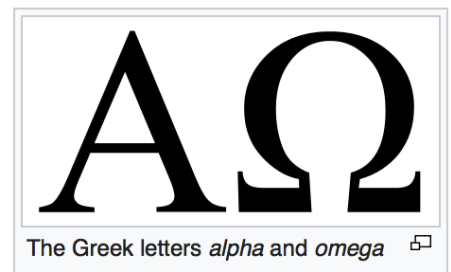
1:8 Alpha and the Omega

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet just as A and Z are the first and last letters of the English alphabet. **These are the first words of Christ directly quoted in Revelation.** They serve as a unequivocal affirmation of the Deity of our Lord. Jesus uses the same terminology in reference to Himself in Revelation 22 as the book comes to its triumphant conclusion (cf. vss. 22:12,16,20).

† While these letters (alpha/omega) have been interpreted in many different ways God Himself interprets them for us already in the Old Testament in **Isaiah 44:6: *I am the First, and I am the Last, and beside Me there is no God.***

† In Exodus 3, the Angel of the Lord, had revealed Himself to Moses as “Yahweh,” the great “I AM,” the Almighty and Eternal God. Our Lord now reveals Himself to have been the Angel of the Lord who is the timeless and eternal Son of God. In this instance, the speaker is labeled as “the Lord God” which is the Greek equivalent of the majestic Hebrew title “*Yahweh Elohim.*”

† He further claims as His own the title “the Almighty” which is the New Testament’s version of the Hebrew title “Lord of Hosts”.



The assertion of Christ’s power and authority as the divine Son of God becomes the foundation for the assurance presented in Revelation.

I AM

The words **I AM** used by God actually is the meaning of God's Name which is usually rendered into English as "Jehovah", or "Yahweh". Actually **I AM** only provides the consonants for Jehovah, we don't know what the original vowels were since they were never written. God, having given His Name as **I AM** (when translated into English) identifies himself as the uncreated One who is His own cause and Reason for Being. When Jesus, during His ministry claims to be **I AM** (as in John 8:58 *Jesus said unto them, before Abraham was, I AM*) He is using God's name and claiming to be God Himself. Since there is no question that John wrote the book, the divine claim at this point in the opening of the book makes it clear that **Christ is behind the book of Revelation.** Paul Bartz,

Revelation

Read Revelation 1:9-20

John's Commission from Christ

John, again!

John once again identifies himself (for the third time), and at the same time asserts his solidarity with the beleaguered believers to whom his message is addressed. Like them, he is paying the price for faithfulness to the Lord and His Word – “because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.” He joins with them not only in “suffering” and “patient endurance,” but also in “kingdom” (literally “kingship” in the Greek). **The Kingdom of God in this world is to endure suffering and tribulation,** for Christ's is no earthly kingdom of glory and power. Dr. L. L. White, *Revelation*, p.28

Kingdom/Kingship

The risen Jesus, and enthroned at the right hand of God, rules over all things in heaven and on earth. The suffering Christians, persecuted by the kings of the earth who rule over them, are, in spite of this, people who share with Jesus and his ruling activity. By their prayers for those in authority, by their petition that God's Will may be done, by their proclamation of the gospel, and in countless other ways, they are participating with Jesus in the process by which he carries out the good pleasure of his will. Christians therefore are not to judge by appearance. In spite of the suffering they must endure at the hands of earthly rulers, they are in reality the actual rulers of this world, for whose benefit all things in this world are governed (Rom 8:28). *Revelation*, Becker, p.33

The Island of Patmos

Patmos is a small island off the coast of Asia Minor southwest of Ephesus, about forty miles west of the town of Miletus. The island is crescent shaped, about thirteen square miles in size, ten miles long and five miles wide at its extremities. A barren rock place, it was often used by the Roman authorities as a penal colony and place of exile. Irenaeus tells us that John was exiled there to work in the mines in the fourteenth year of the reign of the emperor Domitian, or 95 A.D., and that he remained in exile until 96 A.D. when Domitian was overthrown and replaced by Nerva. Dr. L. L. White,

Revelation, p.28



1:10 The Lord's Day

The vision occurs on Sunday, “the Lord's day,” so designated because of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead on the first day of the week. Although this is the only use of the term in Scripture the designation is quite common in Christian usage by the beginning of the Second Century.

- † On a certain Sunday, John was “in spirit”. This phrase “in spirit” denotes a spiritual state in which he was able to see and hear things that ordinarily are not seen and heard, the state in which visions are perceived. Many translators render this phrase “in the Spirit”. This is a possible translation. However, the absence of the article in Greek and the fact that there is no other indication in the context that the word is a proper name seems to make the translation “in spirit” preferable – here and every other time it is used in the book (4:2, 17:3, 21:10).

Revelation, Becker, p.33

1:10 Like a Trumpet

Like the ancient prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 3:12) the revelator's commission begins with the sound of a loud voice coming from behind him. Here, as elsewhere in the Book, the incredible volume of the sound indicates the importance of the message it conveys. It is the voice of authority and command with the clarity and power of the trumpet's blast.

Seven Churches

The churches are listed in the order one might follow if he were riding a circuit made up of these congregations and the letters will subsequently be presented in the same order. **Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.**"

- (1) **Ephesus**: where John had spent most of the last 30 years.
- (2) **Smyrna**: a model congregation, one of only two to escape censure.
- (3) **Pergamum**: where Satan dwells and faithful Antipas was martyred.
- (4) **Thyatira**: home of Lydia, who hosted Paul on his journeys lived.
- (5) **Sardis**: spiritually dead congregation falling into sin.
- (6) **Philadelphia**: like Smyrna, a model congregation
- (7) **Laodicea**: materially wealthy, spiritually poor lukewarm. Rev. Paul Bartz, [Revelation](#)

1:12-13 Lampstands

These are not "candlesticks," in the modern sense of the term, but rather a free standing oil lamp. It is an Old Testament image of the seven branch **menorah** of the tabernacle and the temple. (Exodus 37:17-24; Numbers 8:1-4) Here the seven lampstands are individual and fashioned of precious gold. **Christ Himself informs us that the seven lampstands represent the seven churches to which letters have been addressed.** The symbol is apt since the people of God are to be "the light of the world." (Matthew 5:14). A similar image appears in Zechariah 4 and the prophet's vision of a golden lampstand with seven lights at it top. (Zechariah 4:2,10) Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.31-32



The congregations are inseparable from their Head and Center Jesus, who abides and moves among the lampstands in His temple with the dignity and authority of the High Priest. Kretzmann, [Popular Commentary](#), p.593

Son of Man

In the midst of the seven golden lampstands there stands "someone like a son of man." This is a reference to the prominent messianic title of the Old Testament (Daniel 7:13) which is referred to Jesus eighty times in the Gospels and Acts.

The position of the man in the middle of the seven golden lampstands is profoundly important. **Jesus stands in the midst of His church** just as He has promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)

- † So Christians are to think of Christ, not above in heaven only, but as One who is ever with them, having set up His abode in their very midst. Stoeckhardt, [Lectures on Revelation](#), p.3
- † The fact that Jesus was standing among the seven lampstands is a symbolic way of setting forth the truth that the ascended Christ, who is now at the right hand of God, is at the same time still with his people here on earth. [Revelation](#), Becker, p.37

In the middle of the lampstands means that Christ is present with His churches. As the theme of the book we see Christ's continuing love and care for His churches. This close connection between Christ and His love and care for His Church means that those who reject the Church, which Christ so closely ties to Himself, are actually rejecting Christ.

Rev. Paul Bartz, [Revelation](#)

The glorious appearance of the figure is described in precise detail. The imagery is drawn from Daniel chapters 7 and 10. **It serves to present the Lord as our great High Priest and King.**

- † The **flowing robe** with the **golden sash** is reminiscent of the vestments of the high priest (cf. Exodus 28:4-5; Zechariah 3:4). The priestly connotation is certainly fitting in this context amid the golden lamps, since it was the responsibility of the priest to tend the lampstands of the temple, to trim the wicks, refill the oil, and relight the lamps that had gone out. Thus, Christ is the great High Priest who tends and cares for His churches. (In Daniel 10:5, the messenger of God is similarly dressed in fine linen with a belt of gold.)
- † Once before, on the Mount of Transfiguration, St. John had seen the **face** of the glorified Christ. Now that awesome sight is repeated and carefully described.
- † In Daniel 7:9, the prophet uses the imagery of pure **white hair** to signal the eternity of the Ancient of Days: *"His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of His head was white like wool."* John uses virtually the same language here in reference to Jesus to portray Christ as the eternal Word who "was in the beginning with God."
- † The **"blazing fire"** of His eyes indicate the omniscience of God, whose divine vision penetrates through every barrier, from whom nothing can be hidden, and to whom all things are known. The terminology in this phrase comes from Daniel 10:6 where the Angel of the Lord's eyes burn like flaming torches.
- † This is a figure who is holy and without sin, indicated by **"his feet,"** which "were like bronze glowing in a furnace." The purifying fire of the furnace burns away the impurities and the dross until only the perfectly refined metal remains. The figure is barefoot as was Moses before the burning bush.
- † "And His voice was like the sound of **rushing waters.**" There is a matchless power in the voice of this man, like a thundering waterfall or the crash of the surf upon the rock (cf. Ezekiel 43:2)
- † Here, for the first time, the imagery of Revelation 1 lacks specific Old Testament precedent. There is, nonetheless, no doubt as to the significance of the seven stars since John later informs us that they represent the angels of the seven churches. **The right hand**



is the traditional position of favor and protection. It also carries the connotation of power and strength. To be held in the right hand of God is to know peace and security that can be experienced nowhere else.

- † Both St. Paul and the writer to the Hebrews describe the Word of God as a **sharp sword** (cf. Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). John, however, may have had in mind the judgement image of Isaiah 11:4 - “He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth.” (Cf. also 2 Thessalonians 2:8). Thus does the Revelator portray our Lord as the Almighty Judge of the universe.
- † “**His face was like the sun, shining in all its brilliance.**” This phrase calls to mind the Transfiguration when the face of Christ “had shone like the sun” (Matthew 17:2) enabling John and the others there on the mountaintop to catch a brief glimpse of Christ’s heavenly glory as the Son of God. Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.32-34

One thing can definitely be said about the vision as a whole. We have heard a clear assertion that the same Jesus who had suffered humiliation and death on the cross, and who had experienced the same kind of persecution that his followers were enduring, now occupies an exalted position as the ruler of the whole earth. What had happened to Jesus would someday also happen to them. They, too, would be glorified. [Revelation](#), Becker, p.38

John’s Response: *humility!* “When I saw him, I fell at His feet as though dead...”

John, as a sinful human being, is overwhelmed by this stunning vision of the majestic and holy God. He responds in the only appropriate way -- he falls face-down upon the ground in fearful awe. Thus had it been for Daniel (Daniel 10:7-9) and the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:28) before him. John and his companions had reacted in a similar fashion on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:6). On that occasion, and also here, Jesus reaches out to comfort and reassure his frightened disciple (Matthew 17:7).

The Lord reaches out to John with the same strong right hand which had held the seven stars. His reassuring touch is accompanied by a comforting word. “**Do not be afraid.**” The Greek verb is in the present imperative and would most accurately be translated - “**Stop** being afraid.” Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.35

1:17b-18 Christ describes Himself

Christ’s further self-identification not only continues John’s reassurance, but also provides the foundation and authority for his commission to John. “**I AM**” echoes the sacred Tetragrammaton “Yahweh,” **the pre-eminent divine name of the Old Testament** (Exodus 3:14). In Verse 8 the Lord had asserted, “*I am the Alpha and the Omega.*” He now reiterates that claim, again declaring **His eternity** -- “I am the First and the Last.” Not only the Lord of time, Jesus is also the Lord of Life -- “*I am the Living One; I was dead and*



behold, I am alive forever and ever.” The resurrection of Christ affirms His claim to divinity and demonstrates His victory over death and its power. The reality of His resurrection becomes the basis for every Christian’s expectation of life eternal. *“And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”* The imagery signifies **authority, control, and ownership**. Death holds no terror for the Christian for Christ has risen and in so doing has conquered death for us.

Jesus is the living one! This is a word of great comfort to Christians in the day of persecution. Even the executioner’s sword cannot place of believing child of God beyond Jesus’ power to help. Becker, p.39

1:18 HADES

Hades transliterated in the NIV text, literally means “the place that is not seen.” It is the Greek equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew word “sheol.” It is often used in Scripture to refer to hell, the place of the damned. However, on occasion, it is also used in a neutral sense to simply describe the place of the dead. That would appear to be the sense in this text as the state of death and the place of death are combined, both subject to the power and authority of the Lord. Dr. L. L. White, [Revelation](#), p.36



- † Hades is the state of death, including the terror of one’s dying and the gloom and hopelessness after death. If Christ is said to have the keys of death and Hades, it implies that He can lock the door to death. He saves His own from death, well He banishes all His enemies into death. Stoeckhardt, [Lectures on Revelation](#), p.4
- † There can be no doubt that it often, perhaps even most generally, means what we understand by the word “hell” . . . it would be possible here to understand *Hades* as the grave, then the assertion that Jesus has the keys to *Hades* would mean that he has the power to release from the grave. [Revelation](#), Becker, p.39

1:19 Write this down!

John’s commission is repeated in this renewed command to write. This book was not produced at the initiative of man nor is its content determined by the mind of man. **The command to write comes from God and the content of that which is written is determined by God and revealed to the human writer by Him.** The grand sweep of Revelation’s message encompassing past, present and future is outlined in the threefold phrase *“what you have seen, what is now, and what will take place later.”*

The First “Mystery” ≅ apocalypse; special revelation

Following the command to write, an explanation of the two primary symbols of the initial vision is provided. The symbolism of the seven stars and lampstands is described as the “mystery.” The term refers to that which is hidden or secret to the natural mind and must be therefore be revealed by God. Ordinary understanding is not adequate here. Supernatural revelation is required.

- † The **lampstands** are the seven churches previously introduced. The identification is simple and straightforward.
- † **The gospel of Christ is the light of the lampstands. This light should shine forth from individual Christians as well as from entire congregations, both in Christian confession and Christian conduct.**
- † The **seven stars** are identified as “the angels of the seven churches” through whom the letters will subsequently be presented to the congregations. The Greek word “*angeloi*” simply means “messengers.” It is commonly used in Scripture both in reference to human beings and to spirits. Accordingly, the commentators have debated the intended sense here. Some would argue that the reference is to angels of God appointed as the guardian spirits of each congregation. While this view is not impossible, there is no indication anywhere else in Scripture of the existence of such ecclesiastical guardian angels. At the same time, it does not seem to fit the context. Why would Christ reveal His message to John, a man, who would then convey that message to seven angels, so that they, in turn, could take the message back to the people of the churches. **Others argue more convincingly that the messengers in question are the pastors of the respective churches. This view makes better sense in the context, and is completely consistent with a Biblical view of the pastor’s role and responsibility.**
- † “The messenger of the church is the man who delivers the Lord’s message to the church. He is the pastor of the congregation...If we understand the messenger of the church to be the pastor of the congregation, then we can in a very natural way look upon the pastors of each of the seven congregations as the messenger through whom the message intended for each congregation is conveyed from Jesus to the people of God.” Becker, *Revelation*, p. 41



27 Titles, Names, and Descriptions of Christ

In Revelation 1 alone!

Inspired the Apocalypse
The Faithful Witness
The firstborn from the dead
Ruler of the kings of the earth
Loves us
Freed us from sin by His blood
Made us a Kingdom and Priests
Visibly returning soon in glory
Alpha and Omega
Lord
God
Who is, was, and is to come
The Almighty
Walks among the Lampstands
Son of Man
High Priest
Eternal
Omniscient
Holy
Powerful
Shepherd of shepherds
Powerful Word
Divine Glory
I AM
First and Last
The Living One
Holds keys of Hades and Death

*The assertion of Christ's
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