

The Vision of Christ - The Seven Churches - The Things which must be after the Churches into Eternity

239 CHAPTER 1

Introductory remarks

(1:1-11). 1 Title, origin, subject, object, transmission, and author

THE "Revelation" of Jē'sus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2 Threefold authenticity (22:16)

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

3 The beatitude (Cp. 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14) and nature of prophecy (Cp. 22:7, 10, 18, 19)

►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.

4 Sevenfold salutation to the churches and threefold exaltation of Jesus Christ

4 **J**OHNS to the "seven churches which are in Ā'siā: 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;

5 And from Jē'sus 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,

*6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Ā-mēn'.

5 Chief theme of Revelation (11:15-18; 19:11-21; 22:20)

►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, Ā-mēn'.

6 Eternity of Jesus Christ (1:8, 11, 17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13; Mic. 5:1-2; Jn. 1:1-2)

8 I am "Āl'phā and Ō-mē'gā, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

7 The prophet - John (1:1, 4)

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in trib-

ulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jē'sus Christ, was in the isle that is called Pāt'mos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jē'sus Christ.

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

8 John's commission to write the Revelation

11 Saying, I am Āl'phā and Ō-mē'gā, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Ā'siā; unto Eph'e-sūs, and unto Smŷr'nā, and unto Pēr'gamōs, and unto Thŷ-a-tī'rā, and unto Sār'dīs, and unto Phīl-a-dēl'phī-ā, and unto Lā-ōd-i-çē'ā.

1 "THE THINGS which thou HAST SEEN" (1:12-20). 1 The vision of Christ: (1) Eight characteristics of Christ

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

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

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

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

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

(2) Effect of the vision upon John (Cp. Isa. 6; Ezek. 1:28; 2:3; Dan. 8:27; 10:5-18; Acts 9:3-8)

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:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Ā-mēn'; and have the keys of hell and of death.

(3) Key to the interpretation (1:11 and 19 with 4:1)

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

(4) The symbols interpreted

20 The 'mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven gold-

a The kingdom of or from the heavens that Christ will establish on earth at the second advent (1:6, 9; 5:10; 11:15; 12:10; 20:4-6; 22:5). See notes j and e, Mt. 4:17; 10:24

b 7 times in Rev. of the endurance of Christians in suffering (1:9; 2:2-3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12)

c A volcanic, treeless, rocky island about 6x10 miles, 30 miles S. W. of Samos. It was made a place of exile by the Romans for the lowest of criminals

d 2 reasons for banishment (v 2, 9):
1 For preaching the Word of God
2 For testifying of Jesus Christ

e A term used of being wholly in union with the Holy Spirit and yielded to Him (note n, Lk. 22:3)

f See The Lord's day, p. 191, 305

g God prepared Moses to receive the law by the blowing of a trumpet (Ex. 19:16-19)

h Here John was told to write in a book what he was about to see and send it to the 7 churches of Asia Minor (v 10-11)

i In v 12-18 we have the vision of the glorified Christ, which constitutes the first division of Revelation in v 19

j These symbolize the 7 churches (v 20)

k See Dan. 7:13-14; 10:5-10; Rev. 10

l 8fold description of Christ:

1 His body was clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded with golden girdle (v 13, Cp. Dan. 10:5)

2 His hair was white like wool and snow (v 14; Dan. 7:9)

3 His eyes were as a flame of fire (v 14; 19:12; Dan. 10:6. Cp. Hab. 1:13)

4 His feet were like fine brass (v 15; 10:1; Dan. 10:6)

5 His voice like many waters (v 15; 8:5; 10:2-4; 11:15; 14:2; 16:17-18; 19:6; Ps. 29; Heb. 12:26; Dan. 10:6)

6 His right hand held 7 stars, which were the pastors of the 7 churches (v 20)

7 His mouth had a two-edged sword coming out of it (v 16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21. Cp. Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12)

8 His countenance shone like the sun (v 16; 10:1; Dan. 10:6)

m Note the effect of the vision upon John (v 17-18).

n Found 80 times in Scripture, generally of God quieting the fear of man because of His presence

o This identifies the person to be Christ (Acts 2:25-36; 1 Cor. 15:1-23; Col. 2:14-17; Eph. 2:14-15; Jn. 21:14, note)

p Keys signify power and authority (v 18; 3:7; Mt. 16:19; 18:18; Isa. 22:22)

q John is now commanded to write (v 19). In v 11 he was told to write what he was about to see. Now he is told to write what he has already seen - the vision of v 16-18

r 3fold key to the book of Revelation:
1 Write the things which thou hast seen, that is, the vision of Christ in the midst of the candlesticks (Rev. 1)

2 Write the things which are, that is, the things concerning the churches, which John wrote about in Rev. 2-3

3 Write the things which shall be hereafter, that is, the events which MUST BE after the churches (Rev. 4:1-22:5). This confirms the 3fold division of Revelation: after John had written the things which thou hast seen in Rev. 1, and after he had written the things which are, the things concerning the churches in Rev. 2-3, he was told to

Come up hither into heaven, and I will show thee things WHICH MUST BE

HEREAFTER, that is, after the churches (Rev. 4-22). Rev. 4:1 says, AFTER THESE THINGS (after writing the vision of

Rev. 1 and the things of the churches in Rev. 2-3)... Come up hither, and I will show thee THINGS WHICH MUST BE AFTER THESE THINGS, if the things of Rev. 4:1 on must be after the things of the churches, then they will not be fulfilled along with the things of the churches. This means that every event of Rev. 4-22 must be fulfilled after the

rapture of the church. It also means that no historical or present event could possibly be a fulfillment of any event of Rev. 4-22

s After the things which are, or after the churches of Rev. 2-3

t Gr. musterion (see Mystery, p. 175). Used 4 times in Rev. (1:20; 10:7; 17:5, 7)

a Gr. apokalupsis, to unveil or uncover. It implies the lifting up of a curtain so all can see alike what is uncovered. When used of writing it means to reveal or make clear (Eph. 3:3; Gal. 1:12); when used of a person it denotes visible presence (v 1; 2 Th. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:7, 13). Here it refers to both the book and the person of Christ. See p. 190 and 207

b Not a revelation altogether concerning Christ, but one from Him. Christ is not the main subject of the book. See note f, below

c God gave it to Christ, emphasizing His limitations during His incarnation (Isa. 50:4; Mt. 28:18; Mk. 13:32; Lk. 2:40, 52)

d The purpose was to show, not hide from His servants, events from John's day into all eternity (Rev. 21-22)

e 111 times in the N. T.; 14 in Rev.

f 45 times, emphasizing the subject matter of the book, which is things or events:

1 Events of the whole church age (Rev. 1-3)

2 Events in heaven (Rev. 4-5)

3 Events of the future tribulation of Daniel's 70th week (Rev. 6-19)

4 Events of the Millennium (Rev. 20)

5 Events of the eternal new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21-22)

g Gr. tachos, swiftness; speed; quickly. Trans. shortly (v 1; 22:6; Acts 25:4; Rom. 16:20); quickly (Acts 12:7; 22:18; Rev. 2:5); and speedily (Lk. 18:8). The idea is that this series of events must begin quickly

h Gr. semaino, to show or point out; announce; to make a note of. That it does not mean that all things are in symbols is clear from its use elsewhere (v 1; Jn. 12:33; 18:32; 21:19; Acts 11:28; 26:27). It simply means to make a clear record

i The book was transmitted from God to Christ, to the angel, to John, to the churches, to us (v 1, 11)

j 3 classes blessed (v 3):

1 Those who read the Revelation

2 Those who hear it

3 Those who keep things written therein

k 7 times in Rev. indicating the prophetic aspect of the book (v 3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19)

l 7 rules regarding prophecy:

1 Understand prophecy as history written beforehand

2 Give the same meaning to words of prophecy as you do the words of history

3 Do not seek for hidden meanings

4 Do not think prophecy must be fulfilled before it can be understood

5 Do not interpret God's own interpretation of any thing in prophecy

6 Take all prophecy literally unless it is clear that it cannot have a literal meaning. Then get the literal truth conveyed by the figurative language

7 Let the Bible be its own interpreter

m 7 times in Rev. (v 3; 2:26; 3:8, 10; 12:17; 14:12; 22:9)

n They were located in Asia Minor (v 11)

o From the Divine Trinity (v 4-5). See 89 proofs of a Divine Trinity, p. 280

p See note on Rev. 5:6

q See 10 facts about Jesus Christ, p. 304

r 1st N. T. prophecy in Rev. (1:6-7, unfulfilled). Next, 2:5

s All eyes in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem where He lands (Zech. 14:1-5). People in distant parts of the earth will not see Him until later (Isa. 2:2-4; 66:19-21; Zech. 8:23)

t The descendants of those who pierced Him - the Jews (Zech. 12:10)

u The armies of the nations that will be surrounding Jerusalem when Christ comes (Zech. 14:1-5; Mt. 24:29-31)

v The first and last letters of the Gr. alphabet. Used 4 times in Rev. (1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13, Cp. 1:17; 2:8. Used of Christ in all these places except in 21:6). He is also called the Almighty (v 8), which is elsewhere used of the Father (4:8; 11:17; 16:3; 16:7, 14; 19:15; 21:22)

w Partaker, as in note o, Phil. 1:7

x Used 5 times in Rev.: 4 times of persecution of Christians in John's day (1:9; 2:9, 10, 22), and one time of the future great tribulation (7:14). See note h, 2 Cor. 1:4