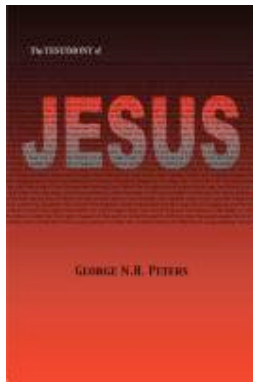


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**GEORGE N.H. PETERS**



*The author's unpublished 1907 study notes on the Book of Revelation. His unique interpretation combines prophecy with covenants to unlock the Book's symbolic language. Although the study is over 100 years old, the reader is instantly confronted by this Testimony of Jesus, the Son of Man proclaiming His promised physical return to earth in a prophetic future that strikes the reader as eerily and uncannily similar to today's dangerous, chaotic world.*

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# **The Testimony of Jesus**

1907 Biblical study notes on the Book of Revelation

George N. H. Peters

Edited by  
D. A. Baltuskonis and P.R. Baltuskonis

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## Chapter 1:1

**The (or, a) Revelation (or, Apocalypse) of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass (or, that which must come to pass speedily; or, what must shortly come to pass; or, what things must in swift succession come to pass); and He sent and signified it (omit 'it') by his angel unto his servant John (or, as some render, signified the same; or, and sending He signified by his angel to his servant John; or, and He signified sending by his angel to his servant John).**

### The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ.

'Apocalypse' – Definitions are: uncovering, disclosure, manifestations, revelation, and appearing.

The word is used in the New Testament to denote a disclosure (or revelment), Luke 2:32; 'to enlighten,' Rom 16:25; or, a revelation; 1Cor 14:6,26; 2Cor 12:1,7; Gal 2:2; and Eph 1:17.

It is primarily employed to denote a literal and personal revelment, appearing, and manifestation, as in Rom 2:5, 'revelation of the righteous judgement;' Rom 8:19, 'manifestation of the sons of God;' 1Cor 1:7, 'waiting for the coming of our Lord;' Gal 1:12, 'the revelation of Jesus Christ;' 2Thess 1:7, 'when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed;' 1Pet 1:7 'glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ;' 1Pet 1:13, 'at the revelation of Jesus Christ;' and 1Pet 4:13, 'when his glory shall be revealed.'

The verb from which this noun is derived has likewise in the New Testament this twofold meaning and application. When applied to things, it denotes disclosure, (or revelment), sometimes allied (1Pet 5:1) with the idea of manifested realization. When applied to persons (Luke 17:30) it means a personal appearing indicative of a real manifested personal presence.

Hence, so far as the word is concerned, two opinions respecting 'Apocalypse' meaning here are advocated by interpreters, both are based on scriptural usage.

One view is, that, as the word allows, it simply means uncovering or unveiling the future coming things by Jesus. It denotes a disclosure of purposed divinely ordered fulfillments by the act and authority of the Christ. According to this class of interpreters it is a revealment, or communication, given by Jesus for the purpose for showing what is to occur. The entire contents of the Apocalypse are embraced in this manner, as a revealment. Such is the most generally received explanation and application of the word.

The writer however prefers and adopts the following primary viewpoint, (which also includes the above secondary explanation); that 'Apocalypse' here denotes and portrays the personal Second Advent, (or appearing, or revelation, or manifestation), of Jesus Christ. In support of this view and application various reasons can be assigned.

- The proof in behalf of merely accepting the first view (the generally accepted interpretation of the word Apocalypse) is weak and inconclusive. Its advocates assign the following in support:

1. Usage. Fully admitting that the word 'Apocalypse' is used in the sense of revealing truth, etc., it does not necessarily follow that such must be its meaning here, for we are not at liberty to ignore its frequent employment to describe the still future Coming of the Messiah in person and glory.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> To indicate that we do not force a meaning into the text opposed to the laws of language, reference is made to the frank concession of Albert Barnes in his Notes on Revelation, p 49, this voluntary granting of our view as sustaining a proper grammatical position is the more valuable, since it is in direct opposition to his own. Thus he says; the phrase 'the Revelation of Jesus Christ' might, so far as the construction of the language is concerned, refer either to Christ as the subject or object. It might either mean that Christ is the object revealed in this Book, and that its great purpose is to make him known - and so, the phrase is understood in the commentary called Hyponora (New York, 1844); or, it may mean that this is a revelation which Christ makes to mankind, that is, it is His in the sense that He communicates it to the world." Rev. Dr. Seiss in his Lectures on Revelation, (3 vol, Philadelphia), as well as other English and

2. The verb 'gave' is stressed, as 'God gave.' While it is true that God gives or imparts knowledge of truth and events, it is also true that God gave to Jesus far more than this, as will be duly shown in remarks on the phrase.

3. Advocates stress the expression 'to show things.' But the question to be decided is, what things? Are they things independent of the Second Advent, or, are they intimately associated with it? Are they things disconnected from the 'day of the Lord Jesus,' or, are they (see notes verse 10) inseparably joined to that future day?

4. Special force, under the assumption of continuity of fulfillment during this dispensation, is laid upon 'must shortly come to pass.' As this Book is divinely inspired, we prefer to take (see notes on 'shortly') the Divine estimate of time instead of a humanly limited one.

5. Because future events are predicted, it is assumed that the word Apocalypse must be indicative of their (future) disclosure. In a certain sense this is true, viz: all that follows in prediction is involved in this Apocalypse of Jesus and results from it.

6. A pious and esteemed commentator even assigns as a reason (for accepting the first viewpoint) this astounding declaration: "No disclosure of the person or work of the Lord Jesus Christ, being merely a disclosure of events which were to happen". It is amazing that an interpreter can make that statement in light of verses like

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American writers, have taught that Revelation (or Apocalypse) here refers to the personal Second Advent and must be so interpreted. Even such writers as Huidekoper (Judaism at Rome, vol. 1, p 255), who reject the Apocalypse and its teaching, regarding it as un-apostolic and unworthy of credence, say in reference to its title: a Book called 'Apocalypse,' that is, the Personal Appearing or, the Manifestation of Jesus Christ. The common version, Revelation of Jesus Christ, in order that it may correspond with the Greek, must be understood as meaning, not a Revelation made by him, but a revealing of himself personally, 1Cor 1: 7; 2Thess 1: 7;<sup>1</sup> compare Luke 17: 30 and also the revealing, 2Thess 2: 3, 6, 8 of "the Lawless One."

Rev 1:7,13,18 and Rev 22: 3,7,16, 20<sup>2</sup> because, from beginning to end, the Book is filled with the personal presence and active work of the Lord Jesus.

- If we only have the phrase 'the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ', every one would be forced to admit that it meant 'the Revelation, (or Appearing) of Jesus Christ.'
- It is not merely a revelation, or disclosure, by Jesus but of Jesus himself personally. Such is the grammatical force of the language.
- We are authorized by Scriptural usage. The identical phraseology 'Apocalypse, (or Revelation) of Jesus Christ' is employed to describe the future appearing, manifestation, and personal presence of Jesus Christ, as in 1Cor 1:7; 1Pet 1:7,13; compare the 'Apocalypse' of 2Thess 1:7.<sup>3</sup>
- A strict adherence to the Greek text is confirmatory. The Greek has no article, and therefore reads, 'Apocalypse of Jesus Christ.' This very structure is indicative of the revealment and reappearance of Jesus, for it is not the Revelation but a Revelation of Jesus Christ.'

**Consistency makes Jesus Christ the subject (or object) of disclosure and not the Book itself. This is evident by the connection and precise phraseology.**

- The Second Coming of Jesus is a revelation (or appearing) from the unseen and invisible, being appropriately described by the word 'Apocalypse.'
- The great leading and most impressive topic and subject matter of the Book is the future Apocalypse of Jesus. It is permeated by it, and hence, owing to its importance, special and significant attention is directed to it in the opening and closing words.
- It is an Apocalypse duly seen and felt and realized in His personal administrations. And it is an unveiling, or revealing, of the acts and scenes and results flowing from a personal presence so frequently predicted and so plainly promised.
- The Apocalypse of Jesus being Redemption's medium and climax; being (Acts 3:19-21) the forerunner and all-powerful agency of the times of restitution, it is preeminently worthy of a special Book devoted to his proclamation and consideration.



- It is reasonable to have 'the blessed hope' (Phil 3:20,21<sup>4</sup>) thus conspicuously presented as the grandest event that the world has ever witnessed, and the most potent in bringing forth a perfectly realized Salvation.

The exegesis that consecutively follows is corroborative and confirmatory of the writer's position, in as much as the actual revelation; personal presence and acts of Jesus are constantly and prominently found in the biblical record.

It is an 'Apocalypse of Jesus Christ.'

- 'Of Jesus,' thus designating the person and His relationship to humanity. It is David's Son, and David's heir. He is the same Jesus who ascended to heaven, and who now fulfills the promised return from thence. It is a reappearing and re-manifestation of Jesus here on the earth.
- 'Of Christ,' i.e. the Anointed One, thus indicating that He is revealed as the King, as the covenanted and predicted Ruler, the Mighty Theocratic King, the actual and real representative of God on earth.

The manifestation of this Person and his august official station as recorded, being duly accepted by faith and hope, we are prepared for the tremendous acts and exerted power that result.

'Which God gave unto Him.' God gave not merely a communication to Jesus but a special gift, a high privilege and honor, a lofty station of authority and power. As Deity exalted David's Son (Acts 2:33<sup>5</sup>) so now again God honors Him at His promised return by this wonderful Apocalypse. Indeed it is involved in the Davidic covenant that God gave, and which is to be realized at this revelation. The evidence of this giving is abundant:

- Thus Daniel 7 informs us, that, when the Roman power has run its allotted course, then Deity brings forth 'the Son of man' and gives to him dominion and glory and a Kingdom.
- Jesus himself tells us, (Matt 11:27), that 'all things are delivered unto me of my Father.'
- In John 3:35 we read: 'the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.'

- Jesus affirms, John 5:27, that the Father 'hath given him authority to execute judgement also, because He is the Son of man.'
- Therefore in Acts 3:19–21 we are told that God sends this very Jesus Christ, reveals him, to introduce the 'times of restitution.'
- We are informed in Acts 17:31, that God has determinately, appointed 'the day of appearing.'
- In Eph 1:21 God is represented giving Jesus supremacy not only in this world (or age) 'but also in that, which is to come.'
- In Luke 22:29, Jesus, in accord with this Apocalypse, speaks of his future Kingdom as one 'my Father appointed unto me.'

'To show unto his servants (bond-servants) things which must shortly (or speedily; or, in swift succession,) come to pass.'

- 'To show,' that is, to make known. It is interesting to the student to notice, that the word in Greek here used is also employed in direct connection with the Second Advent of Jesus.
- 1Tim 6:14, 15, 'until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall show, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.'
- To show 'unto his servants.' To his 'bond-servants,' to believers bound to him in life-service, others will not properly receive & honor the gift.
- 'Things,' meaning this Apocalypse and the immediate results proceeding from its occurrence.
- 'Which must shortly come to pass.' 'Must,' i.e. the matter and ordering of events are preordained by an infinite and All-powerful will. They are done precisely as shown, not arbitrarily, or by chance, but by Divine guidance.
- These things must 'come to pass.' They will inevitably be realized. The fulfillment is certain, being appointed by God.
- 'Shortly, (or, speedily or, in swift succession).' If we adopt the rendering given by some 'in swift succession,' then the idea suggests itself, that the Advent and the events related to it are quickly realized in a succession, no lengthy time period is required for an ample and complete fulfillment of the predictions of the Book.

If however we prefer (as the writer does) the rendering 'shortly,' then let the following be observed: This term is said in a Divinely inspired Book and we are not to limit its nearness, or remoteness, by our own ideas of time, but reverently and humbly regard it's meaning in the largeness of view, which belongs to God. For what is very long to us may be a 'shortly' or exceedingly brief period to him.

Indeed such is the Scriptural representation of God's estimate of time, that what appears long to us is brief or short to him. 2Pet 3:8, 'one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' Hence in Isa 54:7 the many centuries of Jewish dispersion and suffering are designated 'a small moment' and 'a moment,' in Isa 54:8. The Self-existent alone can speak in this manner. Compare Psalms 30:5.<sup>6</sup>

To avoid a too hasty conclusion respecting the word 'shortly' it would be well for the interpreter to consider the Divine Spirit's measure of time as evidenced in both the Old and the New Testament. In his largeness of conception, we have as characteristic of his utterance e.g. the nearness of the great 'day of the Lord' and the speedy Coming of the Lord Jesus, although many centuries of time intervene. What is distant to man is near to God. In our estimation of such statements, we should be governed by the Divine usage.

We must not overlook the fact, that God, consistently with his own being, adopts this language as the very best adapted to place all successive generations of believers in an attitude of expectancy, watchfulness, preparation, faithfulness, and endurance.

This interpretation is sustained by the use made of the same Greek word in Luke 18:8 where we have, 'I tell you that he will avenge them speedily,' this declaration being directly associated with the phrase, 'Son of man cometh,' and involves, humanly speaking, a long period of time. (The same is true of the word 'shortly' used in Rom 16:20).

'And sending (having sent) by his angel he signified (the same) to his servant (bond-servant) John.' An angel was divinely commissioned to impart to John a view of the Apocalypse of Jesus

and the results following. The Lord Jesus himself sent this angel to communicate the knowledge of these things. Therefore the derivation and authority, and, it may be said, the authorship of the Book is based on Jesus Christ; for the angel only presents what Jesus sought to communicate, and John only records what the angel gave to him.

Hence the angel is to be regarded as the medium or agent between Jesus and John. He appears at the beginning and the closing of the Book, so that we have reason to believe that the entire contents are conveyed through him to John. At the conclusion (Rev 22:6,8) John acknowledges his indebtedness to his intermediation. In some unexplained and mysterious manner the presence and aid of the angel were requisite for John to see the things vividly portrayed and deeply impressed.

We are not even told, who this angel was. As the word 'angel' simply denotes messenger, it is not requisite to conclude that this agent was a person separate and distinct from humanity, belonging to the unfallen and ever-holy spiritual beings, the first in rank of creation. Indeed the little that the messenger says of himself in Rev 19:10 and Rev 22:9, gives us reason to believe that he was one closely related to redeemed humanity, one like unto Moses (or Elijah). He numbers himself as one of the fellow servants, one of the brethren, one of the prophets, one having the testimony of Jesus, one who has a personal interest in the realization of the sayings of this Book.

In view of the great and important part taken both by the Redeemer and redeemed ones (e.g. Rev 4 and 5) it seems appropriate to depute a redeemed one to make it known.

## Chapter 1:2

**Who bear record of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. (or, who bear witness, or testified, or, who attested to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatsoever things he saw.)**

'Who.' John, the apostle, is thus highly favored because, as the record reveals, Jesus 'loved him.' To no other can we consistently and historically attribute this record. It is supposed by some, that he was then the only apostle then living.

'Attested (or, bear witness to the word of God).'' Not the witness recorded in his (John's) Gospel respecting the word of God, but his attestation to the word as revealed in this Book. He testifies to the Apocalypse, or Revelation, of Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God, and whose revelation, in accord with God's expressed will, forms the grandest features of the Record.

'To the testimony of Jesus.' Rev 19:10, 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' John therefore bears witness to the fact, that these predictions of the future are given by Jesus and are to be received as His testimony. The same is preeminently worthy of our acceptance and earnest belief, because (Rev 3:4), 'these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness.'

'To whatsoever things he saw.' That is, he faithfully records what he saw, concealing nothing and changing nothing. His condition and capacity for seeing will be noticed in remarks on v 10, and a limitation of record under Rev 10:4.

## Chapter 1:3

**Blessed is (or, be) he that readeth (or, blessed he that readeth) and they that (or, those who) hear the words of this (or, the) prophecy, and keep those things (or, observe the things) which are written therein; for the time is at hand (or, the time is near).**

A Blessing is pronounced:

- On readers. That is, on those who seek to learn, who endeavor by study to understand (the Book).
- On hearers. That is, on such as endeavor to become acquainted with it, giving it due attention, taking heed, and seeking knowledge by hearing it read or its contents stated by others.
- On those who keep (or observe) the things recorded, holding fast to the instruction imparted. Persevering obedience is enjoined.
- From this it follows, that investigation of the record, a careful study of its contents, and an observance of its teaching, are both invited and inculcated.

When is the blessing realized?

Now, – at present.

- In the enjoyment of a privilege, a favor, a gift.
- In stimulating the hungering and thirsting of Matt 5:6.
- In securing a sanctifying influence imparted by an acceptance of Divine truth.
- In being ‘profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’
- In furnishing us views of Jesus, stimulating love for him.
- In enlarging our conceptions of precious promises.
- In bestowing upon us needed words of consolation and hope.
- In impressing upon us required cautions and solemn warnings.

At the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus.

- As taught e.g. in Rev 2:25-28.<sup>7</sup>
- The rewarding allied with the Second Advent Matt 16:27.<sup>8</sup>
- At the rejoicing connected with the future day of the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare e.g. Phil 3:20–21.<sup>9</sup>

- At the honoring of those who appreciate and honor God's word, thus escaping the rebuke of Jesus given to the Jews, and even to the disciples, censoring them for overlooking, or not believing, the predictions given.

This evidences the importance and value of the Book.

We have a present and a future personal interest in the Record.

We have 'a light that shineth in a dark place,' 2Pet 1:19. It enables us to meet objections against the study of prophecy. It gives us valuable advice respecting misleading and false views.

Through the prophecy we are brought into contact with the most exalted conceptions of Deity, of the majesty of the Christ, of the grand results flowing from the cross, of the marvelous greatness of redemption, of the glories of the renewed heaven and earth, of the matchless reign of the glorified Theocratic King and his chosen subordinated rulers. The caution annexed is 'the time is at hand, or the time is near.' 'Time' i.e., the time of determined fulfillment, the time when the things recorded in this Book are to be realized.

'At hand,' (or near). This nearness, as already shown in the remarks on the word 'shortly' (v1), must be regarded according to the Divine estimate of time. The indefiniteness of positive time, and its relative nearness, is motives urging to watchfulness, for we know not the precise time and how soon the hour may strike. Of this, however, we may be assured, that after the lapse of many centuries since the words were given, the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ must be vastly nearer fulfillment. It is an enjoined duty to consider the time and events associated with the speedy Second Advent of Jesus Christ. A reverent study excites love for his appearing, making his feature personal revelation 'the blessed hope.'

## Chapter 1:4-6

**John to the seven churches (congregations) in Asia: grace unto you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come (or, who cometh); and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the Prince (or, Ruler) of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved (or, loveth) us, and washed (or, cleansed, loosed, freed, redeemed,) us from our sins in (or, by) is blood, and hath made us a Kingdom, – priests unto God (even) his Father (or, his God and Father); to Him be (or, is) the glory and dominion unto (or, into) the ages of the agents. Amen.**

‘John to the seven Churches (congregations) in Asia.’

John, before entering the apocalyptic visions salutes, or dedicates, the record, to the churches, or congregations. The language employed is grand, the conceptions conveyed sublime.

This salutation is appropriately given to the seven churches, selected as types, representatives, or symbols, and extends through them to the Church (or ecclesia) in general.

‘Asia,’ that is, Proconsular Asia (ancient Phrygia) or, Asia Minor.

The benediction of ‘grace and peace’ favor and restful blessing is invoked.

‘From Him who is and who was and who is to come (or, who cometh).’

- ‘Who is’ i.e., the self-existent and present abiding One.
- ‘Who was’ i.e., the One who has existed from all eternity.
- ‘Who is to come (or, who cometh)’ the One who will reveal himself in the future.
- ‘Who is, was, and is to come.’ This expression describes a Being who is everlasting, who embraces the past, present and future. He is the One who is (One existing), the One who was, and the One who is coming.



Several things are deducible from this all-embracing title.

Its similarity and implied reference to the name Jehovah, which expresses the same meaning and is a special covenanted name intimately related to the people of God.

The title impresses the immutability, or unchangeableness, of this Being. It involves a glad expectation of the future, for it directs us to 'the Coming One,' to the 'glorious appearing of the great God and our savior Jesus Christ.' Let the reader compare e.g. the 'Maran-atha' of 1Cor 16:22, and it enforces the idea that such an eternal One must be the Almighty, the All-powerful Being, to whom all things are subordinated and subject.

'And from the Seven Spirits which are before his throne.' This, owing to lack of explanation and information, is an exceedingly difficult expression. It is only possible to express an opinion respecting its meaning.

The various interpretations given to the 'Seven Spirits.'

- That by these 'Seven Spirits' reference is made to God himself as a seven-fold, or perfect, Spirit. But this introduces a harsh tautology. It makes God a being of 'Seven Spirits' and it places God 'before His throne.' This interpretation can bring together no analogy of scripture in its support.
- That the 'Seven Spirits' denote the seven angels of the churches afterward mentioned. This unwarranted assumption places the angels of the seven churches antecedently to their own testing and trial, and into the loftiest position and imparting the capability of conferring a Divine blessing upon the Church general. The benediction is invoked, as the connection shows, so as to include these seven angels.
- A favorite view with many is, that the Holy Spirit in his perfect and all pervading multifarious influence is thus denoted. But to this opinion strong objections can be made, which render it impossible to accept of it as a proper and consistent interpretation. It may be asked, why should the Holy Spirit be symbolized in immediate connection with an un-symbolized Deity and an un-symbolized Jesus Christ? Why should symbol be forced into a plain benediction? Why should the plural 'Spirits' be

employed instead of the singular? Why should the Holy Spirit be described as a being of 'Seven Spirits,' in accord with the analogy of Scripture? How can we consistently place the Divine spirit 'before the throne?' (See these and other considerations in the following remarks).

- Another view is that the 'Seven Spirits' mean the varied and multiform Providence of God. But this is a mere personification of God's providence, and, for reasons already assigned, is untenable. The connection enforces the real and personal existences of Deity, of the Spirits, and of Jesus.

The writer is forced to receive and adopt the view, that seven real and personal angels are denoted by the 'Seven Spirits' for the following reasons: 'Angels' are spirits, as designated in Heb 1:7. Since personality (or a real subsistence) is ascribed to Deity and the Messiah, the same attribute must be accorded to the Spirits, who evidently are seven beings specially endued by Deity.

An invocation (or benediction) in a form like this, will not employ symbol to designate the parties meant. Real persons, working in unity must be recognized. As the three parties, God, the Spirits and Jesus are all in their way and sphere dispensers of favor and blessing, a mere and exclusive symbolic representation of any one of these is not admissible.

The number 'seven' clearly indicates the distinct individuality of each Spirit, one personally separate from the other. Collectively they are in number seven, but one in unity of action. The entire usage of the Book confirms this distinctive idea of separate agents, however united in carrying out a Divine purpose. The identical discrimination is taught in the seven stars, seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, vials, bowls, etc.

Observe the force of Rev 4:5; 'there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the Seven Spirits of God,' seven separate lamps symbolize Seven separate Spirits. The symbol of the lamps does not represent another symbol, which in turn must be explained. The expression 'which are the Seven Spirits of God' is

explanatory, telling us what the lamps denote. It is a violation of propriety to have a symbol of a symbol.

The position of the lamps 'before the throne,' imply a distinct station separate from and subordinate to enthroned Deity, they are Seven separate agents of fire, (i.e. judgement).

- Rev 5:6, 'seven eyes which are the Seven Spirits of God sent forth in all the earth.' Seven distinct eyes, "Eyes," the symbol of intelligence, each 'eye' symbolizing one spirit and unitedly Seven Spirits in number, (i.e. the number of completeness). The explanation that the 'eyes' are representative of the spirits enforces a reception of seven real existing spirits. For ought we know, each one of these seven may likewise be representative of a specially exalted class, or order, acting in unison.
- Rev 3:1, 'these things saith he that hath the Seven Spirits and the seven stars.' The 'stars' are seven in number so also are the connected Spirits. Jesus, having received all authority and power, has subject to himself both the Spirits and the 'stars.'
- Rev 8:2, 6, 'I saw the Seven Angels which stood before God,' and 'the Seven Angels,' respectively. This evidently is only another designation of the Seven Spirits, who are angels. These spirits or Angels stand before God, i.e. in his presence.

The article 'the' strongly implies that they are angels previously specified, and this points us to the Spirits in a preceding mention. These seven spirits, or angels, are specially mentioned because they have highly important missions assigned to them. Thus compare Rev 8:2,6.<sup>10</sup>

The phrases 'before the throne,' and 'before God,' are repeatedly used in this Book to signify the real personal presence both of angels and of saints, in the presence of God, separate and distinct from Deity. 'The Seven Spirits which are before His throne' is language only appropriate for, and applicable to, angels.

We learn from the Scriptures that angels have, amidst their host, differences of rank and dignity. From, Eph 1:21, 'there are, principalities, powers, mights, and dominions.' These seven occupy a high station in the Divine administrations.

As the Jews held (Tobit 12:15; Enoch 20) to seven 'presence-angels,' standing in the presence of Jehovah, is it not credible that John would employ language so confirmatory of Jewish belief, unless it was true, as to the angelic nature and number.

'Grace and peace' can come from them. The reason is apparent from the Book. The following predictions show, that these angels are most intimately authoritatively and powerfully associated with the future fulfillment and realization of these prophecies. Like Elijah's angel, or Daniel's angel, or Abraham's angel, or Mary's angel, they are channels conveying grace and peace. In this great future crisis, they are designated and appointed the Divine agents, or instruments, through which events of the grandest nature, resulting in the deliverance and blessing of believers, shall come. John foreseeing the blessing they bring, invokes the same upon all believers who live to witness the scenes portrayed. Powerful agents, although lofty mediums of inestimable blessing, they, as the station before the throne indicates, are not to be worshiped, being merely exalted subordinate instruments performing the will of Deity.

'From Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness, the First-born of the dead, and the Prince (or, Ruler) of the kings of the earth.' In the previous context, the Deity united with Jesus is prominently set forth, and here we have his humanity presented.

- 'Jesus,' the covenanted and predicted David's Son and Heir.
- 'The Christ,' (or, the Anointed), who is the promised Messiah, to introduce a realization of 'the sure mercies of David.'
- 'The Faithful Witness,' Jesus is a witness who faithfully attested to the truth of God at his first Advent in his life, works, death, resurrection, and ascension. He is a 'faithful witness' now during this dispensation in his exaltation, Headship over the Church, disposing of blessings, and performing the Divine will. He will be a witness to the truthfulness of these apocalyptic visions, faithfully attending to their fulfillment.
- 'The First-born of the dead,' Jesus by this term, First-born, is distinguished as the One preeminent in dignity and power, the 'Chief-born.'
- Jesus, Col 1:18, is 'the first-born from the dead,' and 1Cor 15:20 'the Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of

them that slept.' His resurrection is not only an assurance of the coming resurrection of believers, but assumes in virtue of its relationship to others raised, a Headship over all the resurrected ones. The resurrection of believing dead ones to an immortal glorified life is forcibly represented as a regeneration, a being born again, for it embraces a re-vivification or restoration to life of those who are dead, Heb 1:5; Rom 8:29; Isa 66:7-9; Matt 19:28.

- 'The Prince (or Ruler) of the kings of the earth.' The word rendered 'Prince' denotes a Ruler first in rank, a supreme Potentate. A universal dominion, to be manifested at his Apocalypse, is ascribed unto this Messiah. The time when the sovereignty of the earth shall be given and wielded by the Christ is specified in Rev 11:15.
- The day is surely coming, when all ruling authorities shall be subject to Jesus. He will be supreme and preeminent among the glorified kings of the earth. A divinely manifested government, with its administrations embracing the world, is also implied by the phrase.
- Jesus is the supreme head of divinely appointed Kings.

'Unto Him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in (or by) his blood, and hath made us a Kingdom, priests unto God his Father; to Him be the glory and dominion unto the ages of the ages. Amen.' This Christ, so highly exalted and majestic, 'loves us,' as shown by his past and present love, Eph 5:2,25.<sup>11</sup> It is not merely 'loved' but 'loves', as evidenced by grace and peace bestowed, in experiences realized, and in care and benefits extended to believers. (Compare Rom 8:35–39); as shown in the many precious promises and assurances relating to the future; and by an abiding, ever-enduring, eternal love, which will result in happiness and fullness of joy during the ages of the ages.

This Christ 'washed us from our sins in his blood.' Jesus by his blood freed, loosed, cleansed, purified, redeemed, ransomed, delivered, reconciled, justified, and purged us. The most expressive and varied terms are used throughout scripture to indicate forgiveness of sin. This strongly implies, what the Scriptures plainly teach, that Jesus gave himself as: a sacrifice for sin (1Cor 5:7);<sup>12</sup> a redeeming sacrifice (Titus 2:14);<sup>13</sup> reconciling sacrifice (Col 1:19);<sup>14</sup>

a justifying sacrifice (Rom 5:9);<sup>15</sup> a sanctifying sacrifice (as Heb 10:10, 11);<sup>16</sup> a purifying sacrifice, (as Heb 1:3);<sup>17</sup> and a sin-remitting sacrifice (as Matt 26:28).<sup>18</sup>

Hence His dying for us is immensely more than an illustrated example, or enforced pattern of living, or a high moral teaching, (What a Loss multitudes will suffer by voluntary lowering and dishonoring this 'one sacrifice for sins forever').

By accepting and having faith in this sacrifice, by honoring its claims and provisional nature, by personal appropriation and realization of its efficiency, we obtain pardon, forgiveness, and remission of sins, Rom 3:24.<sup>19</sup>

This is an inestimable privilege and blessing tendered to us by the love and mercy of God in Jesus Christ. It is absolutely necessary for our Salvation. It is absolutely essential in order to secure the favor of God, the grace of the Lord Jesus, the fruits of the Spirit, and the promised eternal redemption. Many scripture passages decisively teach this. We all need its purifying, saving and sheltering influence. The simplicity of appropriation with cooperating Divine grace makes its provision for the remission of sin accessible to all conditions of men.

Jesus 'Hath made us a Kingdom.' 'Hath made.' Owing to the certainty of realization, future blessings are spoken of as present, as seen e.g. Rom 8:30,<sup>20</sup> (some favor the reading: 'made for us').

'A Kingdom.' Instead of 'Kings' the most authoritative manuscripts, the Revision, and many renderings, read 'Kingdom.' This rendering accords with Exod 19:6, 'and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests.'

The meaning to be attached to the phrase;

- Saints are entitled to the inheritance of a kingdom, in which they compose the ruling power, Luke 12:32.<sup>21</sup>
- They shall 'inherit' a Kingdom, Matt 25:34.<sup>22</sup>
- They are represented as 'heirs of a kingdom,' James 2:5, as 'joint heirs with Christ,' Rom 8:17.

- They shall be 'kings and princes.' Rev 5:10; Psalms 113:8.
- They shall be 'Judges,' who are associated with "the throne" of Jesus the Christ. Rev 3:21.<sup>23</sup>
- They shall have 'power over the nations,' Rev 2:26; Psalms 149:5-9, shall 'reign with Christ on the earth,' Rev 5:10; 20:4, 6.
- They shall be 'crowned,' 1Cor 9:25,<sup>24</sup> see when 'crowned,' 1Pet 5:4,<sup>25</sup> and when 'rulers,' Matt 24:46,47.<sup>26</sup>
- The most striking promise is recorded in Daniel 7:27, 'and the Kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

Now by a comparison of such passages and their consideration, we are forced to believe, that a real ruling, actual exaltation to regality, a positive reigning power, is denoted. Such promises cannot be consistently explained away. They demand in realization, elevated rank and dignity, a participation in regal authority and government, an actual possession as associated rulers with the Christ of the future Kingdom.

The raising up and qualifying of, such a body of rulers, to be manifested in due time, serves largely to explain the predicted perfection, purity, holiness, stability, and glory of the coming Kingdom, as held forth to us in the vivid inspired predictions of the prophets.

We too little appreciate the exceeding preciousness of these promises, which not only contain assurances of high honor and blessedness, but of a future perfect government, (productive of a perfect administration of the laws), of peace and prosperity and happiness, such as the world has never yet witnessed but which it sadly needs and which it can only in this way attain.

The realization of these promises is determined. The appointed time of fulfillment is designated. Many scriptures positively connect it with the personal Second Advent of Jesus Christ. His coming and presence are requisite for their accomplishment. The Supernatural is

absolutely necessary, for 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.' The kings or rulers must first be glorified.

The high destiny of being associated as rulers with the 'King of Kings' is so astonishingly great, that many reject the idea as untenable;

- But what then becomes of these promises? Is the plain grammatical sense to be discarded? Are they vain, beyond God's ability to perform?
- Is it not reasonable, that in his future glorious reign the Christ will have exalted associated rulers, and that in the choice of these, he gives the preference to his brethren?
- Is it not reasonable, that in the coming world-dominion the Lord Jesus will combine with himself a splendid array of officials elevated in rank, clad with power, and made like unto him?
- Are not God's faithfulness, equity, justice, grace and glory involved in this reign of the saints?

'Priests unto God his Father.' A future priesthood of saints is promised, Rev 5:10.<sup>27</sup> 'Priests' through whose medium, agency, and service Deity is to be honored, adored and glorified. A restored Theocracy, to preserve unity and enforce authority, has (as in Jesus) the priesthood and the ruler ship united in the same persons. The perfection and stability of a Theocratic rule demand that the saints should be both religious and civil rulers.

This priesthood indicates that the coming Kingdom will be controlled and permeated by a divine ordering. The service performed by these priests is varied. They will engage in and conduct Divine service, promote the worship of God and the Lamb, preserve and teach the laws, form a channel of communication and blessing between God and the nations.

This priesthood, therefore, embraces a most honorable and high station, ever-enduring and ever productive of joy. As 'first-born,' this priesthood is both their promised right and privilege. No one can become such a 'priest' unless directly chosen by God, and by Him qualified for the position. The glorification of the body, the marvelous endowments of the Spirit, the personal appearance, the gifts worn



as tokens of approval, and even the vesture, will give to all orders and ranks a magnificent and impressive display.

God is now engaged in calling out, training, testing, and qualifying those who shall be accounted worthy to engage in future priestly ministrations. In view of the tender of this priesthood to us, of its angelic excellence, of its enduring grandeur, of its blessed fellowship, of its happy activity and agency, we certainly should strive, by God's grace, to seek a personal interest in it and attain to its glory.

Ascription of endless glory and dominion:

'To Him' i.e., to Jesus the Christ, Rev 5:11-13.<sup>28</sup>

Be (or is) . God determines this Divine worship.

'The glory.' The glory that he had, John 17:5; the glory that Jesus showed in Transfiguration, Luke 9:32;<sup>29</sup> the glory that He now has, Luke 24:26;<sup>30</sup> His coming in glory, Matt 16:27;<sup>31</sup> the 'brightness of the Father's glory,' Heb 1:3; constituting him 'the Lord of glory and dominion, (or might),' 1Cor 2:8. Not merely his present authority and power and rule and exaltation but his predicted and promised manifested world-dominion. Dan 7:14,27.<sup>32</sup>

'Unto (or into, or for) the ages of ages.' The phrase 'ages of ages,' as the Greek presents, is used in a number of passages, and is regarded as equivalent to eternal. Future time is represented as made up of a ceaseless succession or progression of time. Hence the sublime, deeply significant title given in 1Tim 1:17 to the Jesus 'King of the ages,' and the glory ascribed (Eph 3:21) to Him 'throughout the ages of the ages.'

We have here a plain and positive declaration of the perpetuity or ceaseless or eternal continuance both of the glory and the dominion of Jesus Christ. This is the uniform teaching of the Scriptures. As to the 'ever-enduring glory', compare Gal 1:5.<sup>33</sup> As to the endless reign, or dominion, compare the affirmations of Luke 1:32.<sup>34</sup>

The only passage which, owing to a wrong rendering, seems to antagonize the general analogy of scripture on this subject is, 1Cor

15:27,28, critically examined in the writer's large work, **The Theocratic Kingdom**, vol 2, pp. 634-638, and shown to be in accord with general teaching.<sup>6</sup>

'Amen,' John affirms the truthfulness and faithfulness of his utterances, and evidences his desire and hope for a realization.

We are most positively assured that the glory and dominion of the Lord Jesus shall never be diminished.

**If John and the heavenly host could tender worship to the Christ, what a rebuke this attitude is to those (alas! not a few) who lower the Messiah to suit their humanitarian theories.**

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<sup>6</sup> For a proper understanding and rendering of 1Cor 15:27, 28, the reader may refer to the following writers: Storr's Dissertation on the Kingdom; Van Valkenberg in Bib. Repos, vol 2&3 (Essay on Duration of Kingdom); Prof. Bush in his Anastasis; Storr's Opuscula, vol 1.

## Chapter 1:7-8

**Behold, he cometh with (the) clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they which (or, those who) pierced him; and all kindreds (the tribes) of the earth (the land) shall wail because of him (or, before, or, over him). Even so: Amen. I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty, (or, the One who is, and the One who was, and the One who is coming, The Omnipotent).**

'Behold he cometh.' 'Behold.' Special attention is directed to this subject, as one of great interest.

'He.' It is not necessary to designate by name the Coming One. The context, prophecy, the gospels and epistles sufficiently and most amply inform us, that it is the Son of man, the Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovah-Jesus.

'He cometh.' This is the great theme of the Book, beginning, permeating, and ending. It will be the most stupendous and majestic event that the world has ever witnessed. He does not stay in heaven, but returns to earth again, as so plainly affirmed in Acts 3:21,22.<sup>35</sup> This coming is essential and preliminary to the mighty work of deliverance and restitution so often predicted and promised. It is the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus the Christ, as presented in Matt 25:31; Luke 17:30; 2Thess 1:7-10.

He cometh 'with Clouds.' This peculiar and distinctive feature repeatedly predicted, as in Dan 7:13.<sup>36</sup> As he went up in a cloud, so shall he likewise return, Acts 1: 9-11. The overshadowing bright cloud, the Transfiguration, Matt 17:5,<sup>37</sup> is a real representative of this future coming investiture. These 'clouds' are indicative of Deity, and expressive of Divine splendor and majesty, and include the saints, Rev 19:14, who come with Him 'in myriads' and, 1Thess 4:17, 'in clouds'. Such an astounding glorious appearance so marked by a supernatural environment and its 'clouds of witnesses' will readily be recognized by every one who beholds it.

'Every eye shall see him.' This phrase is a generalized affirmation of a future realization that does not necessarily require a simultaneous seeing by everyone. Compare the 'seeing' Rev 19,<sup>38</sup> that shows that Jesus in person is seen (or witnessed) at various times and places.

This clearly teaches a visible personal coming, a view enforced by covenant, prediction, promise, and the belief of the Apostolic and Primitive church. Being essential to the fulfillment of scripture, and to the carrying out of a completed redemption, it is a truth constantly and plainly taught, so that unbelief is utterly inexcusable.

'And they which pierced him.' This evidently is a reference to Jews, of whom this is predicted in Zech 12:10 and Ezek 20:35.

'And all kindreds of the earth; (all the tribes of the earth; or, all the tribes of the land).'

- Able scholars give three renderings. The first two would indicate a general or universal lamentation over the entire earth. The third rendering would limit it to the Jewish people or tribes in Palestine.
- To the writer it appears the most consistent to adopt the second rendering, which includes both Gentiles and Jews, because at this open visible Coming no such a tribal division and occupation of the land by the twelve Jewish tribes shall exist. Such a restoration is effected later on under the auspices of the Messiah; 'All' is used to indicate a generality, an impressive large number.

'Shall wail because of him.' They all 'shall wail,' lament, or cry out in consternation and terror, 'because of him' i.e., on account of His appearing, dreading the result to themselves.

This general mourning shall occur because:

- The world, instead of being converted, shall be in a moral and degraded condition represented by the 'days of Noah and Lot,' Luke 17:26-30; Matt 24:37-39.
- God-dishonoring, widespread unbelief, Luke 18:8.

- The existence, confederation, work and aims of a mighty Antichristian power that shall confront the Christ at His Coming, Rev 19; 2Thess 2.
- The sinfulness of the last days (2Tim 3:1-7) shall cause men to be conscience-stricken, self-condemned, and fearful of a wrath to come, Rev 14:19.<sup>39</sup>
- The suddenness of the Coming, the majestic revelation, and the evidence of supernatural power (that will crush the hopes of 'peace and safety'), of trust and confidence in man and nature, pride in apostatizing, of happiness derived from material sources, of pleasures exclusively based on, and derived from worldliness.
- The time of perplexity and distress of nations, the predicted time of fear and dread, the appointed 'day of vengeance,' trouble, and anguish, have at last come, all connected with this Apocalypse of Jesus.
- 'Even so: Amen.' This is a double assurance, one in Greek and the other in Hebrew, emphatically declaring the absolute certainty of the coming of the Christ and the results following. It implies the ascent, approval, and the desire of John (Rev 22:20) respecting this coming. It also implies that such emphatic assurance given to meet and rebuke a foreseen unbelief.

'I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.' 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' is an expression drawn from the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, symbolizing the 'first and the last.' It involves the idea that Jesus is the beginner and the finisher of the divine purpose. In Him only the way is opened; and in Him alone the goal is reached. 'In Him and for Him all things subsist' from the beginning to the end. Such an all-embracing affirmation can only be ascribed to absolute Deity. Hence it strongly impresses the certainty that the things related to the future shall be fulfilled as predicted.

'Saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come,' see (v4) for explanation.

'The Almighty,' i.e., the All-ruler, All-powerful, Supreme Being who is over all. The assurance given in this affirmation is that He can order and accomplish the things recorded in this Book.

These two verses suggest a number of deductions or impressive inferences:

- Owing to the prominence, importance and certainty of this Coming, it should be much in our minds and hearts.
- We should occupy the attitude of 1Cor 1:7,8.<sup>40</sup>
- It should cause us to consider the exceeding precious promises associated with this coming, such as 1John 3:2.<sup>41</sup>
- It should, owing to indefiniteness of time, lead us to constant watchfulness, Matt 24:42.<sup>42</sup>
- Since this is the Coming of One 'mighty to save,' who loves us, we have no reason to fear, but can have confidence and boldness in that day, Phil 1:6.<sup>43</sup>
- Viewing the Coming with its grand results, we should, as Paul teaches, 2Tim 4:8, 'love his appearing,' Heb 9:28, 'look for Him who shall appear the second time unto Salvation.'
- Having a proper scriptural conception of, 1Tim 4:1, the united 'appearing and kingdom,' we can intelligently and hopefully pray for the coming of the Kingdom of covenant, prophecy and promise.
- This announced Coming is evidence God intends, Acts 15:16, to restore with glory and power the Theocratic–Davidic rule, the leverage of a world–dominion.
- If our affections are truly and devotedly fixed on this mighty Coming One and the triumphs that He will inaugurate, the blessings He will introduce, the main subject and overriding theme of this Book, instead of being unwelcome, should be intensely interesting and desirable.
- While His Coming is terrible to the wicked, it is blessed to the righteous. See the two aspects contrasted in 2Thess 1:5-10.<sup>44</sup>
- When we see the signs multiplying and intensifying as tokens of his coming, we should, Luke 21:28, 'look up and lift up our heads, for our Redemption draweth nigh.'
- Alas! Reasoning, eloquence, imminent ability, learning, science, and art are engaged in lowering the necessity and importance of this Coming, by claiming that humanity will and does perform the work assigned to the Coming One.

- Alas! Multitudes are satisfied with a provisional redemption, and lay no stress on the Redemption to be realized at the Second Advent 'in the day of the Lord Jesus,' the means, earnest and preparation for the Second Advent, are substituted for the Advent itself.
- The Coming of 'the Son of man,' of 'the same Jesus,' teaching his coming in person, cannot without gross violence be transmuted into a 'manifestation of truth' or 'divine sovereignty' as its only purposed and exclusive meaning.
- Evidently foreseeing the unbelief and indifference prevailing, This Coming is so prominently set forth in the scriptures, so as to render inexcusable, a neglect and perversion of the subject.
- Foreseeing the ridicule, sneering, scoffing, and abuse that would be heaped upon the doctrine, hence we have the repeated and plain warnings attached to this coming.
- It is absurd, evidencing ignorance and folly, to convert this Coming into a mere 'spiritual coming,' or a coming of Titus and the Roman Army, or a coming in judgements on the Jews, or the coming of Providence, or the coming of truth, or of the enemy 'death,' or of 'religious expansion,' or of Spiritualism,<sup>7</sup> Shakerism,<sup>8</sup> Swedenborgianism,<sup>9</sup> Mormonism,<sup>10</sup> etc.

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<sup>7</sup> **Spiritualism** is a dual metaphysical belief that the world is made up of at least two fundamental substances, matter and spirit, further developed into various forms by details about spiritual entities such as the soul, afterlife, spirits of the dead, deities, mediums. Spiritualism developed a form of Christian Spiritualism, e.g. First Spiritual temple founded in 1883 in the USA and the Greater World Christian Spiritualist League, UK, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing is a religious sect, also known as the **Shakers**, founded in the 18th century in England, having branched off from a Quaker community. They were known as "Shaking Quakers" because of their ecstatic behavior during worship services. In 1747 women assumed leadership roles within the sect, notably Jane Wardley and Mother Ann Lee.

<sup>9</sup> The New Church (or **Swedenborgianism**) is the name for several historically related Christian denominations that developed as a new religious movement, informed by the writings of Swedish scientist and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772).

- The heavy responsibility assumed by the ministry who either ignores or decries this Coming so essential to the promised Redemption.

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<sup>10</sup> **Mormonism** is the principle branch of the Latter Day Saint movement of Restorationist Christianity, which began with Joseph Smith in upstate New York during the 1820's. Their beliefs and practices are based on the Book of Mormon.



## Chapter 1: 9-11

**I, John, your brother and fellow partaker (co-partner) in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance (patience or patient waiting) in (for) Jesus (or, in Christ), was (became, found myself) in the Isle that is called Patmos, for (on account of) the word of God and for (or through, or for the sake of), the testimony of Jesus. I became (or, found myself) in the Spirit on (or, in) the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying: What thou seest, write in a book (or, scroll) and send to the seven churches (or, congregations): unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and onto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.**

'I, John.' John gives personally his calling and commission. He personally vouches for the authority and canonical dignity of the Book.

'Your brother.' Your 'Christian' brother, for all believers in Jesus Christ are brethren. John gives himself no titles of honor, rank, or precedence. His language is expressive of humility and enforces the oneness of all in the Christ Jesus.

'Fellow-partaker in the tribulation.' John endured trial and suffering and persecution. See, 2Tim 3:12, 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,' and, Acts 14:22, 'that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.' The design of suffering in believers is gracious, Heb 12:1-11.<sup>45</sup> He (John) also will be with those who shall witness the great tribulation of Rev 19, for he comes with Jesus.

'Fellow-partaker in the Kingdom.' All believers are 'heirs of the Kingdom,' James 2:5 (see notes v6). John is a co-heir, and thus expresses his decided faith and hope of sharing in the Kingdom with them. And well could he declare his personal hope, in view of the promises of Matt 19:28; Luke 22:29,30.

'In endurance (or, patient waiting).' The endurance of evil, this 'patient waiting' for Jesus is a distinguishing characteristic of true believers.

- As to endurance, see e.g. Matt 24:13.<sup>46</sup>
- As to waiting, see e.g. 1Thess 1:10.<sup>47</sup>

John thus endured and patiently waited. Those two things are linked together in Rom 8:17; Acts 14:22; and are essential to the condition mentioned in 1Cor 1:7,8.

John 'was in the isle called Patmos.' Patmos is a small, barren, rocky island in the Aegean Sea. John was in banishment then, under a persecution enforced by the Roman government. Although forced to live on a dreary, lonely Island, he was kindly remembered, honored, and blessed by the Christ. Persecution cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. It may even qualify us for a discharge of highly imposed duty.

'For (on account of) the word of God and for (or, through, or, for the sake of) the testimony of Jesus.' The construction (so critics say) of the Greek will admit of two meanings, either one giving a good sense. One is, that John was there on account of his past service and testimony. The second meaning is, that he was providentially brought to Patmos to receive the word and the testimony of Jesus. The two combined certainly convey what is true of John.

'I became (found myself, or, was set, or placed, or put) in the Spirit, or (as Lange and others), I was transported in, or by the Spirit.' If we refer the Spirit to John's spirit, as many do, then it means that John in spirit, not physically, was transported over into the future to see and describe events.

If however by Spirit we are to understand (as many prefer) the Holy Spirit, then it denotes that John by the agency and power of the Spirit was thus transported. For the Spirit, as even seen in Philip's case (Acts 8:39) can move or transport physically at will. In either case John was supernaturally impelled, directed, impressed, or otherwise taken from his ordinary state now and passed into an extraordinary one, i.e. into a condition of prophetic vision, trance or

ecstasy, and in this state, like e.g. Ezekiel, Paul, he was transported away.

To make this declaration to simply mean a 'high state of religious experience or ecstasy' is to put aside a key given to direct us to a proper interpretation of the Book. Compare the being 'in Spirit' of Rev 4:2; Rev 17:3; Rev 21:10.

'On (or in) the Lord's Day.' As the Greek 'en' is in a multitude of places rendered by 'in,' the writer prefers the translation given by several critics, 'in the Lord's day' or, 'into the Lord's Day.'<sup>11</sup>

Consistency, and a strict adherence to scripture usage, requires us to reject the commonly received view, that 'the Lord's day' here mentioned denotes the first day of the week, or Sunday, or the Sabbath, on which day John was spiritually engaged in worship. The reasons for such a rejection are decisive. Let the following considerations be duly regarded;

- The two expressions, 'the Lord's day' and 'the day of the Lord,' are synonymous. They denote the same thing.
- Likewise it must be observed, that nowhere else in the New Testament is the first day of the week, or Sunday, or the Sabbath, called 'the Lord's day' or 'the day of the Lord.'
- The 'day of the Lord' demands not merely a spiritual but a personal presence. This is clearly enforced by the teaching of Jesus in Luke 17, for he tells, that after his departure (v22) 'the

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<sup>11</sup> It is sufficient to say, that such a Greek scholar as Wetstein, being unprejudiced to subserve some exegetical theory, renders this 'transported by the Spirit into the last day.' The reader will observe that, as commentators and critics have stated, the phrase 'Lord's Day;' (just as in 1Cor 11:20, 'Lord's supper' denotes a 'supper pertaining to the Lord'), simply means a 'day pertaining to the Lord.' No exegesis is strictly within the laws of language and interpretation, if it is clearly and decisively shown, that this 'day' here referred to, is claimed in a high and special sense as his own, and particularly thus designated and distinguished, – a day related to Him, into a knowledge of which John is, for a special purpose, introduced. Two eminent critical students Dr. Wines and Dr. Zullig, in accord with this view, render as follows 'in the Spirit I was present at the day of the Lord.'

days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it,' (in which days we now live), but then proceeds to show (v24,26,30) how the Day is inseparably linked with His personal Second Coming.

- In the Old Testament we find 'the day of the Lord' predicted precisely in the same line of vengeance and redemption presented in this Book. We hold the one descriptive of the other, only that this record enters more largely into details, both the 'day' of the prophets, the 'day' that John sees and describes is still future, compare Joel 2:21.<sup>48</sup>
- Observe, as many critics inform us, that the Jews held and taught, that 'the day of the Lord' was equivalent to 'the day, or the times, of the Messiah,' and the personal presence of the Messiah was essential to introduce that 'day' or times.
- Observe next, how the apostles (following Jesus), adopted this phraseology of the prophets and the Jews, applied it to Jesus, and located this 'day,' (that the Jews expected), in the future;
  - We have 'the day of the Lord' 1Thess 5:2; 'the day of the Lord Jesus,' 2Cor 1:14; 'the day of Christ,' 2Thess 2:2; etc. these are related to the still future personal Advent and presence of Jesus.
  - This personal presence is forcibly confirmed by, 2Pet 3:10,<sup>49</sup> indicating a distinctive coming day of the Lord.
  - Now the analogy of these and kindred passages enforce the propriety of John referring to this future promised time as the Lord's day, when the 'Son of man cometh in His day.'<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Whenever a student sees a man resort to a scholastic flood of words and learning, interlaced with expressions of scorn and contempt, to oppose a doctrine or view that he evidently hates, his pompous array of alleged evidence is open to the gravest suspicion. A seeker after truth is not deceived by such means, or especially not when it is claimed by such that they are specially and essentially guided by the 'word of God.' Others, avoiding the pomposity of learning, more artfully resort to the old trick of making the doctrine of odious by linking it with men who entertain gross error; by associating it with false messiahs (who appear openly and not secretly) and to the teaching of Russell and others that the Messiah has been here for years in secret (although no definite sign of such return is given); by asserting that the thief-like coming is given to warn only the

wicked and not the pious in the Church (although addressed to the seven Churches); by boldly arrogating a superior piety and loyalty to God's word (the cheapest kind of reasoning); by assuming that 'Apocalypse' when referring to the Second Advent only means a spectacular outshining or visible glory (which opinion a concordance will weigh); by alleging that only one stage of the Second Advent is admissible, viz: the coming in splendor (with which theory the student may compare the predicted and realize stages of the First Advent); by claiming that premillenarianism will, by excepting only one stage, be made more acceptable to the Church and world (prophetic warning teaches us to believe that such will be the fatal result); by declaring that the Second Advent must be regarded as one single act or stage (which rule they may try on the First Advent); by carefully avoiding any effort to reconcile or explain the future coming of Jesus for his saints and with his Saints, coming in a time of peace and in a time of war, coming in a concealed manner and in an open visible one, coming with the first-fruits and to the Harvest, (it is much easier to find fault with others than to see our own). The only passage quoted to prove that the Second Coming of Jesus will not be in secret, that seems plausible to some is that found in Luke 17:21,24. But when we turn to the Scripture we find it disrupted. The preceding verse (20) shows that the subject matter in discussion was, not the Second Advent but 'the Kingdom of God', and of which Kingdom it is said that it should be openly and conspicuously established (as covenanted and predicted) and not secretly, at a visible and glorious manifestation of Jesus. Now precisely and strictly in accord with this do we interpret the Book of Revelation. It is only after the judgements and orderings of the thief-like stage are all realized that we come to the climax, viz: the visible appearing in glory and power, the manifestation openly of this promised Kingdom. The writer is thankful, however scorned by some, to be able to receive and do as such Scriptures teach, as e.g. Matt 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; etc. He is grateful that he is enabled to feel that in so doing, he is in fellowship of faith and service with a host of the Lord's brethren in heeding the Master's injunctions. He is glad that he still occupies the posture indicated (by Rev. Dr. West in 'Premillennial Essays'), by a resolution adopted by a large body of ministers in conference, viz: "resolved: the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus is everywhere in the Scriptures represented as imminent, and may occur at any moment, yet the precise date and hour thereof is unknown to man, and known only to God."

- Carefully ponder the fact, that agreeable to the teaching of the prophets, of Jesus, and of the apostles, demanding a personal presence as pre-requisite to the ushering in of 'the day of the Lord,' the very first thing that we meet in this portrayal of the future day is the personal revelation and presence of the Lord Jesus. This, if our position is correct, is not only significant but also essential. It accords with the multiplied teaching of Scripture.
- In view of such considerations, it is most reasonable and scriptural to conclude, that John (in spirit) was divinely transported into a visible representation of the Lord's Day, to view and describe its introductory scenes, beginning with the majestic appearing of Jesus.
- The Transfiguration and Paul's experience illustrate just such a vivid supernatural transporting (of John) into a future state.
- 'I heard behind me a great (loud) voice as of a trumpet.'
  - 'Heard behind me.' This expression of the sudden and unexpected Advent and presence of the speaker.
  - 'A great voice as of a trumpet.' It was not a trumpet that sounded, but a great voice, which was exceeding loud, clear and ringing, like a trumpet's blast. This was an intelligent voice, for it spoke and gave commands.
  - As to whose voice thus spoke, it is reasonable to refer it to the Lord Jesus, who immediately appeared; whose voice, v15, is most powerful; and who seen, to impress authority, repeats, v19, the commission given in v11. His voice is all-powerful, John 5:25,28.

'Saying.' The best authorities and the Revision omit what our version gives, viz: 'I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.'

'Saying: What thou seest.' This indicates, the symbolic nature of the scroll, or Book, for John was to record all that passed before him in vision. The prophetic future was now to be a prophetic present to John.

John saw a vivid representation of future events and occurrences in a series of impressive moving pictures. He saw these visions in

Patmos. The seeing implies, that the symbols represent coming realities that will be witnessed in a determined future.

'Write in the Book, or Scroll,' that is specifically designed for instruction, caution, warning, consolation, and edification. We have this Book, and should (see v3) reverently study its contents.

'And send to the seven churches, onto Ephesus,' etc.

To avoid undue repetition, detailed remarks will be found introductory to Rev chapters 2 and 3.

## Chapter 1:12–20

And I turned to see the voice that spake (was speaking) with me. And being turned (having turned), I saw seven golden candlesticks (lampstands); and in the midst of the seven candlesticks (lampstands) one like unto the (or, a) Son of man, clothed with a garment down (reaching) to the foot, and girt about the paps (or, girt about the breasts) with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white as white wool, as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, (or, his feet like unto burnished brass as if it had been refined in a furnace; or, his feet like fine brass glowing with fire as in a furnace; or, his feet like unto a stream of molten metal, as it had become glowing in a furnace); and his voice as the sound (voice) of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went (goeth forth) a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance (or, appearance) was as the sunshine this in his strength, and when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying fear not; I am the First and the Last and the Living One and I was (became) dead, and behold I am alive (living) unto (for) the ages of the ages; and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Write therefore the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are (or, what they are), and the things which are about to happen after these (or, the things which shall come to pass hereafter); The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in (upon) my right hand and the seven golden candlesticks (lampstands). The seven stars are (the) angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks (lampstands) are (the) seven churches.

### Introduction.

John (v10) is supernaturally carried into a prophetic future over into the coming 'day of the Lord.' Men under the vane and specious plea of superior learning may ignore this key, but prudence accepts of it. Hence it follows, that what he now sees appertains to that day. That 'day of the Lord' cannot come without a personal presence of the Lord Jesus, the 'day,' or time, in which He reveals himself. Hence, first of all, the personal presence of the Lord Jesus is introduced.



This distinctive feature is an essential one, because it is preparatory to all that follows. While the Christ is represented under a symbolic portraiture, yet the distinguishing marks by which he is thus presented are so numerous and striking that his intended personality cannot be doubted. A symbolic representation is purposely chosen because, in view of our limited conceptions of Deity and glorified humanity, it is the best adapted to convey to us proper ideas of the majesty and glory of the Christ.

**The symbolic representation of the presence of the Lord Jesus.** 'And I turned to see the voice that spake (was speaking) with me. And being turned (having turned).'' The Revelation of the Lord Jesus was sudden, unexpected, and surprising. John instantly responds. John now begins to view the scenes pertaining to the 'day of the Lord.' As this was the thief-like stage (not the open and public stage) of the Second Advent, John did not see that coming and was not aware of His presence until Divinely announced by the all-powerful and controlling 'voice.'

'I saw.' John in a vision, a prophetic state, saw this while on Patmos.

'Seven golden candlesticks (or lampstands).'' The candlesticks (lampstands), representing (v20) the churches, or congregations, and being 'light-bearers,' symbolize the Church in its bearing the 'light of truth and knowledge' amidst darkness.

'Golden' candlesticks, represent (precious and highly esteemed) the churches. 'Seven,' being the sacred number of completeness, is representative of the whole Church (or ecclesia).

It would be unreasonable to suppose that seven literal churches alone are denoted in this position, that Jerusalem, Corinth, Rome, etc. are ignored. But it is important to notice, that these seven (whatever the headship and care of the Lord Jesus in the past) do not represent the Church of the past and/or present, but the Church as it shall exist when the 'day of the Lord' is to be manifest in outgoing judgements. Certain foreknown conditions (or phases) are distinctly portrayed.

'And in the midst of the seven candlesticks (lampstands).' The phrase suggests a half-circle of the lampstands, symbolizing a nearness to, and oversight of, the Church by Jesus.

'One like unto (a) the Son of man.'

- 'One like unto.' This Son of man represents Jesus the 'Son of man.' It strongly implies his humanity, 'made in the likeness of men' and 'in all respects made like unto his brethren.' It implies the Divine uniting with humanity, the Word being made flesh and manifested, once unglorified but now glorified.
- The Greek is 'a Son of man,' indicating the appearance of the One in symbol as a man in human form.
- 'A Son of man.' This Being undoubtedly represents Jesus the Christ in glorified, resplendent humanity. For to none other can the language apply (v18). It is representative of a real personality, as the speaking, action, and commission show. It is an individuality as real as the believers who are portrayed separately under His supervision and control. This title 'Son of man' was repeatedly used and applied to himself by Jesus. It is the peculiar and distinctive name given to the Messiah, as David Son, because of his predicted and covenanted relationship to the Kingdom. By this name (Son of man) Jesus, is identified and associated with the Second Advent and Kingdom, as in Matt 16:27.<sup>50</sup> The 'day of the Lord' is introduced by the coming of this Son of man, the revelation of himself, Luke 17:24,26,30.<sup>51</sup> Both covenant and prophecy demand the actual personal coming and presence of David's Son, the promised Seed, the predicted Man, both the 'Son of God' and 'Son of man.' This is an ever-enduring title, for the humanity of Jesus, glorified as it may be, is an essential and blessed factor in the future Theocratic ordering. The title ever remains distinctive, and hence, as many promises declare, it never will be completely absorbed or obliterated by the Divine. This continued perpetuation of his humanity in majesty and glory, brings the Christ very near to us in relationship, and magnifies his exceeding and enduring preciousness. Everyone must admit, that the 'Son of man' here represented is the same with the honored and exalted one predicted in Dan 7:13,14.

'Clothed with a garment down (reaching) to the foot,' is representative of royalty, describing a regal garment, a robe of state.

'Girt at the breasts with a golden girdle.' To be girded about the loins is indicative of labor, service, and activity. To be girded about the breast is representative of dignity and a superior station. A 'golden girdle' represents a high rank, a princely rank.

'His head and his hairs were white as white wool, as snow,' symbolizes purity, venerable dignity, radiance, exceeding brightness, and resplendency. It pertains to Deity as in Dan 7:9.

'And his eyes were as a flame of fire,' is symbolic of intelligence, penetration, and infinite discernment.

'His feet like fine brass glowing with fire as in the furnace,' (See various renderings at head of chapter) is symbolic of all-consuming energy, an irresistible force, of judgement and of power to tread down one's enemies. See Dan 10:6; Ezek 1:7.

'And his voice as the sound (voice) of many waters,' is representative of a loud, powerful, commanding, and majestic voice (see Dan 10:6).<sup>52</sup>

The phrase impresses authority, and power to enforce judgement. It is like the voice of a great multitude.

'And he had in his right hand seven stars.' In (or, upon) his right hand, is symbolic of sovereign power, nearness, esteem, and preservation. See v20 for an explanation of the 'seven stars'.

'And out of his mouth went (goeth forth) a sharp two-edged sword.' This is symbolic of judgement, of penetrating and decisive action of the words proceeding from his mouth, (compare Isa 49:2; Heb 4:12). It is, as the record proceeds to show, a sort of sharp discriminating judgement, indicative of the fearful conflicts that are coming.

'And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength,' is symbolic of a dazzling overpowering personal appearance, exceedingly splendid and brilliant. It represents the same person

who, when transfigured (Matt 17:2) 'His face to shine as the sun,' and who (Acts 26:13) when He appeared to Saul, came as 'a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun.'

'And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead.' The majesty and grandeur of the vision overpowered John. The effect of Deity and glorified humanity is thus represented. This is illustrated and enforced by the experiences of others, Dan 8:18,27.<sup>53</sup> Mortal man is so constituted that the presence of the God-man would naturally be overpowering. No mere mortal, without imparted strength, can endure the sight of Deity. But (in the future) glorified and fashioned after the Christ, they will both endure and enjoy.

'And he laid his right hand upon me,' i.e. to support John and impart strength, as Dan 8:17.

'Saying: Fear not.' It is the (represented) same Jesus, who once said (Matt 14:27), 'it is I; be not afraid.' Jesus proceeds to give reasons why John (and all true believers) need not fear the One who is all-powerful, who gave his life for us, and who ever-liveth to manifest His love and blessing.

'I am the First and the Last.' (see v8). He is the beginning and the end, the great factor that begins and the goal that ends. He is the Supreme Eternal One, the source and orderer of all things. Hence Paul in Rom 11:36 says, 'for of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory unto the ages. Amen.' (see John 1:1)<sup>54</sup>

This is a distinctive Divine title, and can only be appropriated by Him who is 'one with the Father' and the Father's 'express image.' Only a God-man can use such title without blasphemy. Consequently John need not fear, for He (Jesus) is unchangeably the same, the Infinite Source of blessing, compare Isa 44:6-8.<sup>55</sup>

'And the Living One.' Jesus is the 'fountain of Life,' for He is 'the Life' (John 1:4; 14:16) the ever-enduring source of Life. This title indicates that Jesus is immeasurably greater than mortal man. He is the Divine-human, the God-man.

'I was (became) dead.' This declaration can only be consistently applied to the Lord Jesus, who once was dead and buried. It exalts the sacrifice that he made in our behalf, when such a Being gave up his life to save us. It should inspire faith and trust in the efficacy of his atoning death. This should remove fear from John for the same Jesus, once dead, (whom he loved) now spoke to him.

'And behold, I am alive (living) unto the ages of the ages.' Death and the grave could not hold Jesus, John 10:18.<sup>56</sup> His being raised from the dead, the ever-enduring perpetuation of resurrection life is affirmed. It is eternal life. Its duration extends through all the ages of eternity. There is an infinite succession of Messianic times, or ages, for 'the King of the ages.' This representation should encourage every believer to hold fast the precious promises of John 10:28,<sup>57</sup> the resurrected Lord, addressing John, is eminently fitted to dispel all fear.

'And I have the keys of death and of Hades.' Deity inseparably united with humanity alone could affirm such vast power. 'Keys' are symbolic of authority and power. Death now reigns, but holding the 'key of death' Jesus has the power to release from, to overcome, and to destroy, death. Likewise, Hades now triumphs, but holding the 'key of Hades' Jesus has the power to deliver from the underworld, the unseen world, the world of the dead, the grave, or the congregation of the dead. Death places and conditions in Hades (Rev 6:8; Rev 20:13,14), but Jesus has authority and power over both, including the individual and the general state or lot of all humanity. This power of bringing forth the dead and buried, is ascribed solely to the Lord Jesus (John 5:21).<sup>58</sup> He evidenced his ability by raising persons from the dead and especially in the wonderful testimony of Matt 27:52, 53, even to his own resurrection. These keys will be most effectually used at the Second Advent of Jesus (1Thess 4:14–17), for Death itself must first be overcome in order to deliver those confined in Hades. Then and then only will Hosea 13:14 and 1Cor 15, be realized.

'Write therefore the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are (or, what they are), in the things which are about to happen after these (or, the things which shall come to pass

hereafter).' John is commanded to write (see remarks v11). John was assured of a future realization by the majesty and glory revealed in the vision. The grandeur and sublimity of the Sender of the Book, should excite us to its study.

'The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in (upon) my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks (lampstands). The seven stars are (the) angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks (lampstands) are (the) seven churches.'

- 'The mystery.' That is, something hidden, a concealed truth or fact, something not to be understood without help, or unknown until it is revealed. The word 'mystery' impresses the idea, that something more than seven literal churches are denoted, a more comprehensive meaning is implied.
- 'Stars,' symbolize teachers, leaders, messengers, and/or ministers of the churches (Haggai 1:1).<sup>59</sup> The churches are addressed and admonished through them and hence they are held in honor because of their service. The 'stars' themselves are subject to admonition and rebuke. No supreme rulership is affirmed of them. The 'stars' are not directly attached to the 'lampstands,' evidently discarding the idea that by them a lordly or ruling bishopric is intended. They simply, by the Lord's ordering, subserve, (as servants), to keep the 'lampstands' to their mission. Each 'candlestick' has a 'star,' not one star for all.
- 'Seven stars.' Seven indicates completeness, fullness. Taken literally the seven churches, leaving out the 'stars' and 'lampstands' of more dominant and powerful churches, cannot and do not impress us with the idea of completeness. The only interpretation that accords with the meaning of 'seven,' is to make these stars representative of the entire ministry of the Church.
- We therefore have no seven literal Diocesan Bishops, or Episcopacies, or religious Lordships represented, but the entire body of teachers (or ministry) is denoted. It is simply assumption and a gross imposition for high prelates to make themselves exclusively the 'stars' here mentioned, and on the strength of it claim superiority in ministerial rights and powers, and affect a state and pomp and address correspondingly. Papacy and prelacy might find some support and comfort if only one star was

assigned to the seven churches, but such a distinction is purposely rejected. The 'stars' are represented as being in, or upon, the right hand of the Lord.

- This assigned position (inside his hand) indicates nearness, support, care, and supervision. It also denotes, that the Lordship is not lodged in the dependent stars, but in Jesus Christ.
- 'Golden lampstands' symbolize 'light bearers.' 'Seven,' the complete, full number, is representative of the entire Church. The seven stars represent the angels of the seven churches. The seven stars symbolize the entire ministry. No seven single individuals are represented as occupying such a lofty relationship to Jesus. It is only applicable to the ministry in general. They are designated 'angels,' for they are messengers, or ministers. They act as mediums through whom the Church is addressed.
- The seven lampstands (candlesticks) represent the seven churches. The Church general, as it then exists, is thus represented. The ministry and the Church, under the symbols of stars and lampstands, are certainly representative of those existing at a particular period of time. The stars and churches are not represented as coming in a succession or at different and separate times. The symbolism enforces the idea that they all exist contemporaneously, all are present at the same time. The time of existence and realization is firmly and inseparably united with this revelation seen by John.
- This introduction clearly indicates that the Book deals in symbol, and must accordingly be interpreted. What a majestic representation of the Lord Jesus the Christ! The dignity, grandeur, attributes, and Lordship ascribed to him are astounding and sublime. This symbolism and explanation prepares us to assume that the seven named churches are also selected as symbols, (in view of their religious condition), of the entire Church as it will exist when the 'day of the Lord' begins. John, conveyed over to that day, sees and describes the existing phases of the Church's faith and life. The seven named individual churches are chosen because they most fittingly represent the future state.

## Introduction to Chapters 2 and 3

Before interpreting these 2 chapters, it is highly important to decide the following two questions:

**First**, are the seven local Churches types of the Church in general? And, **Second**, at what time is the typical application to be realized?

Are the seven churches of Asia ‘types’ of the universal Church?

The answer should be a decisive affirmative, that they typically, owing to certain characteristics, represent the Church-general. The reasons for such of view are both reasonable and strong.

1. We cannot take it for granted that the seven angels are the sole and special favorites, who only are so highly honored.
2. We cannot limit the seven churches to the seven local ones, as if they alone were light-bearers.
3. We cannot limit the instruction, commendations, cautions, warnings, and promises to the seven local churches, as if others then also existing, did not likewise require the same.
4. The omission of Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth, Antioch, Alexandria, etc., only accords with this typical view.
5. The non-mention of the strongest and most influential churches, (evidently foreseen how such mention might be utilized to promote pride and ambition) can only be suitably explained by the typical view.
6. The sacred number seven only receives its representative meaning of completeness, full complement, perfect, by adopting the typical view.
7. The number seven with its symbolic meaning cannot consistently be applied to the condition, character, faith, or fate, only of the seven local churches.
8. The fact that the representation itself is called a ‘mystery’ implies, that a more comprehensive and far-reaching application is intended than a mere confinement to seven local churches.
9. The Book, its design and intent, is not to be limited to the seven local churches.



10. The call for all to hear what is said of and to the churches and repeated at the conclusion of the Book, conveys and impresses the idea of universality.
11. Being regarded as mere types, the overthrow, destruction, and non-existence of the seven local churches, does not effect or change the intent of the addresses.
12. No two interpretations of a local or historical fulfillment agree. Although numerous, the very disagreements and discordance evidence a lack of unity, palpable contradictions, imaginary and arbitrary handling.
13. The typical arrangement while requiring (as will be shown) a specific fulfillment is also fitted to be applicable for instruction, and warning, at every age of the Church.
14. The reasons why these seven local churches were selected to represent the Church at a future epic arises from the varied conditions, faces (or states) presented making them suitable as 'types' expressive of a certain foreknown future, and perhaps also from an implied significance in their names:<sup>13</sup>
  - **Ephesus** signifies impulsiveness, strong in desire and action.
  - **Smyrna** signifies myrrh, often used for embalming; hints implying persecution, death. Used in rich ointments, and perfumes, it is typical of pride, self-esteem, and vanity.
  - **Pergamos** signifies a high tower, citadel, or fortress; hence implying a trust in security.
  - **Thyatira** signifies, as some define it, feminine domination, and thus implicitly refers to the woman Jezebel mentioned.
  - **Sardis** signifies the stone Sardius found there, and implies its lifeless condition (Rev 3:1).
  - **Philadelphia** signifies the love of the brother, and implies a prevailing brotherly love.
  - **Laodicea** signifies (from 'laos' meaning people, and 'dice' meaning judgement) a body controlled and swayed by the people, and hence implies a worldly Church.

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<sup>13</sup> In Scripture names are frequently significant, and this has led not a few interpreters to regard these in the same light. The most suggestive are therefore given for the reader's consideration. For an intended meaning by name cannot be dogmatically affirmed.

At what time is the typical application to be realized?

Owing to the fact that, between the giving of this Book and the future thief-like coming of Jesus, many of the characteristics given in these seven addresses have been (more or less) witnessed, and primarily because of misconceptions arising from erroneous interpretations of introductory verses (see notes v1, v10) relating to the words and phrases, 'Apocalypse,' 'shortly,' and 'the Lord's Day,' many (interpreters) have sought for a continuous fulfillment from the first century down to the present day. Some advocate seven successive periods to be represented in regular historical order down to the end. But no two of this class agree in their chronological ordering of the alleged seven ages of the Church. Others find the fulfillment in the past and future by advocating seven successive phases, but which may intermingle, run into each other, partially coexist, and evidence a predominance at some point in history. But, as can well be supposed, by opening such a wide door, no two of these agree either in their chronology or in their application of history. All such theories of historical continuity and fulfillment, however modified and advocated by able and learned man, must, impelled by consistency and a logical connection, be discarded as untenable and misleading.

Let the reader consider the following statements, which give the reasons why all such theories of historical continuity should be rejected, and the time of fulfillment be placed in the future.

1. This is represented as taking place in 'the day of the Lord,' (see remarks on v10). John in spirit is transported over into that future day, and now informs us what he saw and heard in the opening of this Day.
2. The Lord Jesus has appeared and his express personal Revelation is proof that this great and consummating day has at last come.
3. These addresses are given after, not before, the personal appearing of the Lord Jesus, hence representative of the time.
4. No chronological order or succession of periods are intimated; but as an evidence of coexisting at the same time the addresses are all delivered at one time impressing contemporaneousness.
5. The addresses fittingly precede what follows them, in view of Christ's headship of the Church.

6. The addresses appropriately typified the condition, or phases, or states that the Church will present when this day of the Lord begins.
7. In this thief-like coming, hidden from the eyes of the churches, He as a judge is already present and inspects the then existing Church, commending, rebuking, cautioning, warning, and promising.
8. It is at this fearful crisis, preparatory to the terrible events that shall inevitably come, that the Church will need the special direction, caution and comfort that these addresses present.
9. In view of the impending calamities and sore trial to follow, it was suitable to remind the professed Church then existing (1Pet 4:17) that judgement must begin with professed Christian believers.
10. The particular opening and closing attached to each address are designed to call special attention to the condition of the Church at a solemn crisis relating to the coming of Christ.
11. It is a matter of deep interest and importance to delineate the precise condition of the Church at this crisis, and to give the Divine estimate respecting the same.
12. It is of the highest importance and instruction, in view of the impending temptation, trial, and suffering, to represent the seven types (or phases) as then existing and predominating, in order to impress the non-conversion of the world, and the condition of the professing Church, at the closing period of this dispensation.
13. Before presenting the evils and judgements to come, the Antichristian domination and persecutions that will arise, it is eminently suitable to address the Church.
14. The addresses are given for this period. They are recorded by John and are faithfully transmitted for the instruction of the ministry and church of this coming epoch.
15. The Lord Jesus in his majesty and glory is revealed only to John and not to the seven churches, (as will be shown under Rev 4 and 5), at the beginning of the 'day of the Lord,' He is revealed only to certain chosen ones. His open visible revelation takes place later.
16. The Church as here represented, exists in this 'thief-like' stage of the Revelation of Jesus. It is essential, in order to obtain a correct view of the Church in this period, to apprehend the Second Advent (or Apocalypse) of the Lord Jesus, not (as so

many suppose) a single act (or manifestation) occupying a brief period of time. The reverse is the unmistakable intimation and logical implications of Scripture.

Consider the following observations;

- The First Advent embraced quite a number of years and several stages. It is reasonable to assume that the Second Advent need not be limited by a brief time, or by one stage of action, as analogy indicates.
- At the First Advent there was an interval of years between the Lord's personal presence and his open visible appearing to the nation. It is reasonable to suppose that the same will be true of the Second Advent, enforced as it is by the contrast presented between the private appearing of Rev 1 and the open appearing of Rev 19.
- At the beginnings of the First Advent, Jesus the Christ was revealed only to a few chosen ones, so it is fairly implied in Scripture, that this same process will be repeated at the Second Advent.
- The 'thief-like' Coming is most certainly to be distinguished from a 'visible-open' Coming. A thief's coming is private, hidden, stealthy, and concealed. To impress this idea of a hidden Coming the very introduction of the 'day of the Lord' is represented as 'so coming as a thief in the night,' (1Pet 5:2,4) i.e. concealed in its beginning from the world and not openly affecting those chosen. Now the Thessalonian brethren were so impressed by this hidden and concealed introduction of the day of the Lord 'as a thief in the night,' that they feared the day concealed in its opening had, unknown to them, already begun, and they were not among the favored chosen (2Thess 2:2), for they held (so Lange, Alford, Lillie, Revision, and a host of critics,) 'that the day of the Lord is now present,' and which fear Paul allays, not by denying their conception of the Day's beginning but, by stating how certain things must first transpire before the Day comes. This thief-like coming is, while it involves as its outgoing and outcome the most tremendous issues and events (as this Book and 2Pet 3:10–13 indicate) and in view of its concealment, specially addressed to professing Christians to put

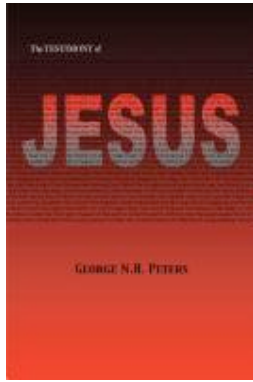
them on their guard as in Rev 16:15; 3:3, and not, as some contend, exclusively to the world.

This Coming of Jesus (or, of His day) is represented in scripture by the figures of the 'snare' and the 'net,' the full meaning of which also involves the idea of concealment. In describing the same Advent, Jesus is represented as coming for his saints, and then again as coming with them, differing as to the intent of the Coming, they indicate separate stages, manifestations, and acts; the former, having for its purpose a special gracious manifestation of Salvation and glorification, the latter having a special reference to judgments and the overthrow of enemies.

This view is strongly confirmed by Scripture presenting the same Advent into two distinctive and separate aspects. The first time Jesus comes in a time of peace, prosperity, security, and non-anticipation of impending evil; the second time He comes in a time of dire distress, of war, of oppression and suffering. These two predictions are alone reconcilable by adopting separate stages of the same Advent. This view is sustained by regarding this non-open, thief-like, Coming as provisional and preparatory to the participation of the glorified redeemed and the Theocratic ordering and the judgments written, immediately, following Rev 4, thus showing an existing vital and essential connection. This is a required prelude, to an understanding of God's ordering.

A number of associated things connected with this Advent and 'day of the Lord' intimate and imply distinct stages. Thus the unseen (following the Lord's) resurrection of chosen ones, the different stages and classes of resurrected persons, the non-public translation of believers, the privilege accorded to a favored few to escape the coming judgements, the Coming as the 'morning star' and the promise of obtaining this 'star,' the unnoticed overlapping of dispensations, the coming in that 'night,' the return from the 'wedding,' the being hidden during the 'fearful storm,' the first-born attaining to the honor of executing judgement, the time required to realize all that is affirmed respecting the Second Advent, the utter rejection of the Popish conceptions of the judgement and the judgement day.

**This Book is, therefore, not a history of the Church from the First Advent down to the Second Coming; nor is it a fanciful rhetorical work, or a poem with poetic imaginings, or a specimen of sublime writing suggested by genius, but it is a solemn prophetic portraiture of the ushering in of the great day of the Lord.**



*The author's unpublished 1907 study notes on the Book of Revelation. His unique interpretation combines prophecy with covenants to unlock the Book's symbolic language. Although the study is over 100 years old, the reader is instantly confronted by this Testimony of Jesus, the Son of Man proclaiming His promised physical return to earth in a prophetic future that strikes the reader as eerily and uncannily similar to today's dangerous, chaotic world.*

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