

Revelation Chapter 1 Continued

Verses 9-18: This vision of Christ is equaled in grandeur only by the vision of His final return as King of kings and Lord of lords (19:11-16).

Verses 9-11: "John" was exiled to the island of "Patmos" for preaching the "word of God" and testifying as a witness of "Jesus Christ". Patmos is located about 60 miles from Ephesus and about 35 miles off the coast of Asia Minor. "Tribulation" refers to present afflictions, not to the future Tribulation period. Believers live in a present form of God's "kingdom" (the church), though not yet in the promised messianic kingdom. "Patience" is perseverance or endurance (Greek *hupomone*). True believers in Christ will persevere through all their present afflictions, with John as their example.

"In the Spirit": John was in a state of receiving prophetic revelation from God. "The Lord's day" refers to Sunday, the first day of the week, as the new day of worship for Christians. "Alpha and Omega": The description that was applied to God the "Almighty" (in verse 8), is here applied to Christ, showing that Christ is God, "the first and the last" (compare verse 17; 22:13). The "seven churches" introduced here are described further in chapters 2 and 3. "Ephesus" was the largest and most important city in the province of "Asia".

Revelation 1:9 "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

"In tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience": Four characteristics that John and his believing readers share:

- (1) Persecution for their faith;
- (2) Membership in the redeemed community over which Christ serves as Lord and King;
- (3) Eager anticipation of the glory of His coming millennial reign on earth; and
- (4) Endurance and perseverance in spite of difficult times.

John identifies with the suffering believers here (in Rev. 1:9), by referring to himself as their "brother, and companion in tribulation." Then he describes the place where he received the Revelation, exiled and alone on the Isle of Patmos. Can't you just visualize John standing there on the Lord's Day, alone, forsaken, cold, and weary? The sound of the howling wind echoes through the Rocky Mountains. The waves crash upon the deserted jagged shoreline.

"Isle that is called Patmos": Located in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey), and part of a group of about 50 islands. Patmos is a barren, rocky, crescent-shaped island that is about 10 miles long and less than 6 miles at its widest point. It served as a Roman penal colony. According to early Christian historian, Eusebius, the emperor Nerva (A.D. 96-98), released John from Patmos.

As John is speaking here, he is not a god but a person, as we are. Truly he is an anointed servant of Jesus. He explains that believers in Jesus, then and now, will have tribulation. Tribulation is to make believers strong. Also, to see if under stressful situations, we will still believe. This new message the church is sending out that Christians do not have problems is in error. In the Old and New Testament, men and women of God have had to stand amidst tribulations and trials. Even Jesus was tried forty days and nights. Problems come to all. The difference is in the way you handle the problems.

John was not trying to impress anyone of how spiritual he was. He was alone on the isle of Patmos. The authorities had sent John to this isle to stop him from proclaiming Jesus. But we see that God had plans for this stay as well. God's purpose in John being on the isle was to receive the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus. The enemy planned evil for John's stay here, but God turned something bad into something wonderful for all time.

John was full of patience, not his own, but the patience of Jesus. John knew the bottom line about the kingdom, as well. This was not a time of despair; he found this a great time to be with Jesus with no interruptions.

Romans 5:3 "And not only [so], but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;"

Acts 14:22 "Confirming the souls of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

This isle of Patmos was a special place for what we would call hardened criminals.

It was in exile that Jacob met God at Bethel. God helps us in our greatest need. Moses was in exile when he saw the burning bush.

Elijah heard the still quiet voice of God while he was running for safety. Daniel was also in exile when he saw the Ancient of Days.

Sometimes God must get us alone before He can reveal Himself to us.

Revelation 1:10 "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,"

We note here that John was in the Spirit. Spirit is capitalized. This indicates that John was totally consumed by the Holy Spirit. This great voice is an awesome sound. There is no question whose voice this is. When the Lord returns and blows the silver trumpet to redeem His people from the earth, it will actually be His voice, which is like a trumpet. God's voice frightened the children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land. They thought it thundered, the voice was so great.

This was not a dream. John was supernaturally transported out of the material world awake, not sleeping, to an experience beyond the normal senses. The Holy Spirit empowered his senses to perceive revelation from God (compare Acts chapters 10 and 11).

“Lord’s day”: This phrase appears in many early Christian writings and refers to Sunday, the day of the Lord’s resurrection. Some have suggested this phrase refers to “the Day of the Lord”, but the context doesn’t support that interpretation.

“Great voice”: Throughout Revelation, a loud sound or voice indicates the solemnity of what God is about to reveal.

Revelation 1:11 "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send [it] unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

But as John begins to worship God, something supernatural occurs. Suddenly, he hears a voice behind him as loud and clear as a trumpet declaring, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last!" Alpha and Omega is the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Christ was describing Himself as being the eternal, complete, revelation of God and He was commanding John to write what he would see in a book to be preserved for the Church. When John turned to see the source of the mighty voice making this declaration, Jesus Christ, in all His power and glory was unveiled before his eyes. John saw into the realm of the Spirit and he was so overcome at Christ's awesome presence that he was fearful and fell at His feet as though he were dead!

“Book”: The Greek word refers to a scroll made of parchment formed from papyrus, a reed that grows plentifully along the Nile.

Everything that was said here is in red, this means it is all said by Jesus Himself. Here Jesus is saying to John to write down everything he sees, and put it in a book, and send it to the churches. I really believe that it was not just to these seven physical churches, but to all the churches which are all the believers in Jesus Christ. As we begin to see the problems in these churches, we can easily relate it to problems that we see in our churches today. We can also look at the things that God is pleased with in these churches, and we will know what He finds pleasing in our church.

These churches were not physically very far from where John was on the island so he was familiar with them. There were about sixty known churches at the time this was written, so we must note that these were chosen for their peculiarities of worship.

John did not choose these, Jesus did. The purpose in sending these messages to the churches is so they can see their error and change. Take one more note that this is from Jesus the everlasting one, the A to Z.

This message, that John is to write down, is what he sees and also hears. Sometimes it is difficult for us to recognize what he is describing. You have to remember that John is describing things he

has never seen. Things that would not be in existence until thousands of years after his time. You can imagine how he would describe a helicopter or a jet airplane. This vision is very similar to the parables. This, as the parables, must be spiritually discerned.

Verses 12-16: This is a description of Jesus Christ as a Judge (compare John 5:22, 27). Christ has authority over both the church and the world. The “seven candlesticks” (lampstands), are identified (in verse 20), as the seven churches mentioned (in verse 11). “The Son of man” is a messianic title from (Daniel 7:13), and was Jesus’ favorite designation for Himself. The “garment” described (in verse 13), is a judge’s robe. His “white” hair symbolizes justice, purity and glory. “Fire” is also a symbol of judgment. The “brass” and the “sound” of the “voice” show Christ’s authority and power. The “seven stars” are identified (in verse 20), as the angels of the seven churches. The “sword” also represents Christ’s judgment (compare 19:15), of the church and the world through His Word. His “countenance” or face was like the “sun” as the glory of God shone forth.

Revelation 1:12 "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;"

You understand that we cannot see a voice. This is saying, I turned to see where this voice was coming from.

This is not one candlestick with seven flutes, but rather seven separate stands. John wants us to see, not the happenings, but the one that causes it to happen. This revealing is not of historical events but revealing Jesus to us. One thing we see by the seven separate candlesticks is that there is light enough for each of these churches. They can have their own light. The gold in these stands indicates the presence of God, because the spiritual meaning of gold is purity of God. These churches' light or knowledge is not worldly wisdom. This knowledge and light comes from God.

“Candlesticks”: These were portable gold lampstands that held small oil lamps. Each lampstand represented a church (verse 20), from which the light of life shone. Throughout Scripture, 7 is the number for completeness, so these 7 lampstands are representative of all the churches.

Revelation 1:13 "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks [one] like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

“Son of man”: According to the gospels, this is the title Christ used most often for Himself during His earthly ministry (81 times in the gospels). Taken from the heavenly vision (in Dan. 7:13), it is an implied claim to deity.

This garment down to the foot is a priestly robe, a robe of authority. This "Son of man" is Jesus who is in the midst of the church. This golden girdle is saying that this is God.

Christ was wearing the robe of the High Priest. John states He was "clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." In the Old Testament, the high priests wore full length robes with a girdle made of fine linen, embroidered with needlework, secured around their waist. In this vision, Christ had on the robe of a high priest, but the girdle He wore around His chest was made of gold, which denotes the dignity of an important office and signifies His office as our Great High Priest "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:24-25).

“Robe”: Most occurrences of this word in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, refer to the garment of the High-Priest. The golden sash across His chest completes the picture of Christ serving in His priestly role (compare Lev. 16:1-4; Heb. 2:17). John sees Jesus in a body with a robe. Jesus, our High Priest, represents us before His Father. He is not an earthly high priest but a heavenly Priest. He appears before God to bless the Christians, to plead our case if you will.

His appearance in the churches would be as the Son of man. In other words, in a body as man. The purpose of the high priest was to take the sacrificial blood into the Holy of Holies; and that is just what Jesus did, when He carried His own precious blood to the Father to abolish our sin. Not to cover them up, but to do away with them.

Revelation 1:14 "His head and [his] hairs [were] white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes [were] as a flame of fire;"

Christ's hair was white like wool. Christ's white hair is symbolic of His title, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. Christ is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. When the prophet Daniel had a similar vision, he also described Him as having hair "like pure wool," raiment "white as snow," and eyes "as a flame of fire." (Dan 7:9).

Christ's "eyes were as a flame of fire". Like two lasers, the eyes of the exalted Lord look with penetrating gaze into the depths of His church (2:18; 19:12; Heb. 2:17). This description is also found (in Revelation 19:11-12), where Christ is pictured as a judge and Conqueror over the Antichrist and the nations of the earth who have gathered together for the Battle of Armageddon. His eyes of fire symbolize perfect discernment.

John was at the transfiguration of Jesus and had seen a glimpse of what He would be like then. We are looking here through John's eyes as he describes what he sees. This white hair can mean several different things. One is that white hair goes with Daniel's description of the Ancient of Days.

My own insight into this whiteness is because of the great Light. Jesus is the source of all light. We know that in heaven there is no need for the sun and moon, because of the presence of the Light which is Jesus. This much light can make anything look white. I am sure this hair is white, however. This white is so bright that no bleach on earth could make it so bright. The light just makes it look brighter.

Jesus was seen of John as Son of man, but now John is seeing Him as the second person of the Godhead. This eternity of Jesus (now known as King of kings and Lord of lords), is showing in all His majesty. We have seen God throughout the Bible associated with fire. We read that God is a consuming fire. We saw Him in the burning bush, the fiery finger of God that burned the Ten Commandments in the rock, and we are told by John the Baptist, that Jesus baptizes with fire. This fire of the Holy Ghost cleanses us inside by burning out the old self; making way for the new.

“Eyes ... flame of fire”: Like two lasers, the eyes of the exalted Lord look with penetrating gaze into the depths of His church (2:18; 19:12; Heb. 4:13).

Eyes indicate wisdom. Jesus' look is so full of wisdom and fire that it looks into our heart and purges out the sin with fire. This look (with these piercing, fiery eyes), will come into a Holy Ghost filled church and will burn so brightly that this look will purge the church. Those who cannot stand to be purged will leave. The church that is left, regardless of how small, will be lined up with the will of God.

Revelation 1:15 "And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters."

Christ's feet were "like unto fine brass". Brass, a strong, purified metal which results from intense heat, denotes the purity and power with which Christ will bring judgment upon the ungodly of the earth. Jesus Christ with feet of judgment is moving through His church to exercise His chastening authority upon sin.

This brass indicates the great strength and steadfastness of Jesus. Brass also means judgment and Jesus is the Judge. Jesus here is standing in the midst of the churches. Judgment begins at the house of God. Jesus has overcome Satan and the demons. We know the Word says that Satan, his demons, and all who reject Jesus have been judged; and they truly will spend an eternity in hell.

The Bible says Satan is under Jesus' feet. Here this is Jesus, upright, not defeated, overcoming the devil and his angels.

Christ's voice was "as the sound of many waters." The voice John first heard in his vision was described as "a great voice, as the sound of a trumpet," loud and clear. In this verse, John describes Christ's voice as "the sound of many waters" which is similar to the description given by the prophet (in Ezekiel 43:2). His voice is mighty and powerful, beautiful but frightening. John likened it to the crashing of the surf against the rocks of the island. It was the voice of authority.

Revelation 1:16 "And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance [was] as the sun shineth in his strength."

“Seven stars”: These are the messengers who represent the 7 churches (see note on verse 20). Christ holds them in His hand, which means that He controls the church and its leaders.

Out of Christ's mouth proceeded "a two-edged sword". This sword represents the power and authority of Christ's words by which the world will be judged (Rev. 19:15), and those aligned with Satan and the Antichrist. Those who attack His people and destroy His church.

Christ's countenance was "as the sun shineth in his strength". The powerful light surrounding Christ was so blinding that John compared it to the powerful rays of the sun in all its strength. In (2 Thessalonians 2:8), Paul tells us that Christ will destroy the Antichrist with the brightness of His coming. Later on (in Revelation chapter 22), John tells us that in the New Jerusalem there will be no need of the sun, for the Lord God will be our light.

The right hand has to do with the blessings of God. The right hand blessing was always the preferential blessing. These seven stars are blessed over abundantly of God because they are in the right hand of Jesus. It was a double blessing. These seven stars are the ministers of the churches. He calls them stars, because they must shine in the world. They do not produce light; they just reflect His Light to the world. Jesus said to light this light and set it on a hill where all can see. The darker the area, the more important it is to shine His Light, so that those in darkness can come to the Light.

Jesus is the Word of God. The Bible proceeded out of His mouth. The Bible is the written Word of God. God is the author. People like Paul and John are just the penman, moved upon by the Holy Spirit to put it down for all to see. This Bible is the two-edged sword, both the Old and New Testament. This two-edged sword (law and grace), is the only weapon that God's people need.

The Bible itself says, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit" (Hebrews 4:12). The Word separates good and evil. The cutting edge of the Word sometimes even separates families. One who believes the Word cannot go back to their old sinful lives, and this divides families and friends sometimes.

In (John 1:1), We read; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

This Word divides the Spirit from the flesh. If you read it much, the Word will convict you of sin in your life. It will cause you to seek God and be saved. The Word is powerful. The power of Jesus is beyond comprehension. He is the Word. His Power, through His Word, has changed the whole world. He is Power. He is the source of all power, energy, and light. There is no power greater.

Revelation Chapter 1 Continued Questions

1. Who did John call himself?
2. What are we companions with him in?

3. What two things was John on the isle of Patmos for?
4. What does John tell us that contradicts some of the teachings of prosperity?
5. What separates believers and nonbelievers in trials?
6. How many days and nights was Jesus tried?
7. Whose patience did John possess?
8. What worketh patience?
9. In Acts, how does it say that we enter into the kingdom of God?
10. Name four people who had a great experience with God while they were in exile.
11. When John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, what did he hear? Where?
12. Is the Lord's day and the Sabbath the same?
13. This voice like a trumpet is what?
14. Name the seven churches.
15. These are the physical churches, who are the spiritual?
16. If there were about sixty known churches, why were these seven chosen to write to?
17. Why do we not always understand exactly what John is describing?
18. When John turned to see the voice what did he see?
19. What must we notice about the candlesticks?
20. Why is this important?
21. The light for these candlesticks, comes from where?
22. In the midst of the candlesticks, what did John see?
23. What does the garment to the foot show us?
24. What does the golden girdle tell us?
25. Why does Jesus stand before God?

26. What was the purpose of the high priest?
27. What was Jesus' hair like?
28. What were His eyes as?
29. What did Daniel call Jesus that indicates white hair?
30. What do I believe causes the whiteness?
31. What did John the Baptist say Jesus would baptize with?
32. What can this look of the fiery eyes of Jesus do to a church?
33. What were His feet likened unto?
34. What are two things this metal stands for?
35. Where does judgement begin?
36. What did the voice sound like?
37. What did He have in His right hand?
38. What do they stand for?
39. What came out of His mouth? Why?
40. What is this symbolic of?
41. Why does he call them stars?
42. Who is the Word?
43. What is the Bible?
44. What does two-edged mean?
45. It is so piercing, it can even divide what?