

## A STUDY ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION

### I. THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAS SEEN (1:1-20)

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a. The Introduction and Greetings – 1:1-8

i. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST – 1:1

ii.

i. The Word “Revelation” appears 18 times in the NT. When used with reference to a person it always means “to become visible.” E.g. Lk. 2:32; Rom. 8:19; 1Cor. 1:7; 1Pet. 1:7.

ii. Things which were once upon a time concealed but now revealed. Revelation did not quote the Old Testament but alludes to it in 278 verses out of the total 404 verses.

iii. Some of the things which the book of Revelation reveals include:

1. warns the church of the danger of sin

4. ii. instruct the church on the need for holiness

5. iii. the final conflict between God and Satan and his hosts

6. iv. end of human history

7. v. final political empire of the world

8. vi. career of the antichrist and his end at Armageddon

9. vii. coming glory of Christ’s earthly reign

10. viii. millennial kingdom

11. ix. Great White Throne Judgement

12. x. eternal bliss in the new heaven and new earth

13. xi. ultimate victory of Jesus Christ over all human and demonic opposition

14. xii. ultimate defeat of sin, and destruction of death, and Hell and the final destination of all the enemies of God in the Lake of Fire

15.

xvi. God gave His revelations to the Son who gave the same to His servants i.e. primarily for our benefit not the world’s. Cf. Jn. 17:9, 20; 1Cor. 2:14; Mt. 13:11,13.

xvii. To SHOW us the things which will surely come to pass very shortly. 2 Peter 3:8, "*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*"

Out of 27 NT books, the first 5 books (Gospel of Matthew-the Book of Acts) talks about the past; the next 21 (Romans-Jude) books on the present and the last book (Revelation) on the future.

xviii. Angels were used to tell this to John.

“Unique” – sent and communicated by angels

“angel” and “angels” used 71 times in Revelations. This occurrence is more than in any other book of the Bible.

b. JOHN WHO WAS GOD’S SERVANT – 1:2

**i. To bear record** – not of self but God’s holy Word and Jesus Christ. This is one of the hall marks of a servant of God. The emphasis of his witness and testimony is not self but God. This theocentric theology is in contradiction to the anthropocentric philosophy of the world and many false teachers today.

**ii. of God’s Word** – The centrality of the entire book of Revelation is the Word of God. John was in exile because of the words of God. Many saints will be killed because of the Word of God. The message in the whole Book of Revelation is the Word of God.

The centrality of the Word of God in the believer’s life must never be underestimated. Without the Word of God, the people will definitely perish (Cf. Prov. 29:18). The Word of God is the only objective inerrant and infallible rule to guide the believer’s life toward eternity.

**iii. of the testimony of Jesus Christ** – MAIN THEME though is the revelation of the majesty, glory and power of Jesus Christ as seen in His final conquest and victory. The final consummation of our salvation!

The Book of Revelation is the testimony of God’s only begotten Son. It is by Him, about Him, Christ is the living and written Word of God personified.

**iv. the things that he saw** – John was an eyewitness of what is recorded here in the Book of Revelation..

c. **THE BLESSED READER** – 1:3 (promised blessedness of Mt. 5:3-12; other blessed verses in Rev. are: 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:14.

**i. He must READ** (present participle) –cf. Mt. 13. The first and most obvious step of every sinner who wishes to be blessed is to read God's Holy Word.

He has to set aside time amidst all the busyness and cares of this world to make the reading of God's Word his top most priority. If he does not, then he will not read God's Word. All of us have struggle with this time and time again.

**ii. He must HEAR** (present participle) – Reading without hearing or listening to what we are reading is a common problem. We just go through the motion as if to soothe our conscience. We hear our own voices or sit there silently reading but our mind is miles away.

What we read does not register. The reading of God's Holy Word is the voice of God speaking to us. So John was asked by God to read and to listen.

**iii. He must KEEP** (present participle) – to keep is to obey. Mt. 7:21ff. A life transformed by the word of God is the ultimate result. This three step instruction is what the study of God's Word is all about.

To stop at the level of reading is like opening the refrigerator and stare at the food and shut the door after that. To read and listen and not do anything about it is like opening the door of the refrigerator and pick up the food and appreciate the texture of the food and then put everything back and shut the door. To read, listen and obey is to open the door and take up the food and place it into the mouth and be delightfully satisfied with it after savouring every morsel of the food.

Reading and listening to the Book of Revelation or any book of the Bible for that matter and do not have our lives patterned after God's Holy Word is the epitome of foolishness. To be so closed to food and then die of hunger. To have the most valuable diamond within reach and yet choose to remain a beggar.

Notice that the three verbs are in the present tense which means that the Christian has to practice this three levels CONTINUOUSLY or ALL THE TIME whenever he approaches the Word of God.

**iv. The things that were written therein** – The immediate context is of course the Book of Revelation. But by way of application it will definitely include the whole Bible.

The reader is to read, hear and obey the whole Bible and in particular the apocalyptic literature found in the Book of Revelation.

“Time is at hand” – Cf. Lk. 12:35-40; Jas. 5:7-9; Heb. 10:25; 2Pet. 3:1-7 – Time is not on our side. Do not presume that we have all the time in the world to decide whether to live for Christ or to believe in Him. One thing is certain we do not have much time. Procrastination has been the greatest pitfall of millions who are now in Hell or many a lazy and carnal Christian who wasted his life chasing the elusive dream and ended his life in deep regret.

Future events called prophecies and none more so than prophecies concerning the last things are for our benefit. The greatest benefit derived from this is to pattern our present lives in light of what God has revealed to us in Holy Scripture.

READ, HEAR AND KEEP!!

d. TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES – 1:4-6

**i. Grace and Peace** – Standard greeting; BUT we must understand the reality of the greeting. It is not meant to be perfunctory.

2 Peter 1:2, "*Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,*" cf. 1Thess1:1; 2Thess. 1:1-2; Phil. 1:1-2Eph. 1:1-2Gal. 1:1-3; 1Cor. 1:1-3; etc.

**GRACE** – It is by grace that we are saved through faith. Grace is unmerited favour given to sinful men such as going to heaven. Grace is God sending His only begotten Son to die for us when we do not deserve it.

Romans 4:16, "*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,*"

Romans 11:6, "*And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.*"

Ephesians 2:5, "*Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)*"

Ephesians 2:8, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*"

**MERCY** – Removal of punishment which sinful men richly deserve because of sin. God delivered us from Hell.

Titus 3:5, "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,*"

Cf. Psalm 136 – The merciful Psalm.

**ii. From God** – Which is, which was, which is to come

God -- The eternal source of grace and peace

Which is – today

Which was – yesterday

Which is to come – forever

God almighty is timeless yet to be viewed in time dimensions for our benefit that we may understand. It is quite obvious here that Christ is revealed to John and to us that He is in control of the past, the present and the future.

### **iii. The seven spirits – cf. Isa. 11:2; Zech. 4:1-10**

Revelation 3:1, "*And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*"

Revelation 4:5, "*And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*"

Revelation 5:6, "*And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.*"

Isaiah 11:2, "*And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*"

The seven spirits – seven depicts God's fullness. Here it is a reference to the Holy Spirit as Isaiah 11:2 intimates. He is the spirit, spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and fear of the LORD.

Produces peace in believer's life -- Galatians 5:22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," hence the greeting of Paul was from Christ and

#### iv. The Titles of Christ –

**From Jesus Christ** – He is the Christ (or in Hebrew it is “Messiah” – i.e. the anointed One). Jesus Christ means the Anointed Saviour. God almighty has anointed Him only as the Saviour of the world. Beside Him there is no one else who can save us from our sins.

Hebrews 13:8, "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*"

The greeting of the apostle John is complete. The grace and mercy that he highlights comes from God the Father, God the Holy Spirit and God the Son.

Christ's titles are crucial for they depict the emphasis of the content of the Book of Revelation and appealed to the readers to take note of its content. It comes from Christ who is:

**The faithful Witness** – always speaks and represents the truth cf. Rev. 3:14; Jn. 14:6; 18:37. He will always keep His Holy Word. Unlike us He will always do what he says.

**Jesus Christ cannot lie** – promises grace and peace to all believers. Truth is Christ's character. A perfect God always gives us a perfect Word. Anything less would mean that God has ceased to be God for He has contradicted Himself.

The Bible is the perfect Word of God at the time of inspiration. This same Word of God has been preserved perfectly for God's people throughout the ages.

Titus 1:2, "*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*"

This attribute of Christ is in contradistinction to the character of the Devil who is known as the father of lies. The Devil cannot but tell lies all the time.

John 8:44, "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*"

**The first begotten of the dead** – the emphasis here is not in terms of time but pre-eminence. He is above all. He is the greatest of all. The uniqueness of His resurrection as the Son of God and Son of Man will always be special and unique. Even though God may have millions of adopted sons and daughters this will not in any way diminish even the slightest, the unique relationship that the glorified Son of God has with the Father.

The emphasis of time in terms of chronology is found in found in 1 Cor. 15:22-24. Was Jesus Christ the first to be raised from the dead? The answer is a resounding yes. This is the resurrection with the glorified body. The resurrections found in the Old Testament and people like Lazarus were with the same mortal body. They all died again.

**The prince of the kings of the earth** – Jesus Christ is absolutely supreme on earth – 19:16; Ps. 2:6-8; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 9:9; Mt. 2:2; 21:5; Lk. 19:38; 23:3; Jn. 1:49.

**The one who loved us** –

Love for the world – a general kind of love which does not lead to salvation.

John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

This is a special kind of love for the believers only, which is an unbreakable love. This is the only kind of love that leads to salvation. Rom 8:35-39; 1Jn. 4:7-21.

**The one who washed us from our sins with His own blood** –

Hebrews 9:22, "*And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*"

Cleansing and sanctification by all that He did for us. His entire life and death.

Jesus' life i.e. His active obedience – brings us to heaven.

Jesus' death i.e. His passive obedience delivers us from death and Hell.

The one who has made us kings and priests –

“Kings” – we reign with Him. This is the rule of every believer in eternity. We shall even rule angels. This is one of the reasons why Christians should never go to court.

1 Corinthians 6:1-4, *“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.”*

Romans 8:17, *“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”* Cf. Tit. 3:7; Heb. 1:14; 6:17; 11:9; Jas. 2:5; 1Pet. 3:7.

2 Timothy 2:12, *“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:”*

Revelation 20:6, *“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”*

“Priests” – access to God's Holiest place or the Holy of Holies. This is the throne of grace and mercy that God has made available to all sinners saved by grace. This is what prayer is and only priests are given this privilege and honour.

Hebrews 4:16, *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

e. CHRIST'S RETURN – 1:7-8 – for God's glory

a. **Behold He cometh** – In the present tense implying that he is already on the way. That means His coming is also certain.

“Coming” -- used 9 times in Rev to refer to Jesus Christ and 7 times by Jesus Christ to refer to himself. A total of 16 times in the book of Revelation is used to describe His return. Scoffer will despise the return of Christ cf. 2Pet. 3:3-4.

It is estimated that 1 out of 25 verses in the NT refers to Christ's return.

Jesus Christ must return because

i. In fulfillment of OT prophecies – Psa. 2:6-9; Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-8; Dan. 7:13-14, 18; Zech. 14:4-9; Mal. 4:1-6. Cf. Num. 23:19.

1. In fulfillment of Jesus' own promises – Jn. 14:2-3; Lk. 19:11-27

2. Programme of the church awaits – Rev 3:10; 1Cor. 3:12-15; 4:5; Rom. 14:10; 2Cor. 5:10; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2Tim. 1:12, 18; 4:8; Rev. 11:18.

As the bride of Christ – Rev. 19:7-9; cf. 2Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-30.

iv. Return in triumph with Christ – Rev. 19:14 cf. v. 8.

3. To judge unbelievers – Joel 3:1-2, 9-17; Mt. 13:24-30; 37-43;

4. God's programme for Israel – Rom. 11:1-2, 13; Jer. 33:25-26; 26:63-64; Phil 2:10-11; Hebrews 10:13.

5. Christ's humiliation demands His return – Mt. henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."

6. Judgement of Satan – Satan is the Temporary ruler of this earth (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) as the god of this earth (2Cor. 4:4) and he uses the power of death to enslave men (Heb. 2:14-15). Jesus Christ will return to judge him (Rev 19 and 20). This is the culmination of a process which began in His first Coming cf. Rom. 16:20; 1Jn. 3:8).

7. The hope and expectations of every believer – 1Cor. 15:19; Tit. 2:13; 2Tim. 4:8; Jn. 14:1-3; 1Thess 4:18.

f. “with the clouds” – cf. Dan. 7:13; Mt. 24:30 Coming with the clouds is in fulfillment of Acts 1:10-11. The same manner in which Christ ascended will be the same way that He will return, with the clouds.

Acts 1:10-11, "*And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*"

g. every eye will see Him . . .(7c) –

“at His incarnation” -- glory veiled The people see Him but did not see His external glory which he set aside when He became a man. This is known as the Kenosis theory.

at Transfiguration – only Peter, James and John saw His glory. It was a private encounter given to the three privileged disciples. James was the first to be martyred for the faith after Pentecost. Peter was the leader of the 12 disciples after the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ. John was the last disciple to die after the exile in Patmos and writing of the Book of Revelation.

BUT at His return – all eyes will see. Philippians 2:9-11, "*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*" This will be the first time that sinful men will see the glorious Christ in all His power as the Second Person of the Godhead. Every knee will bow then and every tongue will be forced to confess Him as Lord.

By then it will be too late. They will see Him as their Judge and they will be punished for their sins. They will be sent to Hell.

“THEY ALSO WHICH PIERCED HIM” – includes the soldiers BUT more so the unbelieving Jews who instigated His death cf. Zech. 12:10; Acts 2:22-23; 3:14-15.

Many Jews will be converted at this time during the Great Tribulation. See Rev 7.

“KINDREDS OF ALL THE EARTH” – refers to the unbelieving Gentiles. They shall wail but not lead to repentance like that of the Jews. Despite the wrath of God being poured down on sinful men they will still remain in sin and idolatry cf. Rev 9:14-21), altho

ugh some will believe cf. Rev. 7: 9-10, 14.

“Wail” – lit. to cut. Cf. 1Ki. 18:28. Jews were strictly forbidden to cut themselves cf. Lev. 19:28; Deu. 14:1. The sorrow will be so intense like being cut in the flesh.

**h. Alpha and Omega** – emphasizes God’s omniscience. All knowledge is conveyed in the alphabets. Thus God affirms that he has all knowledge. He is immutable. He knows therefore the certainty and definiteness of His return. He makes no mistakes.

**i. “the beginning and the end . . .”** – His eternity. His name Jehovah means exactly this. His eternal presence is not confined by time or space or any feature or event. He not only knows all things he is always present when everything occurs.

**j. “the Almighty”** cf. 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22 – First occurred in Gen 17:1. This affirms His omnipotence. As the all powerful God nothing and no one can prevent Him from doing what he wants to do. All that He has promised which requires power to achieve He has the power to bring them to pass.

Not only does God knows all things, but all things are done in accordance to His Holy and Sovereign Will.

### **6881313. The First Vision of the Glorified Christ – 1:9-16**

Early Persecution during Roman Times

By the close of first century, Christianity became a hated and despised religion in the Roman Empire. In 111 A.D., Pliny, governor of Asia Minor, wrote to the Roman emperor Trajan to explain his procedure in examining and punishing Christians: ‘He placed an image of Caesar before them, along with the images of certain gods, and then ordered the Christians, one by one, to renounce Christ and to worship Caesar. If the person refused three times, he or she, adult or child, was executed. However, Pliny admitted to Trajan that he was disturbed and full of doubt. He had tortured two female slaves, who were styled deaconesses, in order to discover the real truth about Christians. “They affirmed” he wrote, that “the whole of their guilt was that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain day fixed day before it was light, where they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god; and bound themselves by solemn oath, not to do any wicked deeds;

never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery; never to falsify their word; not to deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up. After that it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food.“

Pliny wrote to the emperor Trajan because he was puzzled by the Christians who were brought before him for trial. This was the kind of things he found himself up against: A certain unknown Christian was brought before him, and Pliny, finding little fault in him, proceeded to threaten him. “I will banish thee,” he said. “Thou canst not,” was the reply, “for all the world is my Father’s house.”

“Then I will slay thee,” said Pliny. “Thou canst not,” answered the Christian, “for my life is with Christ in God.”

“I will take away thy possessions,” continued Pliny. “Thou canst not, for my treasure is in heaven.”

“I will drive thee away from man and thou shalt have no friend left,” was the final threat. And the calm reply once more was, “Thou canst not, for I have an unseen Friend from whom thou art not able to separate me.”

Such persecutions went on for the next two centuries. There is a third century A.D letter, written by one Donatus, which shows the remarkable life of the early Christians. “If I should ascend some high mountains, you know what I would see – armies fighting, brigands on the highways, pirates on the seas, men murdered in the amphitheater to please applauding multitudes. But in the midst of this, I have found a quiet and holy people. They are persecuted, but they care not. They have found a joy a thousand times greater than any pleasure. These are the masters of their own souls. They are the Christians, and I am one of them.”

Other than sinful man’s natural hostility against God and His Word and Children, certain aspects of sinful society were drastically affected by the influence of Christianity, which should be the case. RELIGIOUSLY, Christians were denounced as atheistic because they refused to worship the Roman pantheon of gods. The God they worshipped was invisible and to them this was regarded as no worship at all. SOCIALLY, Christians were despised by the high society aristocrats. Christian taught that all men need Christ as their Savior equally without exception. Master and slaves alike were one in Christ without distinction. The aristocrats hated this. Furthermore Christians refused to participate in worldly amusements that were so much apart of pagan festivals and society. ECONOMICALLY, Christians were saved from sin and idolatry hence threatening the livelihood of the numerous pagan priests, craftsmen and merchants. Business declined tremendously resulting in hostility against the missionaries and converts (cf. Acts 19:23 for early examples of such kind of hostility).

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO PERSECUTION? When the emperor Valens sent messengers to lure Eusebius into heresy by fair words and glowing promises, the saint answered them: “Alas, sirs, these speeches are fit to catch children; but we, who are taught and nourished by the Sacred Scriptures, are ready to suffer a thousand deaths, rather than permit one tittle of the Scriptures to be altered.” Then the emperor threatened to take by force all his goods, to torture him, banish him and even kill him. The courageous Christian answered, “He needs not fear confiscation, who has nothing to lose; nor banishment, to whom heaven is his country; nor torments, when his body can be destroyed at one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty from sin and sorrow.”

*a. The apostle describes himself (1:9-10) –*

"**I John, who also am your brother**, -- the humility of John is seen here. He was the last apostle to survive up to the close of the first century. He was not only part of the initial twelve disciples but was also one of the inner three disciples who were privileged to be present at the Transfiguration of Christ. Yet despite the many high honours given to him by the Lord he calls himself their BROTHER!

The idea is one of love, unity, relationship, and respect. To be identified as Christ's brother is indeed a tremendous encouragement of identification when you are under persecution.

and **companion in tribulation**, -- the word "companion" is an emphatic term from the normal word. Literally it means "to partake together" or "to be a joint sharer." "Tribulation" means "to crush, press, compress or squeeze." The sufferings a believer has to endure which were meant to crush him because of his faith. The one who suffers for Christ has many "fellow-sufferers" by his side. He is never actually alone even though he may feel alone at times.

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO PERSECUTIONS? Pray for them who persecute us. Bear no malice and grudges and keep the faith always. Pray for the mercy and justice of God to prevail.

Let it not be known that Christians do not understand justice. Do not condone sin or sinner when he is not repentant. Reject sin and separate from unrepentant sinners. Forgive when they repent.

and **in the kingdom** – Companions in the kingdom of Jesus Christ is a true and realistic perspective every Christian must hold on to for dear life. This is precisely what Christians are to one another as we march toward heaven hand in hand especially in the midst of persecutions. Our focus is never on this earth. It is always heavenward.

and **patience of Jesus Christ**, -- "Patience" means "to bear up under or an endurance as to things or circumstances." This is different from the word translated in the KJV as "long-suffering." The latter is a reference to the endurance we need to have in the face of difficult people. The former is related to difficult circumstances. Here John says that he was a companion in the patience of Jesus Christ. We suffer for Christ, which is a privilege, and here we are sustained by Jesus Christ.

was **in the isle that is called Patmos**, -- "Patmos is a barren, volcanic island in the Aegean Sea, at its extremities about ten miles long and five miles wide, located some forty miles offshore from Miletus (a city in Asia Minor about thirty miles south of Ephesus; cf. Acts 20:15-17). According to the Roman historian Tacitus, exile to such islands was a common form of punishment in the first century. At about the same time that John was banished to Patmos, Emperor

Domitian exiled his own niece, Flavia Domitilla, to another island. Unlike Flavia Domitilla, whose banishment was politically motivated, John was probably sent to Patmos as a criminal (as a Christian, he was a member of an illegal religious sect). If so, the conditions under which he lived would have been harsh. Exhausting labour under the watchful eye (and ready whip) of a Roman overseer, insufficient food and clothing, and having to sleep on the bare ground would have taken their toll on a ninety-year old man. It was a bleak, barren island, under those brutal conditions, that John received the most extensive revelation of the future ever given." [MacArthur, 41.]

**for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."** – the only "crime" John committed was to believe in Jesus Christ and holding onto His Word. These are synonyms describing the Word of God.

These are the same two reasons that many saints will be killed in the last days (see. Revelation 6:9-10).

*Philippians 1:29, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake,"*

*1 Peter 2:18-20, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."*

*1 Peter 3:13-18, "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit"*

Christians are to defend two things in this life: The WORD OF GOD and the TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST. We are not called to defend our name, our property, our position, and not even our church per se. But we are called to defend the written Word and the living Word which is Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Revelation 1:10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet," – John's experienced transcended normal human experiences. God has communicated to His servants in this manner before (cf. Ezekiel in Ezekiel 2:2; 3:12, 14; Peter in Acts 10:9ff; and Paul in Acts 22:17-21; 2 Cor. 12:1ff.). He heard a great voice behind him which sounded like a trumpet. The trumpet signifies command and boldness. The message was meant therefore to be clear and dignified.**

*b. The apostle describes the Voice (1:11) --*

Revelation 1:11, "Saying, **I am Alpha and Omega,**" -- Alpha and Omega are the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet. The implication would include: first and last in terms of time, events, and power. Jesus Christ will forever be there and no one will ever precede Him for He is omnipresent. All mankind will be judged by Him. No one will escape His justice on that Day for He is omniscient. No one has the means and power to thwart any of His plan and purpose for He is all powerful.

**the first and the last:** -- This would perhaps refer to the above as synonyms.

and, **What thou seest, write in a book,** -- The tone of the book will consist of imageries that John must record down for posterity. He will be the eye witness to these things. This is not hear-say description.

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.**" – Copies of the book of Revelation would be sent to these seven churches located in the province of Asia Minor which we now called Turkey. These churches do not exist now except in ruins. But they were part of the province of the Roman Empire. These seven churches occur in order of the route of travel by the messenger if he were to send the letter to them.

*c. The apostle describes the Lord (1:12-16) --*

**Revelation 1:12-16, "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;**

**Seven golden candlesticks or lamp stands — This represents the seven churches as 1:20 reveals to us. The candlestick or lamp stand was the common portable lamp used in homes in the 1st century to light rooms at night. Gold was the most precious metal at that time as it is in our time today.**

**Since this is a symbol of the church, from God's perspective, it reveals to us therefore that to God His church is to be light to the dark world and they are extremely precious, in fact most precious thing of planet earth in His sight. Did He not send His only begotten Son to die for us? [see Acts 20:28]**

## HOW ARE WE, TO BE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD TODAY?

John 8:12, "*Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*"

John 9:5, "*As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*" [SEE CONTEXT]

Matthew 5:14-16, "*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"

WE DERIVED OUR LIGHT FROM CHRIST. WE ARE LIKE THE MOON, A REFLECTED LIGHT. WE DO NOT HAVE ANY INHERENT LIGHT. IT IS NOT AS IF IT WERE LYING DORMANT AND THEN GOD MADE THAT LIGHT COME ALIVE. AS THE LIGHT WHICH MUST SHINE FROM US COMES FROM GOD, WE MUST SHINE FOR CHRIST.

PEOPLE AROUND US MUST SEE CHRIST IN US AND NOT OURSELVES. It is not our light. We have no light to show others.

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, -- the glorious Jesus Christ, here called the Son of Man, walks in the midst of His church.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF:

THE PHRASE "SON OF MAN"?

He is man. Numbers 23:19, "*God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*"

Title of Christ -- Daniel 7:13, "*I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*"

**Daniel 8:17, "So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision."**

**Matthew 8:20, "And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."**

**Matthew 9:6, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."**

**John 13:31, "Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."**

**THIS IS CHRIST'S IDENTIFICATION WITH MAN. HE MUST BECOME MAN TO DIE FOR MAN. AND HE DID. HE WAS BORN OF A VIRGIN. HE WAS PROPHESED FROM THE TIME OF THE FALL IN GENESIS 3:15 THAT HE WILL BE BORN OF A WOMAN.**

**"IN THE MIDST OF"? – THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF HIS CHURCH IS OF THE GREATEST VALUE AND COMFORT AND THE GREATEST DEMONSTRATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE.**

**Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."**

**HE DID THIS BY GIVING TO US THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ALSO CALLED THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.**

**1 Peter 1:10-11, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."**

**Romans 8:8-10, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."**

***And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."***

**JESUS PROMISED HIS PRESENCE WITH US IN THE DIFFICULT TASK OF CONFRONTING SIN IN HIS CHURCH. Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."**

**FOR COMFORT . . . John 14:18, "*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*"**

**ASSURANCE . . . Hebrews 13:5, "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*"**

**MOSES UNDERSTOOD THIS EXTREMELY WELL . . . Exo. 33:12-17.**

clothed with a garment down to the foot, -- the "ROBE" could be the royal robe worn by kings and princes as seen in 1Sam. 18:4 -- Jonathan; 1Sam. 24:4 -- king Saul; Ahab and Jehoshaphat in 1Ki. 22:10. But the word "robe" was used most frequently in the LXX [Greek translation of the OT] to refer to the robe worn by the high priest. [see Exo. 28:4, 31, 34; 29:5, 22-26; etc.]

This means that Christ is pictured as the great High Priest rather than as king even though He is both King and High Priest.

**SIGNIFICANCE – Hebrews 2:17-18, "*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*"**

**EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING is the emphasis. He knows and feel with every believer the sorrow and pain that come with the suffering for Crist.**

**Hebrews 4:14-16, "*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*"**

**COME TO GOD KNOWING WITH CONFIDENCE THAT IN CHRIST WE CAN ENTER INTO THE HOLY OF**

## **HOLIES WITHOUT FEAR OF DEATH AND REJECTION.**

**Hebrews 7:24-28, "*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. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*"**

**AS OUR HIGH PRIEST HE CONSTANTLY PRAYS FOR US. HIS PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS ANSWERED BECAUSE HE ALWAYS PRAYS ACCORDING TO THE FATHER'S WILL.**

**Hebrews 9:11-12, "*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*"**

**HE OBTAINED ETERNAL AND SECURED REDEMPTION FOR US. WE NEED NOT FEAR THAT OUR SALVATION COULD EVER BE LOST.**

and girt about the paps [CHEST] with a golden girdle. – This second phrase reinforces the interpretation that the robe refers to the high priestly responsibilities of Christ. In Exo. 28:4 and Lev. 16:4, the high priest of the OT wears a girdle.

**THE DIGNITY OF HIS PRIESTLY MINISTRY AND HIS IDENTIFICATION WITH US IS SEEN IN THE USE OF THE GOLDEN COLOURED GIRDLE.**

**THE ROLE OF THE HIGH PRIEST IS SIGNIFICANT. TRACE THE TRANSITION FROM FIRST BORN SON TO LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD IN NUMBERS 3:3:12-13, 40-46.**

**His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; --**

**Daniel 7:9, "*I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.*"**

Significance of white: Wisdom; purity; holiness; goodness.

and his eyes were as a flame of fire; --

Significance of fire: piercing eyes which are able to see into the very depths of our souls. Every motive is known by Jesus Christ.

Psalms 44:21, "***Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart***"

Romans 2:16, "***In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.***"

1 Thessalonians 2:3-7, "***For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.***"

1 Corinthians 4:1-5, "***Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.***"

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace;

Daniel 10:6, "***His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.***"

Significance of brass: melting point of brass is extremely high. It is Jesus Christ will walk through all the churches and He will test ALL with fire.

90-98% copper—melting point is 1005-1080 C

70-80% copper – melting point is 750-800 C

60% copper – melting point is 630 C

**1 Corinthians 3:11-15, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."**

and his voice as the sound of many waters. --

**Significance of the sound: loud and very authoritative**

**Psalms 93:4, "The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."**

**Ezekiel 43:2, "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory."**

**Revelation 14:1-3, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."**

**Revelation 19:6, "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."**

And he had in his right hand seven stars:

**Significance: Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. He is in control of His church. Nothing happens in His church without His permission, both good and bad**

**Ephesians 5:23, "*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*"**

**Colossians 1:17-18, "*And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*"**

**and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: --**

**Significance of sword: Romans 13:4, "*For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*"**

**Although this verse speaks of human authority but the meaning of the word sword is the same when used of Jesus Christ. The sword is for protection (defence) and also for slaying or attacking (offensive).**

**Hebrews 4:12, "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*"**

**and "his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." --**

**Daniel 10:6, "*His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.*"**

**Significance of bright countenance: alertness; glorious; righteous.**

**Judges 5:31, "So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years."**

**Matthew 13:43, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."**

#### **6881314. John's Commission by Christ – 1:17-20**

**Revelation 1:17-20, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."**

Partly voluntarily and involuntarily.

Note: Rev. 19:10; 22:8—Where good angels will not want worship. This was opposed to fallen angels which demands worship.

Matthew 4:8-10, "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

"Dead" -- a stillness like that of a dead person. There was no movement at all. Why? John was frightened to death to be given this incredible vision of his Lord Jesus Christ.

**And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:**

John was afraid. So our Lord told John not to be afraid. If you have something to hide BE AFRAID. The coming of the Lord will not be a time of great rejoicing for you. But on the other hand Jesus said to John and to all who live obedient holy lives before Him, there is no need to fear.

Psalms 103:13-14, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust"

“First and last” – same as in verse 11. Jesus exists for ever. He also uphold all things as he will be there at the end of all things.

**I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**

The earthly life, death and resurrection of Christ is summed up in these words. By His completed work of salvation Jesus says that the keys of hell and death are in His hands. He is the one in control.

Matthew 10:28, *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*

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

The past i.e. this very vision that we read of in Rev. 1

The present i.e. the seven churches which God wanted John to address.

The future i.e. the last things which shall shortly come to pass.

Jesus Christ is in control of all of them as the omnipresent, omniscience and omnipotent God.

**The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."**

The “mystery” – the symbolic representation of the seven stars and seven golden candlesticks are explained by Christ now.

Seven stars are the seven angels of the seven churches.

“Angels” – They are pastors and elders rather than actual angelic beings. In Rev 2:10 the “angel” is told to be faithful unto death but angel cannot die. – Jas. 2:25; Luke 7:24; 9:52.

*Acts 20:26-32, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."*

Throughout the history of God's dealing with mankind, He has always entrusted this responsibility of watching over God's people to God's appointed leaders. In the days of Moses, for example, He was in charge of the people of Israel. Subordinate leaders like elders were appointed to lead smaller groups. [See Exodus 18 and Deu. 1 on the qualification of these earthly leaders.] The period of Judges and David and the period of the kings were all men who looked after men.

In the New Testament, God gave us very high qualifications for elders and deacons. See 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1.

There is no record that God has ever entrusted the care of His church to any one other than to saints whom he has endowed with the necessary qualifications to feed and protect the flock.

This is also true in eternity. Revelation 4:1-4, "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

The supreme throne of the King of kings was surrounded by the 24 elders in heaven.

2 Timothy 2:11-12, "*It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:*" Cf. Rev 20:6.

