

Questions to Ponder

1. What is the overall purpose of the book of Revelation?

2. What significance can be found in how God describes Himself?
How does this description give you hope?

3. When John turns to see the one speaking, he sees a very vivid picture. What does the appearance of the Son of Man mean for you as a believer?

4. The words of the Son of Man in verse 17-18 are very powerful. As a believer in Christ's death and resurrection, what hope do you hold onto in your daily life?

5. What significance does the number 7 hold? Do you take one day and give it back to the Lord the way that the third commandment demands?

Revelation 1

v. 1 – The title of Revelation or of any other book of the Bible for that matter was not part of the original text. Scholars have come up with the names of the books based on the first sentence or the author of the book.

This revelation came from God the Father to God the Son. The Son then was to show it to His servants or slaves. God is desiring to show His children what is going to happen at the end of the world. The Lord Christ sent His angel to John and provided a sign for him.

v. 2 – This angel will be with John throughout the book. He will show John exactly what the Lord wants him to show. This angel witnessed all of the things that John was about to see and hear. This helps to illustrate that the angels and the heavenly bodies are outside of time. Time does not apply to these Heavenly Beings. If time applied to them, there is no possible way they could be witnesses to something that had not yet occurred in earthly time.

v. 3 – The angel offers to John a blessing before the book is even written. *All will be blessed who read and take to heart the message contained in this book.* The interesting part of this verse is the concept of reading aloud. This is used to show that the Christian is not simply to read the Bible at home only, but he is to live out his life proclaiming the love of Christ to all people everywhere. Each and every Christian, no matter where they go, is to do so with the words of Christ firmly planted within them.

v. 4-6 – John is writing this letter initially to the seven churches of Asia, which is modern day Turkey. John begins much like all church letters did at the time, with a salutation and blessing from God.

- *The one who is, who was, and who is coming.* – This is a reference to Yahweh, the creator, the great I am, God the Father. God here is telling all people that He alone

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is the One capable of Creating life, Sustaining life, and Saving life. John alone uses the “I am” story in his Gospel account. A significant note here is that this section of Revelation is very similar to the “I am” account, both center around God’s omnipresence. Fulfills Old Testament reference found in Exodus 3:14 and fills it out with the fullness of God as seen throughout the Bible.

- *And from the seven spirits who are before His throne*
You will be able to see the significance of the number seven in greater detail later, but for now seven is the holy number for God as Creator. Seven is the sum of three, which symbolizes God himself (Genesis 18:1-2; Isaiah 6:3) and the number four which is the number of creation (Ezekiel 37:9, 1 Chronicles 9:24). This is referring to the sevenfold presence of the spirit. Isaiah 11 shows the sevenfold spiritual gifts. Zechariah 3 provides a look at seven eyes – seven spirits which are connected to the branch that is to come, namely Christ. This section demonstrates that through His Spirit, God is with us completely and perfectly.
- *And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness* – Jesus is the faithful witness to the glory of God. Christ was the only human ever born to be allowed to see God the Father in all of His Glory.
- *The firstborn from the dead* – The word used here indicates that more will rise up from their graves after Him. Literally the word means “first born after whom many will follow.” Jesus is the one who has broken the chains of death, now all the believers will follow His lead. Colossians 1:13-20 speaks to this concept as well.
- *And the ruler of the kings of earth.* – This is where the church gets the phrase King of Kings. Jesus is the greatest King there ever will be. He is the only King

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with the power to create a New Earth. All kings of the earth are mortal and will one day die. Christ however, by breaking death’s hold shows that nothing can hold Him. He is immortal.

Verse six brings John’s praise to the Lord. John gives the readers a blessing from God and then returns the worship to God with praise and glory that are due His name. One can see Christ in this verse with the reference to “saved by his blood.” Only Christ has shed His blood to save anyone.

v. 7 – First and foremost, Christ is returning. There will be no denying that fact. No one will be able to escape His awesome presence. All will see Christ when He returns. Even those who have done evil against Him (have pierced Him), they too will see His glorious face. John is the only Gospel writer who has the account of Christ being pierced on the cross. This connects very powerfully with the words here in verse seven regarding those who pierced Him.

There are a couple of ways to take the words “all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him.” The first is that the wailing will be by those who have done wrong against the Lord and have not repented of these acts. The second possibility is that the word actually be read “mourn” instead of “wail.” This would indicate that the whole earth will see that He has been pierced and has died for all, thus they shall mourn at their sin on the final day. The most probable way to reconcile this verse is to accept both definitions. Both renderings of the word here are correct, “wail or mourn.” This would signify that the unrepentant will wail for their pending doom, and the believers will mourn for their Savior who had to die.

v. 8 – God the Father speaks here in verse eight. He calls himself the “*alpha and the omega.*” These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This signifies that nothing has come before Him and nothing will come after Him. He repeats the phrase heard in verse four. Then the Father calls Himself the “*Almighty.*” God the Father

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still is and always will hold the prime position of Father and creator of all.

v. 9 – This tells where John was when all of this began to happen to him. He was on the island of Patmos doing the work of the Gospel. He was doing the Lord’s work and sharing in the suffering that is attached with performing these tasks. This is where John completed the book of Revelation.

v. 10 – John was “in the Spirit.” This does not refer to some mystical, magical fantasy of John’s. Being ‘in the Spirit’ was a reference to deep meditation (prayer) and worship. One can see that it was most likely during a time of worship given the reference to the “Lord’s Day.” The voice of God and of angels is very often described as trumpet-like. It will be impossible to mistake the voice of God for anything else. The voice demands that all listen.

v. 11 – God provides the exact instructions to John for writing the book of Revelation.

v. 12-16 – John is about to see the ultimate sight of his life. Curious, as any person would be, John turned to see who was speaking to him. As he turned, he saw many things. First he saw seven golden lamp stands. Not much detail is given about these lamp stands here. But his eyes are drawn past the lamp stands to the middle where he saw “*one like a son of man*” This clues a couple of things. The impression is given that John has seen something like this before. This is the case because of the events of the Transfiguration in the Gospels. In the transfiguration of Christ, John with the other disciples saw Jesus in a *new light*. They saw Him in a way that portrayed His glory. Now John sees that similar scene but with noted differences. The glory that John sees is more than he has seen before.

John provides a detailed description of the “SON OF MAN” seen here. He was wearing a **long flowing robe**. This exact word is used in the

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Greek version of the Old Testament to describe the robe that the high priest would wear. This helps to keep in mind the Office of High Priest that Jesus holds. See also Hebrews 4:14-16

John also refers to the “**golden sash/belt**.” The golden sash was a sign of the kingly office. Those holding the office of king would gird themselves with the golden sash. The fact that the sash was placed so high, “around the chest,” is very normal for this type of a robe. The long flowing robe would have a sash about chest high. For more on the sash see Daniel 5, 7 and 10.

The hairs of His head were “**white as snow**.” In the Old Testament as well as the early periods of history, having white hair was to be commended. It commanded respect. White or grey hair was a sign of wisdom and knowledge. Here, the SON OF MAN has hair as white as snow. He has earned the glory and honor that are due His holy name.

His eyes are like “**a flame of fire**.” In the Old Testament, fire was thought of as the purifying presence of God. The eyes of the SON OF MAN glowing as fire show that He is pure and perfect. One can see here that the fire of God destroys all evil that He sees. As the book progresses, Christ is given the power and authority to destroy all evil. The fact that the eyes of the SON OF MAN are as flames of fire help also to tie this passage with the book of Daniel. It is highly recommended that everyone look to this OT prophecy for more insight into the concepts found in Revelation.

The feet of the SON OF MAN are as “**burnished brass**” being refined in a fire. The concept of brass feet signifies conquering ones enemies. Here one can see that Christ has conquered all of His enemies and now they lie defeated under His feet. Daniel 2:33 and 10:6.

The voice that John hears is powerful. The volume of the voice is like that of the “**rushing waters**.” This description of mighty roaring waters is used elsewhere in scripture. Daniel 10 uses the same concept as does Ezekiel 1 and 43. All references to the sound of rushing waters are references to the Glory of the Almighty God. Here one can see that the SON OF MAN has received the power from the Almighty God, thus His voice shows the power and glory of God.

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Later the description of the **seven stars** shows that they represent the seven churches of Asia (1:20). The Lord Christ Himself will comfort and strengthen His church with His own hand. The right hand of God is a place of honor. All Christians will, on the Last Day, be found in the right hand of the Almighty.

The sharp double-edged sword shows that the Lord Christ will execute the Judgment of God. The basis for the Judgment will be the very Word of God. This is portrayed by the sword coming from the mouth of the SON OF MAN. Additionally, see Ephesians for the description of the Armor of God and the Sword of the Spirit being the very Word of God.

The fact that the SON OF MAN here is “like the sun shining in its full brightness” demonstrates the Christ is the One who radiates the full Glory of God. Christ is the light that shines in the darkness. He is the light that will pierce through the darkness, completely destroying it. See John 8:12.

v. 17 – John sees the exalted Christ in all of His Glory. This is a sight that no sinful being is able to stand. Immediately upon seeing Christ, John fell over dead. He was *dead as a corpse* according to the Greek. However Christ laid His hand on John and raised him to life. This is also a reference to Isaiah 6:5.

v. 18-20 – Jesus tells John to not be afraid. The reason that John is to have no fear in this instance is because Jesus is truly the Savior. Christ calls Himself the **“first and the last.”** These words show that He truly is God. None have gone before Him and none will be able to follow after Him. He is the one and the only Savior of the world.

And Christ continues by describing Himself as the **“living one.”** He no longer is dead as many people have claimed. He is risen from the grave, and now He is alive and ruling over all. Jesus, the SON OF MAN, holds the keys of Death and Hades. He will on the last day lock the doors of Hades and no longer will death possess its sting.

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Now John is commissioned for the work he is about to do. John is given strict instruction to write what he has seen and what he is about to see. Then Christ begins to unlock the symbolism, revealing His message.

The seven stars that Christ held in His right hand are the angels of the churches. The word for angel literally means messenger. Scholars remain at odds on who these angels are: literal angels or the pastors (messengers of the Gospel) of these churches.

The seven golden lamp stands that John was looking at earlier represent the seven churches which are to appear in chapters two and three. It is important to note that these seven churches were literal churches in Asia minor. Ephesus being the hub of the churches. Like the rest of the book of Revelation, however, there is a symbolic thrust of these churches in that every church can relate to these seven churches from time to time.