

**A PERSONAL
VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY**

**REVELATION
(revised again May 2014)**

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Rev. 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

Revelation = uncovering, revealing, disclosure
Of whom? Jesus Christ in all His glory

God gave this revelation to Jesus to shew His servants (believers) what was in store for the future.

These things will happen *shortly*--quickly, in a brief space of time.

This communication was sent to His servant (bondslave, slave by choice), John, and the signs used in it explained through a chosen angel/messenger. This is supported by chapter 22:6-9:

Rev. 22:6-9 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the **Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel** to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, **I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.** Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: **for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.**

The question comes to mind—Why is it emphasized that the Father gave this revelation to the Son to share with His servants? I find myself so absorbed by the fact of the unity of God that it is hard for me to understand the uniqueness of the three beings of this one God. Obviously, the Father is the dominant “being” of this triune God since Jesus continually asserted that He spoke/taught only what the Father gave Him or told Him to.

Matthew 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

John 5:20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth:

John 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but **as my Father hath taught me**, I speak these things.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

While on earth as a man, Jesus lived as an inspired prophet of God whose knowledge was limited according to the revelation of God through His Holy Spirit. He was still fully God, but chose to “humble Himself” and “make Himself of no reputation.”

***Philippians 2:5-7** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men....*

He lived in the flesh as a man; He lived in dependence upon the Spirit—just as we are supposed to do. He didn't cease being God; He just **chose** to live with the limitations of a man, albeit a sinless man indwelt by the Spirit—just as Adam was created and intended to live.

My friend Dixie had an interesting thought—"Why did God reveal this message to the servants of Jesus? He revealed this for the same reason that He told Abraham about the destruction of Sodom."

***Genesis 18:17-19** And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.*

He knew that Abraham would use the knowledge to teach his children and household the importance of obeying God. In the same way, we should be motivated to teach our families and friends the importance of obedience to God based on the proof of fulfillment of prophecy past and the sure fulfillment of prophecy future as recorded in scripture.

Rev. 1:2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

"testimony" = evidence given, witness, record, report

John is telling what God/Jesus Christ told him and showed him. As we saw in John 8:28 above, Jesus taught as His Father taught Him. John also tells us that Jesus is the Word of God in the flesh.

***John 1:14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Everything about the person of Jesus was evidence of the truth of God's Word. John had been privileged to spend time with Jesus personally during His ministry on earth. He saw and interacted with God in the person of Jesus. John was uniquely qualified to share this special Revelation with other "servants" of the Lord.

Rev. 1:3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Those who read, hear with understanding and guard/keep/preserve the truths that are being shared will be blessed/happy. Why? Because it won't be long before these prophecies will be fulfilled. Time is relative. In light of eternity, the time is near. Note should be made that this is a book of prophecy (*propheteia* – prediction, scriptural or

other) as of the time of its writing by John (around 90 AD). The wording of this verse makes it clear that the writer expects it to be understood by the recipients.

Sadly, there are many pastors today who ignore the promise in this verse and declare that the teaching of prophecy is a waste of time. Anyone who spends much time in the word of God will quickly learn that a great deal of scripture is devoted to prophecy. Many of the prophecies of scripture have already been fulfilled, and testify to the veracity of those yet awaiting fulfillment. Jesus revealed the purpose of prophecy when telling His disciples that He was going away but would come again.

***John 14:29** And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.*

There are seven uses of the word “blessed” in Revelation, and they all are connected to promises to the believer.

***Rev. 1:3 Blessed** is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

***Rev. 14:13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, **Blessed** are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

***Rev. 16:15** Behold, I come as a thief. **Blessed** is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

***Rev. 19:9** And he saith unto me, Write, **Blessed** are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

***Rev. 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.*

***Rev. 22:7** Behold, I come quickly: **blessed** is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

***Rev. 22:14 Blessed** are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*

Rev. 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

John is sharing this revelation with the seven churches in Asia as identified in the verses that follow. There were more than seven churches in Asia (current day Turkey) at the time, but these seven represent the conditions of churches not only at that time, but of all times.

Seven is the number of completion in scripture; thus, the choice of seven churches. These letters are vital to the health of the whole church. Sevens will permeate the Revelation—seven spirits, seven stars, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven angels, etc. All these sevens are indicators that God is revealing the completion of His plan of redemption accomplished by Christ Jesus as determined before creation.

1 Peter 1:18–20 *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you....”*

The seven churches were chosen by Jesus--not John (cf **Rev 1:11**). Like Paul, he wishes them grace and peace (can't have peace without first experiencing His grace). The One who gives this grace and peace is “he which is, and was and is to come”—a statement of His eternal nature.

The prophet Isaiah gives some insight on “the seven Spirits which are before His throne.”

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.)*

This seems to indicate the completeness and fullness of God through His attributes as ministered through His Spirit.

I think the following excerpt from my study of Isaiah would be helpful in light of the above verse.

- “of the Lord” – This says to me that His Spirit is in fellowship, at oneness, with God; He is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, God’s Spirit. This spirit would “rest” on Him. The word for *rest* includes the idea of settled, dwelling, quiet, and giving comfort. I personally believe that this is the same spiritual provision that was given man at creation. Just as God is a being with the ability of choice, so He created us with the ability to choose. Through Satan’s deceit “we,” through Adam and Eve, decided to believe a lie--that God was holding out on us. From that point on, fellowship was broken, and we no longer possessed the “spirit of the Lord.” We died spiritually. After Jesus returned to heaven victoriously resurrected, the gift of that Spirit was and is given to those who choose to trust in Jesus by faith for their salvation. We are spiritually reborn.
- “Wisdom” – This word includes *wisdom* in “mind, word, and action.” In other words, not just possessing the quality, but putting it to use.
- “understanding” – This word includes the attributes of “knowledge, discernment, skillfulness, and the ability to teach or impart what you possess.” Again, this involves more than just *head/heart knowledge*; it involves putting that knowledge into practice.

- “counsel” – The Hebrew for this word included “advice, plan and purpose.” Webster added: “One who exercises deliberate judgment,” “deliberate purpose, design, intent, scheme, plan.” God/Jesus always acts in accordance with His divine master plan/purpose.
- “might” – force, victory, mastery, power, strength. I thought it was interesting that the Hebrew included the thought of force that would result in victory. In other words, His is a “might” that cannot be overcome; He embodies the greatest power. In light of the spirit of counsel, He is able to implement/accomplish His plan/purpose.
- “knowledge” – to know, cunning (skill), clear perception of fact and truth.
- “of the fear of the Lord” – The word for “fear” indicates that fear and reverence go hand in hand. In fact, Webster’s definition for *reverence* states, “Profound respect and esteem mingled with fear and affection, as for a holy being or place.”

I ran across a statement from Henry Morris that made a lot of sense: “Grace and peace are not mediated through angels, but through the Holy Spirit.” This verse in Revelation is the only one that attributes grace and peace to be from the Spirit specifically. All the other uses in scripture, mainly by Paul, indicate that it is from God the Father and Jesus Christ; but it is the Holy Spirit that is the source through which that grace and peace are imparted to believers.

“Grace represents standing; peace represents experience.” (John Walvoord)

Rev. 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,*

Rev. 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

This is a continuation of the thought in verse 4. Distinction continues to be made regarding the triune God. This grace and peace is also from Jesus Christ, the Son, who is:

- 1) the faithful witness--reliable, trustworthy one who furnishes evidence/proof.
- 2) the firstbegotten of the dead—The first man to be resurrected from the dead to a glorified state, the body of flesh that will clothe us for eternity. (cf notes in journal for Colossians 1:18)
- 3) the prince (first in rank or power) of the kings of the earth.

Psalm 89:27 Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

It is also interesting to note that the word for “witness” is “*martus*,” the root word for martyr—one who is willing to die for his beliefs, which Jesus did.

Then John expresses his praise to Jesus—

- 1) the one who loved us, (per Tony Garland, www.spiritandtruth.org, “loved” = present participle, “He is loving”—present tense—us.)
- 2) washed us from our sins in 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.*

Hebrews 9:26 *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

- 3) made us (believers, members of the body of Christ, the church) kings and priests unto God, His Father (cf **Rev 5:10**). The fact that we are kings means that we can live with access to THE source of power in the universe. As priests we can approach the throne of God in prayer on behalf of self and others.

1Peter 2:5 & 9 *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood....*

John is recognizing that Jesus will be honored and worshipped in the seat of power and strength for “time without end.” Amen = truly, verily, so be it.

My mom made a great point regarding our being washed from our sins—we were washed white, not whitewashed.

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; “regeneration” = rebirth, restoration*

Thought from Dixie: “He washed us’ makes me think of His washing someone who is incapable of doing it for himself, like a baby or a seriously ill person.”

I found another quote from Tony Garland at www.spirtandtruth.org that spoke to me: “Both now and in the future, our function is primarily priestly. That is, we are to minister to God. Here we run into an extremely important distinction which has not been adequately appreciated among many who lead God’s people. Our primary responsibility is to minister to God and not to men. Our focus is to be Godward rather than man-ward. We are to ‘offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ’ (1Peter 2:5). As we take care to minister to God, He will minister to men through us.”

Rev. 1:7 **Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.**

The fact of Jesus coming in/with clouds is also corroborated in the following verses:

Matthew 24:30 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Mark 13:26 *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*

Luke 21:27 *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

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.*

The “he” is still referencing Jesus. He will come (future to the time John was writing) with/among the clouds. This coming will be visible by “every eye,” and he is speaking from a reference position of earth.

Many throughout history have argued whether Jesus actually resurrected from the grave. His return will put an end to such arguments; His return will be seen by everyone on planet earth.

“they also which pierced Him” – I think this is referring to the Jewish people since they are the ones who demanded that He be crucified by the Roman authorities and the sentence structure implies that this group is distinct from “all kindreds of the earth.” The prophet Zechariah seems to affirm this conclusion.

Zechariah 12:10 *And I will pour upon **the house of David**, and upon the **inhabitants of Jerusalem**, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and **they** shall look upon me whom **they** have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*

However, the Jews are not the only ones accountable for His death. Jesus died as a sacrifice for the sin of all mankind. It was me and you just as surely as the Jews who are responsible.

“kindreds of the earth” – refers to all the other races or clans of people living

“wail” – means to strike or chop; to mourn. This seems to indicate that the people on earth will “beat their breasts in grief” according to Strong’s. Why? Because they will realize that they have rejected the truth and will therefore suffer the consequences established in ages past through His Word.

Even though this will be a time of great grief, John is longing for His coming. Why? For the believer it will be a time of great victory and celebration.

Another good note from Mr. Garland: “He *is coming* (present tense) and every eye *will see Him* (future tense). The grammar places the event on the edge between the present and the future—the *futuristic present*. It is ‘about to occur.’ It is imminent.”

Rev. 1:8 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

The Lord identifies Himself as the Alpha and Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet), the beginning and the ending. In other words He was before all things (from a human perspective on earth) and will be the culmination of all things (as to the human perspective on earth). Paul supports this truth in his letter to the Colossians.

Colossians 1:16-17 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Jesus reinforces this truth by stating that He is (exists in the present tense of whoever is reading this Word), which was (in reference to the reader/hearer of this word), and which is to come (If you are reading or hearing this prophecy, He hasn't come yet.) In verse 4 this phrase references the Father. This is another statement of the unity of Father and Son.

Who is He? The Almighty—the universal and absolute sovereign; omnipotent.

Rev. 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.

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

Rev. 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.

John identifies himself as a brother and companion in tribulation, a part of the kingdom (those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord) patiently waiting for the return of Jesus Christ in glory. Many of those who publicly claimed to be followers of Jesus Christ in that day suffered persecution. John didn't separate himself as unique from the rest of the body. He was being held on the Isle of Patmos at that time because of His outspoken testimony of Jesus Christ.

Dixie had a good thought concerning the tribulation of the believer: "The spiritual and eternal benefits that come out of those difficulties far outweigh the time given to them."

2Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

"patience of Jesus Christ" – I liked Dixie's thoughts on this phrase: "Trust always involves having patience. Jesus has had patience for nearly 2,000 years. If anyone is a perfect example of patience, it is He, lovingly trusting His Father's Word and waiting until the time the Father indicated."

Hebrews 10:12-13 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

"I was in the Spirit" – I think John is talking about a special time of communion and prayer with the Father. Paul tells us in Ephesians what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18-21 *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

“on the Lord’s day” – Technically, this is the day that belonged to the Lord. Throughout most of the Bible we would determine that to be the Sabbath, a day set apart by the command of God to rest and commit wholly to Him. It seems that the believers decided to meet together on the first day of the week after the resurrection of Jesus. I would guess they did this in celebration of the resurrection and as a testimony to the fact that Jesus had fulfilled the law.

Acts 20:7 *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*

Frankly, every day of our life should be lived as unto the Lord, so I don’t think it really matters which day it was.

John heard a great/strong voice that sounded like a trumpet calling from behind him. This would seem to reference the voice of the Lord. The Greek for the word *trumpet* references “a reverberation” as well as a trumpet. In that regard, it makes me think of thunder, and there are other scriptures that equate the voice of God with thunder.

Job 40:9 *Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?*

Psalms 29:3 *The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth:*

The voice identified itself as “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” which has already been identified as Jesus (cf **Rev 1:8**). This description is also used of God the Father as shown in the following verses.

Isaiah 41:4 *Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.*

Isaiah 44:6 *Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*

Isaiah 48:12 *Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.*

Jesus instructs John to write down the things he will see in a book (roll, scroll, paper) and send it to the following churches in Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

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

Rev. 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.

Rev. 1:14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

Rev. 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.

Rev. 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

It was a natural reaction for John to turn and see the owner of the voice that was talking to him. When he turned around, he saw seven golden candlesticks. In the middle of the candlesticks was a being that looked like the “Son of man.” I think this indicates that John recognized his friend and Savior, Jesus. The term “Son of Man” is used many times in the gospels in reference to Jesus. It also occurred to me that this is probably a reference to the way Jesus appeared in His glorified state as witnessed by John during His earthly ministry.

Matthew 17:1–3 *And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.*

In Daniel 7:13 the phrase “like the Son of man” is used again in reference to Jesus. The context is a scene in which the Father gives all authority to His Son.

Daniel 7:13-14 *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. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

Jesus was clothed in a garment that covered Him all the way to His feet and had a gold belt around His breast. His head and hair appeared as the whitest white and His eyes appeared to look like a flame of fire. His feet looked like polished brass; they glowed as if they had been heated to brightness in a furnace. His voice sounded like great rushing waters. In His right hand He is holding seven stars, and a sharp, twoedged (cuts both ways) sword is coming out of His mouth. His whole being was shining and bright like the brilliance, strength and power of the sun.

His clothing is appropriate to His ministry as our High Priest. JFB notes: “The ordinary girding for one actively engaged was at the loins [waist], but Josephus expressly tells us that the Levitical priests were girt higher up, about the breasts or paps....”

Hebrews 4:14 *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.*

God is always associated with great light. Everything surrounding Jesus is reflective of purity, righteousness, and holiness—gold, proper clothing, white. The blazing eyes

bring to mind the omniscience of God and the fact that nothing can be hid from Him. They also make you think of His coming judgment, as do the brass feet. His voice is always manifested with great power and authority, and His words are full of meaning and power. They cut through to the truth.

***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.*

In His letter to the church at Thyatira, the greeting (2:18) is from “the Son of God” with eyes like a flame of fire and feet like fine brass, and that makes this a statement identifying the “Son of Man” as the “Son of God.”

These verses appear to connect with some verses in Daniel.

***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.*

This verse is a description of God the Father. Because we know that Father and Son are One, it is not surprising to hear them described in like fashion.

***Daniel 10:5-6** Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were **girded with fine gold** of Uphaz: 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**.*

I don't think you can dogmatically identify this man in Daniel 10 as Jesus, but the similarities are certainly thought-provoking.

Rev. 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

Rev. 1:18 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.

When John saw the Lord, he fainted. Jesus laid His right hand (the hand of power and authority) on John and told him not to be afraid. Again He identified Himself as the first and last. Then He goes on to add that He is the One who lives even though He had died; in fact, He will live forever (time without end). Jesus had been crucified and buried and yet had conquered the grave and established victory over death through His resurrection. Amen—this is the truth. He now holds the keys (He is in control) of hell and death. I believe the *death* referred to here is the second death; that which determines one's final dwelling place for eternity.

“hell” = hades – the place that holds the spirits of those who have died. We know that believers are “absent from the body and present with the Lord.”

2Corinthians 5:8

“he that liveth” – I liked this quote from Joseph Seiss, an old Lutheran theologian, regarding this phrase: “All mere creatures are dying ones, except as their being is sustained by Him who gave it; but God is the Living One, as life in Him is self-existent.”

Rev. 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

John is told to write about the things he has seen (to this point in the revelation), the things which are (the present condition of things—the letters to the churches), and the things which are going to happen in the future. He is writing to the churches, so I believe he is talking about things from the perspective of the church, the body of believers. This is interesting because the prophecy of the Old Testament was directed to the Jews or specific nations or people. This prophecy is for the church.

Rev. 1:20 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.

A mystery usually refers to finding out the truth of something yet unknown or not understood. God is careful to make sure that John understands what is being shown to him. The seven stars in the hand of the Lord represented the seven angels (messengers or pastors) of the seven churches. I don't think they can be real “angels” since they are expected to communicate to those in the church. It would also seem to indicate that they held positions of leadership in the churches. They were probably men that John knew.

I couldn't help but be reminded of some of my favorite verses in John in reference to the pastors being held in Jesus' hand.

John 10:27-30 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, **neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.** My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.*

The seven candlesticks represented the seven churches, and I believe they also represent the whole church from its beginning to its end. This representation should not really come as a surprise since the believer was commanded to be the light of the world and Jesus identified Himself as the light of the world. We, the church, are to reflect the Son through our lives and service.

Matthew 5:14 & 16 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

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.*

John 12:46 *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.*