

THE REVELATION

OF SAINT JOHN THE DIVINE

The Vision of Christ — The Seven Churches — The Things Which Must Be After The Churches Into Eternity

a Gr. apokalupsis, to unveil or uncover. It implies the lifting up of a curtain so all can see alike what is uncovered. When used of writing it means to reveal or make clear (Eph. 3:3; Gal. 1:12); when used of a person it denotes visible presence (v 1; 2 Th. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:7, 13). Here it refers to both the book and the person of Christ. See **Revelation**, p. 332 and 363.

b Not a revelation altogether concerning Christ, but one from Him. Christ is not the main subject of the book. See note f, below.

c God gave it to Christ, emphasizing His limitations during His incarnation (Isa. 50:4; Mt. 28:18; Mk. 13:32; Lk. 1:40, 52).

d The purpose was to show, not hide from His servants, events from John's day into all eternity (Rev. 21-22).

e 111 times in the N.T.; 14 in Rev.

f 45 times, emphasizing the subject matter of the book, which is things or events:

- 1 Events of the whole church age (Rev. 1-3)
- 2 Events in heaven (Rev. 4-5)
- 3 Events of the future tribulation of Daniel's 70th week (Rev. 6-19)
- 4 Events of the Millennium (Rev. 20)
- 5 Events of the eternal new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21-22)

g Gr. tachos, swiftness; speed; quickly. Trans. shortly (v 1; 22:6; Acts 25:4; Rom. 16:20); quickly (Acts 12:7; 22:18; Rev. 2:5); and speedily (Lk. 18:8). The idea is that this series of events must begin quickly.

h Gr. semaino, to show or point out; announce; to make a note of. That it does not mean that all things are in symbols is clear from its use elsewhere (v 1; Jn. 12:33; 18:32; 21:19; Acts 11:28; 25:27). It simply means to make a clear record.

i The book was transmitted from God to Christ, to the angel, to John, to the churches, to us (v 1, 11).

j **3 Classes Blessed** (v 3):

- 1 Those who read the Revelation
- 2 Those who hear it
- 3 Those who keep things written therein

k 7 times in Rev. indicating the prophetic aspect of the book (v 3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19).

7 Rules Regarding Prophecy:

- 1 Understand prophecy as history written beforehand
- 2 Give the same meaning to words of prophecy as you do the words of history
- 3 Do not seek for hidden meanings
- 4 Do not think prophecy must be fulfilled before it can be understood
- 5 Do not interpret God's own interpretation of any thing in prophecy
- 6 Take all prophecy literally unless it is

239

CHAPTER 1

Introductory remarks (1:1-11).

1. Title, origin, subject, object, transmission and author

■ 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:

2. Threefold authenticity (22:16)

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

3 The beatitude (CP. 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14) and nature of prophecy (Cp. 22:7, 10, 18, 19)

▲ 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.

4. Sevenfold salutation to the churches and threefold exaltation of Jesus Christ

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;

clear that it cannot have a literal meaning. Then get the literal truth conveyed by the figurative language

7 Let the Bible be its own interpreter

l 7 times in Rev. (v 3; 2:26; 3:8, 10; 12:17; 14:12; 22:9).

m They were located in Asia Minor (v 11).

n From the Divine Trinity (v 4-5). See **89 Proofs of a Divine Trinity**, p. 489.

o See note on Rev. 5:6.

p See **10 Facts About Jesus Christ**, p. 543.

q **1st N.T. prophecy in Rev.** (1:6-7, unfulfilled). Next, 2:5.

r All eyes in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem where He lands (Zech. 14:1-5). People in distant parts of the earth will not see Him until later (Isa. 2:2-4; 66:19-21; Zech. 8:23).

s The descendants of those who pierced Him—the Jews (Zech. 12:10).

t The armies of the nations that will be surrounding Jerusalem when Christ comes (Zech. 14:1-5; Mt. 24:29-31).

u The first and last letters of the Gr. alphabet. Used 4 times in Rev. (1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13. Cp. 1:17; 2:8. Used of Christ in all these places except in 21:6). He is also called the Almighty (v 8), which is else-

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,

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

5. Chief theme of Revelation (11:15-18; 19:11-21; 22:20)

▲ 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.

6. Eternity of Jesus Christ (1:8, 11, 17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13; Mic. 5:1-2; Jn. 1:1-2)

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.**

7. The prophet—John (1:1, 4)

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.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day,

where used of the Father (4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:15; 21:22).

v Partaker, as in note o, Phil. 1:7.

w Used 5 times in Rev.: 4 times of persecution of Christians in John's day (1:9; 2:9, 10, 22), and one time of the future great tribulation (7:14). See note h, 2 Cor. 1:4.

a The kingdom of or from the heavens that Christ will establish on earth at the second advent (1:6, 9; 5:10; 11:15; 12:10; 20:4-6; 22:5). See notes j and e, Mt. 4:17; 19:24.

b 7 times in Rev. of the endurance of Christians in sufferings (1:9; 2:2-3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12).

c A volcanic, treeless, rocky island about 6x10 miles, 30 miles S. W. of Samos. It was made a place of exile by the Romans for the lowest of criminals.

d **2 Reasons for Banishment** (v 2, 9):

- 1 For preaching the Word of God
- 2 For testifying of Jesus Christ

e A term used of being wholly in union with the Holy Spirit and yielded to Him (note n, Lk. 22:3).

f See **The Lord's Day**, p. 333, 531.

and heard behind me a great voice, ^gas of a trumpet,

8. John's commission to write the Revelation

11 Saying, **I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, ^hWhat 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.**

1. "The Things which thou HAST SEEN" (1:12-20)

1. The vision of Christ:

(1) Eight characteristics of Christ

12 And **I turned to see** the voice that spake with me. ⁱAnd being turned, **I saw** ^jseven golden candlesticks;

13 And **in the midst of** the seven candlesticks ^klike unto the Son of man, ^lclothed with a garment down to the foot, and **girt about** the paps with a golden girdle.

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

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

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.

(2) Effect of the vision upon John (Cp. Isa. 6; Ez. 1:28; 2:3; Dan. 8:27; 10:5-18; Acts 9:3-8)

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

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

(3) Key to the interpretation (1:11 and 19 with 4:1)

19 **^qWrite the things which thou hast seen, and the things ^rwhich are, and the things which shall be ^shereafter;**

(4) The symbols interpreted

20 **The ^tmystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden ^ucandlesticks. The seven stars are the ^vangels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the ^wseven churches.**

the things of Rev. 4:1 on must be after the things of the churches, then they will not be fulfilled along with the things of the churches. This means that every event of Rev. 4-22 must be fulfilled after the rapture of the church. It also means that no historical or present event could possibly be a fulfillment of any event of Rev. 4-22

s After the things which are, or after the churches of Rev. 2-3.

t Gr. musterion (see **Mystery**, p. 305). Used 4 times in Rev. (1:20; 10:7; 17:5, 7).

a Gr. luchnia, lampstand or portable lamps. Used 7 times in Rev. 1:12, 13, 20; 2:1, 5; 11:4. Used elsewhere in Mt. 5:15; Mk. 4:21; Lk. 8:16; 11:33; Heb. 9:2. Cp. luchnos, note r, Mt. 5:15; Rev. 18:23; 21:23; 22:5.

b Gr. aggelos (angelos), messenger. Here it refers to the pastors of the 7 churches. It is used of men in Rev. 1:1, 20; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 15:1, 6, 8; 16:1-17; 17:1; 21:9, 17; 22:8-10; Jude 13.

c The messages to the churches are given immediately after the vision of Christ of Rev. 1. Chapters 2-3 make the 2nd division of Rev. and contain only the things which are, that is, the things concerning the church on earth until its rapture (1 Cor. 15:23, 51-58; 1 Th. 4:13-17; 2 Th. 2:7, notes).

The 3fold Application of the Letters:

1 A local application to the churches in John's day. The letters portray actual conditions in 7 local churches in Asia Minor, the western coast of modern Turkey. This is clear from the messages themselves, as well as from 1:4, 11, 20

2 A prophetic application to the churches throughout this dispensation to the rapture, revealing spiritual conditions in local churches and in individuals in churches. See **7 Proofs of Prophetic Application**, p. 531

3 An individual application, so that the individual in any church in any generation may be warned and profit by the failures of the 7 churches (1:3; 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21)

The dispensational application, that is, that these 7 letters portray 7 distinct church ages and 7 phases of church history throughout the age of grace is not clearly taught in the book. Much confusion and many false teachings are the result of this theory. If we would take all the 7 letters to apply to all Christians and churches throughout this dispensation, as we do all the other N.T. books, then we would have the true prophetic and dispensational aspect of the letters. Otherwise we would have just as much right to make 21 additional church periods out of the N.T. epistles or letters, as some do these 7 letters. See **10 Points of Similarity in the Letters**, p. 543.

† † †

g God prepared Moses to receive the law by the blowing of a trumpet (Ex. 19:16-19).

h Here John was told to write in a book what he was about to see and send it to the 7 churches of Asia Minor (v 10-11).

i In v 12-18 we have the vision of the glorified Christ, which constitutes the first division of Revelation in v 19.

j These symbolize the 7 churches (v 20).

k See Dan. 7:13-14; 10:5-10; Rev. 10.

l **8fold Description of Christ:**

1 **His body** was clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded with golden girdle (v 13. Cp. Dan. 10:6)

2 **His hair** was white like wool and snow (v 14; Dan. 7:9)

3 **His eyes** were as a flame of fire (v 14; 19:12; Dan. 10:6. Cp. Heb. 4:12)

4 **His feet** were like fine brass (v 14; 10:1; Dan. 10:6)

5 **His voice** like many waters (v 14; 8:5; 10:2-4; 11:15; 14:2; 16:17-18; 19:6; Ps. 29; Heb. 12:26; Dan. 10:6)

6 **His right hand** held 7 stars, which were the pastors of the 7 churches (v 20)

7 **His mouth** had a two-edged sword coming out of it (v 16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21. Cp. Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12)

8 **His countenance** shone like the sun (v 16; 10:1; Dan. 10:6)

m Note the effect of the vision upon John (v 17-18).

n Found 80 times in Scripture, generally of God quieting the fear of man because of

His presence.

o This identifies the person to be Christ (Acts 2:25-36; 1 Cor. 15:1-23; Col. 2:14-17; Eph. 2:14-15; Jn. 21:14, note).

p Keys signify power and authority (v 18; 3:7; Mt. 16:19; 18:18; Isa. 22:22).

q John is now commanded to write (v 19). In v 11 he was told to write what he was about to see. Now he is told to write what he has already seen—the vision of v16-18

r **3fold Key to the Book of Revelation:**

1 Write the things which thou hast seen, that is, the vision of Christ in the midst of the candlesticks (Rev. 1)

2 Write the things which are, that is, the things concerning the churches, which John wrote about in Rev. 2-3

3 Write the things which shall be hereafter, that is, the events which MUST BE after the churches (Rev. 4:1-22:5). This confirms the 3fold division of Revelation: after John had written the things which thou hast seen in Rev. 1, and after he had written the things which are, the things concerning the churches in Rev. 2-3, he was told to Come up hither into heaven, and I will show thee things WHICH MUST BE HEREAFTER, that is, after the churches (Rev. 4-22). Rev. 4:1 says, AFTER THESE THINGS (after writing the vision of Rev. 1 and the things of the churches in Rev. 2-3) . . . Come up hither, and I will show thee THINGS WHICH MUST BE AFTER THESE THINGS. If