**The Vision of the Son of Man**

**Revelation 1:9-20**

**Introduction:**

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With all that we’ve done in preparing to study Revelation, I knew in the back of my mind that this would be unlike any of our previous chapter studies. However, knowledge and experience are two very different things. When I started working on my section of **chapter 1**, I struggled with the question: **Where do I even begin?** Once I finally felt like I was off to a very rough start, I kept asking myself: **Where do I go from here?** I found an answer to these questions in John’s opening words, though he certainly wasn’t saying this to answer me: “Blessed is he who reads”. That’s what I did anytime I got stuck. It wasn’t for a lack or resources or information that made this study so difficult, rather it was figuring out how best to select and put into words what I’d learned. Before we tackle the last half of **chapter 1**, I want to share with you some helpful advice I came across in my reading. The first excerpt I chose gives an extremely beneficial piece of advice when studying any book of the Bible, especially **Revelation**. In one of the books Eric Reiser recommended in his lesson a few weeks ago, **Mark Roberts** says:

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“There has been much talk in this book about reading Revelation like its first readers did… Revelation is only twenty-two chapters long. It is not too long for a group to read it aloud all in one or two sessions. Those who try this approach consistently find the book suddenly becomes very different and is much more manageable. When we are liberated from the burden of stopping to make something out of every detail in every passage, we can read it fairly quickly. Then the book comes together in a new and wonderful way, as its themes stand out clearly.

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What it was meant to do it can do, while so many of the interpretive games people play with Revelation get left behind. Instead of fearing we missed something in such a quick reading, we find we gained everything… Doing so means we are reading it like the Christians in the first century read it, and we are using it the way apocalyptic literature was meant to be used. And that means we will be getting from it what they did. Surely that must be the goal of our efforts in reading and studying Revelation.”

I’ve been trying to do this in my own studies for some time now and it really adds depth and meaning to what you learn. It helps you remember the themes, context, details, order, structure, and overall message of the book. You are better able to make connections and interpret the book, especially when you come across difficult passages. Amber and I have been using the advice he gives, attempting to read the book through on a weekly basis, and plan to do so throughout our study of Revelation. I’d encourage all of you to try this as well, as often as you can, and see for yourself if it helps in better understanding the book. I can read through Revelation in just under an hour at a moderate-quick pace so I’m sure that even if you’re somewhat of a slow reader you can make it through in under two hours which you don’t have to do in one sitting. You could also find free audiobook versions of the Bible online where you can listen and read along covering the book in about an hour and a half.

Second, I want to share three other, shorter quotes containing helpful advice which I am using to keep myself focused in this study. These say:

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“Some interpreters want to find meaning in every detail of the vision, but this seems to be going much too far, making the visionary scene into some sort of tightly knit allegory…”

“G. B. Caird (a commentator on the book of Revelation) rightly warns us that ‘to compile such a catalogue is to unweave the rainbow. John uses his allusions not as a code in which each symbol requires separate and exact translation, but rather for their evocative and emotive power.”

“If only we can learn to put ourselves in the place of those Asiatic Christians, we may expect to find that John has said exactly what he means and that he is his best interpreter.”

In our study, we will dig into some of the symbols of Revelation and I will do my best not to get lost in the details and wild speculation which you will find in many books discussing Revelation. We will look at the last half of **chapter 1** in three sections. We will notice a few details along the way which seem to be given meaning by the book itself, but overall, we will do our best to stay focused on the main ideas being presented in the symbols and vision of this chapter. We will spend the bulk of our time looking at each of the elements of John’s vision of the Son of Man so that we can appreciate, as G. B. Caird says, the “evocative and emotive power” of each symbol.

**Section 1 - Some Geography and Some Symbolism:**

The first section we will cover is **Revelation 1:9-11**:

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**Revelation 1:9-11 -** I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

There are two geographic details I want to point out. First, it is worth knowing a little more about where John was.

 **The Isle of Patmos:**

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The setting of the book of Revelation begins on a Sunday in a dull and depressing place. Rather than assembling for worship on this Lord’s day, the Apostle John was on one of the (*Sporeuhdees*) Sporades Islands called (*Patmoss*) Patmos, which is about thirty-seven miles west-southwest of (*Mileetus*) Miletus in the (*Aicareeun*) Icarian Sea. The ancient Isle of Patmos was far different than its modern Mediterranean destination. Today you can visit all sorts of tourist attractions based around the “Apocalypse of Saint John”, walk along the beautiful breezy beaches, or enjoy its eye-catching scenes and architecture. Best of all, you can leave whenever you choose. In John’s day, Patmos consisted mainly of volcanic hills and rocky ground. The mountainous surroundings and depressing mines of the island were calculated to depress its residents, rather than to relax or encourage. It wasn’t a peaceful vacation destination as it is today, it was an island used for punitive measures by Rome. Small islands such as Patmos would be commonly used for political banishments, such as was likely the case with John. As you continue to read and study the book, keep this in your mind. I would imagine that the spectacular, heavenly visions John saw were only amplified in contrast to his dull, depressing surroundings.

 **The Seven Churches:**

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The second point of geographic interest I want to notice concerns these seven churches of Asia, which would be in our modern state of Turkey. In our passage the phrase, “The Seven Churches of Asia” can be a little misleading. In fact, there were at least ten churches located in the Asiatic region at this time, possibly more. In addition to these seven churches, the New Testament mentions three others in the region: Troas in **Acts 20:5-12**, Colossi in **Colossians 1:2**, and Hierapolis in **Colossians 4:13**. There are many theories and speculations as to why these seven churches were selected. There are even many questions as to why only churches in Asia were chosen and none in some other region of the ancient world. There’s really no point speculating on things that are not revealed to us in the book and simply put: God does not tell us all the reasons why He chose these seven specific churches to the exclusion of others. However, there are a few things we can learn from the information He gives us.

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There are two details about these churches given in **chapter 1** which teach us about the intended audience of Revelation. First and most obvious we note that there are **seven** churches selected. The number seven as used symbolically in Revelation means: Completeness, perfection, or totality. The second detail we want to notice is the order in which these churches are named. When comparing the list to a map of Asia, or Turkey, you’ll notice that they are listed in the order you would visit them along the natural ancient travel routes starting from Patmos or Ephesus. The selection of these **seven** churches in this order indicates that this message was for the church in general, the church in its totality, a conclusion which agrees with some of the opening words of the book:

**Revelation 1:3 -** Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

**Section 2 - John’s Description of Jesus:**

Our next section covers **Revelation 1:12-16** where John gives a wonderful and powerful description of Jesus. John now begins to richly utilize the language and symbolism of the Old Testament to drive home the Lordship, Deity, Power, and Authority of Jesus Christ, the Victor, Conqueror, and Priestly King. Continuing from **verse 12** we read:

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**Revelation 1:12-16 -** Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

In John’s description of Jesus, he borrows language from the Old Testament prophets. In particular, he borrows from descriptions of the Ancient of Days **Daniel 7:9**, the Son of Man **Daniel 7:13-14**, and Daniel’s terrifying vision of a man in **Daniel 10:5-6**. Much of John’s description parallels this third reference, with some added elements from the other passages.

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**Daniel 10:5-6 -** I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of (You-faz) Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

**Daniel 7:9 -** I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire

There is some controversy surrounding the two verses in **Daniel 10** concerning who the “terrifying man” was. Some believe he was the pre-incarnate Jesus. This view presents some problems as this heavenly being needed Michael’s assistance in overcoming the prince of Persia, an issue that surely the Word of God would not have. Others advocate that this was the angel Gabriel who would fit the context well since Daniel said he appeared to him in a vision and he has been actively engaged with Daniel in the book already. Still others say it could be another unnamed angel. Whatever the case may be, the language used to describe this terrifying man is very similar to John’s description of the glorified Christ. The reason for this lies not so much in the **identity** of the heavenly figure of **Daniel 10** as in his **mission**. He came to deliver a message of judgment. Likewise, one of the primary functions of this imagery of Jesus is to convey His power, righteousness, knowledge, and fairness as the **Judge** of mankind. You can really see this when you compare this vision of Jesus in **chapter 1** to what He says in each of the letters to the churches in **chapters 2-3**. If you compare Jesus’ traits in this vision to what you read in the letters, you’ll notice that He uses these same elements to describe Himself to the congregations He condemns or rebukes. In contrast, when He has nothing negative to say to a church, He uses different descriptive traits when introducing the letter. Additionally, John’s connection of Christ to the imagery of the Ancient of Days, Who is God the Father, serves to show His glorification and authority as God. These descriptions are meant to convey ideas and consist of powerful imagery. They were common symbols intended to suggest important concepts and truths or simply to attempt to put into words the awesome and majestic power of the risen Lord. There are, to my count, about ten descriptive phrases in this passage which we will briefly and individually examine.

 **One like the Son of Man**

The first phrase we will noticeis **One like the Son of Man**. This phrase is found in seven books of the Old Testament: once in Numbers and Isaiah, twice in Job and Daniel, four times in Psalms and Jeremiah, and ninety-three times in Ezekiel. Four Old Testament prophets use the phrase, Ezekiel being the most prolific. However, most of these occurrences seem to be a more literal usage and are not direct parallels to the phrase as it is used here in Revelation. The only similar use of the phrase in a Messianic sense was by Daniel in **Daniel 7:13-14** where he says:

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**Daniel 7:13-14 -** I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

Son of Man wasn’t used in this way very often in the Old Testament and when it was, it referred only to the coming Savior. There are many things in this passage in **Daniel 7** that should be familiar to you from your own reading of the New Testament. These things were all said of Christ, the promised Messiah who John now sees in His full glory as the risen Lord.

 **A garment down to the feet, girded with a golden band**

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John next describes Jesus’ clothing as **A garment down to the feet, girded with a golden band**. This immediately suggests the image of an Old Testament priest. This imagery presents Christ as High Priest and King. A study of the clothing of the Old Testament priests quickly brings forth similarities to the garments John describes. However, it might be more difficult to see the Kingly aspects of this description. The description of His robe echoes similar language used of the Lord’s Kingly robes in **Isaiah 6:1**.

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The golden girdle and exquisite robe also suggest high rank or authority such as in **Daniel 10:5**. Nearly the same description of Jesus as we find here in this passage is used again in **Revelation 19:12-16** when He comes at the last to conquer the world and claim His people. There is an interesting contrast between our description here in **chapter 1** and the one found in **chapter 19**. **Chapter 1** primarily builds on the image of Christ as the caring High Priest while **chapter 19** does the inverse, presenting Christ as the Conquering King.

 **Head and hair white like wool, white as snow**

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Next, John describes the Lord’s **Head and hair as white like wool and as white as snow**. This phrase is used in the Old Testament to describe God the Father as the Ancient of Days in **Daniel chapter 7**. This phrase suggests Christ’s deity and exaltation. The Ancient of Days in the Old Testament was often portrayed as a judge. This description also suggests Christ’s role as the Divine Judge at the end of time.

 **Eyes like a flame of fire**

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John says that Christ’s **Eyes are like a flame of fire**. This imagery conveys Jesus’ omniscience in His righteous judgment, which is so clearly displayed in **Revelation chapters 2-3**. Christ’s omniscience is affirmed in each of the seven letters as He tells John to write to each congregation “I know your works”. Further, the Lord elaborates by commending them for good works, encouraging them to continue in such, and rebuking them for wickedness or failure.

 **Feet like fine brass, refined in a furnace**

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John continues saying he has **Feet like fine brass, refined in a furnace**. G. K. Beale in his commentary on this passage says that this phrase:

“Suggests his moral purity and will become the basis for His demand that those among whom He walks must reflect this purity in the midst of moral turpitude (turpitude meaning depravity or wickedness)”

I had a harder time making many other connections in the scriptures to this phrase, but I think Beale’s explanation is acceptable enough without reading too far into it. The scriptures speak of Christians being refined in faith or purity through trials and endurance in the world. Often the description of a metal being purified through the fires of a furnace is used, so it would make sense here as a description of the glorified and exalted Christ who was perfected through His sufferings in the world. He endured all things and calls for His people to do likewise. It is no shocking bit of news that with the Kingdom of Heaven and a life dedicated to Christ also comes tribulation. John says as much in **verse 9** of our passage: “I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ”. We might also remember what the Apostle Peter wrote in:

**1 Peter 4:1-2 -** Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

 **Voice as the sound of many waters**

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John next says that Jesus has a **Voice as the sound of many waters**. This is perhaps one of the easiest symbols to define. It simply refers to the roar you might experience standing near a great quantity of rushing, crashing waters such as at a waterfall or near an overflowing dam. The way this phrase is used later in the book is also helpful in determining its meaning as one of strength, depth, and commanding authority. In **Revelation 14:2** it says:

**Revelation 14:2 -** …I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder…

**Revelation 19:6 -** …I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings…

 **Out of His mouth a sharp two-edged sword**

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One of the strangest things John says about Jesus is that **Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword**. Some commentators simply connect this imagery with the description of the word of God as the sword of the spirit. They may also make connection to **Hebrews 4:12** calling the word of God “living, active, and sharper than any two-edged sword”, or **Luke 2:35** which is the only other verse in the scriptures to use the same rare word for “sword” as used here which says “(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”. However, this description conveys a more specific aspect of the words of Christ, particularly their role in judging and condemning the world. This meaning is brought out in the way this phrase is used throughout the book. Notice in the letter to Pergamos it says:

**Revelation 2:12 -** And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword

**Revelation 2:16 -** Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

This imagery appears again near the end of the book when Christ comes to make war with His enemies in:

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**Revelation 19:15 -** Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron...

This is a direct reference back to the words of Isaiah as he said in:

**Isaiah 11:4 -** But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

This is a firm and vivid warning. The word of God holds all the sweetest promises, blessings, and hopes for us in eternity. However, it is also the weapon by which Christ’s enemies will be destroyed, with which He will war against those who rebel, and it pierces us revealing all that is in our thoughts and hearts. Nothing can be hidden from the One with eyes like a flame of fire and the two-edged sword coming from His mouth. He is the righteous, just, and all-knowing Judge.

 **Countenance like the sun shining in its strength**

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John’s final description of the **person** of Jesus is that His **Countenance was like the sun shining in its strength**. This phrase, like the sound of many waters, draws its meaning primarily from common natural experience. The Lord’s face was shining so brightly as to be difficult to look at, such as in His transfiguration in **Matthew 17:2**. G. K. Beale in his commentary notes that the wording of this phrase comes from **Judges 5:31**:

**Judges 5:31 -** Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD! But let those who love Him be like the sun When it comes out in full strength.

In the New Testament, we have what seems to be a quotation of this verse from **Judges** in **Matthew 13:43**:

**Matthew 13:43 -** Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

It seems very likely following the overall theme of this depiction of Jesus as the Holy, Awesome, and True Judge, that in addition to the literal shining of His face, it also symbolizes His stunning righteousness and moral purity.

**Section 3 - The Mystery and the Power of the Vision:**

There are two more phrases describing what John saw when he saw Jesus that we are going to cover in our third and final section. These two elements of Jesus’ description to John have more to do with His surroundings than His physical appearance. In our final portion of our passage, the mysteries of both symbols are explained by the Lord Himself. We will pick up reading again at **verse 17**:

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**Revelation 1:17-20 -** And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.”

The preceding image of Christ as we’ve discussed is a terrifying and yet awesome picture of the righteous, eternal Judge. It’s no wonder that as John turned to see the Risen Lord that he fell at His feet as though dead. What we will see from this passage, and from the other two details we’ve not yet covered about the vision John saw, is that those who are faithful in Christ and endure to the end of their lives have nothing to fear in Him. Jesus begins the Revelation to John by giving him two commands:

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**1. Do Not Be Afraid**

**2. Write! Write the things you have seen, the things which are, and the things which will take place**

These two commands can serve as a summary of the theme of the book of Revelation especially considering the vision of Jesus Christ the risen Lord. Jesus tells us several important and comforting things: “I am He who lives, and was dead, and am alive forevermore” “I have the keys of Hades and of Death” **Do not be afraid, I will tell you all things!** He then proceeds to explain two mysteries from what John saw when he turned to look at Him. He tells John that the **Seven Golden Lampstands** among which He stood are the **Seven Churches** to which John was to write. **The Seven Stars** which He held in His right hand are **the Angels of these Seven Churches**.

**Seven Golden Lampstands - The Churches**

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We discussed earlier the way Christ is presented as a priest in this vision of John. This aspect of the vision is particularly moving when you stop and think about the scene John paints for us. He tells us that Christ stood **among the seven lampstands**. In other words, Christ our High Priest, the great and powerful Son of Man just described in this vision, stands among His churches. He watches over them, maintains them, and protects them. This description transports your mind back to Old Testament days of the priests working in the temple keeping the Golden Lampstand polished, in good working order, and full of oil. This part of John’s vision delivers the comforting message of Christ’s presence among His people. He is not distant from them, rebuking them for their errors, but is there in the middle of them. He knows your works because He is there to see them, He watches over His own.

**Seven Stars - The Angels of the Churches**

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As I studied this chapter, I tried my best to use and answer all of Johnny’s questions without them being our only focus. Along the way I felt mostly satisfied with my answers to all but the last question: **Who or what do you think the angels of the seven churches were?**

I’ll be honest, the answer I really want to give and move on is that: Jesus said it was a mystery and didn’t tell us who or what the angels are so how am I supposed to know?

Luckily for me, Johnny was in town this weekend and spent part of the day on Friday with me at Half Price Books. So, I had the chance to get an answer straight from the source! Imagine my relief and excitement when I asked him and he sat back, clearly thinking about the question, and said: “Well, I don’t really think it matters.”

Now, you may think I was disappointed, but this was the same conclusion I reached about his question and I think was what he intended for us to realize. I’ll talk more on that in a second, but Johnny did go on to give his opinion about the identity of the angels in this verse. He said he believes that the Angels were messengers of some sort sent by the churches. He also mentioned there were several commentators who took this position. So, if Johnny’s answer is good enough for you, you can leave it at that. However, some of you might also be interested in what the prevailing theories are for your own study which I will also share with you. Just remember, Johnny and I both believe it doesn’t really matter but a different point is being made here. G. K. Beale in his commentary mentions four identities which have been suggestion for who these angels were:

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1. Heavenly beings in general.

2. Heavenly beings who are representatives of or guardians over the churches so that the churches are also in mind.

3. Human leaders or representatives of the churches.

4. Personifications of the prevailing spirit or character of the churches.

I can’t really give you any solid answer to this question other than to say I don’t think it matters for us to be extremely specific and exact as to **who** these angels are. Jesus identified the stars as angels and went no further. There isn’t an exact identity tied to them. However, I believe there are some important concepts conveyed to us in what He says. Rather than identifying the **who** of these angels, we should focus on the **what** and **where** they are. Angels are **Heavenly Beings** and these particular angels in this vision are located **in the right hand of Jesus**.

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Their close association with the churches such as to be their spiritual or heavenly representatives’ contrasts with the church’s earthly representation as lampstands. Jesus holds these stars in His hand, where no enemy can harm or remove them. He holds them in His **right hand** which is a symbolic phrase meaning they are under His authority. This is a reminder of spiritual security for the faithful in Christ. Though the earthly gatherings of the church can be persecuted and destroyed, no enemy can touch the spiritual counterparts of God’s people who are secure in Christ.

**Conclusion:**

To wrap up our study, let’s read **chapter 1** from start to finish. This time we will read it from the **Plain English Bible** which says:

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This book is what Jesus Christ revealed. God gave this revelation to Jesus to show his servants the things which must happen soon. Jesus revealed it to John, his servant, sending it through his angel. John told the truth about the things he saw - the testimony of Jesus Christ and the message of God. Happy is the person who reads the words of this prophecy, listens to them, and obeys the things written here, because the time is near.

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From John, to the seven congregations in the land of Asia. The One who is, who was, and who will be *sends* you gracious love and peace; so do the seven spirits who are before God’s throne. Gracious love and peace from Jesus Christ, too. He is the faithful Witness, the first one to rise from death, and the Ruler of the kings of earth. May glory and power be his forever and ever. Amen! Jesus loved us. He bled, setting us free from our sins. He formed us into a kingdom. We are priests to God, his Father. “Look! He is coming with the clouds.” “Every Eye will see him; even those who wounded him.” Because of him, all people on earth will cry. Yes, Amen! “I am the A and the Z says the Lord God. He is the One who is, who was, and who will be. He is all-powerful.”

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I am John, your brother. In Jesus I share with you the trouble, the endurance, and the kingdom. I was on an island called Patmos. *They put me there*, because *I proclaimed* the message of God and the evidence about Jesus. During the Lord’s day, I was in the Spirit. I heard a loud voice *speaking* behind me. It was like the sound from a trumpet. It said, “Write what you see in a scroll. Send it to these seven congregations: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.”

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I turned around to look at the voice which was talking to me. After I turned around, I saw seven golden lampstands. There was one like the Son of Man among them. He was dressed in a very long robe. He wore a golden belt around his waist. His head and his hair were white, white like wool or like snow. His eyes were like the flame of a fire. His feet were like brass, glowing in an oven. His voice was loud, like *the rushing of* much water. He had seven stars in his right hand. A sword, sharp on both edges, was coming out of his mouth. His face looked like the sun, when it shines its brightest.

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When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. Then he put his right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the first and the last. I am the one who is alive. I was dead, but, look, I am alive forever and ever! I have the keys to death and Hades. So, write the things which you saw, the things that are now and the things that are about to happen after the present time. This is the secret of the seven stars in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands which you saw on my right: The seven stars are the messengers of the seven congregations. The seven lampstands are the seven congregations.”

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As we continue our studies in Revelation, I encourage you to revisit this chapter and remind yourself of this vision of the victorious Lord. Think about the stark contrast between John’s physical surroundings on the dreary Isle of Patmos and these wonderful and terrifying visions he is shown. When you face your darkest days and feel the oppressive weight of this wicked world and it makes you want to give in and give up, return to this chapter and read it. The Lord is risen. He is exalted and glorified. He is the all-mighty, all-powerful, all-knowing ruler of Heaven and of Earth. He stands amid His churches overseeing them and tending to them as their loving High Priest. He is the King of Kings with power and authority over all things, even holding the keys to Death and Hades which He has overcome. If you face death for the name of Christ, He has the power to release you. He knows all things that were, are now, and are to come. **Do Not Be Afraid**!

If you’ve sinned against the Lord, make your life right with Him today by repenting of your wrongs and confessing them to God in prayer asking for forgiveness. Come back to Him. If your sin is of a public nature, we will gladly assist you in making your life right with God. If there is someone here who needs to obey the Gospel and become a child of God, we want to extend to you the Lord’s invitation. If you believe that He is the Son of God, confess your faith before us today. Turn away from your old life of sin, repenting and dedicate your life to Him. If you are ready to commit your life to Christ, you can come forward and be baptized, washed in His blood, and added to His church. If we can assist you with any of these things, come forward while we sing.