

Revelation Unraveled Part 3

A Berean Sunday school lesson by Pastor Byron Chesney 02-05-2017

†Revelation 1:12-20

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

Now we get into the symbolism that we find in the Revelation. Here he turned and saw 7 golden candlesticks. As we mentioned before, the number 7 represents completeness, or perfect ness, it is spiritual perfection. Remember, he is writing this to the 7 churches. Well he sees 7 golden candlesticks. We covered this already last Sunday but down in verse 20 we are told what these represent:

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. Jesus says that they are the 7 churches. The 7 churches are compared to 7 candlesticks because the church is supposed to be the light of the world, the light which they receive from Jesus Christ.

They are made of gold because that is the most precious and the church is precious.

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.

This one like unto the Son of man is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. We just studied this in the Book of Daniel in Chapter 10 when Daniel saw the Lord Jesus during his day in a Christophany.

Daniel 10:5-6: *5 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: 6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.*

He called him a “**certain man**,” and then described him as looking much the same as John described him.

Jesus is standing in the middle of the 7 churches. A vivid description is given of Jesus here. This is nothing like the pictures you see in paintings. In fact, the description is majestic and quite terrifying. Remember that John was one of Jesus’ disciples and had seen Jesus as a man here on earth many many times. But now, Jesus looks different, he now has a wonderful, glorified body. Notice that this is how Jesus looks even today.

This garment that went down to the foot was representative of a Kings robe. Prophets wore such robes as well. This shows Christ in his Priestly role.

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

Jesus appears as the ancient one as also described by Daniel in **Daniel 7:9:** *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.*

Daniel was describing the appearance of God but John is describing the appearance of Christ. This is just another example of how God and Christ are one in the same.

This pure white hair represents the pureness and holiness of Christ. His eyes of fire were piercing. All through the Bible we see that fire is used to represent God’s Holiness. Fire was a method to purify or cleanse something. The sacrifice was burnt with fire to offer up a sweet savour unto the Lord. Jeremiah was whisked into Heaven on a Chariot that was cleansed by fire. Here we see that Christ’s 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.

The description of the feet of Jesus represents his authority and his sacrifice of sin. In the Temple and the Tabernacle, all of the furniture that was used in the sin offering was made of brass. Brass is always dealing with sin. In the days of Kings a criminal would fall at the feet of the King who would be seated on a throne. The Kings feet were a symbol of authority. In this vision from John the feet of Jesus is a symbol of His authority and judgment of sin as he walks among the churches, purifying them.

His voice as the sound of many waters. We see this several times throughout Scripture. **Ezekiel 43:2** and describes the voice of God like this: *2 And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.*

No longer does John hear the voice of Jesus as a trumpet, but now it is like many waters crashing, like mighty waves on the ocean or a powerful waterfall. It would be almost deafening to the ears. It is the voice of authority and majesty. John MacArthur points out that this mighty voice will be the voice that wakes the dead from their graves as mentioned in **John 5:28-29:** *28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

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.

Again we rely on the Bible to interpret the meaning of the 7 stars. Look down at **verse 20** again: **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. -- The 7 stars are the 7 angels of the 7 churches. The 7 angels are the 7 different leaders or elders or bishops of the 7 churches. In our modern day time that would most likely mean the Pastor of the church. Here he says that Jesus was

holding them in His right hand. That means that Jesus holds these pastors in his hand, showing that He controls the church through these pastors. The pastor or leader of the church is nothing more than the vessel that the Lord uses to do His work through. Pastors are in total subjection to Christ. Pastors are not to be dictators but only messengers subject to God's authority.

out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: This twoedged sword represents Christ's protection of the Church. This twoedged sword is powerful and will destructive damage to all He wields it against. Remember, in this vision Jesus is standing in the midst of the 7 churches, meaning that this is speaking of him working on the inside, not outside the church walls but on the inside. Let me tell you friend, Jesus loves the Church and died for it. He will do everything in His power to defend it. Woe to the person that tries to destroy the church. Those that try to sow seeds of discord among the brethren had better take heed and warning that the Lord will destroy with his mightiness. He said that it is His Church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it. Brother you better take that to the bank.

and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength this represents the shining Glory of the Lord Jesus. His countenance is referring to His face. John looks at the face of Jesus and it is bright as the full sun. It was glorious. The light of Jesus shines all through the Church and all of those that are His this same glorious light is reflected off of. We are but mirrors of our Lord and we reflect His glory.

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:

Now we get to one of my very favorite passages of Scripture. This shows exactly how we are going to be when we are finally in the presence of Jesus. That little song that the teenie boppers like to sing that says: "I can only imagine, and it talks about "will I dance for you Jesus." That may be a real touching song but I seriously doubt any of us are going to be dancing when we come into the Lord's presence. We don't have to imagine what we will do because the Bible gives us the perfect description of what we will do. Just like the Apostle John did, we will fall down at his feet as dead!

Daniel 10:7-8: Daniel has the same type of reaction when standing for a Holy God. He says that when he saw it "**there remained no strength in me**": *7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.*

Ezekiel 1:28: *28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.*

Coming in the presence of a Holy God, of the Holy Lord Jesus will be overwhelming to us. We will not be able to stand in His presence. We will be forced to fall down at His feet. -- Why did people not do this when Jesus walked the earth as a man? Because his glory was veiled. The unveiled glory of the Lord will be so shocking, so overwhelming to us that we will not be able to stand.

Friend, I want to make one thing completely clear here. Jesus Christ is the subject of the Book of Revelation. It is all about Him. It is about His majesty and His glory. This book is not about YOU. Sure it mentions the church and that is a key part of it but it is not a book to unveil YOU or to bring glory to YOU. When Christ returns He will be returning in all of His glory, no longer is he a man of sorrows or a man that comes in humiliation. He will no longer be spit on or laughed at or falsely accused but He is returning in full glory, with power and majesty.

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.

He then tells John that he was the one that liveth and then was dead but now he is alive again for evermore. What an assurance this must have given John. He immediately would know that this was the Jesus whom he spent so much time with here on earth. The one that entrusted his own mother to him. The one that nicknamed him and his brother James, "**The Son's of Thunder.**" The one who John was on this Isle of Patmos for preaching about. What joy this must have brought John.

He said he is alive for evermore. No more will he be crucified on a cross. No more will he lay down his life on an old rugged cross. No more will he have to suffer and die for man's sins. No more will he be buried in a borrowed tomb. He now reigns as Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

Remember that this was to be given to the 7 churches in Asia. They were living in a time of horrible persecution by the Romans. Domitian, the Roman Emperor had been ruling for about 15-years by the time this was written. It had been about 63 years since Christ had risen and ascended to heaven and things only seemed to be getting worse for the Church. This would serve as a comfort to them, knowing that they had not been forgotten.

Friends, the church could use some encouragement today. We see so many things going on in this world and it troubles us. Our rights are being taken away, it is slowly becoming a very unchristian nation that we live in. We look around us and wonder how could the Lord delay his coming anymore? Well, we can also read from the Book of Revelation and get encouraged. Encouraged knowing that there is going to be a payday someday. One day the Lord IS going to return, He IS going to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He follows that up with a big hearty "**AMEN.**" The word AMEN comes from the Hebrew word "**Ah-mane**" which means surely, or verily. In other words what I say is for sure, it is true, it will happen.

Then he says something that should be a wake-up call to everyone. He says "**and have the keys of hell and of death.**"

Friends, I want you to be very clear on something. Satan does not hold the keys to hell or death. He does not own it and is not ruler over it. Jesus is the one who holds those keys. Typically the holder of a key is the one in charge or the owner. In your pocket or your pocket book you have a set of keys. Those keys are to your vehicle and to your house and to anything else that is valuable to you that you lock up. You have the keys because those things belong to you, not someone else. Jesus holds the keys to hell and to death, no one else does because he is the owner of them.

This hell that is mentioned is from the Greek word “Hi-dace” or “Hades” which is the realm of the dead. This is the same place that was mentioned in the account of the rich man and Lazarus. It is the place reserved for those that are awaiting judgment and to be cast into an eternal lake of fire, which is also referred to as hell which is from the Greek word *gheh'-en-nah* which is the everlasting place of burning, or the lake of fire, in which this place called hell, will be cast in the final great white throne judgment.

Jude 1:6: says: ⁶ *And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*

2 Peter 2:4: ⁴ *For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;*

We will be looking at this closer when we get to **Revelation chapter 20**, where John records this: ¹¹ *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.* ¹² *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* ¹³ *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* ¹⁴ *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* ¹⁵ *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

The important thing to remember is that Jesus holds the keys to hell and of death.

¹⁹ *Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;*

This is pretty self-explanatory I think. He instructs John to write down these visions which he has just now seen and to write down the things which is about to see concerning the 7 churches which we will look at in the next 2 chapters, and to write down the things which he is going to see of the prophecy that he is going to reveal to John.

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.*

The “**Mystery**” he is talking about is those things unknown or not understood.

Then he tells John the interpretation of what he has been describing. Of who the seven stars are that he holds in his right hand = angels (ministers of the churches). Of who the seven golden candlesticks are = the seven churches.

We covered in detail in lesson number 2 the meaning and significance of these so we aren't going to dwell upon that, but just remember by the candlesticks being made of gold this would signify how precious they are to Christ and the fact that

they are candlesticks would represent the fact that they are supposed to be shining forth light into the world.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version