

Revelation A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #3
Revelation 1:5-6
7/5/2006

Revelation 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.

Christ had told His disciples that He was coming with the clouds and every eye would see Him (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.”* This is not the rapture, but the victorious return of our Lord in judgment. Revelation 19:11-16 tells us *“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”*

This will not be a happy time for the people here on the earth, the people who have rejected the Lord and rebelled against Him. It is no wonder that they shall mourn and wail. Their destiny will have arrived and it will not be pleasant, but indescribably horrific, but it will be fully deserved. Finally, justice will be theirs. They will get what they have chosen, but they will not like it and will not want to see Him, but they will!

Revelation 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.

Here are the first words out of heaven actually heard by John. It is Jesus speaking. He speaks forth the first of seven great *“I am’s”* found in Revelation.

“Alpha” is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and *“Omega”* is the last letter. Jesus comprises the only alphabet that you can use to reach God. The only language that God speaks to man is the language where Jesus is the *“Alpha”* and *“Omega”* because He sums up all truth and the disclosure of what God is like. If a person is going to get to God, he will have to go through Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 4:12) because God listens to no other.

“The beginning and the ending” indicates that Jesus is the source, the Creator, of everything and the judge of everything (John 1:3; 5:25-29; Colossians 1:16). Paul wrote in Romans 11:36 *“For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things”* Also, in Colossians 1:17 we are told that *“by Him all things consist.”* Not only did He create everything, but He also superintends the operation of everything, providing its sustenance, and its function. Someday, He will call things, every person, before Him to account for how they have related to Him and will determine their destiny based upon their response to Him. Therefore, His identification of Himself not only focuses upon the beginning of everything, but also upon the ending of everything. His identification of Himself thusly suggests what is to be revealed to John in the remainder of the Revelation.

Then He emphasized His eternal, unchangeable nature by the statement, *“which is, and which was, and which is to come.”* Though men did not recognize His deity and the fullness of His glory at His

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first coming, He has not changed. What He shall reveal about Himself in this Revelation is not that He has become new and different. He has always been fully God and all of God has always been in Him (John 1:1-2; Colossians 2:9).

He concluded his statement to John by saying that He is *“the Almighty.”* *“Almighty”* comes from two Greek words, **panta krater** (3841) which mean **“ruler over all things.”** Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:14-16 *“That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”* This closing expression clearly sets forth His authority to do what the awesome things He was about to disclose to John.

Revelation 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.

For the first of three times John identifies himself, *“I John.”* The other two times are at the end of the book. This was not the manner of John in his other books, but, because of the nature of this book, it seems that John wants to make sure there is no misunderstanding regarding the authenticity of this book.

“Companion in tribulation” indicates that John was in trouble. Domitian (AD 90), the Roman emperor, had put him in prison on the isle of Patmos. John had been active in the church at Ephesus and had also exercised supervision over all the other churches, teaching the Word of God. He is not referring to the Great Tribulation, but rather to the time of trouble he was experiencing. He was not alone in this. Most all believers were also being persecuted and imprisoned and he was their “companion” in the matter.

Though he was a prisoner of Rome, he was in the *“kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.”* Another way of saying this is that **“he was under the authority of Jesus Christ, submitted to Him, though he was under the burden of the circumstances of his day. Thus, he was able to bear the burden because it was a result of his service to His Master as he shared the Word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ.”**

Paul often referred to himself as a **“prisoner of Jesus Christ.”** John looked at his circumstances in the same way, as the way he was serving under the authority of his King.

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

Revelation 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’s experience took place on *“the Lord’s day,”* Sunday, the day set aside by the early church for worshipping the risen Lord. He *“was in the Spirit,”* i.e., he was under the control of the Holy Spirit. That’s where we all who believe in Jesus should be, doing exactly what He, the Spirit, wants to do in and through us on that day, as well as on other days, but on that day especially.

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Suddenly, he heard what he recognized immediately as his Lord's voice. It was as loud and clear as a trumpet. The Lord Himself had come from heaven to be with him. What a day! What a worship experience!

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He, the Lord, repeated His self-identification. His use of *"I am"* is His eternal name, not just a grammatical expression as it seems to be in our translations. It is the same name that Moses heard at the burning bush in the desert (Exodus 3:14) which He used frequently when He was here on earth as recorded by this same writer in his Gospel.

He also repeated the phrase we read in verse eight, *"the Alpha and Omega"* changing the following phrase just a bit, *"the first and the last,"* but meaning the same. **He does this to place emphasis on Who He is** and wanted John and all readers to recognize the importance of this title. It relates to what is yet to come and His authority to do His work.

John's instructions from his Lord are clear and concise: *"What thou seeyest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia"* Then, as if to make sure that there would be no misunderstanding, He listed the churches to whom the book was to be sent.

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

Revelation 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.

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

Revelation 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.

Revelation 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.

The voice which he had heard was behind him, and when he turned he saw the most glorious sight ever beheld on this earth: the full, glorious manifestation of God The Son! What a sight!

"In the midst of the seven candlesticks" or lampstands, stood *"One like unto the Son of man."* These *"candlesticks"* probably called to John's mind the lampstands in the Tabernacle, the Menorah. Each of them had one main and six side branches (Exodus 25:31). However, these *"candlesticks"* or lampstands would refer to the seven churches as explained in verse 20. Jesus was positioning Himself right in the midst of these seven churches to which He was addressing this message. *"The Son of Man"* was one of Jesus favorite titles, used by Him more than eighty times in the Gospels. There it signified humility, but its use in Revelation 14:14 signified authority.

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Though He came *“in the likeness of sinful flesh”* (Romans 8:3) and was *“made like unto His brethren”* (Hebrews 2:17), He knew no sin. He came with this likeness so that He might substitute Himself in the place of sinful man on the cross. Thus, it was a favorite title of His.

Note His garments: *“clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”* While Jesus was stripped of His garments while on the cross, here He comes, fully clothed, with the garments of a High Priest, suggesting the role that He plays for us, ever making intercession for us before God The Father. Concerning the *“girdle,”* Josephus states that the priests were girdled about the breasts. The ordinary custom was to be girdled about the loins. But the emphasis here is not service, but strength. It speaks of His judgment in truth according to Dr. J. Vernon McGee.

“His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow” and spoke of His eternal existence. See Daniel 7:9 where Daniel says, *“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.”*

“...And his eyes were as a flame of fire.” This speaks of His penetrating insights and eyewitness knowledge of everything in the church. He knows why you are here, whether to worship Him and study His Holy Word or for some other reason. We cannot fool Him. We may fool each other, but, no matter how hard we try, we cannot fool Him. It is better not to come than to come and attempt to fool Him. He hates hypocrisy and lying. Always has and always will.

“His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.” Brass is a symbol of judgment. The brass or brazen altar outside the Tabernacle proper represented Christ’s work down here on the cross. It was there that He bore the penalty for your sins and mine. His “feet of brass” therefore reminds us of His work down here in our place where He bore our judgment. Of course, the *“fiery furnace”* speaks of judgment by fire where the impurities are burned away or the substance itself is destroyed. See 1 Corinthians 3:13-15.

“His voice as the sound of many waters” is the voice of authority, the same voice that called this universe into existence, the voice that will raise His own from the grave and the voice that will take His own out of this world to be with Him.

“And he had in his right hand seven stars” means that He controls the universe.

“And out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword” is a precursor to Revelation 19:15 where we read that *“...out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”* Also we read in Hebrews 4:12 that *“...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.”* Those who scoff at statements such as these about the power and authority that resides in and flows from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ will one day wish they could repent and change their ways, but it will be too late. No grace, only judgment, will be offered in that day.

“...his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” No one can even look directly at the sun without being blinded. In His glorious presentation, Christ will be even more brilliant. There is nothing on this earth or in this universe to which His glory can be compared. To compare His brilliant glory to the brilliance of the sun offers us the only thing that can even help us to think of His brilliant, majestic glory.

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