

Revelation 1 v 4

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne...

Seven churches; seven means completion. These seven churches could therefore represent for us all the virtues and all the failings of all churches from the beginning to the end of the church age, the word does not say this but there is an inference here to this effect.

There are greetings from Jesus ...*from Him who is and who was and who is to come...This shows us that Jesus is God and has always been in existence.*

Hebrews 13 v 8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

The seven spirits that are before His throne may well be the interceding spirits that we read of in Isaiah.

Isaiah 11 v 1-3

Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear...

This is descriptive of the seven characteristics that make up the one Holy Spirit, again remembering that seven means complete.

The seven churches are in Asia, they are said to be seven different states of the church of God throughout history. This may be true but some theologians go even further and suggest that each church represents a particular era in church history. The bible does not say that this is the case and as there are strong warnings against taking away or adding to the words of the book of this prophesy we have to interpret only what is written or revealed by the Holy Spirit.

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Revelation 22 v 18-19

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

We shall look at each of the churches when we get to chapter 2 in study 3.

Revelation 1 v 5-6

...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Now we come to the description of Jesus, the purpose of His sacrifice and our role in God's plan for us all. Jesus is the faithful witness: totally reliable from Genesis to Revelation. He is the firstborn of the dead.

Hebrews 12 v 18-24

For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

The Christian church is the church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven. He is the King of kings. He has set us free from our sins because He loved us and shed His blood for us.

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He has made us to be a kingdom; His purpose has not changed, Moses brought the intention of God's heart to the people and we can see that God's intention will come to pass.

Exodus 19 v 6

...and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

We see the fulfilment of God's heart in Revelation 1.

Revelation 1 v 6

...and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Again we see the same prophetic declaration through the prophet Isaiah as he speaks.

Isaiah 61 v 6

But you will be called the priests of the Lord; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, And in their riches you will boast.

Revelation 1 v 7-8

Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Today we see clearly the signs of His return, we should be prepared for this event, it will not matter what we are doing when He returns, rather it will matter how we are dressed!

Matthew 22 v 12-14

...and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

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1 Thessalonians 4 v 13-18

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

2 Peter 3 v 9-13

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

This event must be after the second resurrection if those who pierced Him are going to see Him! There will also be those who will mourn, perhaps those who lived when Jesus was on the earth. The Jews will regret that they did not recognise the Messiah whom they had long been waiting for, which may lead them to be tremendous evangelists in the final days. Jesus declares to us all today; "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

He is the only hope for mankind, how sad that not everyone realises this.

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Revelation 1 v 9

I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Here is a picture of what we may expect in Christ Jesus; we shall share the same things that Jesus experienced, it is a sandwich of Tribulation, Kingdom and Perseverance.

Tribulation

Tribulation will strengthen our faith in God and stimulate the Kingdom life that is in each of us.

Kingdom

Nothing can touch the life within.

Perseverance

We shall receive greater Holy Spirit power to overcome the evil one as we trust God more and more. Those who abide in the word of God shall wield the sword of the Spirit, truly proving their testimony of Jesus; the sword is the word of prophecy that will destroy the works of the devil.

Revelation 19 v 10

Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Revelation 1 v 10-11

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

John was in the Spirit not depending on any human resource, only relying upon the Holy Spirit; this is how we are to hear God, the voice came from behind him! John not only had to hear the voice of God but he had to turn round to see; it was a change of mind, that is changing from only hearing, to a place of heeding Christ's words. In effect he was instructed to take note of what God was saying to him.

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What did John see? He saw the word that spoke to him and which described Jesus.

Revelation 1 v 12-20

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. As for 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 are the seven churches.

Jesus stands in the middle of His church. Note that there are seven which means complete. Jesus is the centre and the circumference of all things, but we have to be in the Spirit to see Him there.

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