

Verse 11: (The Voice said) *'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.'*

Verse 12: *'And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; ¹³And 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. ¹⁴His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; ¹⁵And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. ¹⁶And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.'*

Here, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His Glorified Eternal body, is standing before John. John had seen Him like this years before when he, Peter and James went with Him up onto what's come to be known as the 'Mount of Transfiguration:' *'... Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, ²And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun (sound familiar? We just read: *'...and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength'*), and his raiment was white as the light... behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. ⁶And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. ⁷And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid... And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.'* Matt 17:1

The Lord Jesus Christ is now seen as the fully glorified, Eternal, God Almighty, King of kings and Lord of lords, Ancient of Days, Creator and Sustainer of all that is. This is Who we will see at the moment of the Rapture.

Here, and from verse 5: (to John and through John to us) Jesus presents Himself as Prophet, Priest and King. He is the "Faithful Witness," our Prophet. As the "First Begotten From the Dead," He sprinkled His own blood onto the Mercy Seat in the Heavenly Tabernacle as our High Priest. As the "Prince Of The Kings Of The Earth," when He takes the Throne, He will be The King. As Prophet, Jesus is God's Word, as Priest He is God's Lamb, and as King He is God's Lion.

He will explain the stars and candlesticks momentarily but notice, *'and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword...'*

Here, John is seeing the risen, glorified Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealing to John some of what will be the future history of the Church followed by the Rapture of the Church and then what will happen during the terrible seven years of the Tribulation. At the end of the Tribulation, the Lord Jesus Christ will return, accompanied by the True Church as He comes to destroy all His enemies and set up His 1000 year Millennial Kingdom on Earth. When He returns, He will destroy His enemies with this same 'Sharp, two-edged sword' which proceeds from His mouth:

At the end of the 7-year Tribulation: *'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. ¹²His 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. ¹³And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. ¹⁷And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; ¹⁸That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of*

captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. ¹⁹ *And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.* ²⁰ *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.* ²¹ *And the remnant were **slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth:** and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.'* Rev 19:11

Verse 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: 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.'*

The glorified, eternal Jesus Christ was so terrifyingly magnificent that John faints away... he says that he was as if dead. He didn't just bow down to worship... he lost all control but Jesus Christ, the Healer had but to lay His hand on him and he was recovered.

This is someone John had known personally; he had walked and talked, eaten and slept near for 3.5 years; he had been with James and Peter up upon the Mount of Transfiguration; he had seen Him glorified! Even with that kind of familiarity, when he saw the Lord Jesus Christ fully glorified... he fell down as a dead man; every muscle gave way and he collapsed to the ground.

It's so foolish when someone says, 'When I see Jesus I'm going to want to know why He did this or that... why He allowed that to happen... why He treated me so shabbily in this life...' No... actually, you're going to do just what John did... you will fall down as if dead!

Verse 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.'*

Jesus is alive and He will be alive forever! He, alone, could conquer death through His perfect and sinless life; this is the foundation of Christianity; this is one of the many aspects that separates the only True Faith from all the pretenders. Buddha is dead. Mohamed is dead. Joseph Smith is dead. Mary Baker Eddy and Hellen G. White are all dead... only the Lord Jesus is alive.

Satan does not hold the keys to anything: not of anyone's life or death and he does not own anyone's soul, no matter what oath or ritual one has performed.

God said, *'Behold, all souls are mine...'* Ezek 18:4 No one has the authority or ability to sell his soul even though many have believed they could.

Belief in His Resurrection is a necessary component of Salvation: faith in His life, work, and crucifixion is necessary but, also, faith in His Resurrection is necessary for true Salvation; *'That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, **and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.'*** Rom 10:9

He is the One who controls all life and eternity. He is the One who opens that which no one can shut and He is the One who shuts that which no one can open... including death and Hell. He has opened the door to Eternal Life and no one can shut it; not even Lucifer who, with his evil spirits are the ones who lie to people saying, 'You're too bad... God doesn't love you; He won't save you... it's impossible!' And, sadly, many have believed that lie and continued to close themselves off from Salvation, even when they were at death's door. Once they go through that door, it is closed forever; no one can ever open it again... the door from life to death to Hades where they will await the Final Judgment to be sent to the Lake of Fire... another door which is now closed but will open wide at the Final Judgment to then be closed forever.

The doors which are open, now, are the door to Eternal Life which is narrow and found by relatively few and the door to eternal death, in Hades and then the Lake of Fire, which is very wide and is the door chosen by very many throughout time.

'Enter ye in at the strait (narrow) gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait (narrow) is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' Matt 7:13

This is where people get the saying, 'on the straight and narrow' which is not what the Bible says at all. The road OF Eternal Life is not straight and it is not narrow. Only the way TO Eternal Life is narrow... so narrow that there is only one very specific way that is acceptable to God: through the Lord Jesus Christ... *'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.'*

*'I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come **that they might have life**, and that they might have it **more abundantly**.'* John 10:9

The only door TO Eternal Life is narrow but the way OF Eternal Life, once saved, is the most broad, the most abundant and most fulfilling life of anyone still on Earth.

Only Jesus Christ, Himself, holds the keys to life, death, Heaven, Hell, the Lake of Fire and the Bottomless Pit. He holds and controls everything! That old song is true: 'He's got the whole world in His hands...'

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

This is the most important verse in The Revelation! Upon the right understanding of this one verse rests the right understanding of all of The Revelation.

Jesus tells John 4 very specific things. First, He repeats His command that John should write all of this in a way that will endure for the next 2000 years and then forever. This wasn't to be something to just be remembered and then told to his buddies around the campfire. This is the Word of God; this is meant to endure forever!

'The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.' Isa 40:8

'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.' Matt 24:35

'The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: ²⁵ But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.' 1 Pet 1:24

Here is why this verse is so crucial to understanding The Revelation but, also, much else of God's Word. John is instructed to write 3 very specific things: 1. The things you have seen, 2. The things which **are** 3. The things which will be **after this**.

What has John seen, what is he seeing now? The answer is, 7 Golden lampstands, the Lord Jesus Christ in all His Glory with 7 stars in His right hand. That's it! That is *'the things which thou hast seen.'*... what you have already seen.

Then, in the next 2 chapters, Jesus Christ will dictate to John 7 letters to be delivered to 7 specific churches of that time: *'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.'*

Not only are these 7 letters to specific churches of John's time but they also, as importantly, prophetically give a panoramic overview of the entire time of the Church on Earth. Those 7 specific churches represent the entire Church and then, the 7 specific letters represent the entire Church throughout her coming 2000 years of life on Earth. It's not as important that we understand how each Church represents a specific epoch of the the Church's history but that we see that there have always been examples of each of the 7 churches alive or dead (Sardis/Laodicea) operating during the entire time of the Church.

Then, suddenly, after the 7th letter, to Laodicea, John sees a door open in Heaven and hears a voice say, *'Come up here!'*

'After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.'

Now, Jesus makes very clear to John and to us just exactly what Jesus meant by: *'Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and **the things which shall be hereafter;***' Now, the first voice John heard again speaks, and he uses the exact words Jesus did.

John is taken up through that open door in Heaven and from that moment on... the Church no longer exists on Earth... she has been taken up into Heaven and then will begin the next 7 years... Daniel's 70th Week, the 7 year Tribulation. Then John will see what will happen after the time of the Church on Earth.

This is so clear to anyone willing to believe God's Word and yet, it is glossed over and denied by so many beginning with Catholicism, moving on to Reformed and finally into the dark recesses of the Emergent Church, the New Apostolic Reformation and on into Dominionism and every other false face of Christianity.

Verse 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.'*

Now Jesus will explain what John 'has seen' before He moves on to 'the things which are' pertaining to the Church: Here is one of the places, in The Revelation, where God uses symbols representing something else BUT... we are not left to guess at their meaning; Jesus tells John, and us, clearly what they represent.

'The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches'. Obviously, angels are not stars and churches are not candlesticks.

As candlesticks, giving out light in darkness, so, the Church is the light of the World... individual believers are the light of the world and the Church is, simply, all the believers. No building or corporation is the Church; it is only the true believers within the walls which constitute the True Church... and those true believers are becoming a smaller and smaller number in many churches as the End Times rolls on toward the Rapture.

Jesus said, *'Ye are the light of the world.'* Matt 5:14

Angels are not stars and yet, at times they are represented as stars.

Jesus holds us, the True Church, in His hand. We are never apart from Him; we are always protected by Him. And, He holds and controls every angel, both elect and fallen angels... even Lucifer who has no power, whatsoever, apart from what the Lord Jesus Christ allows him.. he is always on a short leash.

We are never to fear him, any fallen angel or evil spirit. Next time we will begin with 'the things which are,' that is, ***the time of the Church on Earth.***

I know this picture seems kind of scary but it's the closest to John's description...

... no wonder he fainted away as if he was dead!

Note: Those are flames of fire coming from His eyes, not horns!

