

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Foreword and Chapter 1

An Outline of the Last Book of the Bible

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(To be followed along with JND translation)

Foreword

This is a book of judgments — beginning as Peter says at "the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17). Christ's glory and power are in view, not church truth. The Rapture (the church's proper hope) is not seen until after the main body of the prophecy has run its course, in chapter 22:16-17,20, although referred to in chapter 3:10. After Revelation 4:1 the rapture is assumed and the church is no longer seen on earth. When John (as a prophet) is caught up in chapter 4 he sees the church already there, included with the Old Testament saints under the figure of the four and twenty elders (1 Chron. 24:1-4). John himself does not prefigure the rapture, but gets a change of view just as in chapter 1:10-11 he gets turned around to take a backward look.

May we value, individually and in the assembly, this book which shows how our Lord Jesus Christ will come into His own things (which were denied Him by His own people — John 1:11) in the day of His power and glory (19:11-21). It is the writer's desire that this little outline (incomplete as it is) may be of help in stimulating meditation on this precious book. "Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things written in it; for the time is near" (Rev. 1:3).

"The things which thou hast seen" — Chapter 1

The book is divided into three main parts as shown in Rev. 1:19: 1. The things which thou hast seen — all of chapter 1. 2. The things which are — all of chapters 2 and 3. 3. The things which shall be hereafter (or after these things) — chapter 4 to the end of the book (chapter 22).

John here sees the Lord Jesus as a Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. He is there to judge and has everything needed for that judgment (vs. 12-16). The chapter may be divided as follows:

Vs. 1-3 — Introduction

1 — It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ introduced to John by His Angel. 2 — Leave out the word 'and', as all that John saw and heard is the Word of God. 3 — The blessing pronounced on reader and hearers, the time being near.

Vs. 4-6 — The Greeting

4 — God presented in His own absolute being: 'Who is', then in His character as Jehovah, 'Who was and Who is to come'. Next the Holy Spirit in His perfect but varied ways of government — 'the seven Spirits' (Isa. 11:1-3). 5-6 — Presentation of Jesus Christ produces praise. Believers vested with royalty and priesthood.

Vs. 7-8 — The Purpose of the Book

Christ coming in power and glory.

Vs. 9-20 — The Vision of Christ as Judge

With all attributes and power required. Key symbols: SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS (Lamp-stands) — Responsible vessels of light on earth in their totality. GARMENT DOWN TO THE FOOT — Garb of priestly discrimination, not now in service, but judging. GOLDEN GIRDLE — Divine righteousness and faithfulness (Isa. xi:5). WHITE LIKE WOOL — The divine glory of the ancient of days, viewed in that character (Dan. vii:9). EYES AS A FLAME OF FIRE — Attribute of searching, intelligent judgment; judicial discernment. FEET LIKE FINE BRASS — Righteousness in dealing with man in his responsibility. VOICE AS THE SOUND OF MANY WATERS — Overwhelming power and majesty (Ezek. i:24; xliii:2). SEVEN STARS — Completeness of subordinate authority under Christ in light. SHARP TWO-EDGED SWORD — Searching judgment of the word of God (Isa. xlix:2; Heb. iv:12). COUNTENANCE AS THE SUN — Splendour of supreme authority. KEYS OF DEATH AND OF HADES (v.18) — Power over death and the departed state. ANGELS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES (v.20) — The moral representatives of the responsibility of the assemblies. A symbolical representation of the assembly viewed in those responsible in it.