

(Revelation 1:9) I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

island of **Patmos** was a like an Alcatraz Island in the Roman Empire. It was used as a prison island, and functioned as a prison without walls. The island was rich in marble, and most of the prisoners were forced laborers in marble quarries. **Patmos** was a rocky, desolate island about 10 miles long, and 6 miles wide.

they are directed by the Spirit of God into a patient waiting for Christ, or a patient expectation of his coming, kingdom, and glory:

(Revelation 1:10) I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

The imagery of the trumpet is to announce or declare something important:

Exodus 19:16 Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled.

Exodus 19:18-19 Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. (19) And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.

Numbers 10:2-3 "Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. (3) When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

(Revelation 1:11) saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the **seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.**"

We discussed the "I am the Alpha and the Omega" last week. Some scholars believe that verse 8 was amended at some point to include what Jesus spoke in ver 11.

Why Jesus chose these 7 churches is not totally understood..

Many believe that these 7 churches represent 7 church ages and are indicative of the major Church attributes throughout time until the present, so:

Ephesus – the Apostolic Church 30-100
Smyrna – the Roman Persecution 100-313
Pergamon – the Age of Constantine 313-600
Thyatira – the Dark Ages 600-1517
Sardis – the Reformation 1517-1648
Philadelphia – the Missionary Movement 1648-1900
Laodicea – the Age of Apostasy 1900-present

The problem with this approach, while nice and neat, it doesn't reflect reality! The Church body is way too complex to relegate a specific attribute to only a given time period AND to the entire church body.

Most would rather take an "Historical/prophetic" interpretation:

1. The seven churches were real churches at the time of the writing; They were representative types of all the churches that existed at that time
2. These seven church-types exists throughout the entire church age. Pick a time period and you will find examples of each type of church.
3. Some believe, however, that even though the seven church types exist at all times, there might be one dominate type in that period.

We need to appreciate the number seven when making accurate interpretations. So, if "seven" represents completion then what we have here is a "complete" picture of the churches even up to the time of the Rapture.

But the number "7" is so prevalent in this Book as it is throughout the Bible, it might be interesting to take a moment or two to discuss.

The number 7 is also a sign of a covenant; The Sabbath day and even circumcision (1 day after the 7) are signs of covenant. It is the "number of sacrifice" as seen in 1 Kings 8:65

[1 Kings 8:65](#) At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven *more* days—fourteen days.

And the number for purification and consecration:

[Leviticus 4:6](#) - [Leviticus 4:6](#) The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary.

And the number of forgiveness:

[Matthew 18:22](#) Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to **seventy times seven.**"

In the Book of Revelation, we see (and we can read):

1. Seven Churches
2. Seven Angels
3. Seven candlesticks
4. Seven Spirits
5. Seven Stars
6. Seven eyes of the Lamb
7. Seven Angels

And the list goes on.

(Revelation 1:12) Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,

This begins the picture of Jesus as “revealed” to John in the vision. First, John sees seven golden lampstands (or candlesticks); this certainly evokes the picture of the Tabernacle and later the Temple:

Exodus 25:31-32 "You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and flowers shall be *of one piece*. (32) And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side.

Note that the ones John saw were also made of GOLD. In Judaism as well as other eastern religions, gold was a symbol of sacredness and therefore was used to make all kinds of items used in worship. Gold is also a precious metal and is purified to remove all impurities.

So, if I read the following verses to you, what would these lampstands represent?

Matthew 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. (16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Psalms 119:105 Your word *is* a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

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So, the churches are symbolized here. The church is the world's ‘light-bearer’;

Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

Philippians 2:14-15 Do all things without complaining and disputing, (15) that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

And finally, the tabernacle's lampstand stood in the Holy Place, reminding us of our call to be Holy:

1 Peter 1:15-16 but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, (16) because it is written, "BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

(Revelation 1:13) and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

“like the Son of Man”. This is one of the titles given to and used by Jesus while on earth. It is important to note that while He might appear strange (verses 14-15), John understood him to be a man, that is, he appeared in human form (head, hands, feet etc). And, by implication, He is one that shares a human nature. Ezekiel was referred to as the Son of Man by the LORD. So, John would have had a basic understanding of the significance of the title.

John 5:26-27 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, (27) and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

And while, as I said, His appearance is strange, many believe that John recognized Him as Jesus, the One on whose breast He laid his head at the last Passover meal.

The Gold band is reminiscent of the priestly garment; Now while some of the imagery says “here’s our High Priest”, most believe that this isn’t the main point here. The priestly garment did have a band around his chest but that band was not made with pure gold!

No, the image so far is more of a King, that is, that while He is our Priest, it’s critical that He be viewed as the King!

This band is a symbol of strength and of righteousness and truth:

Isaiah 22:21 I will clothe him with your robe And strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem And to the house of Judah.

Isaiah 11:5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

(Revelation 1:14) His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire;

Daniel had a very similar vision:

Daniel 10:5-6 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist *was* girded with gold of Uphaz! (6) His body *was* like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

Some liken this image to an Ancient Person, full of wisdom. But that can’t be Jesus. White hair is a sign of old-age and in a way, the loss of strength and vitality that accompanies it. No, that can’t be our ageless Savior.

Richard Trench writes:

“It is part of the transfiguration in light of the glorified person of the Redeemer; a transfiguration so complete that it reaches to the extremities, to the very hairs of the head”

It is better likened to “white hot fire”. We’ve all seen this in our fireplaces or fire pits. The blue, red and orange/yellow flames are not as hot as the white hot flames.

1 Timothy 6:15-16 which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, **(16)** who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.

There is a cleansing aspect as seen in Isaiah:

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

And what of those eyes as a flame of fire?

His eyes can penetrate the sinner and hypocrite (one who says he’s a believer but does not show any signs of being one), to reveal sin. But more than that, His gaze can consume the sinner and his sin;

But are we exempt from His gaze? No, because we will see Him face to face.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, **(13)** each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. **(14)** If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. **(15)** If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. **(10)** But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. **(11)** When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. **(12)** For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

(Revelation 1:15) His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

The imagery here is brass, also purified in the furnace which would be white hot. These feet were more than sufficient to tread down his enemies!

And, the sound of many waters.

Ezekiel 43:2 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice *was* like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.

Isaiah 17:12-13 Woe to the multitude of many people *Who* make a noise like the roar of the seas, And to the rushing of nations *That* make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! **(13)** The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters; But *God* will rebuke them and they will flee far away, And be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind, Like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

Psalms 29:3 The voice of the LORD *is* over the waters; The God of glory thunders; The LORD *is* over many waters.

This is a mighty voice, a terrifying voice with which our King will rebuke his enemies

The Revelation of Christ Jesus is not a comforting one. In 2 more verses (spoiler alert), John falls at His feet as if he were dead!

But why this revelation? And why was it given to the last apostle?

We are, especially in the western world, inundated with the Mild-Mannered Clark Kent Savior; One who is our friend, our brother; He has removed our sin so we are free to behave in any way we choose, because He has forgiven even our future sin. Sweet deal! Then add into that mix the abundant, rich life we can have just for the asking...and you end up with a mess of a church!

No, He is the King of Kings! He is the LORD of Lords; He is God Almighty who promised to return and set everything right.

No, not Clark Kent, not even Superman, or any other hero we can imagine. No! The reality He wanted to reveal was His Glory, His might, His pure justice and righteousness; Paul may have been shown some of this when he was taken in the Spirit to the third heaven. Peter, James and John experienced a taste of it on the Mount of Transfiguration; But the full revelation was given to John.

But why was the revelation given then? And why to John?