

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

the transfiguration in light of the glorified person of the Redeemer

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 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.**

(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

Revelation 1:16 NKJV (16) He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength.

The SWORD:

Luke 2:34-35 NKJV Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (35) (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Ephesians 6:17 NKJV And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Hebrews 4:12-13 NKJV For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (13) And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

The very power of the WORD spoken at creation will once again speak to its creation at the end of the ages. This time, not to create, but to reveal the utter truth of the human condition!

The SUN

Psalms 19:1-6 NKJV To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. **The heavens declare the glory of God**; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (2) Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. (3) There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. (4) Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. **In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, (5) Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race. (6) Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.**

This is most of the Revelation of Jesus to John. There's a few more verses. But let's see what happened next:

Revelation 1:17-18 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, **"Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. (18) I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.**

John faints and falls to His Feet! Like Isaiah, you can almost imagine the thought that preceded:

Isaiah 6:5 NKJV So I said: "Woe *is* me, for I am undone! Because I *am* a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."

But look how gentle Jesus is! His right hand came down and rested on John. And, instead of "a voice of many waters", John hears "Do not be afraid".

Jesus then completes the revelation:

(17b) I am the First and the Last. (18) I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

First comes the revelation of His eternal Nature: before anything existed, He was there; If all creation would cease, He would still exist! (ALL GOD)

Next, comes His Messianic nature: He lives NOW, He was dead but He lives forevermore! (ALL MAN)

And, with that, He is the One who is in control! He holds the keys to Hades and to Death;

(19) Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. (20) 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** which you saw are the seven churches.

And finally, he directs John to write have seen (so far), and the things which are “now” and the things which will take place.

Then, to introduce the next section He explains the symbols of the lampstands and the stars:

Lampstands are the seven churches. We discussed last time about the church body being lights in the world!

Stars are the angels of those seven churches.

There is, of course, some controversy about the word “angels”.

The word in the Greek is “Angelos” and is most often translated angel; but it also means “messenger”. It was used to describe John the Baptizer and even his disciples who came to Jesus.

And evidently, it can also mean “pastor”.

So, is it an angel or pastor/messenger, that is, is it supernatural or natural.

I lean towards the natural. Probably because John is told to write this down....if Jesus wanted to convey His message to an Angel, He wouldn't need John to do it.

But, while this chapter reveal much about Jesus, there's 21 more chapters that reveal His Name! King, LORD, Judge, God Almighty, Son, the Holy One.....and so on and so on....

Jesus has much to say to these seven churches. We talked last week about how these churches are “types” having a specific character; The seven churches are:

1. Ephesus – neglected priorities (all from David Hocking “*The Coming World Leader*”)
2. Smyrna – satanic opposition
3. Pergamum – religious compromise
4. Thyatira – immoral practices
5. Sardis – spiritual apathy
6. Philadelphia – lost opportunities
7. Laodicea – material prosperity

They are all in Asia Minor; However, let’s see what we can glean from the text to see if we agree with Hocking’s description.

For the most part the “Letters” to the Churches from Jesus follow a similar pattern:

- a. A command to write to the “Angel of the Church”
- b. One or more titles which Jesus claims for Himself. Many were things Jesus said about Himself in Chapter 1.
- c. The Message to the Church – remember the image of Jesus walking in the midst of the Lampstands. He knows all about the church! Nothing is hidden from His sight. He praises and He admonishes. If needed, a call to repentance!
- d. A promise to the faithful (that they should overcome trials etc)
- e. Summation and call to hear what He has said!
 - a. In the last four letters, “d” and “e” are reversed.

There are other characteristics but I don’t want to get too bogged down in the structure and literary devices used in the letters.

(Revelation 2:1) "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

Think of the imagery “seven stars held in His right hand” and “Jesus walking in the midst of the seven lampstands”. It is the same as in Chapter 1.

What does this say to you?

Psalms 139:23-24 NKJV Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; **(24)** And see if *there is any* wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

Hebrews 4:13 NKJV And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

Jesus is not far away, aloof, uncaring. He “walks” among His churches. It’s not a “God is watching you” fear! No, it is a comfort to know that the One who is the Head will care for and nourish His Body!

(Revelation 2:2) "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who

are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;
(Revelation 2:3) and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

The “works” here are not for salvation, but because of it!
What is the difference between ‘works’ and ‘labor’?
Jesus is pleased. Why?

1 Thessalonians 5:21 NKJV (21) Test all things; hold fast what is good.

1 John 2:22 NKJV Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

Romans 12:9 NKJV Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

The church is doing good for His Name’s Sake!
(Revelation 2:4) Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

This is an active church; But Jesus tells them what?
And what did He mean?

(Revelation 2:5) Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Think back to before your fall into neglect of Jesus! What were You doing? What do you need to remember?

What are the first works?

Jesus isn’t threatening loss of salvation! Ephesus, perhaps, was the “first church” in position given how it responded to the Gospel and rejected their former pagan (or legalistic) ways. So, while it can’t be loss of salvation, what could happen – if they do not turn back?

(Revelation 2:6) But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

First, note that Jesus comes back to a “praise” from a rebuke!

Psalms 139:21-22 NKJV Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? (22) I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.

Who are the Nicolaitans? No one knows for sure; It may be some sect of the Gnostics. It may be those who supported eating meat sacrificed to idols and were sexually immoral. There are many theories but little agreement. But, let’s not lose focus on Jesus’s attitude towards them – they were enemies of the Cross.

Does Jesus Hate?

(Revelation 2:7) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." '

This some take to mean "if you have an ear, listen", meaning that everyone has an ear, so that there's no excuse for not listening.

Some believe that Jesus is talking about the "spiritual" ear and has the same sense as in Matthew 19:12 where Jesus ends a verse with "He who is able to accept it, let him accept it".

Jeremiah 6:10 NKJV To whom shall I speak and give warning, That they may hear? Indeed their ear *is* uncircumcised, And they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the LORD is a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.

It's not just the hearing, but the 'listening', taking it to heart. The Hebrew word "Shema" conveys this "Hear and Obey".

The Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God

This is the 'true' Tree of Life;

Revelation 22:2 NKJV In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

In the midst of the Paradise of God: Originally, the word **Paradise** meant "a garden of delight." Eventually, it came to mean "the place where God lives." Where God is, that is **Paradise!**

The 'true' Garden of Delight because that's where God is!

EXTRA NOTES

- i. Irenaeus (writing in the late second century) described what he knew of the Nicolaitans: “The Nicolaitanes are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practice adultery, and to eat things sacrifice to idols.” (*Against Heresies*, book 1, chapter 26. From the *Ante Nicene Fathers Volume 1*, page 352)
- ii. Hippolytus, a student of Irenaeus (writing in the early third century) associated the Nicolaitans with the Gnostics: “There are, however, among the Gnostics diversities of opinion . . . But Nicolaus has been a cause of the wide-spread combination of these wicked men. [He] departed from correct doctrine, and was in the habit of inculcating indifference of both life and food.” (*Refutation of all Heresies*, book 7, chapter 24; ANF volume 5, page 115)
- iii. Others have emphasized the root meanings of the words that make up the name **Nicolaitans**. *Nikao-laos* means literally “to conquer the people.” Based on this, some point to presumptuous claims of apostolic authority and to the heart that sets up hierarchies and separates the “clergy” from the “laity.” Perhaps the **Nicolaitans** fulfilled all these aspects, being both an idolatrous immorality and a presumptuous, hierarchical, “hidden mysteries” system typical of Gnosticism.