

**VICTORIOUS LIFE CHURCH BIBLE STUDY SERIES:
THE BOOK OF REVELATION
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**“THE GLORY OF THE SON OF MAN IN THE CHURCH”
CHAPTER ONE (CONTINUED)**

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, 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. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And 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. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 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. 19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 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.

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”

I, John,

This is the first of three times John refers to himself as the **human author** of the Book of Revelation. John is going through suffering as a member of the early church that was persecuted miserably by the emperors of Rome who had already claimed the lives of James, Peter and Paul.

both your brother and companion

John identifies himself as a “brother and companion” to the seven churches to whom he is writing. A brother is a person who comes from the same womb. In this case, A Brother by **spiritual** birth. He is talking to those who have been born spiritually in Christ. Brotherhood/Sisterhood is the basic family of God dimension that represents an equality of union that crosses distinction of authority and obliterates them. “Companion” comes from two words: *with* and *to partake*. A companion is someone who partakes in and of the **same** things as another. John understand that during their time as is true today that there is unique suffering that comes to those who claim Christ as their Savior and it serves to join his people together emotionally and spiritually. This is why coming together as the people of God is vital. We relate and encourage each other like no one else can because our suffering is unique.

23 Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:23-25

John partakes in three things with his readers.

1. First, He closely identifies himself with suffering Christians. He says he is a **companion in “tribulation.”** “Tribulation” means *to put under pressure*. The Domitian reign (81-96 AD) put **pressure** on him and the people of God. Domitian regarded Christianity as a threat to the Roman Empire. John says in effect, “I am a partner with you in your tribulation. Look at me, I am banished to this Isle of Patmos. I have it difficult, just like you.”

2. The second area where **John** was a “**companion**” is in the area of the “**kingdom.**” “I share the true kingdom with you. The kingdom of Rome cannot daunt us.” The “kingdom” is God’s **plan** for man, beginning with salvation and ending in His glory. He had confidence that God had a plan for his suffering.

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love...”Colossians 1:13)

3. The third area where **John** was a “**companion**” was in “**patience.**” Our English word “patience” is a weak idea compared to the Greek idea. The Greek idea carries the ideas of tenacity. God gives those who walk by faith a bulldog-like tenacity of soul.

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

John knew how to be **tenacious** in his soul when it came to suffering. “Patience” means *endurance*. Since sin reigns unchecked, the Christian is in a war. Our tenacity of soul comes from our relationship to and our confidence in Jesus.

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Patience comes from **faith** in God’s provision. Pressures cannot get to those who operate by faith.

SEVEN REASONS WHY EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE PERSECUTED BY ROME

1. They were revolutionary in their faith, their focus was evangelical and mission based.
2. They required complete obedience to Jesus Christ and their Lord and King, not to Caesar.

3. They refused to bow down before idols.
4. They were looked upon as cannibals because they met in secret and it was heard that they “ate flesh and drank blood” during their services. (Referring to the sacrament of communion which is the Lords Supper)
5. They offended those who made their living fabricating and selling idols.
6. They usually recruited from the poor and slaves and were therefore looked down upon
7. They refused emperor worship. Domitian, for example, would sign his decree as “For and God.”

v. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

John heard a voice from behind. It was like a trumpet, which is similar to the description of God's voice in Exodus 20 when He gives out the Ten Commandments from the mountain.

“All the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain surrounded by smoke. When the people saw it they trembled and stood at a distance.” (Exodus 20:18, HCSB)

This voice reminds us of the power and majesty of God. Just as these Ten Commandments were given to help the people live as they entered the Promised Land, this vision and what follows is given to help encourage the Christians to live today.

11 Saying, 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.

The “Lord's day” was most likely Sunday, the first day of the week. And on that day, even though he could not worship with fellow believers, John tells us he was in the Spirit. Paul had

told the Ephesians to “pray in the Spirit” in Ephesians 6:18, which is what John is doing but it is more than that. God, through the Spirit, is giving John a vivid vision.

Notice that the “book” John is to write is primarily a record (v. 11) of what John would “see”. He was to write it and not verbally pass it on. At this time they were writing on scrolls which implies that God wanted this revelation to be communicated in the immediate future but also to be preserved for future generations. This record was then to be sent to the seven churches listed here. As mentioned in the previous lessons, these seven churches were all located in western Asia Minor, and beginning with Ephesus, they are listed here in the same order in which a messenger would travel to deliver this letter.

And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And 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.

This vision of Christ is one of overwhelming glory. In this vision John is introduced to Jesus as He is and as He will be throughout the entire book of Revelation. John was present at the transfiguration of Jesus and that was overwhelming for John to say the least, but what John now sees will almost be too marvelous for words. Jesus reveals Himself to be the Cosmic Judge, Priest, and Ruler of the Church as a result of His victory over death. **We’re not to see this vision as describing who Jesus is physically but describing who Jesus is symbolically.** Or to put it another way, **“The symbols seen by John in the vision reveal not what Jesus looks like but what He is like...the vision shows us how things are, not how they look to the physical eye.”**

I saw seven golden candlesticks

That John sees 7 golden lampstands is an allusion to Exodus, Numbers, and Zechariah 4 where we see the lamp-stand representing the people of Israel inside the temple behind the table of Shewbread, something symbolically representing the whole of Israel.

Exodus 25:32-37

32 And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: 33 Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. 34 And in the candlesticks shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. 35 And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. 36 Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. 37 And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it.

Zechariah 4:2

2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:

Here in this vision John sees 7 golden lampstands, and since John is using the number 7 to indicate completeness, this vision of the 7 golden lampstands is a vision of not only the 7 churches but the universal Church as well. This is confirmed for us in 1:20 when Jesus says the lampstands do indeed represent the Church. In the midst of the lampstands John sees ‘one like a Son of Man’ clothed with long robe and golden sash around His chest. According to the Gospels, this is the title Christ used most often for Himself during His earthly ministry (eighty-one times in the Gospels) This symbolizes to us and reminds us that He, the Son of Man is the one who unifies the church and is at the center of all its undertaking. In Revelation 2:1 we are told that He walks in the midst of the churches. The only factor that makes a congregation the Church

is the presence of Christ in it. Here we see this vision of Christ in the midst of the churches of John's age and likewise throughout the church age. The vision of this clothing is associated with the description of Daniel's vision in Daniel 7:9-14 where it is associated with the Ancient of Days and two thrones upon which they are seated, the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man. This clothing is often classified with clothing of dignity of three types of people: prophet, priest and king.

Daniel 7:9-14

9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. 11 I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. 12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. 13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The garment also refers to the garment of high priest. The golden sash across His chest completes the picture of Christ serving in His priestly role. This was typically the robe of the high priests as they ministered in the Holy Place in the temple. Two of the duties of the high priest were to tend to the lamp stand in the temple and to intercede for the people before God. Jesus Christ is now our High Priest. The golden sash around his chest refers to a symbol of dignity, honor, strength and authority in the ancient world and is again reminiscent of the garment and stature of the high priest. It is also said to represent justice which is imperial, impartial and impervious to all but truth.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

The **white hair** speaks of speaks of His righteousness. It also speaks of age, wisdom and stability.

His **fiery eyes** speak of Christ penetrating judgement and indicate that He is eyewitness to the deceitful acts of wickedness. He is all knowing. His flaming eyes are reminders of His perfect knowledge and insight

Proverbs 15:3

3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Fire burns its way through everything and there is no hiding from it. His eyes flash with penetrating anger and judgment and there is no hiding from He who knows all.

His feet are as burnished brass. The best understanding is that it was an alloy with gold and silver. It was regarded as a very fine metal and it is appropriate to the glory of Christ appearance. His bronze feet may speak of the firmness of His position. Once the serpents wicked fangs fastened onto those feet, but now like red-hot bronze they will trample on the serpents head and crush him and all the devils works forever.

Zechariah 14:4

4 And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

His voice as the sound of many waters;

One of the questions and great mysteries that fill our minds is the silence of God. I dare say that at times his silence is just as profound as His voice. One day, that voice will go forth with the sound of many waters and will roar breaking the silence forever.

verse 16 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars:

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. These are not angelic beings but represent the pastoral leadership of the churches suggesting that God holds His servants and places them where He wants them to “shine” for Him. In Daniel 12:3, wise soul winners are compared to shining stars.

and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword:

as being like a “sword”, conveys the sense of power and authority when He speaks.

and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

John saw this before:

“He was transformed in front of them, and His face shone like the sun. Even His clothes became as white as the light.” (Matthew 17:2, HCSB)

This time. the vision shocked John to death if you will. He fell at his feet as dead. But Jesus laid

His hand on John and spoke to him the same words He had spoken before: **“Don’t be afraid!”**

“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. He laid His right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last,” (Revelation 1:17, HCSB)

This is the message that Jesus says to us when we encounter difficulties. Jesus has overcome death (Revelation 1:18) and He will help you overcome whatever you are going through right now. He holds the keys of death.

“and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades.” (Revelation 1:18, HCSB)

Jesus’ encouraging word to us today: “Don’t be afraid!”

**“Therefore write what you have seen, what is, and what will take place after this.”
(Revelation 1:19, HCSB)**

Jesus tells John to write the visions he “has seen” (which are in chapters 1), “what is” which are the letters to the seven churches, and then “what will take place” which are the rest of the book.