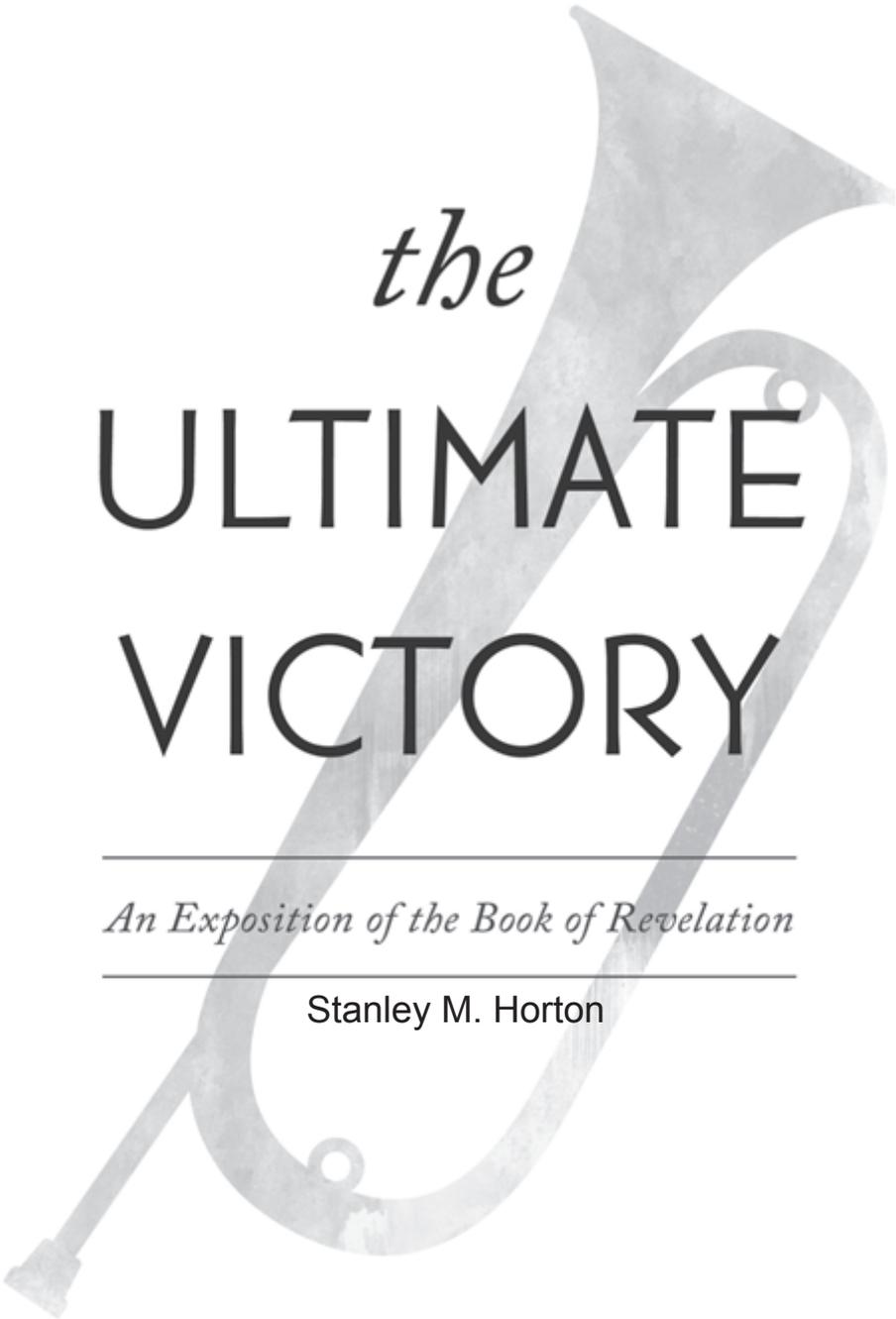


the
ULTIMATE
VICTORY

An Exposition of the Book of Revelation

STANLEY M. HORTON



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LOGION®
P R E S S

Abbreviations of Bible Translations

Fenton: Farrar Fenton, *Holy Bible in Modern English*

JB: *Jerusalem Bible*

NASB: *New American Standard Bible*

NEB: *New English Bible*

NIV: *New International Version*

Phillips: J. B. Phillips, *New Testament in Modern English*

TEV: *Today's English Version*

Wade: G. W. Wade, *The Documents of the New Testament: Translated and Historically Arranged with Critical Introductions*

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Revelation 1

The believers who first received the Book of Revelation must have been excited over its prophecies. But the book still deserves attention and study since it promises blessing to whoever keeps its message. Its prophecies focus on Jesus and on the end of this age, revealing the climax and final triumph of God's plan. It reminds us that the God who loves us enough to have sent Jesus to die for us on the Cross loves us enough to make every provision for us to share in His triumph and glory (compare Romans 5:8–9).

The book opens with the apostle John on the island of Patmos, writing to the seven churches of the Roman province of Asia. (In the southwestern part of Asia Minor, that great western promontory of Asia partially bounded by the three seas, Black, Aegean, and Mediterranean, this proconsul region of the Roman Empire is, of course, to be distinguished from the present day continent.) His reason and authority for writing come from a tremendous vision of Jesus as "one like unto the Son of man" (1:13). This identifies Jesus with the "one like the Son of man" who in the vision of Daniel 7:13–14 was given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him," an identification that Jesus had used of himself during His earthly ministry (Matthew 26:64). Besides using language from Daniel, the description of the One John sees is also in language taken from Ezekiel, but some of that Old Testament description is applied to God the Father. By it John's readers are reminded that Jesus is the revelation of the Father. (See John 14:9–11.) The command to write also comes from Jesus, who tells John what to say in the letters to the churches (chapters 2 and 3).

The Revelation of Jesus Christ Given to John (1:1–3)

¹The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: ²who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. ³Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

The book's own title is the key to its message: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Matthew's Gospel starts by drawing attention to Jesus as the son of David, the son of Abraham, and the One who fulfills God's promises and prophecies given to Israel. Mark begins by calling Jesus the Son of God and goes on to show Jesus as the Son of God in action. Luke addresses his message to the Gentile Theophilus and then shows Jesus caring for people with all the tenderness and love of God. John, in his Gospel, goes back to the beginning when Jesus was with God in the work of creation and then goes on to show the power and deity of Jesus in order to confirm the faith of believers. The Acts and the Epistles show how Jesus continued to work in power and wisdom through the Holy Spirit in the Church, a work that continues today. The fitting climax to the whole New Testament revelation comes on Patmos when John is given a new, moving, dramatic picture of Jesus. "Revelation" (Greek, *apokalupsis*, "unveiling, disclosure") lets us know that the book brings into the open truths about Jesus and the events leading to His return, including events not revealed in earlier prophecies.

At the same time, the book is not meant for the general public. It is meant for "his servants" (literally, "slaves"), that is, those believers who belong to Jesus and are fully committed to serving Him. The things it reveals, Jesus said, must begin to take place quickly, speedily, without delay. It is sent by His angel to John, also identified as "his servant," or slave. Most slaves in John's day were people taken captive in war. John and the other believers were taken captive by Christ, captured out of the armies of Satan, and made willing servants of Christ and the Church. Even so, as Jesus

told the disciples at the Last Supper, He was not calling them servants or slaves, but friends. A master does not tell his slaves what he is doing, but a person does explain his plans to his friends. (See John 15:15.) That is, Jesus was treating John and the other believers as friends, revealing more of God's plan to them. This revelation made known to John has been a blessing to believers throughout the history of the Church, especially in times of difficulty and trouble.

Though the word "apostle" is not used here, traditions coming from the Early Church confirm that the John who bore witness to the things he saw concerning the Word of God (the living Word, John 1:1,14) and the testimony of Jesus was the apostle John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20). Early Church writers testify that he ministered in Ephesus and died there near the end of the first century.¹

The "blessed" of verse 3 is the first of seven blessings, or beatitudes, pronounced in the book. The reference to reading (Greek, *anaginoskon*) means reading aloud. This implies reading it in the churches where the believers gather to hear. The blessing and happiness come to both the reader and the listeners who keep the words of this prophecy, that is, who pay attention and take its message to heart—for to hear also means to obey. That is, the blessing comes not on casual readers or careless hearers, but on those who lovingly obey the commands and injunctions found in this book.

Greetings to the Seven Churches in Asia (1:4–6)

⁴John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; ⁵and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, ⁶and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

John treats the whole Book of Revelation as a letter and thus

sends the book with greetings to the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia (located in what is now part of Turkey). Most, if not all, of these churches were founded during Paul's ministry in Ephesus. Though Paul did not travel through the province while he was staying in Ephesus, Ephesus was a center, and from it "all which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. . . . So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:10,20).

All these churches were in key cities of this province of Rome. By looking at a map it is easy to see a geographic sequence, about fifty-mile intervals beginning at Ephesus and continuing in a regular pattern to the other churches. These churches were probably representative of all the churches in the province. Their problems were also representative of situations that developed among what was probably the third generation of believers. That Jesus is concerned about more than these seven is seen by the fact that He included a message to all the churches at the end of each letter to the individual churches (see 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22).

John's greeting in verses 4-6 combines the New Testament greeting of grace and the Old Testament greeting of peace, both coming from the one true and eternal God who is and was and is to come, the God who has no beginning and no ending, the God who ever lives. But John does not stop there. The source of grace and peace is the entire Trinity. Grace and peace come from the seven Spirits, that is, from the sevenfold manifestation of the Holy Spirit, probably a reference to the sevenfold Spirit on the Messiah prophesied in Isaiah 11:2 as well as to the sevenfold lamp in Zechariah 4:2,6,10. (The mention of the seven Spirits here anticipates the further revelation of the Spirit in Revelation 4:5 and 5:6.) Others take this to be a reference to seven angels (Revelation 8:2).

Then John gives special attention to the fact that this grace and peace come through the work of Jesus Christ, who is identified in three ways in verse 5. First, He is the "faithful witness." In his Gospel, John tells us that Jesus declared, or unfolded, the Father and His grace and truth to us (John 1:14,18). He is a true witness (John 5:31-37). He came to bear witness to the truth (John 18:37).

And from the Book of Romans we know that Jesus communicates the fullness of divine love to us (Romans 5:5-11).

Second, Jesus is the "first-begotten of the dead." That is, He is the first to be resurrected with a new body that is immortal and incorruptible, never to decay, deteriorate, or die. The term "first-begotten," or "firstborn" (NIV), also speaks of rulership. Jesus takes the place of leadership which, according to ancient custom, belongs to the heir. (See Psalm 89:20,26-27 where God promises to make David His firstborn "higher than the kings of the earth." See also Colossians 1:15-18 where the Bible uses the same terminology to declare the priority and lordship of Jesus as the highest Ruler and Lord of all; compare Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 28:1; Romans 14:9; 1 Corinthians 15:20.) Through His grace and truth He makes us joint heirs with Him (Romans 8:17) and sharers of His triumph.

Third, Jesus is the "prince of the kings of the earth," for He will be King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16).

John is not satisfied with merely repeating the words "grace" and "peace," however. He draws attention to their reality by breaking out in praise for Christ's great love that caused Him to cleanse us from our sins by means of His own blood shed on Calvary (v. 5), thereby introducing a theme prominent throughout the Book of Revelation (5:6; 7:14; 12:11)—redemption through the blood of Christ as God's Lamb. John knew the reality of the continuous cleansing that is ours as we keep walking in the light (1 John 1:7). Because of that cleansing we are already, in God's eyes, what God has always wanted His people to be: "kings and priests unto God." When God delivered Israel out of Egypt and brought them to himself, He told them He wanted them to be His own people in a special way and that His purpose was for them to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (See Exodus 19:4-6.)

God's purpose for the Church is the same as that for Israel. We are a spiritual temple, a holy priesthood, a chosen generation (a choice race, or people, whose characteristics depend on what is received from God, not on what is inherited from parents), a royal priesthood (a body of kings who minister as priests to God, even

the Father of our Lord Jesus), a holy nation (including both saved Jews and saved Gentiles; Ephesians 2:12–20), and a people who are God's own possession in a special way (1 Peter 2:5,9). By His grace through faith we enter into this royal priesthood of all believers and have access to the very Holy of Holies of God's presence. (See Hebrews 10:19–20.) This is our position now, and we have the promise that we shall reign with Him when He comes (2 Timothy 2:12). No wonder John cries out that our Lord deserves glory and dominion "for ever and ever."

The Hope of the Church (1:7)

⁷Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

With the thought of Christ's power and dominion, John immediately interjects the hope of the Church (i.e., "he cometh with clouds"). Most of those he is writing to are former Gentiles who, like the believers in Thessalonica, have "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thessalonians 1:9–10). Even though John is nearing the end of a long life, that hope is still bright for him. Jesus' coming with clouds would be a fulfillment of Daniel 7:13, a prophecy Jesus identified himself with. (See Matthew 26:64.)

In verse 7, John looks ahead to the time, which he sees in more detail in chapter 19, at the end of the Tribulation when Jesus will come in the clouds: the very same Jesus that John and the 120 had seen ascend into heaven (Acts 1:11). At this coming, the "kindreds" (nations, peoples, tribes) of the earth "shall wail," beating their breasts in terrible mourning because of Him. This is not God's desire or purpose. The promise to Abraham was that in him and in his seed (the greater Seed, Jesus) all the families, tribes, and nations would be blessed. But because of the world's rejection of God's way and plan, Jesus will have to return "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7). It is clear from

this that the Church will not be on the earth at the time of this return in judgment. We shall already be with Him. It is the people who are left behind at the Rapture who “shall wail because of him.”

Now, in this age, we have the privilege of obtaining salvation and receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But once Jesus returns in His final triumph over the armies of the Antichrist, there will be nothing left for unbelievers but a baptism of the fires of judgment. Then John adds a “Yes, truly!” It is not that he wants to see that judgment come upon the world, but with this double affirmative he confirms that the prophecies are indeed true. The victory and the rulership are truly the Lord’s.

The Mediator of Our Hope Responds (1:8)

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Verse 8 concludes the book’s introduction and salutation with a response from the One who is praised in verses 5 and 6, the coming One of verse 7. He is indeed the coming One, but He is more. In verse 4, God the Father is described as the coming One, the eternal One. Here, Jesus so describes himself. He is “Alpha and Omega”—the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, that is, the beginning and the ending—thus declaring himself as having no beginning or ending.

There is a sense also in which Jesus is always the coming One. In the Old Testament the word translated “visit” is often used of God coming in blessing or in judgment. The New Testament lets us know that our Lord Jesus is the one Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), and He still comes to us. In fact, wherever even two or three gather in His name, He is among them (Matthew 18:20). But this passage gives special emphasis to His future coming in triumph. All that God revealed himself to be in the Old Testament we see revealed in Jesus in the New Testament. And He is coming again as the full revelation of the omnipotent, Almighty God.

The Voice Like a Trumpet (1:9–11)

⁹I 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. ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹saying, 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.

Besides identifying himself as a slave of Jesus, John identifies himself as a "brother," that is, a fellow member of the family of God with the believers in the churches in Asia. He receives this revelation of Jesus Christ while he is an exile and a prisoner—not for any guilt of his own, but because of the "Word of God," that is, John's faithful proclamation of it, and the "testimony of Jesus Christ," that is, John's determined witness to Him. This witness is shared by those who also endure persecution and distress but steadfastly remain under the rule of Jesus. Jesus is not only with John, He is the very sphere in which John lives. Consequently, the reality of the presence of Jesus helps both him and his fellow believers in Asia bear up under Roman persecution.

The place of John's exile is not pleasant. Patmos is a rocky, treeless, ten-mile-long island, about sixty miles southwest of Ephesus. John may have been sentenced to hard labor in the quarries. But he does not feel sorry for himself. He is in Jesus and under His rule, not Rome's.

Not only is John in Jesus, he is a Spirit-filled believer, and he is "in the Spirit on the Lord's day." "In the Spirit" is another important phrase in this book, indicating special activity of the Holy Spirit (4:2; 17:3; 21:10). The "Lord's day" could mean Sunday, but here it more likely means that the Holy Spirit projected John into the future Day of the Lord that the Old Testament prophets foresaw.

While John is experiencing this special, intense move of the Spirit, a voice like a trumpet blast sounds. The speaker immediately identifies himself as the One who spoke in verse 8, “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” In that the churches in the Roman province of Asia were Greek-speaking, they would understand this identification as meaning not only the beginning and ending but also eternality. As “the first,” Jesus is the most prominent in God’s plan; as “the last,” He will never be replaced. No other messiah will ever take His place; no one else will ever be King of kings and Lord of lords. His throne will be eternal. All others who claim to be a christ, a messiah, are false. Jesus himself warned us about them. He also gave us the assurance that He will come suddenly. If anyone claims to be a messiah, a christ, or a manifestation of Jesus and our feet are still on the ground, we know that that person’s claim is false (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

John was not only to hear and see but also to write down what he saw (probably on a roll of writing material about fifteen or more feet long, made from the inner bark of the papyrus reed grown in the marshes of Egypt). Once the book was complete he was to send it to each of the seven churches of Asia, which are named here in a sort of circular progression. Jesus would have a message for each one of them, but since it was all to be put in one book, the messages would be circulated for all to read.

The Son of Man among the Lampstands (1:12–16)

¹²And 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.

When John turns to see the One speaking to him, the first thing

he sees is seven golden "lampstands" (NIV), which would be holding burning lamps. (Candles were not invented until the Middle Ages.) The gold speaks of Christ in all His deity and glory. The lampstands themselves represent the seven churches of Asia, which had just been named, for the Church is the body of Christ. The olive oil burning in the lamps typifies the Holy Spirit residing in the believers and moving in the churches. (Compare Zechariah 4:2,6 and Matthew 5:14–16.) So even though persecuted, the churches still have the power and warmth of the Spirit and the light of Christ to give to the world. They are very valuable in God's eyes.

John's attention here, however, is not on the seven churches, but on Jesus. These believers needed to know that Christ was still among them as their compassionate High Priest and conquering King. They needed to know especially that He fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel where "one like unto the Son of man" receives the kingdom (Daniel 7:13). Jesus had already made this identification of himself when He stood before the Sanhedrin as they were seeking to have Him killed. (See Matthew 26:64.) This Jesus whom John saw is the triumphant One who will come with the clouds of heaven to receive "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him" (Daniel 7:14).

Jesus' clothing in verses 13–15 indicates both priestly dignity and royal office. The "long robe" (Phillips) is like that worn by priests, judges, rulers, and kings. The "girdle," or belt, of pure gold around His chest (see also Daniel 10:5) is a mark of triumphant royalty, in contrast to the worker or servant who wore a belt of cloth or leather about the waist. He is the King-Priest foreseen by Old Testament prophets and identified with Jesus by the Book of Hebrews (Hebrews 4:14–15). He is now at the right hand of the Father interceding on our behalf (Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 2:1).

The descriptions given in verses 14 and 15 apply to God himself, especially as the mighty Judge and Ruler of the universe. John is making it clear that all the attributes of the Father in the Old Testament visions are also attributes of the Son. To the Son has been given all power and authority both to reign and to judge (Matthew 28:18; John 5:22,27). Though Jesus is "before all things" (Colossians 1:17), the dazzling whiteness of his hair (see Daniel 7:9)

represents absolute purity and holiness, not old age. The eyes like “a flame of fire” (see Daniel 10:6) speak of His penetrating wisdom and righteous judgment. The feet of “fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace,” that is, a burnished, fire-refined bronze (such as was used in censers for incense), speak not only of strength but of the bronze altar of the tabernacle (Exodus 38:30), and, by extension, of the sacrifice of Christ by which He has triumphed over Satan. (Some believe that this bronze, instead of being the ordinary alloy of copper and tin, is a very special alloy of copper and gold.²) Jesus’ voice is the voice of God, coming as the voice of “many waters,” full and strong (see Ezekiel 1:24; 43:2). In this vision Jesus presents himself to John and the seven churches as the one Mediator between God and mankind as well as the One in whom God himself lives fully (Colossians 2:9).

The seven stars in Jesus’ right hand represent either angels who help the churches or, more likely, the leaders or pastors of the churches. Being in His hand means protection and much more: The right hand is the hand of action. Therefore, these “stars” are ready for Jesus’ use. No persecutor, no enemy of the Church, will be able to stop them from leading the churches to do the will of the Lord and win victories for Him.

The “sharp two-edged sword” that comes from Christ’s mouth is their sword. It is also the sword of the Spirit, the powerful Word of God. (See Isaiah 11:4; 49:2; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 19:15.) It may be that the sword also speaks of reproof and punishment to the churches, judgment beginning in the house of God (1 Peter 4:17). (See also Revelation 19:15 where the sword means judgment on the nations.)

Christ’s face is like “the sun . . . in his strength,” that is, in its full, summertime, noonday brilliance, a glory too bright for ordinary human eyes to endure. In Jesus’ resurrection appearances, though His body was changed and freed from limits of time and space, its full glory was veiled. It may be that the full restoration of that glory did not take place until after the Ascension. (See John 17:5.) At least on the Damascus Road the light of His glory was enough to blind Saul. (See Acts 9:3,8.) What John sees is the fullness of God’s glory in the face of Jesus, a fullness even Moses was not permitted

to see. (See Exodus 33:18–23, especially verse 22; compare Exodus 34:29; Judges 5:31; Matthew 13:43; 17:2). We can worship Christ now, and the Holy Spirit makes us very conscious of His presence. Yet, it is not until we are changed at the resurrection and the rapture of the Church that we will be able to see Him in the fullness of the glory, “as he is” (1 John 3:2; see also 1 Corinthians 15:51–52).

Reassurance from the Unchanging Christ (1:17–20)

¹⁷And 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: ¹⁸I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. ¹⁹Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; ²⁰the 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.

When Jesus prayed His high priestly prayer (John 17:5), He asked that the glory be restored that He had had with the Father before the world was. John, with Peter and James, had already caught a glimpse of that glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. There the face of Jesus shone like the sun, and His clothes glistened and glittered like lightning flashes from the radiance of the glory. (See Matthew 17:2.) But that was only a foretaste; the disciples were awed, but not struck down. Nor was the glory visible after Christ's resurrection. However, it was certainly restored when Jesus ascended to the Father's right hand, for Saul fell before it on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3–4). In the same way John on Patmos is not able to stand the full impact of the glory of God in Christ and falls into what must have been an unconscious state, a coma.

Then the same “right hand” that had held the seven stars is laid on John. He feels the same gentle touch and hears the same “fear not” that had so often encouraged him and the other disciples when Jesus had ministered to them during His life on earth. What peace John must have felt, peace from the Savior! (See John 14:27.)

Along with the “fear not,” Jesus gives John wonderful reassurance. Jesus has not changed. He is still “the first and the last”; the eternal, unchanging Christ; “the same yesterday, and today, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). He wants to be the most important Person in our lives so that we can be prepared for that day when He shall come again.

Jesus gives further assurance that He is the same living Christ who rose from the dead and who inspired new faith in His followers after the terrible ordeal of the Cross. He lives forever, and the future is in His hands. (The Greek literally is that He lives “unto the ages of the ages,” their way of saying “forever and ever.”)

“The Living One” is actually a title of God. (See Joshua 3:10; 1 Samuel 17:26,36; 2 Kings 19:4,16; Psalms 42:2; 84:2; Isaiah 37:4,17; Jeremiah 10:10; 23:36; Hosea 1:10; John 5:26.) As the Living One, God is the source of life and healing. The armies of Israel were the armies of the Living God. As the Living God, He will bring wrath on the heathen nations that they cannot endure. In contrast, the heart and soul of the believer thirst for Him.

Besides being the Sovereign of life, Jesus also has the “keys of hell and of death.” Hell, or Hades, in the New Testament is the Greek name of the place of punishment where the wicked and the unbelievers suffer in the time between death and the final Great White Throne Judgment, when death and Hades will be cast into the lake of fire. In the Old Testament it seems that God had the keys of death and therefore of Hades (*sheol* in the Hebrew). Satan did not have the keys, since God, not Satan, had control of what Satan could do. (See Job 2:6.) Jesus now has the keys because God has given Him all power and authority in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18). God has also “set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet” (Ephesians 1:20–22). This means nothing shall prevail against His Church (Matthew 16:18).

Jesus touches John, not just to revive him, but to commission him to write both the revelation he has just received and the one he is about to receive. Verse 19 seems to indicate a threefold division

of the Book of Revelation: the preliminary vision in chapter 1, "the things which thou has seen"; the messages to the churches in chapters 2 and 3, "things which are"; and the future events described in chapters 4 through 22, "the things which shall be." God intends this revelation to be a means of blessing and revival for not only the seven churches of Asia, but also for us.

In verse 20, Jesus explains the "mystery," that is, the symbolic meaning, of the seven stars and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels, or messengers, of the seven churches. The Greek word can mean either angel or messenger. Some Bible students take these angels to be patron angels of the churches even though they are identified with the churches and thus would be members of the churches.³ (Compare Daniel 10:13; 12:1.) Others take them to be the pastors of the churches, since John is writing the message to them. Still others take them to be visitors or delegates from the churches who would take the Book of Revelation back with them. (See 2 Corinthians 8:23, where the messengers are delegates.) However, since a star gives light and the pastors were the teachers and would be the ones to read the book aloud to the churches (1:3), it seems more likely that these star messengers are the pastors of the churches.

“Dr. Horton embraces neither dispensationalism nor amillennialism but offers, instead, an understanding of Revelation that is fully supported by his deep knowledge of history and biblical languages. He manages to reduce complex issues to plain truth and provides a shining light in an era of cosmic darkness.”

RAYMOND L. GANNON, PHD

If you've ever felt overwhelmed and confused by the many symbols, visions, and prophecies in the book of Revelation, you're not alone! Rather than skim through the book or skip it altogether, Dr. Horton provides another option: You can learn and understand the beauty and blessings found in this amazing final book of the Bible.

Well-known for his succinct and brilliant writing, Horton cuts through the haze of classical apocalyptic confusion to provide a simplified and persuasive overview of Revelation. Presenting a balanced view based on thorough exegetical studies, he leads the reader chapter by chapter and verse by verse into a new understanding of Revelation's meaning for all believers. This classic study is truly a rich celebration of the ultimate victory!

Stanley M Horton, (May 6, 1916–July 12, 2014), was a highly respected theologian within the Pentecostal movement and the author of several books including *Bible Doctrines*, *Acts*, and *What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit*. He served as the senior editorial advisor for the *Modern English Version* of the Fire Bible and was the Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Bible and Theology at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri. He held an MDiv from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, an STM from Harvard University, and a ThD from Central Baptist Theological Seminary. He was an ordained minister in the Assemblies of God.


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