

Revelation Chapter 1:4-20

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Revelation 1:4-20 KJV -

4 John 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;

Seven churches and "sevens":

From Barclay's Daily Study Bible:

The seven Churches are named in Rev_1:11 --Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. These were by no means the only Churches in Asia. There were Churches at Colossae (Col_1:2); Hierapolis (Col_4:13); Troas (2Co_2:12; Act_20:5); Miletus (Act_20:17); Magnesia and Tralles, as the letters of Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, show. Why did John single out only these seven? There can be more than one reason for his selection.

(i) **These Churches might be regarded as the centres of seven postal districts**, being all on a kind of ring road which circled the interior of the province. Troas was off the beaten track. But Hierapolis and Colossae were within walking distance of Laodicea; and Tralles, Magnesia and Miletus were close to Ephesus. Letters delivered to these seven cities would easily circulate in the surrounding areas; and since every letter had to be hand-written, each letter would need to be sent where it would reach most easily the greatest number of people.

(ii) **Any reading of the Revelation will show John's preference for the number seven.** It occurs fifty-four times. There are:

- seven candle-sticks (Rev_1:12),
- seven stars (Rev_1:16),
- seven lamps (Rev_4:5),
- seven seals (Rev_5:1),
- seven horns and seven eyes (Rev_5:6),
- seven thunders (Rev_10:3),
- seven angels, plagues and bowls (Rev_15:6-8).

The ancient peoples regarded seven as the perfect number, and it runs all through the Revelation.

From this certain of the early commentators drew an interesting conclusion. **Seven is the perfect number because it stands for completeness. It is, therefore, suggested that, when John wrote to seven Churches, he was, in fact, writing to the whole Church.**

The first list of New Testament books, called the Muratorian Canon, says of the Revelation: *"For John also, though he wrote in the Revelation to seven Churches, nevertheless speaks to them all."* This is all the more likely when we remember how

often John says: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches" (Rev_2:7; Rev_2:11, Rev_2:17; Rev_2:29; Rev_3:6; Rev_3:13; Rev_3:22).

(iii) Although the reasons we have adduced for the choice of these seven Churches may be valid, it may be still more valid that he chose them because in them he had a special authority. They were in a special sense his Churches, and by speaking to them he sent a message first to those who knew and loved him best, and then through them to every Church in every generation.

Another resource on the number of sevens in the Book of Revelation is Ken Murray's notes, the link is in the Additional Resources at the end of this document.

"from him which is, and which was, and which is to come;"

From Jamieson, Fausett & Brown Commentary

him which is ... was ... is to come — a periphrasis for the incommunicable name Jehovah, the self-existing One, unchangeable. In Greek the indeclinability of the designation here implies His unchangeableness. Perhaps the reason why "He which is to come" is used, instead of "He that shall be," is because the grand theme of Revelation is the Lord's coming (Rev_1:7). Still it is THE FATHER as distinguished from "Jesus Christ" (Rev_1:5) who is here meant. But so one are the Father and Son that the designation, "which is to come," more immediately applicable to Christ, is used here of the Father.

5 And 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,

From Jamieson, Fausett & Brown Commentary

the faithful witness — of the truth concerning Himself and His mission as Prophet, Priest, and King Savior. "He was the faithful witness, because all things that He heard of the Father He faithfully made known to His disciples. Also, because He taught the way of God in truth, and cared not for man, nor regarded the persons of men. Also, because the truth which He taught in words He confirmed by miracles. Also, because the testimony to Himself on the part of the Father He denied not even in death. Lastly, because He will give true testimony of the works of good and bad at the day of judgment" [Richard of St. Victor in Trench]. The nominative in Greek standing in apposition to the genitive, "Jesus Christ," gives majestic prominence to "the faithful witness."

the first-begotten of the dead — (Col_1:18). Lazarus rose, to die again. Christ rose to die no more. The image is not as if the grave was the womb of His resurrection-birth [Alford]; but as Act_13:33; Rom_1:4, treat Christ's resurrection as the epoch and event which fulfilled the Scripture, Psa_2:7, "This day (at the resurrection) have I begotten Thee." It was then that His divine Sonship as the God-man was manifested and openly attested by the Father. So our resurrection and our manifested sonship, or generation, are connected. Hence "regeneration" is used of the resurrection-state at the restitution of all things (Mat_19:28).

Colossians 1:18-22 KJV - 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, **the firstborn from the dead**; that in all [things] he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased [the Father] that in him should all fulness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight:

Acts 13:33 KJV - 33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Romans 1:4 KJV - 4 And declared [to be] the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

Psalms 2:7 KJV - 7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou [art] my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Matthew 19:28-29 KJV - 28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, **in the regeneration** when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

the prince — or Ruler. The kingship of the world which the tempter offered to Jesus on condition of doing homage to him, and so shunning the cross, He has obtained by the cross. "The kings of the earth" conspired against the Lord's Anointed (Psa_2:2): these He shall break in pieces (Psa_2:9). Those who are wise in time and kiss the Son shall bring their glory unto Him at His manifestation as King of kings, after He has destroyed His foes.

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, 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.

Some commentators refer to this verse as setting the theme of the book - ie the return of Christ.

Note that every eye will see him, it will not be something done in secret. Why important? Some commentators say this is alluding to their teaching on the Rapture.

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.

From Jamieson, Fausett & Brown Commentary

Almighty — Hebrew, “Shaddai,” and “Jehovah Sabaoth,” that is, “of hosts”; commanding all the hosts or powers in heaven and earth, so able to overcome all His Church’s foes. It occurs often in Revelation, but nowhere else in the New Testament save 2Co_6:18, a quotation from Isaiah.

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,

Yes, this book is about the glorified Christ, but here John is told what he is to do:

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.

See also verses 19 below

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.

Revelation 2:12, 16 KJV - 12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; ...

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Revelation 19:15, 21 KJV - 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ...

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which [sword] proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

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

Hebrews 4:12 KJV - 12 **For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword**, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

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:

John was overwhelmed and impressed and awestruck.

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.

Symbolism:

- Stars = angels (to the seven churches)
- Candlesticks = (seven) churches

Verse 13 - Jesus Christ is in the midst of the churches!

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks [one] like unto the **Son of man**,

Ending chapter on a positive note: the glorified son of God, our Lord and Savior is in the midst of His churches!

Additional Resources

UCG Australia Elder Ken Murray Notes "How Many Sevens in the Book of Revelation"

<https://ucg-mt.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/KenMurray-HOW-MANY-SEVENS-IN-THE-BOOK-OF-REVELATION.pdf>

UCG Australia Elder Ken Murray Notes "The Prophetic Day of the Lord with 28 Verses"

<https://ucg-mt.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/KenMurray-The-prophetic-Day-of-the-Lord-28verses.pdf>