



LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES



June 11th 2017 — Part 6

Rev. 1:17-20 — “The Son of Man and His Church”

John's Response to the Son of Man

Rev. 1:17a— *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.*

- The descriptions of Christ given in 1:12-16 clearly portrayed Him as equal in power and might to God Almighty. John's response was therefore the appropriate response of one who has encountered His Creator.
 - ⇒ Note the similarities between John's reaction and those of the OT prophets upon encountering the Lord (Isa. 6:5) or one of His messengers (Dan. 8:17; 10:9).

Ezek. 1:28b—*Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.*

The Response of the Son of Man

Rev. 1:17b-18—^{17b} *But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last,”¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.*

- Jesus' response to John was to place His hand on Him to tell him not to fear. This is and similar statements (“do not be afraid”, “do not fear”, “be not afraid”) are found over 100 times throughout Scripture.

Isa. 41:10a—*...fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God;*

Jesus' Identification of Himself

“I am the first and the last...” → Jesus is co-equal with God the Father Almighty (Rev. 1:8)

“...the living one...” → Jesus is the eternal God who is always present for His people (Ex. 3:14)

These two titles describe His divinity and illustrate His _____ over the events of history

“...I died, and behold I am alive forevermore...” → Although He died on the cross, Jesus has been resurrected is alive forever.

“...I have the keys of Death and Hades.” → Jesus' victory over death has given Him the power to free others from it as well.

These titles show that Jesus' death and resurrection were integral to the working out of God's plans to accomplish _____ for His people.

Observations: 1. God's people are to respond to Him with reverent _____.

2. God's response to His people is to offer to them _____ and _____.

The Command of the Son of Man

Rev. 1:19—*Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.*

“therefore” — What John has seen of Jesus and heard from Him in the vision are the basis for the command.

- John is commissioned on the basis of Jesus' resurrection power which will secure on behalf of His people ultimate _____ over the powers of the world.

The Mystery of the Seven Stars and Lampstands Interpreted (Rev. 1:20)

Rev. 1:20—*As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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 are the seven churches.*

The Seven Stars

- Jesus interprets the seven stars as the “angels” of the seven churches. The Greek term *angelos* simply means “messenger” and is used in the NT of both humans and angelic beings.
 - ⇒ Some interpret the stars to refer either to the human messengers who delivered the Revelation to the churches or to the leaders/pastors of these churches. This interpretation is possible, however, this would be the only time within the book as a whole where *angelos* would refer to anything other than angelic being.

The Angels of the Seven Churches

- ⇒ These angels are to be identified with the heavenly beings closely identified with the churches they _____ and _____.

“The churches are addressed through their representative angels, apparently in order to remind believers that already a dimension of their existence is heavenly and that their real home is not with the unbelieving ‘earth-dwellers’ (3:10 and elsewhere).”

— G.K. Beale, *Revelation*

The Seven Lampstands

- The OT background for the vision of a golden lampstand is found in the writings of the prophet Zechariah who ministered in Israel during the return from exile at the time that the temple was being rebuilt.

Important characters in Zechariah 3-6

1. Joshua (Hebrew-*Yeshuah*, Greek-_____) the High Priest —Zech. 3:1-10
2. Zerubbabel the Governor (Kingly Figure)—Zech. 4:1-14
3. The “Branch” (The Messianic Figure)—Zech. 3:8-10; 6:9-14

The Vision of the Lampstand (4:1-10)

- ⇒ In the vision, the lampstand represents the temple which is being rebuilt and therefore it is also representative of Zerubbabel who is overseeing the work as well as of the faithful remnant who are accomplishing the work.

The Lampstand = _____

In Revelation, the lampstands represent the NT people of God: The Church

Why lampstands?

1. In the temple, the lampstands were symbolic of the _____ of God’s presence.

During the Church Age, the light of God’s presence is not shown in a _____ but in His people!

2. The lampstand itself was not the source of the light. The olive oil within the lamp was its fuel.

- ⇒ In the OT, oil was symbolic of the _____ (Isa. 61:1; Zech. 4:6)

God’s people are not the light in and of themselves, but are to _____ to the light (John 1:1-18)

3. The lampstands had to be continually maintained by the work of the _____.

Like the lampstands of the temple, we are to be _____ to God for His use.