



[Revelation 1:12-18](#)

(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.

King James Version

By far, the most important feature of Revelation 1 is its long description of the Revelator Himself, [Jesus Christ](#). John wants to be sure that his readers—themembers of God's church—realize, not only *who* is revealing the future to the church, but also just *how special* and *important* He is to us now. In a way, the apostle is adding a final chapter to his gospel, showing us the awesome glory, power, and eternal nature of our Savior in His present role as High Priest and Head of the church.

When John turns "to see the voice" (verse 12), he beholds "One like the Son of Man" (verse 13) standing amidst seven golden lampstands, later explicitly identified as the seven churches (verse 20). John sees a glorious Being who resembles his dear friend and Master, Jesus of Nazareth, but this Person is far beyond human. He is [God](#), in many respects just as the [prophets](#) Daniel and Ezekiel describe Him from their visions ([Daniel 10:5-6](#); [Ezekiel 1:26-27](#)).

John had seen something like this in the past, and he recognized who it was immediately: "[Jesus] was transfigured before them, His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as the light" ([Matthew 17:2](#)). If anything, this vision had an

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Revelation 1:12-18 (<http://www.theberean.org>) even greater impact on John than the transfiguration did, causing him to fall "at His feet as dead" ([Revelation 1:17](#)), again as both Ezekiel and Daniel did ([Ezekiel 1:28](#); [Daniel 10:8-9](#)).

Laying His right hand on John ([Revelation 1:17](#)), perhaps in [healing](#) or in blessing, Jesus tells the aged apostle not to be afraid because "I am the First and the Last. 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" (verses 17-18). In less symbolic language, He says, "Relax, I am indeed the Eternal God, but I am also Jesus, your friend, whom you saw die and then rise from the dead. Look! This is what it is like to have [eternal life](#)! I now have all power over life and death." Though he remained astonished, what a comfort that must have been to John!

And he passes it on to us so that we, too, might have both comfort and [faith](#) in what Jesus commands him to write, the [book of Revelation](#) (verse 19). This final book of the canon is not the delusion of a senile old man on a sun-drenched Mediterranean isle, nor the deceptions of another, more sinister spirit whose aim is to distract and corrupt God's people. No, the book of Revelation is a direct communication from our Lord Himself, given in [love](#) for His sheep, especially for those whom He calls to face the turmoil and terror of that great day of God.

We have this confidence: that Jesus Christ has ascended to the Father, having fulfilled His every assignment and received all things; that He is "the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth" (verse 5) and more besides; and that He will soon return to earth to set things straight (verse 7). In writing the introduction to his book this way, John has endowed us with the background information and the attitude we need to understand the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it (verse 3).

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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