



Daily Verse and Comment

Revelation 1:12-18

(12) I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, (13) and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. (14) His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. (15) His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. (16) In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. (17) When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. (18) I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

New International 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—the members 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 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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