

chapter 1

Introduction and Benediction

The book of Revelation clearly begins with stating who is the revelator. John the Apostle is not the revelator, but our Lord Jesus Himself. The central theme of the book of Revelation is Jesus' return for His Bride, and for judgment. It is Father God who gives the signal or revelation to Jesus to receive His Bride. In the book of Acts, when Jesus' disciples asked Him when He will return to "restore the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6b), Jesus explained to them that the timing comes only from His Father.

Similarly, in Mark 13:32, Jesus told His disciples only His Father knows when He would return.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

After he has chosen his bride, the Jewish bridegroom goes home to prepare a room in his father's home for Her. Only when the room is ready and on the instruction of his father, the bridegroom goes to welcome his bride into his wedding chamber.

Jesus in John 14:1-3 parallels His return for His Bride with this Jewish custom.

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:1-3)

The book of Revelation is a prophetic book. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ to us “His servants, things which must shortly take place”. The channel of this revelation is through Jesus’ angel to John, the apostle. In this prophetic book, we often come across the Lord’s angel speaking and showing to John what is to come.

There are seven blessings mentioned in this prophetic book. The first blessing is for “those who read, and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near”. (Revelation 1:3)

The second blessing is ““Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them.”” (Revelation 14:13)

The third blessing is “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walks naked and they see his shame.” (Revelation 16:15)

The fourth blessing is “Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” (Revelation 19:9)

The fifth blessing is “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:6)

The sixth blessing is “Behold I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.” (Revelation 22:7), and

The seventh blessing is “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.” (Revelation 22:14)

Do you notice that these seven blessings follow the same time sequence of the unfolding of events leading to the millennial rule and reign with Jesus from the holy Jerusalem? From reading, hearing, understanding what is to come, to the blessings of martyrdom to rule and reign with Jesus and eternal life for the doers of God’s commandments in the New Heaven and Earth.

Greetings the Seven Churches

John sent greetings to the seven churches, which in his days existed in Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey. He introduces the Father of the Bridegroom.

“Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,” (Revelation 1:4 b)

Next, the introduction of the Bridegroom, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End:

“And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (Revelation 1:5-6)

In this first chapter, John introduces two major participants in the wedding: the Father of the Bridegroom and the Bridegroom. The triune God is also mentioned. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, the seven Spirit of God.

Jesus is the faithful witness; He is the firstborn from the dead and He rules over the kings of the earth. He loved and washed us from our sins in His own blood. Not only our sins are washed clean, but also made us kings and priests to the Kingdom of His God and Father.

Didn't Jesus in the Lord's Prayer teach us to bring the Kingdom of God down to earth, which already exists in heaven? In Revelation 1:6 and repeated in Revelation 5:10, Jesus made us kings and priests to His God and Father. Only when we recognize our identity as kings and priests of His Kingdom could we exercise our kingly and priestly authorities and live our lives on earth pleasing to the Father. Pleasing God by doing the work he has mandated us to do on earth. The understanding of our identity as kings and priests is so important that Jesus again mentioned in Revelation 5:10. Shouldn't we take notice? We are not only God's servant, His friend, His sons and daughters

but we are also kings and priests unto his Kingdom on earth as it is already in heaven. We are kings and priests in the Kingdom of God now! We are to represent His kingdom and to bring forth His righteousness on earth.

“And have made us kings and priests to our God; and shall reign on the earth.” (Revelation 5:10)

John then made a declaration,

Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.’ (Revelation 1:7)

John the apostle together with the many of Jesus’ disciples heard the same declaration but that time was made by two men dressed in white apparel at the Mount of Olives that “this same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11b)

Vision of the Son of Man

John mentioned he was in “the tribulation”. Believers of Jesus were persecuted by the Roman emperor Domitian. John was sent to the island of Patmos for his testimony of Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

He was in the Spirit of God on the Lord's Day. So, what is the Lord's Day? Some Bible scholars alluded this day as the Jewish Sabbath, and it could be so. However, could the Lord's Day be also the Day of the Lord?

The day of the Lord or the Lord's Day was first mentioned by the prophet Isaiah:

For the day of the Lord of hosts
Shall come upon everything proud and lofty,
Upon everything lifted up —
And it shall be brought low (Isaiah 2:12)

and by Joel:

“Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand;
it shall come as destruction from the Almighty.” (Joel
1:15)

The Lord's Day or the Day of the Lord is also mentioned in Isaiah 13:6,9; 14:3; Obadiah 1:15; Zephaniah 1:7,14; 14:1, Acts 2:20, 2 Corinthians 1:14, and 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and in many other places. From the above verses, we learn that the Lord's Day refers to the day when Jesus will return to judge the world.

John was taken by the Spirit of God and witnessed what will happen right up to the return of Jesus, the Day of the Lord. He was taken up to the Third Heaven where God dwells, in the Spirit on the Lord's Day and was instructed to:

“...write in a book and send it to the seven churches
which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum,

to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”
(Revelation 1:11b)

John turned and saw the voice of our Lord Jesus, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. It is amazing that the voice is a person, our Lord Jesus Himself. John was instructed to write what he saw in a book and send it to the seven churches, which were in Asia. These churches were thriving communities, which existed then in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

Jesus appeared to John amid seven golden lampstands (Revelation 1:13a). The Jewish Bible recorded the seven golden lampstands as seven golden menorahs. Seven “golden lampstands” gives the wrong impression of only seven lights, where seven menorahs, each having seven lights makes up to 49 lights or seven times seven lights representing 49 events.

The seven menorahs comprising 49 branches or 49 lights, and similarly the book of Revelation comprising 49 events as mentioned in the Introduction chapter. Our God is not only a God of love, and justice, but also a God of form and beauty. The revelation of Jesus’s return for His Bride is beautifully embedded in the 49 events represented by the seven menorahs. These are the Seven Letters, the Seven Seals, the Seven Trumpets, the Seven Thunders, the Seven Proclamations, the Seven Bowls, and the Seven Evil Kingdoms giving us a total of 49 events. Jesus is not only “in the midst of the seven lampstands” (Revelation 2:13a) but is also in full control of the events unfolding.

Hebraic Mindset

Before we go any further, we need to explain the importance to interpret the Word of God through the Hebraic mindset. Although the Babylonian, Greek and Roman empires have long disappeared, their philosophy and thinking continue to influence our current thought process. Despite coming to faith, we often continue to act by sight and not by faith. We continue to be influenced by our Babylonian-Greek-Roman mindset that we only believe what we see. We ascertain what we observe as fact only when these are repeatable through experiments. The repeatable cause and effect become theory and natural law of science. Our minds are indoctrinated and influenced by the Babylonian-Greek-Roman education process, which prevents us from going deeper and seeking a full understanding of the Word of God, especially prophecies.

Babylonian-Greek-Roman mindset interprets the Bible either literally or allegorically, but never both. This contrasts with the Hebrew hermeneutics which recognizes Scripture operates on four level¹ and all four levels of interpretation can co-exist at the same time.

This is the very reason why Scripture is alive! The same verse speaks to us with different meaning, at different seasons of our life. God's word is living proof that He continues to speak to us!

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

To understand Scripture and the book of Revelation, we must replace our Babylonian-Greek-Roman mindset with the Hebraic mindset, which is how God speaks to us through His Chosen People.

The Bible is often interpreted essentially from the Gentile mindset, without understanding the Jewish culture and ancient Jewish traditions. Such interpretation of Scripture causes inaccuracy as God's truth are filtered through adulterated lens. It robs us from knowing the fullness of what God has intended for us. One clear example is the substitution of the menorah as the lampstand in Revelation 1:12, which robs us of our understanding the timeline and framework embedded in the seven menorahs. We will develop this point further in subsequent chapters.

John saw Jesus in the middle of the seven golden lampstands or golden menorahs in the fullness of His glory. His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. Jesus was clothed with a garment down to his feet, girded about his chest with a golden band. His head and hair were



*Figure 7 Author with his daughter at the
Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada*

white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters. The sound of many waters reminded me of the thundering sound of millions of gallons of water per second pouring down the Niagara Falls, in Ontario, Canada. The grandeur and

magnificent of that sound cannot be properly described but must be experienced to fully comprehend.

In like manner, we can never fully understand the Glory of Jesus and the fullness of His strength, until we meet Him face to face. I believe the sound of many waters that John heard is too indescribable for human understanding.

Jesus has in His right hand seven stars, which are the angels of the seven churches. These angels are also “ministering spirits sent out to minister for those who will inherit salvation” (Hebrews 1:14). Angels are often described as spirits who minister to people and to God.

Jesus’ appearance is awesome, indescribable with power and beauty.

“Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword”
(Revelation 1:16a)

and this description of Jesus is repeated in Revelation 19:15a.

“Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it
He should strike the nations.”

What an awesome God we serve. He is coming back for us!

The apostle John witnessed the life of Jesus, His ministry on earth, His crucifixion and His resurrection. He was instructed by our Lord Jesus to write what he has seen in the past, the present and future events to come (Revelation 1:19).

The Apostle Paul wrote about the importance to be established in the present truth:

“For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.” (2 Peter 1:12)

John experienced the past (Present Truth), the tribulation (Present Time), and was shown what is to come (Present Trend). I pray that reading this book will give you understanding of the present truth, the present time and the present trend you are living in today and you will know what you ought to do to bring God’s Kingdom down on earth.

To understand the book of Revelation, we need to understand what the Bible says about the Present Truth, Present Time, and Present Trend. The world needs to know Jesus is our Saviour, Lord and King (Present Truth). He is coming back for His Bride and for judgment. What is happening today in world events, nations and Israel (Present Time). We need to understand events involving Israel and the Middle East, the prophetic time clock on the return of Jesus. The advancement in technologies will impact our life, living and livelihood and will usher in the reign of the Antichrist (Present Trend). We need to search scriptures on events leading to the return of Jesus and how these events match up to the Present Truth, Present Time and Present Trend. The earnest study the book of Revelation is to understand the Present Truth, Present Time and Present Trend. The revelation from Jesus in the book of Revelation is for our blessing. It will give us the assurance that despite tribulations that we will face, we are the victor and not the victim. We are above and not beneath. We have a glorious hope and future.

Knowing ahead of events to come will prepare us to face the future with faith and confidence.

Jesus explained the mystery of the seven stars in His right hand are the angels of the seven churches and the seven golden lampstands (menorahs) are the seven churches (Revelation 1:20). In Hebrew culture, the right hand denotes authority. The seven angels of the seven churches have full authority given by Jesus over the seven churches. Jesus instructed John to write seven letters on what he had heard and seen to the seven angels or the seven spirits of the seven churches.

The meaning of the seven letters to the seven churches will be explained further as we move into Chapter Two.