

Revelation- Chapters 1-3:22 (The Seven Churches of Asia)

Prologue- Revelation 1:1-8

- There is a clear sequence of mediation of the revelation- God (the Father), Jesus Christ, his angel, John, and the seven churches.
- V2) ‘witness’- remember John’s use of this word in John 3:11; 5:32; 19:35; and 21:24.
- V4) ‘from him who is and who was and who is to come’- *The Father*; this is John’s way of writing God’s name as revealed in Exodus 3:14 ‘Ehyeh’ (I am Who I am- God’s explanation of ‘Yahweh’) in Greek.
- ‘and from the seven spirits’- *The Holy Spirit*; the seven spirits are accorded equal status with God; the number 7 symbolizes the God of creation; 3 is symbolic of God (Gen 18:1-3) and 4 for creation and 7 is the sum of 3 + 4; God rested on the seventh day from creation; also Rev. 1:4 is a reflection of the 7 lamps and 7 eyes of Zechariah 3:9-4:10 which represent the 7-fold presence of the Spirit of God over the whole earth; then in Isaiah 11:1-2 there are the 7-fold gifts of the Spirit of God that rest on the Messiah; thus 7 in Revelation represents God’s presence with His people through His Spirit.
- ‘and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth’- *The Son*
- V8) ‘Lord God’- we should understand Lord as the divine name of God as He revealed Himself to Moses and the Patriarchs ‘Yahweh.’ Thus when we say Jesus is Lord, one of the things we are confessing is that Jesus is Yahweh (He and the Father are one; the exact image of the invisible God).

The Son of Man- Revelation 1:9-20

- The number 7 continues to play an important role: 7 golden lamp-stands (churches) and 7 stars (angels).
- ‘son of man’- refers to Jesus Christ (see Excursus on Son of Man).

Seven Letters to Seven Churches- Revelation 2:1-3:22

- The intent and purpose of these letters is to prepare the recipients for receiving and applying the prophetic message in vision that begins in 4:1- together they call the Church to repentance.
- These were 7 historical congregations and each letter addresses specific concerns in that congregation, but the 7 letters are also meant for each the congregations as is the entire book of Revelation. In fact the 7 congregations in Asia represent the all Christian congregations and thus the whole Christian Church over all times

and places. From these letters we learn that the entire Church is under the care of Christ through the 7-fold presence of the Holy Spirit who gives grace, forgiveness, renewal, guidance, motivation, and power to the Church.

- ‘Angel’- simply means ‘messenger’; it is likely that here in the context of the 7 churches the term refers to the bishops/pastors of the congregations as well as heavenly angelic creatures.
- The 7 sins in each letter are the 7 deadly sins that confront all Christians in all churches, likewise the 7 promises are promises for all.