

Revelation - Chapter One

The Holy Spirit used the Apostle John to give us three kinds of inspired literature: the Gospel of John, the three epistles, and the Book of Revelation. His purposes may be outlined as follows:

<u>Gospel of John</u>	<u>Epistles</u>	<u>Revelation</u>
Believe, 20:31	Be Sure, 1 John 5:13	Be ready, 22:20
Life received	Life revealed	Life rewarded
Salvation	Sanctification	Sovereignty
The Prophet, 6:14	The Priest, 2:1	The King, 17:14 ¹

Chapter summary. *John introduces his book as a revelation given to him by Jesus and pronounces a special blessing on those who read, hear, and take to heart “the words of this prophecy” (1:1–3). The book is sent to the seven Asian churches with which John has special ties (vv. 4–5a) and is dedicated to Jesus as coming Saviour (vv. 5b–8).*

John now tells his story. While exiled to Patmos, by the Roman emperor Domitian (A.D. 81–96), John was praying one Sunday, when a voice instructed him to write what he was about to see (vv. 9–11). John turned and was given a vision of Jesus in His full glory, so awesome that John fell to the ground, stunned (vv. 12–17). Jesus lifted him up, identified Himself, and told John to write (vv. 18–20).²

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- I. A vision of the glorified Jesus Christ, (1:1-20)
 - A. **INTRODUCTION -- "A BLESSING THAT WILL KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF!" (1:1-8)**
 1. The angel comes in the name of the glorified Jesus Christ, (1:1-3)

INTERPRETATION:

The Source of the Message

¹ **The Revelation** (unveiling, or disclosure), **of Jesus Christ, which God** (the Father), **gave Him** (Jesus Christ, God the Son), **to show His servants** (all believers)—**things** (or events), **which must** (not should, or might, but must), **shortly** (i.e., suddenly and/or rapidly), **take place**, (come to pass in their entirety). **And He** (Christ), **sent** (delivered), **and signified it** (communicated this revelation through signs and symbols), **by His angel** (messenger--possibly Gabriel [cf., Dan. 8:16; 9:2, 21-22; Lk. 1:26-31]), **to His servant John**,

NOTES:

COMMENTARY:

¹ Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.

² Richards, Lawrence O., *The Bible Reader's Companion*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.

² **who bore witness to the word of God** (that is to the di-

vine origin of the revelation), **and to the testimony of Jesus Christ** (as well as to the divine provider), **to all things that he saw**, (meticulously writing everything down).

The Promise of the Message

³ **Blessed³ is he** (the individual), **who^(#1) reads** (the revelation out loud, publicly), **and^(#2)** (blessed are), **those who hear** (listen carefully, meditatively to), **the words of this prophecy, and^(#3) keep** (guard, take to heart, observe [cp., Jam. 1:22-25]), **those things which are written in it;**⁴

The Reason for the Message

for the time (of the fulfillment of these events), **is near.**

F APPLICATION:

What's more, the promise of Jesus Christ's coming should be to all Christians at all times a motivation for obedience and consecration (Rev. 1:3, 7; 2:5, 25; 3:3, 11; 22:7, 12, 20; see also 1 John 1:1-3). No believer should study prophecy merely to satisfy his curiosity. When Daniel and John received God's revelations of the future, both fell down as dead men (Dan. 10:7-10; Rev. 1:17). They were overwhelmed! We need to approach this book as wonderers and worshipers, not as academic students.⁵

2. The angel comes greeting the apostle and the churches of the glorified Jesus, (1:4-7)

INTERPRETATION:

The Recipients of the Message

⁴ **John** (writing what he is shown), **to the seven churches which are in Asia** ⁶ (v. 11): **Grace** (God's unmerited favor), **to you** (believers), **and peace** (with God and that passes all understanding [Rom. 5:1; Jn. 14:27]), **from Him** (God the Father), **who is and who was and who is to come** (the eternal one), **and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne** (the sevenfold manifestation of God the Holy Spirit in these seven churches),

NOTES:

³ This is the first of seven beatitudes, (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).

⁴ "The content of the Apocalypse is not merely prediction; moral counsel and religious instruction are the primary burdens of its pages" (Moffatt). Robertson, Archibald Thomas, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, (Nashville, Tennessee, USA: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention) 1998, c1933, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.

⁵ Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.

⁶ **Asia**—Proconsular, governed by a Roman proconsul: consisting of Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia: the kingdom which Attalus III had bequeathed to Rome. Jamieson, Robert; Fausset, A.R.; and Brown, David, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1998, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.

The Theme of the Message

⁵ **and from Jesus Christ** (God the Son), **the faithful witness** (of all that is truth, including what I, John, write now), **the firstborn from the dead** (paving the way for all believers to follow), **and** (by His resurrection, proving Himself to be), **the ruler over the kings of the earth**; ⁷(not Satan nor man himself [cf., Eph. 1:13-23]). **To Him** (Jesus Christ), **who loved us** (with an everlasting love, while we were yet sinners), **and** (upon our profession of faith in Him), **washed us from our sins** (and thus from the condemnation, power and guilt of our sin), **in His own blood** (by paying the debt of our sin for us, which necessitated His death),

The Doxology of the Message

⁶ **and has** (thus), **made us** (all believers, something we could never have been otherwise), **kings** (lit. "*a kingdom*" sing.), **and priests** (Christ has made us a kingdom of priests which formally applied to Israel [Ex. 19:6; cf., 1. Pet. 2:9; Eph. 2:18]), **to God and His Father** (priests of the one and only true God), **to Him** (Christ, who has done so much for us), **be glory** (splendor, honor, fame), **and dominion** (*power, rule, sovereignty*) **forever and ever. Amen**, (so be it).

F APPLICATION:

The order is important. First comes the reference to his redeeming work [v. 6] and only then that to the kingdom [v. 6]. As a result of what Christ has done for them, believers become other than what they were. . .

All Christians are called *priests*, not a privileged few. A priest speaks to God on behalf of men and to men on behalf of God. Believers are assigned this responsible task by their God. They are to pray to God for the world and they are to witness to the world of what God has done. In God's name they are to speak the message of reconciliation to the world (2 Cor. 5:20). There may also be the thought that priests offer sacrifice, for Christ's people make the sacrifice of themselves (Rom. 12:1).⁸

NOTES:

⁷ The Jesus of Revelation is not the humble carpenter or the teacher with worn sandals. He is "His Majesty King Jesus"! He doesn't say that He *will be* King, but that He *is* the ruler of the kings, the King of kings.

He is King of heaven-(Daniel 4:37).

He is King of the Jews-(Matthew 2:2)

He is King of Israel-(John 1:49).

He is King of the ages-(I Timothy 1: 1 7).

He is King of glory-(Psalm 24:7).

He is King of saints-(Revelation 15:3).

He is King of kings-(Revelation 19:16).

Jeremiah, *Escape the Coming Night*, p. 21

⁸ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Revelation*, (England: Inter-Varsity Press, rv & rp, 1999), p. 49, 50.

The Seriousness of the Message

⁷ **Behold, He** (Jesus), **is coming** (no one, nor anything can stop Him), **with clouds** (a symbol of divinity, Rev. 19 [e.g., Nu. 11:25; Psa. 104:3; Isa. 19:1]; not as a helpless baby this time, but as the King of kings), **and** (when He comes), **every eye will see Him** (saved and unsaved alike [Ac. 1:11]), **even they who pierced Him**, (the Jewish nation). **And all the tribes of the earth** (Jews and Gentiles alike), **will mourn** (not in repentance, but in despair and terror), **because of Him**, (Jesus Christ [Rev. 6:16; Zech. 12:10-14]). **Even so** (even though it will be thus for some), **Amen**, (so be it).

F APPLICATION:

The word most often used to describe the second coming of Christ is *paroulsia*. This is the Greek term for a coming event which immediately changes the situation.

I'm sure schoolchildren today never throw erasers or spitballs when the teacher leaves the room, but they did when I was in school. When the teacher left the room, a wild eraser fight would erupt. The chalky missiles would spread dust all over the room until she returned. Her entrance would be a *paroulsia*. Erasers would stop in mid-air and every student would be an instant model of pious behavior.

Christ's return will change the situation on earth. He will "return in the clouds," a familiar description of His appearing. When Moses was given the law on Mt. Sinai, a thick cloud surrounded the mountain. When the worship of the tabernacle was set up in the wilderness, a cloud covered the tent of the congregation. At the transfiguration of Jesus, He and the disciples were overshadowed by a bright cloud. When He ascended to heaven a cloud received Him, and Daniel predicted that the Messiah would come with the "clouds of heaven."⁹

3. The angel comes proclaiming the preeminence of the glorified Jesus, (1:8)

INTERPRETATION:

The Certainty of the Message

⁸ **"I** (Jesus Christ), **am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End"** says the Lord, **"who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."** (I was before the beginnings of all things, I am in the duration of all things and I will continue to be after the conclusion of all things. I am eternal and all powerful [cp., Rev. 21:6; 22:13]).

⁹ Jeremiah, *Escape the Coming Night*, p. 22

B. THE APPEARANCE OF THE GLORIFIED JESUS CHRIST, "THE CHRIST THAT YOU HAD BETTER BE PREPARED TO MEET!"(1:9-20)

NOTES:

1. The setting of His appearance, (1:9-11)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

The Location of the Message

⁹ **I, John, both your brother** (a fellow believer), **and companion** (sharing with you), **in the tribulation** (sharing 1st [metaphorically speaking], in the *oppression, affliction, distress*, and *straits* that comes because of our faithfulness to Christ, prior to entering into God's eternal kingdom [Jn. 16:33; Acts 14:22; Col. 1:24; 2 Thess. 1:4, 5; 2 Tim. 3:12 – *the great tribulation is not in view here*]), **and kingdom** (sharing 2nd in the honor and privileges with Christ in His kingdom.)¹⁰ **and patience** (sharing 3rd in faithful, persevering endurance in all things until our home going, or the physical revelation of the Kingdom), **of Jesus Christ** (our God, Savior and Lord [the general idea being, "*alike in privileges and sufferings, united we stand*"]), (I, Paul,) **was** (exiled, banished), **on the island that is called Patmos** (a rocky, lonely, desolate, barren hill of about 6 miles long and 1 mile wide in the Aegean Sea), **for** (on account of), **the word of God** (insisting upon God's claims on men and warnings to them to which the prophets of old, and the disciples of today bear witness), **and for the testimony of Jesus Christ**, (that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God – dying, rising, interceding and about to return as Lord over all).

F APPLICATION:

John told the churches that he was a "brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus" (Revelation 1:9).

So many of us cry, "Why me?" when problems pile one upon another. The question should probably be, "Why not me?" Why should we be exempt from trials? John had every right to bemoan his fate; he had been a faithful follower of the Master, but in spite of his loyalty, he was a common prisoner. He could have buried his head and moaned, "What did I do to deserve this?"¹¹

 **COMMENTARY:**

¹⁰ In one sense believers already reign being heirs of the King and thus His kingdom (1:6), though now through suffering. Yet, in another sense, believers will reign with Christ in the future manifestation of his kingdom (Rev. 20:4, 6; 22:5).

¹¹ Jeremiah, *Escape the Coming Night*, p. 26

The Mode of the Message

¹⁰ **I was in the Spirit** (transported into the world of prophetic visions by the Spirit of God [cf. Ezek. 3:12, 14; 37:1; Acts 22:17]),

The Time of the Message

on the Lord's Day (Sunday, the first day of the week, the day of our Lord's resurrection), **and** (was startled when), **I heard behind me a loud voice, as** (bright and clear as), **of a trumpet**, (which symbolizes authority, whether for solemnity, alarm or gladness – Num. 10:1-10; Lev. 25:9; Zech. 9:14; Mat. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16).

The Authority of the Message

¹¹ **saying, “I (Christ), am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,”** (meaning Christ is “the ‘*Beginning and the End*’ [Rev. 21:6; 22:13], who is the absolute source of all *creation* and *history*. Nothing lies outside of Him. ... ‘*the one who has His hand on everything*.’ cf., [Rev. 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 15; 21:22; 2 Cor. 6:18”])¹² **and, “What you see** (what I reveal to you in this vision), **write in a book** (record it in its entirety), **and send it to** (send a copy of it to each of), **the seven churches which are in Asia:**¹³ **to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea,”** (which were churches that were existent in the apostle John's time.)¹⁴

F APPLICATION:

Men dream of ‘*evolution*’ - that is, a *beginning* without God

Men dream of ‘*immunity*’ - that is, *behavior* without God

Men dream of ‘*mastery*’ - that is, *ending* without God

Those are man's answers to the three most perplexing questions we face: 1. Where did we come from? 2. Why are we here? And 3.

Where are we going?

NOTES:

¹² (*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen. Ed. [MI: Zondervan, 1981] p. 423)

¹³ We have not therefore come to the part of the book which deals either with Israel or the earth or the Day of the Lord. Our Lord is going to speak to His church through the instrumental agent of the Holy Spirit concerning the matter that “*as many as I love, I reprove and chasten.*”

Also, as there were many other churches in Proconsular Asia (e.g., Miletus, Magnesia, Tralles) besides, seven is fixed upon because of its . . . significance [the number seven representing], **totality** and **universality**. . . These seven are representative churches; as a complex whole, ideally complete, embodying the spiritual characteristics of the Church, whether as faithful or unfaithful, in all ages,” (Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, *A Commentary*, Vol. 3, [MI: Eerdmans, Rp. 1982] p. 658).

¹⁴ It is interesting that the book is to be sent to each church individually. There was then – no synod, denomination, diocese, or convention of Asia. All were independent, autonomous Bible believing churches. Each local church is a member of the universal church, but each individual church stands on its own base and is responsible for its own actions or inaction as is each and every individual believer.

But contrary to men's dreams: Jesus Christ is declaring here that He is **God, the I Am**, declaring Himself to be **the Alpha and the Omega**: not **A** beginning and **AN** end, but the only One of all beginnings and endings. The everlasting God. Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth . . . I, Jehovah, no matter what personage I may chose to reveal Myself through (as God the Father, God the Son, or God the Spirit), I Jehovah, the first and the last . . . I am, and besides Me there is no other God . . . from the time that **whatever was**, there I am and to the time that **will ever come**, there I will be . . . possessing all power and authority over whatever exists.¹⁵

2. The sight of His appearance, (1:12-16)

INTERPRETATION:

¹² **Then** (upon hearing these things), **I turned to see the voice** (the Word, the One), **that spoke with me** (the One who *in the beginning was the Word and, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us* [Jn. 1:1, 14]). **And having turned I saw seven** (independent, autonomous), **golden lampstands** (gold symbolizing the glory of God. cp. Ro. 15:7; 1 Cor. 10.:31; 2 Cor. 4:15; Phil. 1:11; 2:11; 1 Pet. 5:10 [*Verse 20 tells us that the seven candlesticks are the seven churches of Asia.*]),¹⁶

¹³ **and in the midst** (at the center), **of the seven lampstands** (churches), **One like** (the One and the same), **the Son of Man** (the resurrected, glorified, exalted, Lord Jesus Christ [cp., Ezek. 1:26; Dan. 7:13; 10:16; Rev. 14:14]), **clothed with a garment down to the feet** (this is the robe of the priest and of the judge. . . Here in The Revelation He is judging each church's *use* of its light, . . . dealing with the churches according to **their responsibility to burn brightly**),¹⁷ **and girded about the chest with a golden band**, (the golden band symbolizes the dignity and divine authority Christ possesses and that His judgment of the church's use of the

¹⁵ William Newell, "*The Book of the Revelation*," (IL: Scripture Press, 1935), p. 19.

¹⁶ There are seven – not seven in one, as with Israel (Exodus 25:31-40). Each church is independently responsible to the Lord although all are governed by Him and addressed by the one Spirit.

The candlestick is not the light, but the bearer of light. The light is the Lord's, not the Church's; from Him she receives it, (William R. Newell, *The Book of the Revelation*, p. 26).

¹⁷ This is the robe of the priest and of the judge. Also, it is the aspect of the priest, not in priestly services, but in judging character. It was the high priest's business to see that the candlestick was "kept in order" in the old sanctuary through the night, "from evening to morning" Leviticus 24 :3, 4.

These candlesticks (Revelation 1:12), all bear light, for they are the churches or assemblies of saints still recognized by the Lord, and consequently still having the right to the oil of the Holy Spirit, and to Christ as light. Nevertheless, our Lord's attitude is in the dignity of priestly judgment rather than as Intercessor . . . Here in The Revelation He is judging each church's *use* of its light, - that is, dealing with the churches according to **their responsibility to burn brightly**, rather than seeing to it from His side that they do thus burn, (Newell, *The Book of The Revelation*, p. 26, 27).

light will be according to righteousness and truth [Christ does not appear to man as a servant girded about with a towel this time cf., Jn. 13:4, 5]).

¹⁴ **His head and hair were white like wool** (indicating the maturity of the Judge),¹⁸ **as white as snow** (indicating the purity, integrity of the Judge), **and His eyes like a flame of fire** (indicating the penetrating scrutiny or fierce judgment of the Judge [cf. Ecc. 12:13, 14; Jn. 15::1-6; 1 Cor. 3:12-17; Heb. 4:13; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 19:11-16]);

¹⁵ **His feet were like fine brass** (showing Christ to be strong and steadfast, supporting His own interest, subduing His enemies and those unfaithful to Him [cp., Psa. 110:1; Mat. 22:44; 1 Cor. 15:25-28; Eph. 1:22] – with feet), **as if refined in a furnace** (indicating fierce and decisive judgment upon sin in direct response to His holiness), **and His voice as the sound of many waters** (indicating that the authority of His voice will shake the four corners of heaven and earth. It will drown out and overwhelm all others [cp., Psa. 29; Jer. 25:30, 31]);



3. The sequel of His appearance, (1:17, 18)

INTERPRETATION:

¹⁶ **He had in His right hand** (the place of power, authority and safety), **seven stars** (the seven angels [*which may actually represent the seven pastors*]¹⁹ of the seven churches of Asia [v. 20] which may also symbolize God's faithful witnesses or ambassadors), **out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword** (Christ's Word which is living, active, piercing, penetrating, which never returns void [cp., Isa. 11:4; 55:11; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 19:15, 21]), **and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength**, (in unclouded power and brilliance signifying Christ's divinity, preeminence and victory [Mat. 13:43; 17:2; cf., Rev. 10:1] – "The face of the Lord is the central feature of His person – it represents everything that He is. Everything fades in light of its brilliance"²⁰ [cp., Jud. 5:31; 2 Sam. 23:4; Psa. 19:5]).

¹⁸ Christ is seen here as the **Ancient of Days** mentioned in Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 22. The Eternal holy, just and pure One who will not only judge the believers as to what they did *with the light*, but will judge the world (the unbelievers), as to they're *unbelief in the light* of the World, (Jesus Christ).

¹⁹ The seven stars are identified in the following verses as seven angels. The stars of the churches are His ambassadors, the pastors or ministers over whom the Lord exercises absolute authority, and those whom He protects when they obey Him and are faithful in His service, (Jeremiah, *Escape the Coming Night*, p. 30).

²⁰ (Newell, *The Book of The Revelation*, p. 28)

¹⁷ **And when I saw Him** (the risen, glorified Christ), **I fell at His feet as dead**, (I, John the beloved, who once lay against Christ's chest [Jn. 13:25], passed out cold). **But** (by His grace, being cleansed by His blood and adopted into the family of God), **He** (Jesus), **laid His right hand on me** (and lifted me up), **saying to me, "Do not be afraid** (they that are saved through Jesus, indwelt by Jesus, and are abiding in Jesus, have nothing to fear from Jesus); **I am the First and the Last**, (I am the eternal, self-existent one ["*before Moses was, I am!*"]).

¹⁸ **"I am** (here before you John, as), **He who lives, and was dead** (when I committed My Spirit into the hands of the Father on the cross), **and behold** (I not only live again, but), **I am alive forevermore**, (I will never give up My life again). **Amen** (so be it). **And** (because I have conquered over death), **I have the keys** (the right of free and unlimited access), **of Hades** (the holding place of the dead), **and of Death**, (itself).

F APPLICATION:

Christ has gone to Hades and come out again. The holding place of the dead could not incarcerate Christ because He had committed no crime. Christ died *for* sin, but He did not die *in* sin. Christ conquered death in His resurrection! *"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"* (1 Corinthians 15:54b-55) Christ alone, not only has free and unlimited access to Hades, but He also has the authority to say who will ever go there and who won't. He has authority over Hades and death both!

4. The statute of His appearance, (1:19, 20)

INTERPRETATION:

¹⁹ **"Write** (down now), **the things which you have seen** (in the past - chapter 1), **and the things which are** (presently - chapters 2-3), **and the things which will take place after this**, (in the future - chapters 4-22).

²⁰ **"The mystery** (that which has been hidden up until now), **of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands:** (I will unveil for you now), **The**

seven stars are the angels (messengers [v. 16]),²¹ **of the seven churches** (of Asia [v. 11]), **and the seven lampstands which you saw are the** (individual), **seven churches**, (themselves).

F APPLICATION:

The churches are represented by lampstands because they are to be light bearers! "*Lampstands*" here, is the very word used in Matthew 5:14. We are to be letting our light shine brightly. We are not to let it go out, nor are we to cover it up. We bear the light by the transformation it has had, and continues to have on our personal lives, as well as by offering it to others to light the way of salvation. We are to enlighten the world as to the change the Lord Jesus Christ can have upon them personally and the world comprehensively. It is to reveal the darkness and lostness in our own lives as well as in the world; and steer us away from shipwreck.

²¹ There are three prominent views as to who the stars represent. One is that they represent guardian angels who are to watch over the churches. Another view is that they are delegates from the seven churches that have come to visit John. The third view is that they are the pastors of the seven churches.

"Angel" (Greek, *aggelos*) signifies "a messenger"...

Stars in Scripture stand for those having authority and leadership; also for teachers, both faithful (Daniel 12:3), and false (Jude 13). Inasmuch as the name "angel" is our Lord's interpretation of the symbol star, the name "angel" cannot be itself another emblem. It must be the actual name applied by the Lord to certain persons definitely responsible for the state of the churches addressed. Now the Greek word *aggelos*, translated "angel," is used of *men*, in Luke 7:24 - "the messengers (*aggeloi*) of John." In 7:19 we read of these same men, "John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to the Lord . . . and . . . they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying," etc. That is, they were the representatives of John, just as in the same chapter (verse 27) the same *word* (*aggelos*) is used concerning John himself, in his relationship to Christ: "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face."

Again, in James 2:25, the word *aggelos* is used to describe the spies who came to Rahab: "she received the messengers" (*aggeloi*) etc.; ...William Newell, "*The Book of the Revelation*," p. 32.

"We have seen that the Greek word *angelos* is almost universally used to mean messenger. The risen Lord is recognizing the ministry of overseers in the church. Scripture clearly teaches that God holds the overseers of the Church responsible for the spiritual condition of the people, and this responsibility is not only upon the pastors but upon all who hold positions of leadership. No angel in Heaven could he held responsible for the state of the Church on earth. This is clearly a word to human messengers, and reveals that even though there is no difference between the clergy and the laity, since God commands all believers to follow His Word and to walk worthy of the calling wherewith they have been called, there is nevertheless an increased responsibility upon those who are spiritual leaders because of the increased opportunity for spiritual service. The oneness of the invisible body of the Church is clearly taught in the epistles, but here the local church is the center of the scene. Every congregation must stand by itself independently and be individually responsible to God. Each lampstand is on its own base, giving forth its own light distinct from the other congregations. Christ in the midst of the lampstands shows us that the individual churches are to be centered in Him, gathered around His Word." Donald Grey Barnhouse, "*Revelation*," (MI: Zondervan, 1971), p. 32, 33)

 **INTERPRETATION:**

F **APPLICATION:**

 **COMMENTARY:**