



The Seven Candlesticks

I WAS in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.* 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. 19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.* (Rev 1:10-20)

John was "in the Spirit." He was in a state of inner ecstasy. His mind had perhaps been wondering over his younger years when he had laid his head upon the Lord's shoulder at that Last Supper. Now he is on a lonely island with no worldly attractions to distract him. His mind was fixed only upon things heavenly. Our best fellowship with our Lord is when we are alone in a quiet place with no distractions. This was John's case. John is in advanced years (over 90 years of age most likely) so even human desires did not prevent his soul being staid upon the Lord. I have enjoyed the same ecstasy (to a far lesser extent) while simply driving on a long trip and singing the hymns I had heard of mother in childhood. We all need to have a Patmos Island to resort for communion with the Lord, whether a mountain, a closet, an island, or an automobile.

“ . . . on the Lord’s Day.” I do not believe this has reference to the first day of the week since it would not add or detract meaning to the prophecies given. I believe it is more than a single day – a prophetic period perhaps. One reason I believe this is not the first day of the week is based upon John’s other writings in which he never refers to the Lord’s Day, but only to the “first day of the week” in John 20:1. Additionally, a Day to the Lord is Eternal for He is Eternal. He does not reside in darkness, but rather in resplendent light.

In considering the visions and proclamation of this Book, please bear in mind that John was a man of his age unaccustomed to visions so glorious and wonderful. The vocabulary and imagination of his day were not equal to the grandeur of those revelations made before him; so he uses the best terms he is able that will also relate to his contemporary fellow worshippers.

There was no more audible or clear sound in John’s day than a trumpet. Though it sounded in a blast. Its notes were clear and discernible – just like the Voice of our Lord. *and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.* We are most in God’s sight when He is behind us. He watches over every move of His saints. The Lord identifies Himself immediately to John: *I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.* Our Lord always makes Himself known to His people whether on the shores of Galilee, the wind-swept seas of Galilee, or in prayer and communion. Remember how He revealed Himself to the two men of the Road to Emmaus by the breaking of Bread. He now gives John His title in Glory as the *I AM*. He was never I WAS, or I WILL BE, but the eternal Present – *I AM!* IN our mortal imaginations, we cannot fathom the meaning of Eternity; so our Lord gives John another means of identifying His character and nature – *the first and the last.* Man can barely imagine the very beginning in the Mind of God in eternity past, or the Last things in the Mind of God in eternity future; but it is enough for us to know that our Lord is the beginning and end of all things. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* (John 1:1-3) But the ‘Last’ in Christ is an Eternal Day in Glory.

What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. The vision is not meant for John alone, but for all Christians of times past and present. So the Lord commands John to write all that he sees. It is to be sent to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor. There were more churches than those mentioned such as that at Colosse, Miletus, Galacia, etc. But the Book is intended for more than these seven representative churches. It was meant for the churches of John’s day as well as those of our own time. As is the case with every other Book of the Bible: *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.* (Rev 1:3) (That is, blessed are ALL who read and keep the Words of this Book – including us today). For now, it is enough to know that the Book was to be sent to these seven churches which John describes more fully in the following two chapters.

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, Here is the most beautifully figurative description of our Lord in all of the Testament. He was observed in the midst of the Seven Candlesticks. Out of His mouth went a two-edged sword – a further description of Christ as the WORD. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb 4:12) There is a reason for the two-edged sword. It cuts in BOTH ways to either convict us of sin, or to condemn those who persist in that sin. The seven stars represent the seven angels, or ministers, of the churches. The Lord holds them as a diadem in His hand. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. (Isaiah 62:3) The church constitutes the crown of Christ in perfection.

The first thing Christ does when He appears in Body or Spirit is to place us at ease: *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. 19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.* The Church is where *“two or three are gathered together in His name.*

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt 18:20)

But the church is divided in our day as well as in the day of John. The Seven Candlesticks represents the continuing nature of the Church from Abraham to today. In the Tabernacle and in the Temple, it was represented by a single Candlestick of seven branches before the Holiest of Holies. This was the Light of the Holy Spirit of Christ which one must pass to approach the Veil and Mercy Seat. Today, the churches are divided, but One in purpose. And Christ is forever among His Church in all of their divisions if they are truly churches honoring Him. The message of this chapter is for the Seven Churches, and all churches, of that day – but also for us for today.

PART V will begin a study of the Seven Church individually – there meaning for the time of John and for us today.