

Revelation, Part 2 — To the church

John begins the message to the church by addressing the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia. This region comprises the western part of Turkey.

Revelation 1:4 NKJV John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: 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,

These seven churches were in Asia and not far from the Island called Patmos in the Aegean Sea.

The churches are listed clockwise from the southwest:

Ephesus,
Smyrna,
Pergamos,
Thyatira, Sardis,
Philadelphia,
Laodicea.

Several other churches are mentioned by name in the New Testament:

Corinth, Berea, Philippi, Antioch, Cenchrea, Galatia, Macedonia, and Thessalonica. In addition, there were churches throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and house churches in many cities. The message that was given to John listed the seven churches in Asia, but it is relevant to the whole church.

It is good to remember what Paul told Timothy.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 NKJV All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

As we suggested in our previous study, the number seven often refers to perfection or fullness. This would be referring to the fullness of the church.

The message of the Revelation came from the Father to Jesus Christ by His angel to His servant John to the Church.

Revelation 1:4 NKJV John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: 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,

The “seven Spirits who are before God’s throne” refer to the perfection and completion of the Holy Spirit.



This revelation carries the full inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This may refer to Isaiah 11:2 that describes the fulness of the Spirit that rests upon Christ.

Isaiah 11:2 NKJV The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

This is not referring to seven different or distinct “spirits” but the fulness of the Holy Spirit in all of His power and perfections.

Revelation 1:5a NKJV and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

- Thus far, the Revelation has shown Jesus Christ to be: *“He Who is, Who was, and Who is to come.”*
- Now *“Jesus the Faithful Witness”* refers to the reliability and faithfulness of Jesus Christ.
Jesus was obedient to the Father in every aspect of His life, ministry, works and death.
- *“Firstborn from the dead”* indicates much more than His resurrection. Jesus is the resurrection and the life and He stands preeminent above all beings. He is above Abraham, Moses, and all of the Apostles. He is above all of the holy angels. The idea of the *“firstborn from the dead”* is a testimony of His power that was given to Him from the Father over death.
- The *“ruler over the kings of the earth”* shows that Christ is not just King over the kingdom of God, but King over all.

Philippians 2:20-11 NKJV At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

After the address to the church, John addresses the Lord Jesus Christ in all of His glory.

Revelation 1:5b-6 NKJV 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.

The word “loved” is in the past tense. It refers to the efficacious and redemptive work of Christ that provided the atonement for our sins and blood covering and cleansing. God so loved that He gave His Son, Who died upon the cross to make propitiation for our sins. The word “loved” also refers to the fact that Christ has perfectly satisfied and completed what was necessary to expiate or put away our sins in His own blood. The impact of Christ’s atonement (washing and cleansing) is perfectly seen in the status that the Lord Jesus has given us.

We have been made kings and priests to God the Father.

The washing and cleansing is enough, but He has made us a royal priesthood.

1 Peter 2:9-10 NKJV But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

What Christ has done has transferred us into a new creation and relationship with God.

He has called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light, and has made us royal priests to our God. What Christ has done has made us heirs and joint-heirs with Christ and partakers with Christ (Romans 8:17; Hebrews 3:1). We are being identified with Christ in His glorious reign and power. Christ has transferred us into a royal bloodline and has conferred upon us the privilege of kings and priests to God.

Revelation 1:5b-6 NKJV 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.**

We should exalt and praise Jesus for all He has done. A major part of our new life and relationship with God the Father is found in this. We have been raised to this position to give glory to the Lord.

“To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Glory and dominion refers to the exalted position that Jesus Christ has as King of kings and Lord of lords. We have been lifted out of our former estate and low positions, but Jesus reigns above all and His dominion shall never end. He has been raised to the highest position of power and glory, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named both and eternally, and has put all things under His feet, (Ephesians 1:20-22).

Revelation 1:7 NKJV Behold, He is coming with 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.

“Clouds” refer to the Shekinah clouds of the glory of God that surrounds His presence. Often when God has appeared, He came in clouds of glory, (Exodus 16:10; 19:9; 24:15-18). *“He is coming with clouds”* reflects back to Daniel’s visions and the promise of the angels at His glorious ascension.

Daniel 7:13 NKJV I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

Acts 1:9-10 NKJV Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked

steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,

Acts 1:11 NKJV who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

Matthew 26:64 NKJV Jesus said to him, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Revelation 1:7 NKJV Behold, He is coming with 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.

When Christ returns to this earth, “Every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him.”

The second coming of Christ will be so momentous that even the dead will see Him in His glory. Jesus said, “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be,” (Matthew 24:27).

“All the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him” when they realize that this is the Christ they rejected. Believers do not mourn at His coming. They shout — “Even so come Lord Jesus. Amen”

John’s introduction concludes with Jesus Christ making an introduction and declaration of Who He is.

Revelation 1:8 NKJV “I 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.”

This is a declaration of Christ’s eternal deity. When He came the first time they mocked and rejected Him.

He is the eternal Son of God, the Almighty.

Jesus is both the Beginning and the End. His power, being and position is absolute. All things find their origin, continuance and fulfillment in Christ. When Jesus says, “Who is and Who was and Who is to come,” He is referring to His unchanging nature.

Hebrews 13:8 NKJV Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Christ’s introduction gives solace and strength to everyone who puts their faith and trust in Him. Regardless of what may transpire, our faith and hope are secure. He is *“the Almighty.” The Lord God Omnipotent reigns.* The word *“Almighty”* is used 9 times in the Book of Revelation. This is a declaration of the sovereign power of our conquering King.