

THE BOOK OF REVELATION
“Divine Voice to Seven Churches”
Rev. 1:12, 13

1. The Bible is God’s revelation to mankind. It has been transmitted to us accurately by Holy Spirit inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21). All of this is clearly taught here (1:1, 10, 11).

2. Salient information is given about John:

a. He was “in the Spirit” (v. 10). This denotes he was under the control of the Holy Spirit for revelation and accurate transmission of revelation.

b. He was “on the Lord’s Day.” Without any controversy this is the day 1) On which the Lord was resurrected (Mt. 23:1); 2) The church (Body of Christ) was founded (Acts 2:1 cf. Lev. 23:16); 3) The early church met (Acts 20:1); 4) Support for the Lord’s work is to be collected (1 Cor. 16:1); 5) The “new creation” is declared (Ro. 6:4) cf. Ex. 40:2, 17 for the day on which the tabernacle was set up and Lev. 1:1 the place from which the Lord spoke. Note: This is totally distinct from the weekly Sabbath of the Mosaic Law (Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-19).

c. He was addressed for he “heard a great voice.” The sound came from “behind” because it was startling, sudden, and unexpected (cf. Eck. 3:12). His commission was direct: 1) What you see. 2) Write a Book. 3) Send the Book to the seven local churches named.

3. Scripture records what John did (action) and what John saw (vision). Consider these:

1. ACTION of John v. 12

a. Stated

Responding to what he heard, John “turned.” Twice the verb is recorded (). The first instance is an aorist active indicative form and the second is an aorist active participle. The force of the verb is intransitive i.e. it does not require an object. It could readily be translated John “turned himself around.” Note action of Mary (Jn 20:14, 16).

b. Purposed

The present infinitive “to see” () suggests John expected to get a full view of what he heard. It is interesting that John saw “the” voice “which” (i.e. its quality; of what sort it was). Make no mistake, the voice “spoke” () with real sounds. Moreover, it intended communication as the prepositional phrase “with me” indicates.

2. VISION of John v. 12

a. It was Perceived

Two distinct verbs are used in this verse for “see.” The first views the single look at a particular point (). The second views with a discerning mind (). The physical eye is sublimated to the activity of the soul.

Hence, as controlled by the Spirit, John saw more than the eye!

b. It was Sign-i-fied v. 12 cf. 1:1

Here is a symbol which John clearly could see. The literal “lampstand” () has a significant meaning which is openly explained (1:20). Both the lampstands and the churches are real. Note: This is a major tenet of dispensational interpretation. Rejecting allegorical interpretation, unless specifically stated in the Bible (cf. Gal. 4:19-31), dispensational interpretation affirms the antithesis -- literal, plain, or normal meaning of words and grammar.

1) Enumerated

The number “seven” () is recorded noting perfection. Contextually, this number is found (vv. 4, 11, 20). In the LXX, the candlestick or lampstand answers to the Hebrew menorah (), the candelabrum which had seven lamps (). The seven candlesticks were united in one as part of the furniture of the Mosaic tabernacle (Ex. 24:31ff). The same sort of lamp appears in Zechariah’s vision (4:2). Solomon’s temple had five lamps on the right side and five on the left before the oracle (1 Kings 7:49). What startled John is that he saw seven separate light-bearers and each represented a specific church. Let’s face it, every local church is to shine as a light-bearer in the darkness and gloom (Phil. 2:15). The seven churches of Asia have long since been removed (cf. 2:5). What kind of light-bearing do we give today?!?

2) Fabricated

The candlesticks are of gold. This is costly, precious, royal metal. Of such is a local body of believers -- altogether the most precious thing on earth. Blessed be the Lord!

c. It was Located v. 13

What a remarkable place is mentioned in relation to the candlesticks --“midst” (). How precious to learn where the Lord is viewed. He is there either behind the fourth candlestick or better moving freely from one to another. This is His divinely appointed place among the churches. It is the place of pre-eminence.

d. It was Personified

“Like the Son of Man” is doubtless taken from the O.T. (Dan. 7:13). The reference is to the Son of God Who became flesh. The Lord is God’s mediatorial King Who will rule on the earth. John knew the Lord well on earth and he never forgot Him (1 John 1:1, 2). He may have been different from what John remembered, hence the Lord is referred to “like” (), but he knew Him the moment He appeared in that vision. Moreover, this vision is of our Lord after He went back to the Glory. This shows that the incarnation of Christ is permanent.

Conclusion

The trumpet sound behind John (v. 10) was as a great voice. It could not be ignored. His response to this unusual event moved him to see the Lord and the witness of the local churches (assemblies). As we read the Word of God and respond to it, may we first see our Lord and then the ministry committed to us as local bodies of believers. Amen.