



Revelation Chap. 1:17-20

DR. LUTHER RAY SMITH JR.

Rev. 1:17-20 NASB

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man...”

John records his physical reaction of observing the glory of Jesus Christ. He observes that the sight that John is seeing is so out of his world, so unique, and so powerful that he falls in fear due to the sight that he was seeing. This is not unique to Scripture.

Old
Testament
Passages

Terror Regarding Appearances

16.) Dan. 8:16-17

Reactions from others in front of divine beings

And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, “Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.” So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was **frightened and fell on my face**; but he said to me, “Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end.” **(Dan. 8:16-17 NASB)**

Old
Testament
Passages

Golden Lampstands

16.) Dan. 8:16-17

17.) Dan. 10:8-10

Reactions from others in front of divine beings

So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, **for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor (paleness), and I retained no strength. But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.** Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. **(Dan. 10:9-10 NASB)**

Old
Testament
Passages

Golden Lampstands

18.) Dan. 10:14-15

Reactions from others in front of divine beings

“Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.”

When he had spoken to me according to these words, **I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. (Dan. 10:14-15 NASB)**

Old
Testament
Passages

Golden Lampstands

18.) Dan. 10:14-15

19.) Ezek. 1:28

Reactions from others in front of divine beings

“As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, **I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking...**” (Ezek. 1:28 NASB)

Rev. 1:17-20 NASB

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

“Do not be afraid...”

Due to John’s reaction according to what he saw and observed Jesus tells John that he should not be afraid of what he sees. This is observed in the Old Testament where divine messengers would bring “terror” to a person.

Old
Testament
Passages

“Don’t Be Afraid”

20.) Dan. 10:12

Reactions from others in front of divine beings

“Then he said to me, “**Do not be afraid**, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words.”
(Dan. 10:12 NASB)

Note: This statement (and these events) go against people who say (or sing) that they have seen God

Old
Testament
Passages

First & the Last

20.) Isa. 48:12-16

Isa. 48:12-16 NASB

God, through Isaiah is the Speaker

“Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last. “Surely My hand founded the earth, And My right hand spread out the heavens; When I call to them, they stand together. “Assemble, all of you, and listen! Who among them has declared these things? The LORD loves him; he will carry out His good pleasure on Babylon, And His arm will be against the Chaldeans. “I, even I, have spoken; indeed I have called him I have brought him, and He will make his ways successful. “Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit.”

Just A Note...

I am convinced this is one of the main points of John's epistle (this phrase "sent me" is **only** used by Jesus Christ and is found 37x in the book of John!)

Rev. 1:17-20 NASB

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Rev. 1:18 Greek Translation

καὶ ὁ ζῶν καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρὸς καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶν εἰμι εἰς
τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἔχω τὰς κλεῖς τοῦ
θανάτου καὶ τοῦ ᾄδου

Rev. 1:18 DSV

“And the living[One] became dead and LOOK living
I am into the ages of the ages, and I have (or hold) the
keys of the death and of the hades”

This phrase “The Living One”

It is the phrase ὁ ζῶν

Present active participle

In these words the noun is found in the adjective.

Can be translated “the [One] living” or “the [One] who is living.”

“And I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore...”

This underscores the reason why Jesus is the “Living One.”

This connects back to verses found in the Old Testament

Old
Testament
Passages

Being Alive Forevermore

21.) Ps. 16:10

Reactions from others in front of divine beings

“For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.” (Ps. 16:10 NASB)

“And I have the **keys** of death and hades”

The word “key” is the word κλείς (pronounced *kleis*).

This word is used **six (6)** times in in New Testament.

Can refer to having authority or power to complete a certain task/activity (**c.f., Mat. 16:19; Rev. 20:1**)

Also used to recognize one authority or position (**Rev. 3:7**)

“And I have the keys of **death and hades**”

This phrase is used 4x in the New Testament

The phrase is only used in Revelation (1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14)

The word for “death” is θάνατος (pronounced *thanatos*) used 119x in the NT. In most cases it means physical death.

Hades is the word ᾅδης (pronounced *hades*). It is used only 11x in the NT.

“And I have the keys of death and hades”

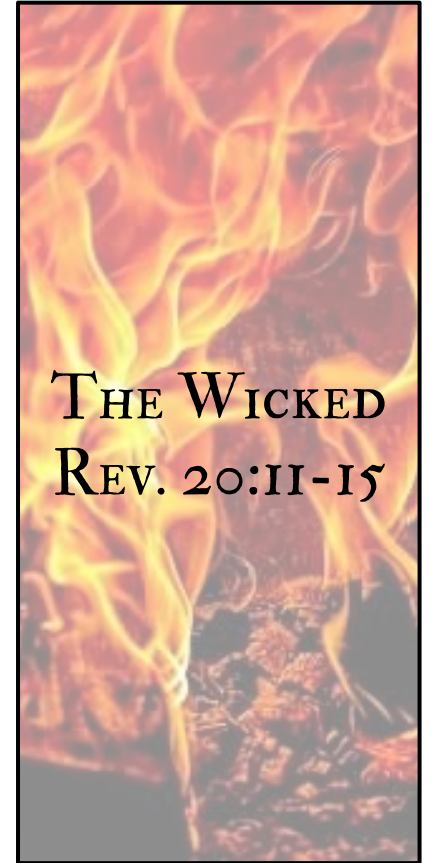
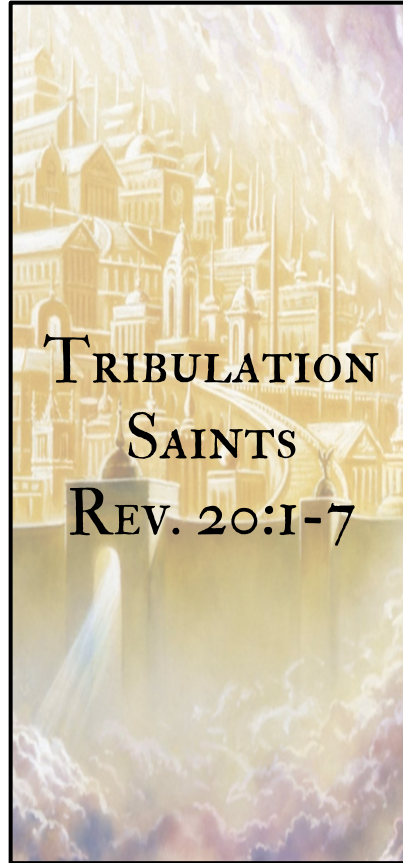
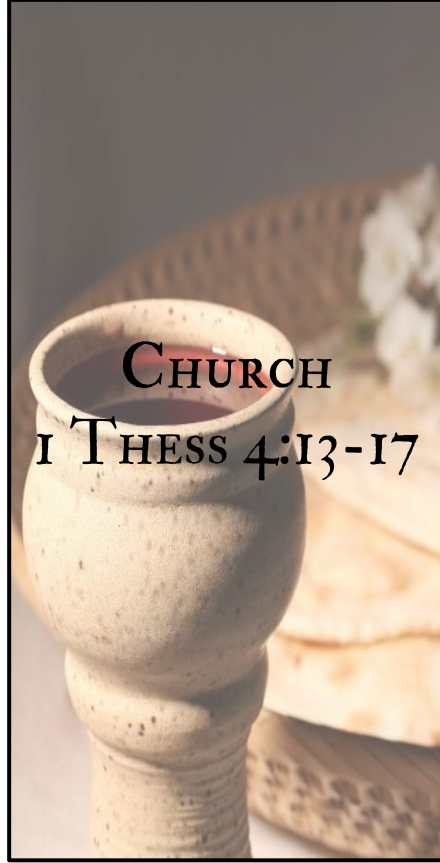
Some usages include Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Acts 2:31

In one context it is used as a place of torment (Lk. 16:23)

This word in this particular context has to do with the grave. Christ Himself has the authority over physical death and the grave. This is also discussed in the Old Testament.

Jesus says this to John to highlight He is the one who has died and has resurrected to an imperishable, indestructible life. Due to this reality of resurrection and His obedience to the Father He has been given the authority by God the Father to resurrect all mankind!

Future Main Resurrections By Jesus Christ



The Trajectory of Thought In Verse 18

“And I am the One who is
Living...”

Living I am (into the ages
of ages “eternity”)

“I was (or became)
dead...”

“I have the keys of
death and hades”

Rev. 1:17-20 NASB

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THREE ASPECTS CONCERNING THE BOR

Therefore write the things which **you have seen** (**We are here in our study!**), and the things **which are**, and the things which **will take place after these things**. (Rev. 1:19 NASB)

Rev. 1:17-20 NASB

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

As for the mystery of the seven stars...

The word “mystery” is the word *μυστήριον* (pronounced *musterion*).

Used 27x in the New Testament.

This word refers to something that has been hidden from our knowledge and understanding.

In this context Jesus gives the answer to the details of what John has seen (c.f., Rev. 1:12-16)

The Mystery Revealed In Verse 20

Seven golden lampstands
(menorahs) (v.12)

Seven Churches (v. 20)

Seven stars in the hand
of Christ (v. 16)

Seven angels of the
seven churches (v.20)

Question: Are these divine angels over churches?

Angel

The Greek word is ἄγγελος (pronounced *anggelos*) which means “angel, envoy or messenger.”

Is used 172x in the New Testament.

For the most part it is used of divine/otherworldly messengers

This word is also used of human beings (Jas. 2:25)

Things To Note

There is no instance in Scripture where particular divine messengers have authority over a church body.

Remember Jesus is telling **John** to write this to the seven churches (v. 19). It would make no sense for Jesus to tell John to write this only to give it to divine angels for them to deliver the seven churches.

To Sum Up

Jesus gives His credentials to John (not just for John but for the audience who will read this).

Jesus Himself, after showing John these images, gives Him the explanation of these images.

Angels in this context have to do with earthly messengers who will read this to the fellowships in these regions.

