

REVELATION CHAPTERS 1-4

1. Purpose of the Book—Rev. 1:1

- The theme is Jesus Christ
- “shortly”—quickly or suddenly coming to pass indicating rapidity of execution after the beginning takes place
- The idea is not that the event may occur soon, but that when it does it will be sudden (Walvoord)

2. Names of Christ

- Names not previously applied to Christ but are found here
 - Faithful witness (1:5)
 - Prince of the kings of the death (1:5)
 - Alpha (1:11)
 - Omega (1:11)
 - The first (1:11)
 - The last (1:11)
 - The living one (Greek) (1:18)
 - The Amen (3:14)
 - The ... true witness (3:14)
 - Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5)
 - Root of David (5:5)
 - King of nations (Greek) (15:3)
 - Offspring of David (22:16)
 - Bright and morning star (22:16)
- (taken from *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* by J.B. Smith)

3. The Vision of Christ—Rev. 1:10-18

- Attributes of Son of Man as suggested by symbolism In the midst of the seven candlesticks: love and familiarity
 - Clothed with a garment down to the foot: righteousness and dignity
 - Girt about the paps with a golden girdle: compassion and virility
 - His head and his hairs...white like wool, as white as snow: eternity and wisdom
 - His eyes...as a flame of fire: omniscience and scrutiny
 - His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace: judgment and purity
 - His voice as the sound of many waters: grandeur and dignity
 - And he had in his right hand seven stars: omnipotence and authority
 - Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: truth and severity
 - His countenance...as the sun shineth in his strength: holiness and glory
- (taken from *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* by J.B. Smith)

4. **The Things Which Are**—Rev. 2-3

- The Prophetic Significance of the Seven Churches

“The seven churches are typical and prophetic in the sense that conditions prevailing in the order of mention anticipate universal church conditions from the time of John on to the close of church history.

That these seven churches have this typical and prophetic character is manifest by the following observations:

Chapters 2 and 3 constitute a part of “the words of this prophecy” (1:3 cf. 22:18). Of necessity, therefore, these two chapters have a prophetic sense.

The number seven as usual suggests completeness, for no other churches are mentioned in the book. Moreover, chapters 4 and 5 which follow tell of “things which must be hereafter” (4:1)...

Ephesus pictures the early decline of vital Christianity at the cost of the first century, in this, that she had left her first love.

Smyrna covers the period of martyrdom prevailing during the first three centuries familiarly known as the ten general church persecutions.

Pergamos prefigures the union of church and state under Constantine including the development of priestcraft and moral corruption.

Thyatira portrays the domination of the Roman hierarchy, when a corrupt spiritual leadership under the guise of a lewd woman “knew the depths of Satan”.

Sardis points to the days of the Reformation at which “a few names...which... [had] not defiled their garments,” again brought a saving message to a benighted Christendom and a needy world.

Philadelphia speaks of a period of orthodoxy and evangelism inaugurated by such leaders as Wesley and Whitefield, at which time all the nations of the world presented “open doors” for the reception of the Gospel.

Laodicea stages the end-time apostasy in language precisely the same as that employed concerning the last days by Jesus and apostles Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude.”
(taken from *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* by J.B. Smith)

5. **Things Which Shall Be Hereafter**—Rev. 4

- The introduction and background of the tremendous sweep of prophetic events predicted in the rest of the book

6. The Viewing of God's Throne

- Rev. 4:2-3
 - John is in heaven
 - God's appearance was like:
 - Jasper—like a diamond
 - Sardine—like a ruby
 - i.e. God's purity and redemption
 - Emerald rainbow—denotes the faithfulness and mercy of God, reconciling between His holiness and retributive justice

*****NB** Rainbow not there in Rev. 20:11

- Rev. 4:4
 - 24 thrones on which 24 elders seated
 - crowns of the victor
 - represent the Church in Glory
 - therefore Rapture has taken place

- Rev. 4:5
 - Seven spirits of God
 - Sevenfold Spirit of God
 - Seven indicates perfection
 - Isaiah 11:2-3

- Rev. 4:6
 - Four living creatures
 - Significance:

“The four resemblances are similar to those of the Septuagint version of Ezekiel 1:10. The Hebrew has ox in place of calf. The allusion appears to be to the four heads of the creatures upon earth: to the lion as the head of wild beasts; the ox, of domestic animals; man as the sovereign head of all creatures (Genesis 1:26); and the eagle as the bird of the highest wing. In Ezekiel the order of mention—man, lion, ox, eagle—is apparently given in the order of strength and power to subdue, whereas in this text the inspired write appears to have varied the order.

In the Old Testament, the four living creatures represented God's presence in earthly creation. However, when Christ came, He was the true Emmanuel (God with us). Anyone familiar with the four Gospels recognizes that He represented Himself in a fourfold manner and in order of sequence corresponding to the subject matter of the four Gospels. In Matthew He appears as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; in Mark as the servant of the Lord (corresponding to the ox of sacrifice, 10:45); in Luke He is the Son of man seeking the lost (19:10); and in John He is the eagle that soars on highest wing in His apprehension and exhibition of grace and truth.”

(taken from *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* by J.B. Smith)

- Rev. 4:8-9
 - Their Worship
 - Compare Isa. 6:3
- Rev. 4:11
 - Their Doxology
 - Notice creation by the will of God