

## Revelation 1:4-20

### Verse-By-Verse Notes

#### Verse 4

- \* John is writing to *literal* 1<sup>st</sup> century churches in Asia Minor (Modern-Day Turkey – see map). Revelation was a circular letter to be sent throughout the seven churches.
- \* The “seven spirits” is a reference to the Holy Spirit. “7” is the biblical number of perfection or completion, so this is a reference to the perfections/fullness of the Holy Spirit.

#### Verse 5

- \* Note the Trinitarian nature of John’s greeting: *Father* (“him who was, and who is, and who is to come”), *Spirit* (“seven spirits before his throne”), & *Son* (Jesus Christ)
- \* “Ruler of kings on earth” is remarkably counter-cultural in a time when Caesar was considered the supreme ruler.

#### Verse 7

- \* “He is coming with the clouds” is a reference to the *second coming* at the beginning of the millennium period, *not* the rapture.

#### Verse 9

- \* John affirms the reality of tribulation for the Christian (see also Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12; John 16:33)
- \* Note the triad of *tribulation*, *kingdom*, and *endurance*. We must patiently *endure tribulation* while we wait for the *kingdom* (the coming of Christ in the clouds, see verse 7)

#### Verse 10

- \* “The Lord’s Day” is a reference to Sunday (the first day of the week) as the day of worship in the early church. See also 1 Corinthians 16:2 and Acts 20:7.
- \* Notice how many times John will use the word “like” in Revelation (around 70 times). This indicates a lot of symbolism throughout the book.

#### Verse 11

- \* John’s original audience was seven historical churches.
- \* Robert Mounce: “Although the letters are written to real churches of the first century, they are relevant to the church universal, for the strengths and weaknesses of the seven are characteristic of individual churches throughout history.”)

#### Verse 12

- \* “Lampstands” are visual representations of the seven churches. See also Zechariah 4 and the vision of the golden lampstand.
- \* “In the midst . . . a son of man” – points to the presence of Christ within His church.

## Verse 17

- \* “as though dead” – A common response when humans encounter the divine.

## Verse 19

- \* The basic outline of Revelation – “The things that you *have seen*, those that *are*, and those that *are to take place after this*.” This verse basically excludes *preterism* as a viable reading of Revelation because it clearly says that John’s vision will contain future events, whereas preterism insists that the events of Revelation occurred in 70 A.D.

## Verse 20

- \* “seven stars in my right hand” are the angels who carried the message to the seven churches. This could mean literal angels *or* the pastors/leading elders of the seven churches. See handout.

**THE BIG TAKEAWAY from 1:4-20 is that *A REIGNING KING JESUS IS SOVEREIGN OVER HIS CHURCH AND HAS SOMETHING TO SAY TO IT***

