

# Seed Thoughts

from the



# Book of Revelation

## SEED THOUGHTS FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION

**“Behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I [the Apostle John] heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.” (Rev. 4:1)**

This verse shows that a *privileged revelation* is extended to God’s people, granting them an insight into activity in heaven and the divine purpose with respect to mankind. The Apostle John, who pictures the Church class, saw as a vision what would become a reality or an experience of the Church here below in a *progressive* unfolding or fulfillment during the approximately two-thousand-year-long Christian or Gospel Age. However, to obtain the blessing of the privileged revelation, John had to *exercise some energy*. He was not simply caught up but was invited to “*come up hither*” and he would be shown “*things which must be hereafter.*” And the lesson is the same for us today. As God’s people, we must bestir ourselves and become active in the search for the knowledge of the divine will respecting us.

**“And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.**

**“And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.**

**“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.” (Rev. 4:2-4)**

At this time, we will not go into the significance of the details of this vision but will merely note that the Apostle John was given an insight or a view into heaven through a door, where he beheld a throne and God seated thereon. John was eventually fascinated to behold a book or scroll in the right hand of God.

**“And I saw in the right hand of him [God] that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.**

**“And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?**

**“And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.**

**“And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.” (Rev. 5:1-4)**

The apostle’s emotionalism and personality become apparent in connection with this vision. The scroll held in the right hand of Jehovah, who was seated on the throne, contained His purpose or plan for mankind, and John was most intent on

knowing the contents. When no being was found worthy to open and read the scroll, John “wept much.”

**“And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.**

**“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.**

**“And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.” (Rev. 5:5-7)**

Without explaining the symbolism of the seven eyes, the seven horns, and the seven Spirits of God, we will just say that our Lord Jesus Christ became the recipient of the scroll, taking it out of the right hand of his Father, and subsequently was privileged to open the seven seals. The beginning verses of the Book of Revelation help us to understand the relationship of God, Jesus, and this last book of the Bible. It is true that the first verse opens with the words “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” but when we consider the fifth chapter, we see that *God* is the Author of the plan of salvation and that Jesus is merely granted the privilege of disclosing its details. The revelation, therefore, is *of God*, but Jesus is the Revelator.

**“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he [God] sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”  
(Rev. 1:1)**

Here we are told that God gave this message to “his angel.” In this case, the angel is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. (God “*signified*” the Book of Revelation; that is, He codified it in signs and symbols that need to be unlocked for a proper understanding.) The terminology should not surprise us because elsewhere the Master is referred to as the “messenger [or angel] of the covenant, whom ye delight in” (Mal. 3:1). In other words, God, the Author of the plan, sent Jesus as His messenger to disclose details to the Church down here on earth. However, since Jesus was a spirit being, he channeled the details through the ministration of “his servant [the Apostle] John.”

**“Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.” (Rev. 1:2)**

Jesus gave the message to John; that is, he testified or dictated the message, the “word of God,” and John recorded it.

**“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”  
(Rev. 1:3)**

Let us not hastily conclude that those who just read the Book of Revelation are promised a blessing. Although it is true that sincere, consecrated Christians, in examining and investigating the Book of Revelation, might comprehend a small portion and thus would get some blessing from the experience, the emphasis in this particular verse is in another direction. “Blessed is the one who *reads aloud this message*” is the thought. The verse would then read: “Blessed is he that readeth aloud, and they that hear the reading of the words of this prophecy, and keep those things ... for the time is at hand.”

**“John to the seven churches which are in Asia:  
Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is,  
and which was, and which is to come; and from the  
seven Spirits which are before his throne;**

**“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful  
witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the  
prince of the kings of the earth....” (Rev. 1:4,5a)**

John addressed the message to the seven stages of the Church down through the Gospel Age, and realizing that ultimately, in due time, Christians would gain the import of the message, he wished them God’s blessing. “Grace ... and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come,” that is, from the great Jehovah Himself, the eternal One, who is from everlasting to everlasting (Psa. 41:13; 90:2). The blessing also came

from “the seven Spirits which are before his [God’s] throne.” The seven Spirits are actually the *one* Holy Spirit of God, but in the Book of Revelation, the Holy Spirit is dispensed in seven special messages to the Church. In other words, there have been seven successive dispensational outpourings of the Holy Spirit down through the Gospel Age: a message to the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (Rev. 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14). And finally, the blessing was “from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.”

**“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” (Rev. 1:7)**

Again John’s emotions are apparent, this time in his enthusiastic and hearty assent: “Even so, Amen.” The apostle looked forward to the time when the world will recognize Jesus as their Messiah, including those who were involved with his death. Details later on show that Jesus, who was crucified on Golgotha’s Hill, will grant great mercy and benevolence.

**“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Rev. 1:8)**

This verse is generally misunderstood to mean that Jesus was likening himself to the “Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” But the thought is not that Jesus is the Almighty One. Rather, Jesus was stating, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, and this title was bestowed upon me by the Lord God Almighty Himself.” In other words, “My Father says that I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending. He gave me this title.”

**“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.**

**“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,**

**“Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.**

**“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.” (Rev. 1:9-12)**

In turning to see the voice that declared itself to be the Alpha and the Omega, the Apostle John noted that none other than Jesus



Christ, the High Priest of the Church, was the speaker conveying this message to him. John also noted seven golden candlesticks, which were the seven churches (Rev. 1:20).

**“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.**

**“His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;**

**“And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.**

**“And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” (Rev. 1:13-16)**

These verses are not an eyewitness description of what Jesus actually looks like in his now divine body. Instead they are a *character portrayal* in figurative or symbolic language of various virtues or attributes that Jesus Christ possesses, and he uses these attributes in his ministration as High Priest over the Church as he walks in the midst of or tends the seven candlesticks.

In addition to wearing a priestly robe that reached down to his feet, Jesus was “girt about the paps with a golden girdle.” This latter expression seems strange because we would use the word

“chest” in connection with masculinity, but the word “paps” was purposed language. The vision is telling us that not only does Jesus use his strength and power to help his followers, but also he particularly exercises affection, love, and concern on their behalf.

The hair on Jesus’ head being white depicts two attributes that are favorable to the Christian. His hair “white like wool” bespeaks his great accumulation of knowledge. In a pictorial vision of God, the Prophet Daniel called the great Jehovah “the Ancient of days,” meaning that He was the very embodiment of wisdom through antiquity and experience (Dan. 7:9,13). Jesus, too, has wisdom. And his hair being “white as snow” signifies that the wisdom from above is first pure (James 3:17). His motives, as well as his objectives in dealing with his people, are always pure.

Jesus’ eyes were like “a flame of fire”; that is, among the great capabilities that he possesses are his X-ray eyes. Just as at the First Advent, he knew the thoughts that were in men, so now, while he is apart from the Church, he has the ability to examine the hearts of his people. Not only can he read their innermost thoughts and their affections toward him, but also he sees their faults that need correction.

Jesus’ feet were like “fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.” Brass (or copper) is frequently used in Scripture as a

symbol of perfect human nature, and Jesus would like us to know that he once trod the path here below in the human nature. In his ministry on our behalf, the Master was in the fiery furnace. Because of the great trials, sufferings, and sorrows that he experienced, he has compassion on his followers in their experiences. As our High Priest, he cannot fail to be touched with a feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15).

His voice was as “the sound of many waters”; that is, the message Jesus speaks from the Word of God is adapted to the various languages of earth. In calling the Church out of many nations, dialects, and tongues, he conveys the message in a way that can be understood. His message is not confined to or interpreted in only one language.

In Jesus’ right hand were “seven stars.” Leading personalities in the world are sometimes referred to as baseball or movie “stars,” and so Jesus has held seven “stars” or messengers in his right hand of power and favor. The lesson is that during the seven stages of development down through the Gospel Age, Jesus administered his Word and message to the Church through seven specially selected individuals. He ended this first chapter of the Book of Revelation by telling the significance of a “mystery”:

**“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels [human**

**messengers] of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks ... are the seven churches.”  
(Rev. 1:20)**

Out of Jesus’ mouth went “a sharp twoedged sword.” Not only did this symbolic sword come out of Jesus’ mouth, but also it had *two* edges. The signification of the two edges is that his words are sharp. They reprove sin in both his followers and his enemies. Moreover, he sends strong, penetrating messages to the Church in the Gospel Age.

Jesus’ countenance was “as the sun shineth in his strength.” Because of Jesus’ faithfulness unto death, even the ignominious death of the Cross, the Father highly exalted him (Phil. 2:8,9). Now Jesus dwells on the very highest plane of existence with his Father and radiates a similar glory (Heb. 1:2,3).

We will briefly consider the application of some of these virtues during the Ephesus and Smyrna periods of the Church. The principles still apply.

**“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” (Rev. 2:1)**

Each of the seven churches was addressed similarly in principle. The direct giving of the dispensational message that was

due for any one of the seven stages of the Church was at the hand of a particular angel or messenger.

The Church of Ephesus was the infant or primitive Church, the first stage of development. The word “Ephesus” means “desirable,” and for the apostles and other Christians in this period of development, the presence of Jesus was especially manifest in their midst. When teachers of error arose or any with improper motivations, the apostles could easily expose them. For instance, at the behest of the Apostle Peter, Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for lying to the Holy Spirit in connection with giving a gift to the Church (Acts 5:1-10). On several occasions, the Apostle Paul identified by name individuals who were having a damaging influence on the Church (1 Tim. 1:19,20; 2 Tim. 1:15; 4:10,14,15). The apostles were forceful and strong guiding lights. Thus the early Church *felt* the great power of Jesus in connection with their experiences—it was as if the Master himself were in their midst.

**“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:**

**“And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.”  
(Rev. 2:2,3)**

The Scriptures authorize only twelve apostles for the Church of God, and in this first era, those who falsely claimed to be apostles were identified by name. Thus faithful Christians in the early Church had particular clarity of vision on this subject. In addition, they bore persecution patiently and labored for Jesus' sake and did not faint. However, the Master had one criticism for the Church of Ephesus, as follows:

**“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” (Rev. 2:4)**

While those in Ephesus were very zealous and patient and suffered greatly for the Lord, the inspiration and the enthusiasm of their “first love” for Jesus were beginning to wane. The problem was that they looked on their activities more as works than as *personal* devotion to the Master.

**“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” (Rev. 2:5)**

While the Christian may fail in connection with certain activities in his life and may actually fall, if he bestirs himself and repents and does the “first works,” God's mercy is still extended on his behalf. This is a message *of forgiveness and of grace*. Allowances are made for the Christian to mend his path. We know that

as time went on, the Church as a whole fell from grace, and it became largely nominal (Matt. 13:24-30).

**“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Rev. 2:7)**

With Jesus’ declaration in verse 5, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent,” our attention hearkens back to the account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. When Adam’s inordinate affection for Eve distorted his vision and he lost his first love for his Creator, he ate of the forbidden tree and committed suicide, as it were, with his wife. He did not have sufficient faith or confidence in God that somehow things would be made right later. And so, if Christians who have similarly forgotten their first love would repent, they would gain access again to the “tree of life,” instead of being excluded from the “paradise” of God’s promises. In other words, Christians are to look forward and press on. They are not to judge themselves from the standpoint of eternal destiny but are to exert effort in trying to fulfill their contract, their covenant of sacrifice, with God to do His will (1 Cor. 4:3,4; Psa. 50:5).

**“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.**

**“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Rev. 2:8,10)**

To Smyrna, the next Church, Jesus called attention to the fact that he was “the first and the last, which was dead, and is [now] alive.” Then he told Christians of this period not to fear the persecutions they would experience, saying, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Smyrna, which means “bitter,” was the era of persecution under Pagan Rome. As an encouragement, Jesus reminded those of Smyrna that he was once put to death but that now he is alive forevermore. If faithful unto death, his followers would likewise be rewarded.

**“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” (Rev. 2:11)**

Christians are enjoined not to fear those who destroy the body but, rather, to fear those who destroy both the body and the soul in “second [permanent] death” (Matt. 10:28). The message to the Church of Smyrna inferred persecution, but the reward for overcoming would be *everlasting* life.

We trust that, by God’s grace, some blessings and benefits have accrued from considering lessons from the Book of Revelation.



Our hope is that hearts have been moved to search further into the “deep things of God” so providentially provided almost two thousand years ago to specially enlighten the Christian in our day (1 Cor. 2:10).

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**For a comprehensive, in-depth explanation of the Book of Revelation and end-time prophecy, see the 723-page book entitled *The Keys of Revelation*.**

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