

Chapter 1

Questions are being asked today, especially by the young, which seem unanswerable by their modernized religious leaders. So, instead of engendering faith and hope in their lives, religion fosters disbelief and disinterest. They are resigned to live in a world created by a God who, for the most part, brings frustration, sickness and starvation, wars and devastation, and sorrows and pain upon mankind. But, hopefully, in the study of this book, the true nature of Jesus and his Father will be seen; that even those passages which bespeak afflictions, calamities, and tragedies upon man, will reveal a God who is working in the lives of his people to bring his creation to perfection.

- [1] **The Revelation of John, a servant of God, which was given unto him of Jesus Christ, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, that he sent and signified by his angel unto his servant John,**
- [2] **Who bore record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.**
- [3] **Blessed are they who read, and they who hear and understand the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time of the coming of the Lord draws near.**
- [4] **Now this is the testimony of John to the seven servants who are over the seven churches in Asia. Grace unto you, and peace from him who is, and who was, and who is to come; who has sent forth his angel from before his throne, to testify unto those who are the seven servants over the seven churches.**
- [5] **Therefore, I, John, the faithful witness, bear record of the things which were delivered me of the angel, and from Jesus Christ the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.**

In [Verse 1] John wrote that the things which Jesus revealed unto him were “things which must shortly come to pass.” This is repeated in [Revelation 4:1]. Because of these two passages, those who have written about this book suggest that the entire book is about things which were to happen from John’s time forward, but we shall see that this is not true. In order for John to understand that which was to happen in the future, Jesus showed him things which had already happened. John was told to “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” [Verse 19] John was going to be shown the entire history of man on earth.

*[1 Nephi 3:238-242] And the angel spoke unto me, saying, Look! And I looked and beheld a man, and he was dressed in a white robe; [239] And the angel said unto me, Behold one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb! [240] Behold, he shall see and write the remainder of these things; [241] **and also many things which have been;** [242] And he shall also write concerning the end of the world.
*[this passage is also on page 1 of “about the book”]

As can be seen, an angel told Nephi around 600 years before John was born that he, John, would write “many things which have been.” So John would have to write about things which had happened before 600 B.C., when this statement was made.

There are significant differences in this chapter between the I.V. and the K.J. Bible; and though they are mostly grammatical, the following verse is one of the most serious conflicts.

[6] And unto him who loved us, be glory; who washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God, his Father. To him be glory and dominion, forever and ever. [I.V.]

[6] And has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. [K.J.]

This infers one of two things; either (1) God has a Father, or (2) God is not Jesus' Father.

Now lets look at **[Verse 5]** where it speaks of "Jesus Christ as the first begotten of the dead;" for many say that, according to the scriptures, this cannot be true, because there were others mentioned as being raised from the dead prior to the time of Jesus' resurrection.

[Acts 26:22-23] I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: **[23]** That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

[2 Nephi 1:74-76] *The Messiah*, ... lays down his life according to the flesh, and takes it again by the power of the Spirit, **[75]** That he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise. **[76]** Wherefore, **he is the first fruits unto God**.

Paul stated that, "Christ ... should be the first that should rise from the dead," **[Acts 26:23]**

But one might reply, "if Jesus was the first to rise from the dead, what happened to Lazarus?" Wasn't he raised from the dead by Jesus, himself, as depicted in **[John 11:43-44]**?" And in;

[John 12:1] Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. *and **[Matthew 11:2-5]** & **[Luke 7:20-22]**

Jesus sent John the Baptist, who was incarcerated at the time, these encouraging words;

[Matthew 11:2-5] Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, **[3]** And said unto him, Are you he of whom it is written in the prophets that he should come, or do we look for another? **[4]** Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and tell John again of those things which you hear and see; **[5]** How the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them.

And what about the twelve year old damsel Jesus raised from the dead? **[Mark 5:27-35]**

And Elijah's prayer being answered to restore a young boy's life? **[1 Kings 17:17-24]**

And Elisha's bones raising a dead man back to life? **[2 Kings 13:21]**

How could Jesus be the "first begotten of the dead; the first that should rise; the first fruits unto God," if others were resurrected before him? The answer to this question lies in the answer to the question, **what constitutes death?** And to find the answer, as always, lets look to the scriptures.

[D&C 28:11b-12a] I the Lord God caused that Adam should be cast out from the garden of Eden, from my presence, because of his transgression: **[11c]** wherein he became spiritually dead, which is the first death, even that same death, which is the last death, which is spiritual, which

shall be pronounced upon the wicked when I shall say, Depart ye cursed. [12a] But, behold, I say unto you, that I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die, **as to the temporal death**, until I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption through faith on the name of my only begotten Son;

Death is first spiritual, separation from God; and second temporal, separation of body and spirit.

[**Alma 19:90**] Therefore, as the soul could never die, and the fall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual death as well as a temporal; that is, they were cut off from the presence of the Lord; therefore it was expedient that mankind should be reclaimed from this spiritual death.

The next two scriptures do not contradict [**D&C 28 & Alma 19**] above, about which is the first death and which is the second, they just have a different point of reference; [**D&C 28 & Alma 19**] look back to the beginning, to the fall, while the two following scriptures speak to the end time.

[**Alma 8:99-107**] Now there is a death which is called a **temporal death**; and the death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal death, that all shall be raised from this temporal death; [100] The spirit and the body shall be reunited again, in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time; [106] I say unto you, that this mortal body is raised to an immortal body; that is from death; even from the first death, unto life, that they can die no more; their spirits uniting with their bodies, never to be divided; [107] Thus the whole becoming spiritual and immortal, that they can no more see corruption.

[**Alma 9:21-32**] Amulek has spoken plainly concerning death, and being raised from this mortality to a state of immortality, and being brought before the bar of God, to be judged according to our works. ... [28] And now I say unto you, then comes a death, even a second death, **which is a spiritual death**; [29] Then is a time that whosoever dies in his sins, as to a temporal death, shall also die a spiritual death: yes, **he shall die as to things pertaining unto righteousness**; ... [31] And then is the time that they shall be chained down to an everlasting destruction, according to the power and captivity of Satan: he having subjected them according to his will. [32] Then I say unto you, They shall be as though there had been no redemption made; for **they can not be redeemed** according to God's justice; and **they can not die**, seeing there is no more corruption.

Simply dying physically and being placed in the grave does not constitute the death placed upon man. That is only a part of that death. And, that is what gives validity to the following statement made by Jesus; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

The Jews, however, did not understand the dual nature of death, so they replied; "Now we know that you have a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and you say, **If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.**" [**John 8:51-52**]

Though those who inherit terrestrial and celestial glory will be outside of God's presence in eternity, the only ones who will taste the entire experience of death are the devil and his angels, because they "**shall die as to things pertaining unto righteousness!**" *see [**Alma 9:29**] above.

The few who were raised from the dead before Jesus, were raised only from the temporal part of death. They did not go into God's presence until Jesus overcame the full force of death! For Jesus

was the first to be resurrected from both the temporal and spiritual death. He overcame both and went back into the presence of his Father, being the “**first fruit unto God.**” [2 Nephi 1:76]

[D&C 42:12e-f] You shall live together in love, insomuch that you shall weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have no hope of a glorious resurrection. [f] And it shall come to pass that those that die in me **shall not taste of death**, for it shall be sweet unto them; and they that die not in me, woe unto them, for their death is bitter.

[7] **For behold, he will come in the clouds with ten thousands of his saints in the kingdom, clothed with the glory of his Father. And every eye shall see him; and they who pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.**

Jude wrote, “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord is coming with ten thousand of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” [Jude :14-15]

[8] **For he said, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.**

[9] **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.** (*This verifies that John wrote these things after leaving Patmos*)

[10] **I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,**
[11] **Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and, What you see, 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.**

The Lord’s day is not the same day as the Sabbath. The Lord assigned the Sabbath only to the Hebrews as part of his covenant with them.

[Acts 20:7] And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, [Hebrews 4:1-11] - talks about another day of rest.

[Mark 16:8] Now when Jesus was risen, early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils; [Matthew 28:1]

What better day is there to set aside as a day of rest, a day of worship, than the day that Jesus overcame death! So, the saints began meeting on the first day of the week, the Lord’s day, instead of on the Sabbath. [D&C 119:7a-c] And the Spirit says further: Inasmuch as there has been much discussion in the past concerning the Sabbath of the Lord, the church is admonished that until further revelation is received, or the quorums of the church are assembled to decide concerning the law in the church articles and covenants, [b] the Saints are to observe the first day of the week commonly called the Lord's day, as a day of rest: as a day of worship, as given in the covenants and commandments. [c] And on this day they should refrain from unnecessary work; nevertheless, nothing should be permitted to go to waste on that day, nor should necessary work be neglected.

The commandment to keep the Sabbath holy was given to the Israelites, not to the Gentiles.

[**Deuteronomy 5:2-3, 12-15**] The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. [3] The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. [12] **Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it**, as the Lord your God has commanded you. [13] Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; [14] But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your burro, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates; that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. [15] And remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you out through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm; **therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.**

The Law of Moses was given to Israel because of their transgression, to keep until Jesus came and restored the high priesthood and the gospel.

[**Galatians 3:19**] Wherefore then, the law was added because of transgressions, **till** the seed should come to whom the promise was made in the law given to Moses. *now back to Revelation;

[12] **And I turned to see from whence the voice came that spoke to me; and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;** *see also the study of [**Revelation 4:5**] pages 29 & 30

[13] **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.**

[14] **His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;**

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

[16] **And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength.**

[**Verse 20**] states that the seven candlesticks “are the seven churches; and the seven stars are the servants of the churches. [**Revelation 11:3-4**] portrays “two candlesticks,” as “two witnesses.”

And relating to [**Verse 16**] we read; “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of body and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” [**Hebrews 4:12**]

[17] **And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last;**

[18] **I am he that lives, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**

[19] **Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.**

[20] **This is the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the servants of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches.** * *seven branches of the same church.*

In [Verse 18] Jesus said that he has “**the keys of hell and of death**,” but until he was raised up, angels in authority were given charge of the keys. This will be studied further in Chapters 5 & 9.

[Revelation 9:1] And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and **to the angel was given the key of the bottomless pit**.

[Ephesians 4:8-9] Wherefore he said, **When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive**, and gave gifts unto men. [9] (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

Lets look at differences in this chapter between the I.V. and the K. J. Bible.

[1] The Revelation of John, a servant of God, which was given unto him of Jesus Christ, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, that he sent and signified by his angel unto his servant John, [I.V.] * and from the K.J.;

[1] The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

[4] Now this is the testimony of John to the seven servants who are over the seven churches in Asia. Grace unto you, and peace from him who is, and who was, and who is to come; who has sent forth his angel from before his throne, to testify unto those who are the seven servants over the seven churches. [I.V.] * and from the K.J.;

[4] 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;

[7] For behold, he is coming in the clouds with ten thousands of his saints in the kingdom, clothed with the glory of his Father. And every eye shall see him; and they who pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. [I.V.] * and from the K.J.;

[7] Behold, he is coming 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.

[12] And I turned to see from whence the voice came that spake to me; [I.V.]

[12] And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. [K.J.]

[20] ... The seven stars are the servants of the seven churches; ... [I.V.]

[20] ... The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: ... [K.J.]

As can be seen from the following map, the churches to which John was to write, were Gentile churches in Asia. The object of this study, however, is not to spend a lot of time exploring history or geography, but to clarify the message of this book as it relates to history, to the present, and to the future. This message is as essential to the world today as it was to the world then. And keep in mind during this study that the members of the church then were not unlike today's members. They had the same temptations, the same weaknesses, the same strengths, the same gospel, and some had the same hunger for the truth and a fervent love for the Father and his Son.



- 1 Ephesus
- 2 Smyrna
- 3 Pergamos
- 4 Thyatira
- 5 Sardis
- 6 Philadelphia
- 7 Laodicea

Asia was a Roman Province located in the western part of Asia Minor, which is now a part of Turkey. Even though the church flourished in this area, they were often subjected to very brutal and harsh persecution. They did not always have the luxury of carefree meetings as do the churches of today. How many of us would have the same steadfastness today that some of those saints had if we had to undergo the same hardships? Would our commitment be as strong as theirs?

Following are a few details about these seven cities.

Ephesus: Was located about half way between Jerusalem and Rome and was the chief city of Asia with a population of around 225,000. One of the seven wonders of the world was there, it's Temple of Diana. Paul had been very successful there in his missionary work 54 to 57 A.D. There were so many converts in Ephesus that almost overnight the church became one of the most powerful influences in the city. Christianity flourished to the extent that pagan temples almost disappeared.

Smyrna: About 50 miles north of Ephesus. It was a magnificent, beautiful city by the bay. Unlike the church in Ephesus in population and prestige though.

Pergamum: [Pergamos] Located about 50 miles north of Smyrna. It was the political capital of Asia. It was famous for its library of 200,000 volumes which was second only to the city of Alexandria. When the king of Egypt became jealous of Pergamum's literary fame, he prohibited the shipment of papyrus to them, so Pergamum invented a writing material and named it "Parchment," which was a form of the name of their city.

Thyatira: Was also famous for its splendid Temple of Artemis, which is another name for Diana.

* More on this in [Chapter 2].

Sardis: During Babylonian's golden age, was one of the richest and most powerful cities in the known world, [during the 6th century B.C.] It was still a famous city during Roman times. The church there made a significant impression on the region.

Philadelphia: Still a prosperous town of around 15,000 + population.

Laodicea: About 100 miles east of Ephesus, was a wealthy, banking city with magnificent theaters and temples which made it a very beautiful city.

It is believed that there were many churches in Asia, and that these seven churches were main centers in each of their respective district. They did not meet in church buildings as we do today. They met in homes, or in halls, or wherever they could.

Smyrna and Philadelphia were cities that had good churches in them and these two cities are still flourishing. The church in Sardis and the one in Laodicea were not very good. These two cities are now nothing more than deserted, uninhabited sites. The churches in the other three cities were mostly an admixture of good and bad members and these cities have also disappeared. We should learn from their mistakes, but history shows that history is seldom a good teacher.