

# Revelation

## Chapter 1, Verses 9-20

# Review

- Two weeks ago, we began a new study
  - The Revelation to John
    - A prophetic writing with features of a letter and of the form of literature called Apocalyptic
    - Written by John to Christians during the second half of the First Century
    - Placed at the end of the New Testament because of its concern with the “end times”

# Review

- Previous readings:
  - Revelation 1:1-3 (Prologue)
    - Gives a general overview of the book
      - John writes of things that must happen before the end
      - Those who read, hear, and do what is written in this book will be blessed, because the end is near.
      - This revelation was given by God, to Jesus Christ, who revealed it through his angel, to his servant John
      - John bears witness to the Church of all that he has heard and seen in this revelation.

# Review

- Previous readings:
  - Revelation 1:4-8
    - Salutation
      - John greets “the seven churches in Asia”
      - Which are probably typical of all churches
    - Doxology (Praise to God)
      - God has all power throughout time and eternity
      - He is mysteriously and unapproachably grand
      - Christ is the only mediator between God and man
      - He has already been revealed, is present now, and will soon return bodily to establish his kingdom completely
      - This is a matter for great expectation, and fear.

# Today's Reading

- Revelation 1:9-20
  - The First Vision

# ヨハネの黙示録 1:9-20

9. あなたがたの兄弟であり、共にイエスの苦難と御国と忍耐とにあずかっている、わたしヨハネは、神の言とイエスのあかしとのゆえに、パトモスという島にいた。
10. ところが、わたしは、主の日に御霊に感じた。そして、わたしのうしろの方で、ラツパのような大きな声ができるのを聞いた。
11. その声はこう言った、「あなたが見ていることを書きものにして、それをエペソ、スミルナ、ペルガモ、テアテラ、サルデス、ヒラデルヒヤ、ラオデキヤにある七つの教会に送りなさい」。

# ヨハネの黙示録 1:9-20

12. そこでわたしは、わたしに呼びかけたその声を見ようとしてふりむいた。ふりむくと、七つの金の燭台が目についた。
13. それらの燭台の間に、足までたれた上着を着、胸に金の帯をしめている人の子のような者がいた。
14. そのかしらと髪の毛とは、雪のように白い羊毛に似て真白であり、目は燃える炎のようであった。
15. その足は、炉で精錬されて光り輝くしんちゅうのようであり、声は大水のとどろきのようであった。

# ヨハネの黙示録 1:9-20

16. その右手に七つの星を持ち、口からは、鋭いもろ刃のつるぎがつき出ており、顔は、強く照り輝く太陽のようであった。
17. わたしは彼を見たとき、その足もとに倒れて死人のようになった。すると、彼は右手をわたしの上において言った、「恐れるな。わたしは初めであり、終りであり、
18. また、生きている者である。わたしは死んだことはあるが、見よ、世々限りなく生きている者である。そして、死と黄泉とのかぎを持っている。



# ヨハネの黙示録 1:9-20

19. そこで、あなたの見たこと、現在のこと、今後起ろうとすることを、書きとめなさい。
20. あなたがわたしの右手に見た七つの星と、七つの金の燭台との奥義は、こうである。すなわち、七つの星は七つの教会の御使であり、七つの燭台は七つの教会である。

# Revelation 1:9-20

9. I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet

# Revelation 1:9-20

11. saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."
12. Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,

# Revelation 1:9-20

13. and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.
14. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire,
15. his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

# Revelation 1:9-20

16. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.
17. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last,
18. and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

# Revelation 1:9-20

19. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.
20. As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.

# Revelation 1:9

あなたがたの兄弟であり、共にイエスの苦難と御国と忍耐とにあずかっている、わたしヨハネは、神の言とイエスのあかしとのゆえに、パトモスという島にいた。

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

- In verse 4 John addressed himself generally to “the seven churches that are in Asia”
- Here, in Verse 9, he identifies himself with them.
  - He obviously expects them to know who he is
  - He is their brother and their partner

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- Their brotherhood and partnership is “in Jesus” and it has three aspects:
  - Tribulation
  - Kingdom
  - Patient endurance



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I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

- John is about to write to his fellow Christians about a vision that he had and, for some reason, he first feels the need to mention where he was when the vision took place, and something about why he was there.
  - He was on the island called Patmos
  - He was there on account of the word of God and testimony of Jesus.

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- It has been said that the island called Patmos was a place where enemies of Rome were exiled.
- If that is the case, then the reason for John's exile probably would have been related to his faith and testimony.

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- It seems to me that John is reminding his readers of something that most of them already knew (i.e. of his exile to Patmos)
- The grammar suggests that his exile has ended by the time of this writing.

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I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

- Why would John wish to remind his readers of his former exile to Patmos?

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- Why would John wish to remind his readers of his former exile to Patmos?
- Probably as an example of “tribulation, kingdom, and patient endurance.”

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I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

- Why would John wish to remind his readers of his former exile to Patmos?
- Probably as an example of “tribulation, kingdom, and patient endurance.”
- It also helps us to understand that this was a visionary experience that actually took place.

# Revelation 1:10

ところが、わたしは、主の日に御霊に感じた。そして、わたしのうしろの方で、ラツパのような大きな声がするのを聞いた。

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet

- John has recounted for his readers where he was when this all happened (i.e. Patmos) and why he was there.
- Now he tells them more about the circumstances:
  - It was on the Lord's day (a time of worship)
  - He was “in the Spirit”
    - Not dreaming or asleep
    - Not in an ordinary state
    - He was overtaken by a prophetic vision
    - He did not sit down to write this on his own initiative

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- The expression “Lord’s day”
  - Probably just means Sunday
  - Possibly means Easter Sunday or something else
- The expression “in the Spirit” reminds the reader of ecstatic prophetic visions of the Old Testament
- Likewise the hearing of “a voice like a trumpet” reminds the reader of Old Testament scenes where God spoke to Moses and other prophets



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- This prophetic vision seems to have begun with sound rather than sight,
  - The sound is described as a loud voice
  - The loud voice is describe as being like a trumpet
  - The “voice” of a trumpet is bright and clear
  - A “voice like a trumpet” pronouncing human words is hard for me to imagine but I would tend to think of it as “angelic”
  - This angelic voice sounded from behind, sort of taking him by surprise, sort of announcing the vision to follow

# Revelation 1:11

その声はこう言った、「あなたが見ていることを書きものにして、それをエペソ、スミルナ、ペルガモ、テアテラ、サルデス、ヒラデルヒヤ、ラオデキヤにある七つの教会に送りなさい」。

saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

- Clearly this was not a trumpet, or a voice like a trumpet which could not be resolved into human words.
- John was able to understand words and the meaning of the words quite clearly.
- So much so that he was able to remember the words and write them.

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- The words said: “***write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches.***”
  - In the Old Testament when a prophet is told to write in a book, most often it is to express the will of God and coming judgment
  - Usually these things were addressed to God’s chosen people
    - Then (in the Old Testament) to the Nation of Israel
    - Here (in Revelation) to “the seven churches”

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- These were real churches that John knew and of which we know some things from Biblical and secular history.
- I believe John understood that he was to prophesy to them as the Old Testament prophets had prophesied to Israel....it is a continuation of the same speech of God ...now spoken in the light of Christ (c.f. Hebrews 1:1,2)

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- Later we will consider what historians think they know about the circumstances of each of these churches.
- For now, lets notice two things:
  - What John sees, is to be written into a single book for distribution to all of the seven churches
  - There were more than seven churches in Asia

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saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

- I think we are to understand that the seven churches represent all churches and that this universal Church hears the prophetic voice which was spoken first and foremost to Israel and which spoke ultimately in Christ and that Christ continues to speak to this Church now

# Revelation 1:12

そこでわたしは、わたしに呼びかけたその声を見ようとしてふりむいた。ふりむくと、七つの金の燭台が目についた。

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me,  
and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,

- The noise from behind which John described as a voice like a trumpet was understandable, and John presumed that it was spoken by someone or something that could be seen.
  - In our day, we might expect such a voice to be coming from a loudspeaker or another man-made device of some sort.
  - In John's day, it seems likely that he expected to see a person, in this case probably a supernatural person.
  - The prophetic forms would have been recognizable to him.

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Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me,  
and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,

- But upon turning around, what he first saw, was not a person but a set of objects: seven golden lampstands
  - Lampstands cannot make noises like a trumpet, much less speak human words
  - With or without noises to draw his attention to them, the seven golden lampstands would not have been a natural occurrence.
  - Surely at this point in the experience he is narrating, John begins to realize that his experience is supernatural.
  - And at this point John perceives a wonderful human figure



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Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me,  
and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,

- The expression “seven golden lampstands” evokes very many images from the Old Testament
- What comes to mind immediately is the golden lamp with seven flames that God instructed Moses to make and to keep burning in the tabernacle and temple as a symbol of God’s presence among the people of Israel
- This does not exhaust the symbolic weight of seven golden lampstands - but clearly they ARE symbolic.

# Revelation 1:13

それらの燭台の間に、足までたれた上着を着、胸に金の帯をしめている人の子のような者がいた。

and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

- This figure is in the midst of the golden lampstands
  - Why did John not mention him first?
  - The order of the narration was voice (from behind), then seven golden lampstands, and finally this person
  - Presumably the person whom John finally describes was the same one who was speaking at first....but he revealed himself gradually and in stages.

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- First John notices that this person is a human being (“one like a son of man”)
- Then it become apparent that this man is a powerful, and important figure, with a robe and a sash as signs of his office.
  - at first we may think of him as kingly
  - a reader steeped in the Old Testament might think priestly

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and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

- This human priest-king quickly comes into focus as more than just an ordinary human being
  - The description “one like a son of man” is familiar from Daniel 7:13 as being a description of the one who is given everlasting dominion over all the Earth
  - We remember that this is also the way Jesus most often described himself.

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and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

- At this point in his vision, I think John surely realized that the man standing in the midst of the lampstands was the Messiah of Israel.
  - The one who had been foreseen by so many Old Testament Prophets
  - The one whom John had known as Jesus of Nazareth
  - The one who was expected to come again at the end of time.

# Revelation 1:14

そのかしらと髪の毛とは、雪のように白い羊毛に似て真白であり、目は燃える炎のようであった。

The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow.  
His eyes were like a flame of fire,

- Now the messianic human figure begins to appear in his divine aspect.
  - One is reminded of how Almighty God, the Ancient of Days, is described in Daniel 7:9
  - One is reminded of how Jesus, Moses, and Elijah appeared at the transfiguration described in Matthew 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9
  - To the image of priest and king is now added the image of judge: one who is old and wise and who can see everything

# Revelation 1:15

その足は、炉で精錬されて光り輝くしんちゅうのようであり、声は大水のとどろきのようであった。

his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

- The glorified Christ is difficult to describe.
- John reaches for Old Testament images and struggles to express in human words the perfection and glory and beauty of the images which he perceives in his vision.
- Finally all that he can understand of heaven and say to us must be spoken in earthly images and symbols and parables.

# Revelation 1:16

その右手に七つの星を持ち、口からは、鋭いもろ刃のつるぎが  
つき出ており、顔は、強く照り輝く太陽のようであった。

In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came  
a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun  
shining in full strength.

- We are now completely beyond earthly reality and dealing here with three figures of speech.
- The last one is the easiest to understand
  - His face was like the sun shining in full strength.
  - This is a simile which expresses radiant glory and perfection
  - It is a radiance that blinds us, nearly turns us away, destroys us



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a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun  
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- Christ has been glorified and highly exalted but he is a man, with a mouth, and he speaks
- A sharp two-edged sword is an instrument of military power, which is used here as a metaphor
- I think the meaning is that the words of Christ are powerful --- powerful to protect and to destroy.

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- So we understand that in the vision Christ is glorious and powerful, but what does it mean that “in his right hand he held seven stars.”
- This too signifies glory and power, and sovereignty
- But we wonder: what are the seven stars?
- And we are supposed to wonder!

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a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun  
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- Without being told, we might suppose that there is some correspondence between the seven stars and the seven lampstands and the seven churches.
- But we would need some help to understand what the correspondence is.
- Such help is provided, by Christ himself, in Verse 20.

# Revelation 1:17

わたしは彼を見たとき、その足もとに倒れて死人のようになった。  
すると、彼は右手をわたしの上において言った、「恐れるな。  
わたしは初めであり、終りであり、

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he  
laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the  
first and the last,

- But now John explains his own reaction to the vision of Christ which he first received.
- It is worth remembering that Jesus was John's beloved teacher and friend.
- Yet here the very sight of Jesus causes him to fall as though dead.
- Why was John terrified to see Jesus?

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- I think John was terrified to see Jesus, because John was a mortal man and he was caused to see some of the power and glory of the risen Christ who is also the eternal Son of God
- Fear was the only proper response.
- But Jesus reassures John.

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- This is a pattern seen throughout the Bible, whenever God reveals himself to man, we are afraid and need to be comforted and lifted up by God.
- If we are not afraid, then we have not seen God.
- But then God is able to still our fear.
- The same must be said of Jesus Christ.

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- In John's vision, Jesus actually lays his hand on John, saying "Fear not,..."
- It is interesting to me that, to comfort John, Jesus does not say "I am the same Jesus who once walked among you," or words to that effect.
- On the contrary, here Jesus calms John's fears by explaining more about the extent of his power.

# Revelation 1:17

わたしは彼を見たとき、その足もとに倒れて死人のようになった。  
すると、彼は右手をわたしの上において言った、「恐れるな。  
わたしは初めであり、終りであり、

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he  
laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the  
first and the last,

- He begins with a figure of speech commonly heard in the Old Testament from the mouth of God.
- He explains that he always has been, is, and always shall be one with the Father.
- Why would this calm John's fear?



# Revelation 1:18

また、生きている者である。わたしは死んだことはあるが、見よ、世々限りなく生きている者である。そして、死と黄泉とのかぎを持っている。

and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

- It would have been comforting for John to be reminded that the Jesus who walked among them, always had been, was, and ever would be the eternal son of God.
- It would have been comforting to be reminded that Jesus truly was born as a mortal man, that he had truly died, that he had truly risen, and he is now alive forever.

# Revelation 1:18

また、生きている者である。わたしは死んだことはあるが、見よ、世々限りなく生きている者である。そして、死と黄泉とのかぎを持っている。

and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

- It would have been comforting to be reminded that Jesus now holds the keys of Death and Hades.
  - He has already defeated Satan, Sin, and Death
  - There is no place in time or eternity where Christ is not the king.
  - This means that Christ can always save and protect us: from everything, everywhere, and at all times.
  - We are never in any danger, unless we turn away from Christ.

# Revelation 1:19

そこで、あなたの見たこと、現在のこと、今後起ろうとすることを、書きとめなさい。

Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.

- Having reminded John of who he is, thereby reducing John's fear of the images he has seen so far, Jesus tells John to write the things which he has seen.
  - I think Jesus is referring here to the contents of this entire letter and not just what is recorded in the first 18 verses.
  - And I think that we are suppose to understand the contents of this letter (i.e. the things that John has seen) as including things that happened before, during, and after the time when he wrote.

# Revelation 1:20

あなたがわたしの右手に見た七つの星と、七つの金の燭台との奥義は、こうである。すなわち、七つの星は七つの教会の御使であり、七つの燭台は七つの教会である。

As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.

- We come finally to the mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden lampstands.
  - Jesus himself admits that this was a mystery!
  - He confirms that it was his hand in which John saw the stars.
  - For a man's hand to hold stars while he stands amidst lampstands, something mysterious must be happening.

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As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.

- Jesus now tells John what these figures represent.
  - The lampstands represent the seven churches
    - These are almost certainly the seven churches listed in Verse 11
    - These seven churches, in turn, may represent all churches
  - The stars represent the angels of the churches.
    - How shall we understand this?
    - It is a mystery within the mystery...

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As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.

- The literal meaning of the word “angel” is messenger
  - It is possible that the stars in Jesus’ hand represent human representatives of the churches.
  - However in Revelation (and the Bible generally) this word is usually intended to refer to supernatural beings and probably does here, too.

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As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.

- Understood as supernatural beings, angels are usually understood to be messengers of God.
- This is consistent with the image of them being in the right hand of Jesus, which I understand to mean that they are fully under his authority and control.

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As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.

- At the same time, each of them is associated with a particular church.
- We might think, then, that angelic messengers ruled by Christ have been sent to the churches.
  - However, as we shall see, Christ directs John to write to these angels and what he has to say is not always complementary!



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As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.

- This almost seems to suggest that these angels are imperfect, even sinful, intermediaries through which Christ rules the churches.
- But this is hard to reconcile with the strong images here, of Christ's glorious power and sovereign authority.
- There is little support for this idea elsewhere in the Bible.

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As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.

- I think the angels of the churches spoken of here are literary figures meant to personify the various churches.
  - Each church, like each person, has its own unique history and circumstances and strengths and weaknesses, and character.
  - Each church, like each person, needs to be ministered to a little differently.

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As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.

- At the same time each church consists of a body of believers, and it is a little difficult to address a body of believers and be fair and accurate to each one of them.
- Addressing separate remarks to the angels of separate churches is a literary device that works well here, I think, to generalize and characterize the various churches.

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As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.

- This literary device (i.e. of personifying the churches) also lets Christ through John address churches as the spiritual bodies which they somehow are, despite the fact that the individual human members come and go.
  - i.e. local churches and the Church Universal are somehow more like living organisms than they are lifeless organizations.

# Summary & Conclusion

- The first chapter of Revelation is easy to understand, with a couple of exceptions:
  - In Verse 4, we do not know the meaning of the seven spirits that stand before the throne of God
    - These may represent the “fullness” of the Holy Spirit
  - In Verse 20, we cannot know for certain what is meant by the seven angels of the seven churches.
    - I have suggested that we understand them as symbols personifying the congregations of local churches.
  - Next week we will begin to read what Christ has to say through John to the seven churches.



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