
EP26: Revelation 1:17-20

Revelation 1

Jesus Addresses John

Revelation 1:17-18

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

This reaction by John is fascinating given that John spent 3.5 years with Jesus and knew Him personally. John would even refer to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved.¹ Clearly, they had a very intimate relationship, and they were so close that Jesus even revealed a glimpse of the brightness of His glory to John on the Mount of Transfiguration.² But not even that prepared John to see the glorified Son of Man. His emotions were overrun as he tried to connect his previous experience with Jesus the man to this image of Jesus the glorified Son of Man. He simply could not do it, so he fell at his feet as though dead.

Fear Not

We get a lot of insight from the **Code** in this next statement, "*But He laid His right hand on me, saying, 'Fear not...'*"

First, "saying" is rendered in the *present active participle*, so the Son of Man is even today saying this and will continue to be saying "Fear not." Perhaps it might be considered a normal convention for John to use the present tense to describe what He heard Jesus "saying," but we dare not skip over the underline message the Spirit is communicating to our souls. Even now He does **NOT** want His bondservants to live in fear.

Second, "*Fear not*" is rendered in the *present passive imperative*. It is a command, however, being rendered in the *passive* voice, this is not a command we can take care of on our own; it is **NOT** something we can do. In effect, Jesus is commanding us to even **now** let Him remove or calm our fear. As with all things that extend from His grace, it is His job to do the work, we just need to let Him. We simply have no power over the fear that dwells in our soul, but He does. We need to let Him calm and still our soul, and that is His command to us. He simply desires our **willingness** to let Him be our **I AM (Yahweh Shalom, the one who bring us His peace)**.

Third, since He specifically used His right hand when He touched John (the right arm/hand are symbols of power and authority), He was communicating that He has the authority of the Father, as the one who sits at the right hand of God, and the inherent strength or power to remove or calm John's fear. But being a command (an *imperative*), John (like each of us) must choose to let Him. After all, this is a relationship

¹ *John 13:23, 20:2, 21:7, 20*

² *Matthew 17:1-2*

that requires reciprocation: we are willing, and He acts.

IF WE LET HIM, GOD WILL PACIFY ALL THE REASONS WE TEND TO BECOME AFRAID OF HIM, OTHERS, OURSELVES, AND OF HIS PLANS FOR OUR LIVES.

The First and the Last

He is the first and the last, a declaration similar in context to the Alpha and the Omega but different. The Alpha and Omega speaks of the fact that all things originate and come to their completion by Him and through Him. Whereas the “first and the last” is more of a statement on His prophetic declarations.

For instance, the “first and the last” is used 3x in *Isaiah* (a perfect declaration). Each time it is regarding a prophetic disclosure of coming events which He pre-determined. **It is as if He is saying, I have the first word in determining what will be, and I have the last word in bringing about what will be. When I speak, it is assured to come to be; it is just a matter of time.** This is intended to bring great comfort and security and instill in us a deep trust in His words. The fact is that every promise He has ever made and every prediction He has ever communicated all will come true in exacting detail, it is just a matter of time.

Isaiah 41:1-4

Coastlands, listen to Me in silence, and let the peoples gain new strength; let them come forward, then let them speak; let us come together for judgment. Who has aroused one from the east whom He calls in righteousness to His feet? He delivers up nations before him and subdues kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, as the wind-driven chaff with his bow. He pursues them, passing on in safety, by a way he had not been traversing with his feet. Who has performed and accomplished it, calling forth the generations from the beginning? **‘I, Yahweh, am the first, and with the last. I am He.’**”

Isaiah 44:6-8

Thus says **Yahweh**, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, **Yahweh Sabaoth** (the Lord of hosts): **I am the first and I am the last**, and there is no God besides Me. Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yes, let him recount it to Me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place. Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.

Isaiah 48:3-12

I declared the former things long ago and they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. Because I know that you are obstinate, and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead bronze, therefore I declared them to you long ago, before they took place I proclaimed them to you, so that you would not say, 'My idol has done them, and my graven

image and my molten image have commanded them.' You have heard; look at all this. And you, will you not declare it? I proclaim to you new things from this time, even hidden things which you have not known. They are created now and not long ago; and before today you have not heard them, so that you will not say, 'Behold, I knew them.' You have not heard, you have not known. Even from long ago your ear has not been open, because I knew that you would deal very treacherously; and you have been called a rebel from birth. For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, and for My praise I restrain it for you, in order not to cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another. Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; **I am He, I am the first, I am also the last.**

Sorry for the long quotes, but those passages are simply awesome and humbling. He is the **first** and He has declared what will be. He is the **last** therefore His word will ensure that it all comes to fruition exactly as He declared it, it is all just a matter of time. Accordingly, there is no negotiation and there is no manipulation that could alter what He is going to communicate to the churches and declare over them; it is a done deal, and He will cause it all to be.

The Living One

"... and the living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." This is an encouragement that functions as a foreshadowing of coming events, as there is so much death in this book, including a large sacrifice of true believers who, although they are slaughtered, will live again, just like Him. **He is the living one!**

Therefore, He wants us to understand that our life is in Him, and our death is in Him. Thus, even if our future is not what we had hoped, He is the one who is now and continually in control of life, death, and Hades. Accordingly, we can **fear not**. We can let this truth of His rule over life, death, and Hades remove the fear that would otherwise grip our souls. Because regardless of what happens in this life, the bondservants of Jesus will live again, and they will be called the *"living ones"*.

The Choice to Die

Jesus said that He *was* dead, and that is rendered in the *middle* voice, meaning that He is the one who chose to die. No one killed Him, He gave up His life. He laid it down on His own initiative and in the same manner He took it up again such that He is now the *living one*.³

This has massive overtones for our lives as well, as He is looking for those who will follow the lamb, even to the altar of sacrifice—those who will willingly lay down their own lives so they might live.⁴ Hence, He proclaims that whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Him on a daily basis, cannot be His disciple, because He won't let them, as they are not worthy of Him.⁵

Said another way, the path to being a *"living one"* is through our **willingness** to let **Yahweh** crucify our

³ **John 10:11-18**

⁴ See **Revelation 14:1-5; Romans 12:1-2**

⁵ See **Luke 14:27**, where "cannot" is rendered in the *present passive indicative*. See also **Matthew 10:38, 16:24; Luke 9:23**

flesh – to put down and remove all that stands in the way of His life fully possessing our being and fulfilling the *Design Point* in us where we can honestly declare: “*I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me.*”⁶

If we are willing, like Jesus, to die to our *flesh*, we will come to know both life and peace—we will be a “*living one*”.⁷ **It is an exchange.** We allow Him to judge our *flesh* now so that we will no longer choose to come under judgment (or condemnation) but will have passed out of death into life.⁸

And, since He has the keys to both death and Hades, He will ensure that those who now choose life will join Him in eternity when they physically perish. Their future will not be found in the grave nor in the deep gloom of Hades.⁹ When they die, they will be in the presence of **Yahweh**¹⁰

FEAR NOT!

Write

Revelation 1:19

Therefore, write the things which you have seen, and the things which **now** are, and the things which are **now** about to choose to be after these things.

Fiction Alert

FICTION ALERT

There has been a whole lot of “to do” made about this verse by those who push a pre-tribulation rapture theory. Predominantly, this verse has been taught as an outline of the book of **Revelation** with chapter **1** being what John saw, chapters **2-3** being the things which, from John’s perspective, “are” – the sequential historical church age up through the present age of the church of Laodicea, and chapters **4-22** being what is to take place after the church age, after the rapture.

Imaginary lines are drawn and inserted into this passage so they can declare that the rapture must take place after chapter **3**, after the so-called church age, and before the “tribulation” events beginning in chapter **4**.

This fabricated “outline” is presumptuous. Fundamentally, it ignores and supersedes the **Code** by

⁶ **Galatians 2:20.** Note: this is how Jesus experienced the Father and modeled the *Design Point* for us as the Father literally lived in and through Jesus. See **Colossians 1:19; John 10:38, 17:21**

⁷ **Romans 8:12-13**

⁸ **John 5:24** (note: “come under judgment” is rendered in the *present middle indicative*). See also **Romans 8:1**

⁹ “Hades” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “Sheol” and the English “Hell”

¹⁰ **2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23**

exchanging it for some version of *instinctual religious wisdom* and *sensuality* that creates an **End Times** mythology based on emotion, and not on the truth revealed by the Spirit of God.

We will find out that there is much in the letters to the 7-churches that defy a sequential historical viewpoint. Likewise, there is much in chapters **4-22** that defy a post rapture presupposition. Therefore, it is critical for us to examine how the Spirit uses the **Code** to painstakingly make a distinction between present realities and the future, with some events being layered, like a cake, such that they are happening now and then.

With that said, we must not say that something which is rendered in the *present* tense is a future event nor that something rendered in the *future* tense is a present event, for then we completely ignore the plumbline of the **Code**.

Moreover, if the 7-churches were a depiction of what we would now claim as history, then the first 6-letters are not even relevant to our lives, they could be summarily ignored and dismissed altogether. They were meant for someone else, not for us. Following the **fictional** narrative, we could conclude that only the 7th letter would apply to our current condition. Thus, all the promises made to believers in the first 6 letters would have to be understood as applying only to those who lived in those sequential time epochs, respectively. They would not be “our” promises but only theirs.

Clearly, that is a ridiculous conclusion to make in far too many ways to discuss currently, and all just to support an **End Times fiction** about the pre-tribulation rapture.

I would suggest that we leave this verse with the understanding that John was exposed to things from the perspective of eternity and saw things which have always been, things that are, and things which revealed the future regarding the **End Times** and the **Second Coming** of Christ—things that from His perspective were about to now choose to be.

Things Which Shall Be

It is fascinating that the phrase, “*things which shall be*” if viewed through the **Code** would be translated: “*the things which are now about to choose to be.*”¹¹ As the **First and the Last**, He has declared things that will be, but with the use of the *middle* voice, this also indicates that all things will occur according to the choices that each of the actors in this **End Times** narrative will make in bringing about these things.

God will not force anyone, but each living being, whether angelic or human, will choose their actions and set forth their destiny. With that said, God knows the beginning from the end, He declares the beginning from the end, but He always works in-and-through agency—through the choices of others (whether angels, demons, humans, animals, institutions, and so on). Therefore, His judgment is righteous and true as are His ways.¹²

This issue of agency is huge. God sets all things into motion but uses agents to accomplish His will. Therefore, He cannot be directly blamed for “doing bad things” or “doing evil”. But what we also know is that He takes full responsibility for setting it all in motion and for all that happens. At least that is what is

¹¹ “shall” is rendered in the *present active indicative* and “be” is rendered in the *aorist middle infinitive*

¹² **Revelation 15:3-4, 16:5-7, 19:1**

explained by His servant Job whom God said 2 times that he (Job) spoke correctly about Him.

As Job said, “If not He, then who?”¹³ And this agency relationship supports the fact that He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the one who is responsible for it all, for He declared it all; “for from Him, by (or through) Him and to Him are all things”¹⁴ Not some things, but all things.

After These Things

So, what is the reference to “*after these things*” apply to? It is simply saying that some of which John will communicate are things that exist and occur even **now** as they have been occurring every moment of **now** since John’s time. But there are other things that have yet to come into existence or have yet to be set free and loosened in the heavenly realms such that they impact our physical realms.

For instance, we will find that there are 4-spiritual beings who are bound at the river Euphrates. We get this sense that they are providing some sort of spiritual barrier, because when they are released from their positions, a massive army of spiritual beings are set loose and they kill one-third of mankind.¹⁵ So, this is an example of things that will choose to come to be after the things which clearly are.

The Answers Are in The Code

But to know what things “*are*” and what will come “*after these things*” we must examine and stick to the **Code**, regardless of what we have been told in the myriad of **End Times fictions**. If we stick to the **Code**, we will come to know how to distinguish between present realities and the future, and those things that like a cake are layered such that they are happening now and then.

The Spirit was meticulous in His use of the *present* tense, the *future* tense (which He rarely used), the *arist* tense, and others to give us the roadmap to follow. He does not want us lost in this journey, and He does not want us guessing. We just need to be willing to trust that He is the one who penned every word and intentionally chose how each word would be used and understood in this **Revelation**.

2 Peter 1:20-21

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

As stated previously, God always works through agency: through the angelic and through humanity. With that said, it is all still His works and therefore they are all perfect. None of what we will read came because of human will or because of human conventions. To hold otherwise is, in effect, to demand that God conforms to our ways thereby rejecting this proclamation that no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will.

¹³ **Job 9:22-24**. See also **Job 42:7-8**

¹⁴ **Romans 11:36**

¹⁵ **Revelation 9:13-19**

7 stars & 7 Lampstands

Revelation 1:20

As for the mystery of the seven stars which 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.

Fiction Alert

FICTION ALERT

The stars and the lampstands are idioms that we do not have to reach back into the **Code** to interpret, as Jesus just tells us what they mean. The 7-stars are the angels of the 7-churches, and the 7-lampstands are the 7-churches. But due to the **fiction** surrounding this verse, we will have to reach back into the **Code** and use it as our plumbline to keep our understanding straight.

Stars & Angels

As to the **fiction**. The Greek word translated “angels” means messengers. Therefore, some have said that this speaks not about literal “angels,” but about those who delivered messages to the churches—the pastors of those churches. They say that Jesus holds the pastors in His right hand.

This is one of those *instinctual religious wisdoms* that lifts pastors up to a position of authority and power in the lives of God’s people that they were never intended to have, a fiction which establishes a hierarchical (top-down) structure of church leadership.

Unbeknownst to most Christians, pastors are just a part of the spiritual oversight which the Spirit has placed in the church. After all, “*He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.*”¹⁶

Pastors are not at the top of that list. In addition, the Spirit details for us the priority of authority in terms of the spiritual gifts that are intended to minister to the body. “*And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.*”¹⁷

Pastors are not even listed, just teachers, and they are third on the list. So, to presume that the stars refer to the pastors who are delivering these great messages is a dangerous presumption that has seriously damaged the body all throughout time, as this hierarchical top-down structure of leadership has historically led to corruption and abuse within the church.

As far as the **Code** and *Expositional Constancy*, “stars” are pictures of angelic beings, and never once

¹⁶ *Ephesians 4:11-12*

¹⁷ *1 Corinthians 12:28*

throughout the **Codex** is this idiom used to speak of pastors or any other leaders in the church.¹⁸

The angles, or the messengers, are His ministers and they are sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation.¹⁹ In some measure, the angels guard or oversee the spiritual welfare of the churches. We see a type of this as Michael the archangel and the angel Gabriel seem to have a role of protection of the nation of Israel—the faithful in God (the bondservants of Jesus Christ).²⁰

Moreover, this viewpoint of the angelic is consistent with the perspective through which we are to understand this letter, from the viewpoint of the heavenlies and not the viewpoint from humanity. God sees what transpires on earth through the lens of the angels and demons who are His servants, His agents, which carry out His purposes amongst humanity and not through the lens of humanity. That is why one of His compound names is used more than any other throughout the **Codex**, and that is **Yahweh Sabaoth**, the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

**ALL THINGS ARE INITIATED FROM THE THRONE OF GOD, ARE COMMUNICATED
THROUGH THE AGENCY OF SPIRITUAL MESSENGERS (ANGELS AND DEMONS) AND
FINALLY COME TO FRUITION IN THE NATURAL REALMS.**

Lampstands & Churches

The seven lampstands are the seven churches. This picture symbolizes the way the churches are to be a light that shines bright, burning with the oil of the Spirit of God. In effect, the church is to be a light to the world, a city set on a hill, a lamp to give illumination to all that are in the house so people may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God.²¹

2 Corinthians 4:6

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

We are going to find that much of what is written to the churches is rendered in the *present* tense and often as a *participle*, and therefore applies not just to those specific physical churches that existed in the 1st century, but to the churches, every moment of now, that are characterized by the descriptions of these 7-churches.

The dispensationalist (those who hold tightly to the pre-tribulation rapture myth) miss this point and tend try to notch each church into a specific epoch of time throughout history instead of to a specific spiritual and relational character and identity. Again, if the issue was time, we should just skip to the 7th

¹⁸ **Genesis 37:9; Deuteronomy 4:19; Judges 5:20; Job 25:5, 38:7; Psalm 147:4; Isaiah 14:13, 40:26; 8:10; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:25; Jude 13; Revelation 1:6, 20, 2:1, 3:1, 6:13, 8:12, 12:1, 4**

¹⁹ **Hebrews 1:7, 14**

²⁰ **Daniel 10:13-21; 12:1**

²¹ **Matthew 5:14-16; Luke 8:16**

letter and just address the church at Laodicea. But since the issues raised are all about spiritual and relational character and identity, we will go through each church to understand what the Spirit even now says to the churches. The only question will be, are you one who is now having ears to hear what the Spirit now says to the churches?

We will stop right here and pick up in our next podcast in *Revelation* chapter **2**.