

## 2. Among the Lampstands (1Q 2019—Revelation)

**Biblical material:** Rev.1:9–18; Acts 7:54–60; Matt. 12:8; Exod. 20:11; Dan. 10:5, 6; Rev. 1:20; Rev. 2:1–7; 3:21.

### Quotes

- This may indeed be a description of the Holy Spirit, not as a “Person” somehow divided into seven parts, but as a seven-branched conduit of God’s communication to the seven churches mentioned earlier in the verse. Thus, John includes “the seven Spirits” as a source of the prophecy to specify how it was imparted to the seven churches. *Richard T. Ritenbaugh*
- Christ, in explaining to John the meaning of what he had seen, said, “The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches” (Revelation 1:12-20). The number seven in the Bible denotes a complete number. The candlestick of beaten gold with its seven bowls for the lamps was an “example and shadow of heavenly things” (Hebrews 8:5). Its seven branches, each holding aloft a lamp, represented the church of God. *Stephen Haskell*
- These seven candlesticks are a symbol of the church in her ideal existence and relation to her Lord, as a light shining to the glory of God in Christ. They represent the church in perfect holiness and righteousness, as she is in the counsel of God, and as she once shall be when the Lord shall present her as His perfected and glorified bride, without spot or blemish. The symbolism reminds us, of course, of the seven-armed candlestick, or lamp, which once stood in the holy place of the temple in Jerusalem. *Herman Hoeksema*

### Questions

*Who* is among the lampstands? What do these symbols tell us? What did John need to see, and how did God supply this need through vision? How can we apply this to our situation today? In what way is this vision part of God’s answer in the great controversy? What is the message we should take away from this particular study?

### Bible summary

In Rev.1:9–18 John is instructed to write down what he sees and send it to the seven churches. His vision is of the risen Christ among the seven lampstands. The explanation of the vision is given in Rev. 1:20. Rev. 2:1–7 is the message to Ephesus, the first church, which is commended for working hard but criticized for losing their first love. Rev. 3:21 is part of the message to the last church, Laodicea, and is a message of encouragement to be victorious. Acts 7:54–60 records the stoning of Stephen. Matt. 12:8 reminds us that the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath. Exod. 20:11 is the Sabbath commandment. Dan. 10:5, 6 is clearly the parallel Old Testament description that John references in his vision.

### Comment

We began our studies this quarter by emphasizing that this is the Revelation from Jesus Christ and it is about Jesus Christ. We need to remind ourselves about this again in this lesson, and throughout all subsequent lessons. It’s not the lampstands that are the

focus, it is the One who is standing among them. So our attention should be on this Son of man, how he is described, what this meant to John, and how we can apply this to ourselves today.

The essential aspect for consideration is how God was reminding John of the final victory in the great controversy, and how we too can see in this vision the glorified Lord who is all-powerful, and yet still inviting all his followers to live according to his principles of selfless love. As we set all the visions and symbols within God's role in the great controversy, we gain a far deeper insight into the meaning of the book and its application to us. At every moment we should be asking: "What picture of God do we see here? What do we learn about God from this passage?"

So instead of examining all the historical aspects of the seven churches etc., it is more important to see what the Spirit is saying to these churches. Look at the words that describe the specific church, and pay attention to both the commendation and the criticism. For while we can trace historical applications, there are elements today that reflect all the seven churches. God cares deeply for his church and wants each of us to be victorious through his strength, wanting us to apply his self-sacrificing principles in our lives, looking for all of us to rightly represent him and his saving message to all around us.

The vision given to John of the glorified Son of man among the lampstands is primarily for encouragement. While the churches face many challenges, Jesus is there in the midst. He is the source of their strength, and promises his grace to help in times of need. We can also apply this reassurance to ourselves individually—this amazing vision of our wonderful God is for each of us to consider. We are not alone. God is beside us to help us on our way. As Jesus promised, "Remember, I am always with you, to the very end of the world." Matt. 28:20 FBV.

### **Ellen White Comments**

I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of man." Revelation 1:10-13. {AA 581.4} Richly favored was this beloved disciple. He had seen his Master in Gethsemane, His face marked with the blood drops of agony, His "visage . . . marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Isaiah 52:14. He had seen Him in the hands of the Roman soldiers, clothed with an old purple robe and crowned with thorns. He had seen Him hanging on the cross of Calvary, the object of cruel mockery and abuse. Now John is once more permitted to behold his Lord. But how changed is His appearance! He is no longer a Man of Sorrows, despised and humiliated by men. He is clothed in a garment of heavenly brightness. "His head and His hairs" are "white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes . . . as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." Revelation 1:14, 15. His voice is like the music of many waters. His countenance shines as the sun. In His hand are seven stars, and out of His mouth issues a sharp two-edged sword, an emblem of the power of His word. Patmos is made resplendent with the glory of the risen Lord. . .

John was strengthened to live in the presence of his glorified Lord. Then before his wondering vision were opened the glories of heaven. He was permitted to see the throne of God. . . In figures and symbols, subjects of vast importance were presented to John. . . This revelation was given for the guidance and comfort of the church throughout the Christian dispensation. {AA 582-3}

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