

Revelation 1: The Seven Stars and the Book's Outline

Revelation 1:19–20, with Revelation 4:1 and 4:5 | Sunday, December 28 | Revelation Series

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OVERVIEW

Verse 19 gives the outline; verse 20 explains the first symbol. Hal starts with *musterion* — a word out of the old Greek fraternities meaning something not known until now, which only the initiated can understand, and here the initiated are those who have been born again. The mystery is this: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. *Angelos* can mean the higher creation, but its basic meaning is messenger, and Hal takes it that way — the seven messengers, held in the right hand of Christ. Since seven is the number of completeness, these seven stand for the whole Church, which sends him into the three senses of the word church: never a building, always the called out ones — every believer joined to Christ, and the local assembly. Then he holds the place and turns to chapter 4, where the lampstands are before the throne in heaven and burning as lamps of fire, and closes on the four ways the letters of chapters 2 and 3 apply.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 1:19 — The outline: the things you have seen, the things which are, the things which will take place after these things

Revelation 1:20 — The mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden lampstands explained

Revelation 4:1 — *Meta tauta* — a door standing open in heaven and the voice saying “come up here”

Revelation 4:5 — Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God

Revelation 3 — “Behold, I stand at the door and knock” — the word to the church at Laodicea

Ephesians 5:30 — For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bone

Ephesians 2 — He has raised us up in Christ and seated us at the right hand of the father

Acts 2 — The Holy Spirit's ministry begins at Pentecost, with the transition continuing in Acts 8 and Acts 10

KEY TERMS

Musterion — a Greek word out of the old Greek fraternities — something not known until now, which only the initiated can understand

Angelos — translated “angel”; it can mean the higher creation, but its basic meaning is messenger

Ecclesia — the word behind “church” — the called out ones

The baptism of the Holy Spirit — what happens at the instant you believe: the Holy Spirit places you into a living organic union with Christ

Throne rights — the authority that comes with being seated with Christ at the right hand of the father

Lampstands — the seven churches, set as a light to the world; in chapter 4 they are lamps of fire before the throne

Meta tauta — “after these things” — the words that open chapter 4 and mark the end of the Church age

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer from the message itself. Every answer is in the teaching.

1. What does musterion mean, and who can understand a mystery?

2. What are the seven stars and the seven lampstands?

3. What are the two meanings of angelos, and which does Hal take here?

4. Why these seven churches, when there were hundreds?

5. What are the three senses of the word church?

6. What did the elderly woman in the Bible class in Houston complain about, and what did the pastor answer?

7. What happens at the instant a person believes, and where did that ministry begin?

8. What does Hal say is the chief sign that a person is filled with the Spirit?

9. What are throne rights, and where does Hal say a believer is right now?

10. What does Hal say about who a local church answers to?

11. What does Hal point out about the lampstands in chapter 4, and what does he draw from it?

12. What are the four applications Hal finds in the letters to the seven churches?

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Hal says the first thing most people picture at the word church is a building with a steeple. What in your own habits still treats it as a building?

2. The messengers of the churches are held in the right hand of Christ. How would that change the way you pray for the person who teaches you?

3. You are here, and you are seated with Christ at the right hand of the father. What would look different this week if you looked at your situation from there?

4. Each local church answerable directly to Christ — Hal admits it sounds radical. What would that kind of accountability actually look like?

5. Lampstands are put somewhere to give light. What is your church lighting up, and for whom?

6. The Lord commends before he rebukes — knowledge of the Word, heresy fought — and only then, you have left your first love. Where do you need to hear the commendation before you can take the rebuke?

MEMORY VERSE

“The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

— Revelation 1:20, as Hal reads it in this message