① JOHN'S RESPONSE TO THE VISION

v.17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead...

- This is actually a very typical response to a heavenly being
- especially when it is The LORD
- Joshua met "the Commander of the army of the LORD... and Joshua fell on his face to earth and worshiped..." Joshua 5:14
- Ezekiel saw "the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day and there was an appearance of brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. So when I saw it, I fell on my face and I heard a voice of One speaking" Ezek.1:28
- "I, Daniel, saw a vision and was seeking the meaning and suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice... who called and said, 'Gabriel, make this man understand the vision. So he came near where I stood and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face..." Dan. 8:15-17

(vision of the Ram and the Goat — Medo-Persia / Greece)
- horns symbolized as Kings/Kingdoms
- broken horns as broken Kingdoms

★ All of the vision is explained 8:18-26

★ Prophecy has much symbolism requires understanding of O.T. prophets

- The "futurist" view takes almost everything as literal
- which requires zero prior knowledge of Hebrew prophecy OR poetry.
- Anyone can pick up Revelation and interpret it Literally

★ However, the reader is told at the beginning that this is a "prophecy sent through symbols" v.1

προφητεία ἀποστέλλω σημαίνω

- Even in this dialogue w/ John Jesus explains some of the "mystery of the seven stars..." v.20

↳ μυστήριον: mystery, heavenly vision

- Back to people's responses to the LORD or heavenly beings: Jesus was transfigured and a voice from the cloud spoke... "when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid, But Jesus came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and DO NOT BE afraid." Matt.17:6-7
- NOTICE Jesus does & says this here!
- Also noteworthy is that when unbelievers entered into God's presence... they fell down as dead and actually died

"AND the LORD said, 'Go down and warn the people, lest they gaze at the LORD and many of them will perish" Ex.19:21

- Moses and Joshua were amazed that they saw the LORD face to face and lived (Ex.33 and Judges 6)

② JESUS' RESPONSE TO JOHN: DO NOT FEAR

v.17 But He laid His right hand on me and said, "Do not be afraid..."

- I thought the 7 stars were in His right hand...
- Did He put them down?
- NO, this is where we need to understand the "vision" was symbolic
- all the host of heaven (the 7 stars) are in His right hand (all control)
- Jesus laying His "Right" hand on John symbolized power, blessing, and fellowship.

"Jesus is at the right hand of God, w/ angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him" 1Pt. 3:22

"Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God" Eph. 1:20, Col. 3:1, Heb 1:3, 13, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2

"Paul and Barnabas were given the right hand of fellowship" Gal. 2:9

- This right hand, in a sense, commissions John to get up and to "write a letter..."

Jesus tells John to NOT BE Afraid

★ Jesus had done this many times before to John & the other apostles
- During the storm while Jesus walked on the sea - Matt 14:22-27
- At the Transfiguration - Matt 17
- Jesus after His resur. - Matt 28:10
- it is life threatening service unto the King while in this world

τίμιος μάρτυς

③ JESUS' REASON TO NOT BE AFRAID

- Now, in v.17b-18 Jesus gives a beautiful reason of why John does not need to be afraid:

v.17 I am the First and the Last
- This is interesting because it is in essence, the same title as GOD
- in 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning & the End," says Yahweh (The LORD)
- some versions have v. 8 as GOD the Father, NOT Jesus (ESV, NLT)

★ However, the "Alpha & Omega" are the First and Last letters in GK
- The Beginning & end = same idea

★ And, at the end of Revelation, we see all titles as EQUal:
"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the First and the Last" 22:12

- So 1:8 very well could be Jesus
- We know 1:17-18 is Jesus because He goes on to say "I am He who lives, was dead, and behold, I am alive forever more. Amen"
- Furthermore, even this title alone of The First and The Last is in the O.T. a title exclusive to GOD

"Who has performed and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, Yahweh am the First and with the Last, I am He" Is. 41:4

"Thus says the LORD (Yahweh), the King of Israel AND His Redeemer, the LORD (Yahweh) of HOSTS (Heavenly) I am the First and I am the Last Besides Me, there is no God" Is 44:6

"Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last." Is. 48:12

- This expression/Title is to God alone
- The Christ is One w/ Yahweh
- NO archangel OR created being

★ This title is now applied to Jesus

- Again, in context, these are reasons not to fear torture, trials & martyrdom

v.18 I am He who lives, was dead, and Behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen

- w/o a doubt, this is Jesus
- This title of the one who lives, OR The Living One OR I am alive Forevermore is also unique to GOD

Nebuchadnezzar prays, "I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever..." Dan. 4:34

"The men clothed in linen... swore by Him who lives forever." Dan 12:7

"Now see that I, even I, am He and there is no GOD besides Me. I kill & make alive... and say, 'I live forever'" Deut. 32:39-40

- The "Behold" and "Amen" as bookends to this statement add emphasis to a hard to believe Truth... Jesus is The Living One = TO GOD

v.18 And I have the Keys of Hades and of Death
- Jesus has the power & authority over these realms
- He alone can free you from Death... OR keep you in Hades

★ Remember, Believers in Jesus are given the Keys to the Kingdom, TO bind and to loose... Matt 16:19, 18:18
↳ hold guilty/accountable / free from prison

★ These Keys are even given at times to Bad (?) angels to release evil demons 9:1 and good angels to bind evil demons 20:1

- The point is that Jesus holds all power over who is released (loosed) and who is retained (BOUND) in death/Hades
- Jesus will remind the church at Philadelphia (and ALL churches) this truth: "To the angel of the church of Philadelphia write: these things says He who is holy, He who is true, and He who has the Key to the house of David, He who opens (looses) and no one shuts (implies/Binds) and shuts (implies/Binds) and no one opens (looses them)" Rev. 3:7
- Remember, these symbols fulfill the typological prophecy of Is 22
  - The Eliakim prophecy... (Shebna the priest loses his standing & given to Eliakim)

★ Jesus, the new Royal High Priest is King over life and death
- He has authority of life (loosed from sin, death, hell) or stays dead (BOUND in sin, death, hell)

④ JESUS COMMISSIONS JOHN TO WRITE

v.19 Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will shortly take place after this

- some believe this sentence is an outline for the entire book
- Most futurists interpret it as so
  1) Things seen ch 1
  2) which are ch. 2-3
  3) shortly take place 4-22
- However, most scholars disagree due to inconsistency in this outline

★ many events in Ch. 2-3 are past actions w/ future blessings or consequences

★ many events in Ch. 4-22 have already occurred (Birth of Israel, the Christ, His death and resurrection, Satan Being defeated, the Falling down of Heavenly Jerusalem, etc)

- also, the world ends 5x in ch. 4-22 it is hard to outline the Book sequentially
- Some futurist interpreters will hold to 4:1 "After this" μετὰ ταῦτα
- they will argue the events of 4-22 are "after this" church age ch.2-3

★ However, μετὰ ταῦτα occurs many times (1:19, 4:1, 7:1, 9:9, 15:5, 18:1, 19:1)
↳ These are new visions in the Apocalypse...
- After this (vision) comes another vision

μετὰ ταῦτα ἄλλος σημεῖον

1:9 vision of the Son supreme
4:1 vision of the Throne Room in Heaven
7:1 vision of 144,000 sealed
7:9 vision of multitudes in white robes
15:5 vision of the wrath of God finished
18:1 vision of the Fall of Babylon
19:1 vision of the marriage supper

★ The Best way to interpret this 3 fold clause
- things which you have seen
- things which are... and
- things to shortly take place

Is that The Revelation ἀποκαλύψις apocalypse is a revealing which transcends time and uncovers spiritual realities and Truths that are past, present, and Future

- Another, but lesser, possible interpretation: v.19 explains 3 genres of the book
  - things seen are visions
  - things are refers to a figurative explanation of the visions meanings
  - the things to come refers to events of eschatology
- The least accepted view: v.19 explains a 3 fold sequence or chronological outline
  - "seen" would be the one vision in ch1
  - "are" would be the church
  - "to come" would only future events (thus making ch. 4-22 unfulfilled) For over 2,000 years now... Despite key warnings of Eminency

⑤ SOME OF THE MYSTERY REVEALED

v.20 As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in My right hand and the seven golden lampstands

- the word mystery is: μυστήριον: secret, a mystery
- typically used to describe a heavenly vision that must be interpreted by God or heavenly being (Like Nebuch.'s dream was a mystery to Him, but Daniel interpreted the vision)

v. 20 The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches
- Doesn't actually clear up much

option #1
- this speaks of all (symbolic?) of the heavenly messengers/angels behind the scenes of the church

option #2
- this speaks of the pastors or Eldership of the church

- The evidence for this option is found in ch 2-3
- in which the letters are addressed to the "angel" of the church ἄγγελος just means messenger
- the church is to obey the messenger/pastors

- evidence against option 2 is the vision in Ch.1 shows Jesus w/ heavenly and earthly power (It would be odd to have the vision represent church and church Elders)

AND

The word "angel" ἄγγελος refers to heavenly beings w/o exception in this Book over 60x
- angels and Believers are "fellow" servants of Jesus 19:10, 22:9

v.20 and the seven lampstands are the seven churches
- This seems clear as the church is to be the light "a light and a city on a hill that cannot be hidden" Matt 5:14
- In the Tabernacle & Temple, the menorah/lampstand was to symbolize GOD's presence