

A GREAT VOICE TO BE HEARD

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Rev 1:10-20 describes the beginning of the vision that John the Apostle was given by the Lord: “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

The Alpha and Omega

In Revelation 1:10, John hears the voice of Christ, which sounds like a trumpet. In verse 11, the “great voice” spoke words. The voice belongs to “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” This descriptive term for Christ is also found in Revelation 21:6 and 22:13. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last letter. This emphasizes the eternal nature of the one who is speaking. This is also one of the hallmarks of Deity. The Hebrew word *Yahweh*, the word for Jehovah, literally means the Existing (or Eternal) One. This word is used in reference to Christ a number of of times in the Old Testament scriptures, particularly in Isaiah (e.g. Isaiah 6:5-8, quoted in John 12:36-42; Isaiah 8:13-14, quoted in 1 Peter 2:4-8; Isaiah 40:3, quoted in Mark 1:1-3; Isaiah 61:1 and 61:8, quoted in Luke 4:17-21). Micah 5:2 prophesied of Christ (quoted in Matthew 2:4-6): “*But thou, Bethlehem*

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(continued)

Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Indeed, Jesus Christ is Divine and possesses the authority that comes from his position. As John 1:1-3 says, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”* Therefore, his voice is to be heard!

He who walks among the candlesticks

In verses 12-13, John turned to see who was speaking to him and saw seven golden candlesticks and Jesus walking in the midst of them. John is told again in Revelation 1:19 to write what he sees, which includes the mystery of the seven stars in the right hand of Jesus and the seven golden candlesticks which he walks among. We are told in verse 20 that the seven stars are the “angels” of the seven churches. This word literally means “messenger” and may refer to a messenger in general or to heavenly messengers in particular. We are not told exactly who the messengers of the seven churches are. They very well could be human messengers who took the letters from John and delivered them to the respective churches. But it is also possible that this refers to heavenly angels. We are not told for certain. The seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches of Asia, which are named in Revelation 1:11 and again in chapters two and three. One important point is that Jesus walks among the candlesticks. Jesus is the head of the church (Eph 1:22-23; 5:23; Col 1:18) and the church is his spiritual body. Furthermore, we can see that Jesus only walks among churches that have a candlestick. Those that do not have one (whether they never had one or whether they had one at one time but then lost it) are not recognized by the Lord and do not have his fellowship. This point is emphasized again early in chapter two in the letter to the church at Ephesus. To that congregation, Christ said, *“I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent”* (Rev 2:4-5). In summary, these verses in Revelation chapter one teach us about the majesty of Jesus Christ. He is alive, eternal, and has all authority. We need to acknowledge who he is and fear and obey him so that our souls can be saved.