

SESSION 07 – REVELATION CHAPTER ONE – PART V

¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. (Rev. 1:12-16 ESV)

I. THE SON OF MAN IN THE MIDST OF THE LAMPSTANDS – PART III

- A. John continues his description of Jesus in the midst of the seven churches. *His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace.* We turn again to Daniel 10 as the foundational description of what is without question a theophany of the pre-Incarnate Son of Man, Jesus Himself. John's continued description of Him in the midst of the Seven Churches is supposed to draw our attention back to Daniel 10; it is there and used for that reason.
- B. That John uses Daniel's description of the bronze where he describes it as, "*the gleam of burnished bronze*" the point of which is not necessarily the metal itself, but what it does: it gleams or shines. This is the same description of the cherubim in Ezekiel 1:7 where their legs and feet *sparkled like the gleam of burnished bronze*. The Greek equivalent used in Daniel and Ezekiel points to *phaino* and *exasprapto* which means to flash as with lightning. It is also used in the Septuagint Exodus 25:37 regarding the lampstand in the Tabernacle's Holy Place before the Table of the Bread of Presence.

³⁷ *And you will make its seven lamps, and you will arrange the lamps, and they will cast light (phaino) forward together.* (Ex. 25:37 LXX)

We also see the use of *exasprapto* used in Daniel 10 and Ezekiel 1 directly used by Luke in his transfiguration account:

²⁸ *Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning (exasprapto).* (Luke 9:28-29 NRSVue)

- C. What is one of the truths we can draw from this? If Jesus walks in the midst of the Church, His feet (that is to say, the part that moves His Body in the Church, is gleaming with light and brilliance) are in some *mystical way* (or *spiritually mysterious way*) united with the Church on earth; His Body. We as believers joined to and in the Body should also gleam with brilliant light, as we too are transformed into the same image from *glory to glory* (2 Cor. 3:18).
- D. That His feet are refined in a furnace (Gr. *kaminos*) again points us back to the Hebrew equivalent (Heb. *kur*; little smelting furnace). Of significance is its use in Deuteronomy 4:19,20:

¹⁹ *and lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which Yahweh your God has apportioned for all the*

peoples under the whole heaven. ²⁰“But Yahweh has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace (kur), from Egypt, to be a people for His own inheritance, as today. (Deut. 4:19-20 LSB; see Deut. 32:8-9)

We see here the contrast of the gods of the nations and God’s covenant people Israel He delivered out of Egypt that Moses refers to as, “the iron furnace from Egypt.” It speaks to the truth that He was with them and delivered them and walked with them in the Cloud and the Fire in Egypt. As we will see later in future sessions, the deliverance from Egypt is a significant key to understanding Revelation. The point here is Jesus walks among the people He has delivered for which Israel’s deliverance from Egypt is a picture, or pattern, or model, or type¹. This *rescue* we see in Colossians 1:13-14.

¹³*He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.* (Colossians 1:13-14 NRSVue)

The deliverance then as now is in His *redemption* (Gr. *apolytrōsis*)². This word is constructed from two Greek words, *apo* - from, out of, away; and *lytrōsis* – meaning release and is directly connected to the Year of Jubilee (Isa. 63:4). A closely related Hebrew root/lemma is *p-d-h* which we will see later as we approach Revelation 8.

⁷“Yahweh did not set His affection on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸but because Yahweh loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your fathers, Yahweh brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed (Heb. *p-d-h*) you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deut. 7:7-8 LSB; see Deut. 9:26, 13:5; 15:15)

- E. Beale writes the burnished bronze feet speak of the foundation of moral purity in Christ. He takes this from Revelation 3:18 which only references gold refined in the fire. Mounce writes they portray strength and stability. Both of these are no doubt true from any reference point. Jesus is the Fount of moral purity and certainly His feet portray strength and stability. However, neither of these provides the connection to the OT, especially the narrative written by the Prophet Daniel.
- F. Daniel makes a point to call the reader’s attention to the metal alloys seen in Chapters 2, 4, and 7:

³¹“You, O king, were looking, and behold, there was a single great image; that image, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was rising up in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. ³²“The head of that

¹ There is a difference in the use of *type* in which a person, event, object, or ceremony that foreshadows a future reality (the antitype) – see 1 Peter 3:21 use of *antitypos* as the reality of the baptism in the Flood, while a shadow is the imperfect, partial representation of that reality. The shadow is the casting of an image which gives the visual of something is near enough to be seen in part, but not fully seen. In terms of the shadows in the Bible, they are proof of the future reality, a thing seen, but not fully.

² *apolytrōsis*, which means “ransom” or “ransom payment” in nonbiblical Greek, becomes a significant term for “redemption” in the NT.[O. PROCKSCH, IV, 328–35]; *lýō* (δέω). This common Greek word, which can denote the redemption granted by deity, has two main senses in the NT: a. “to loosen,” “release,” or “free,” in various connections, and b. “to dissolve,” “to destroy,” “to break up,” “to invalidate.” Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 544.

image was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, ³³its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. (Dan. 2:31-33 LSB)

¹⁰*‘Now these were the visions in my head as I lay on my bed: I was looking, and behold, there was a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great...¹³ ‘I was looking in the visions in my head as I lay on my bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven. ¹⁴ ‘He called out loudly and said thus: “Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit; Let the beasts flee from under it And the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ “Yet leave the stump with its roots in the earth, But with a band of iron and bronze around it In the new grass of the field; And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth...²⁰ “The tree that you saw...²² it is you, O king...²³ ‘But in that the king saw a watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, “Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the earth, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him,” ... (Dan. 4:10-23 LSB)*

⁷*“After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, fearsome and terrifying and extraordinarily strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. (Dan. 7:7 LSB)*

Daniel is drawing attention to characteristics of the beast empires and their associations with metals and metal alloys. Gold and silver are naturally occurring elements/metals. Bronze is an alloy created by combining copper and tin. Iron also naturally occurs as an element/metal but unlike gold and silver appears in rock form and has to be added to coal and limestone.

- G. We see in 1 Enoch, Azazel taught men metallurgy and how to use a furnace to manipulate and create metals and alloys:

8:1 Asael taught men to make swords of iron and weapons and shields and breastplates and every instrument of war. He showed them metals of the earth and how they should work gold to fashion it suitably, and concerning silver, to fashion it for bracelets and ornaments for women. And he showed them concerning antimony and eye paint and all manner of precious stones and dyes. (1 Enoch 8:1 Nickelsburg Trans.)³

Dr. Heiser notes the importance of this *transgression* that ultimately led to weapons of war and their use in prostitution:

The point of these conceptual connections is that, for the writer of 1 Enoch, Cain is the prototypical murderer, the archetypal human agent of chaos after Adam and Eve were driven from Eden. Adam and Eve fell and sinned, but 1 Enoch and other Second Temple texts don't have them as the reason for depravity.¹⁶⁶ Instead, the proliferation of evil is attributed to the Watchers. They are viewed as supernatural agents of chaos, guilty of priming the engine of human self-destruction. Cain therefore typifies the havoc the Watchers (and their spawn, giants, from whom would come demons) would wreak on earth via their false teaching, which would spur

³ George W. E. Nickelsburg, The University of Iowa; VanderKam, James C.. 1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation (p. 25). Fortress Press. Kindle Edition.

idolatry and violence. Human civilization in turn is viewed as a pitiful attempt to restore Eden, something only its original architect (God) could do. Human civilization and its “arts and sciences” are invariably less than Eden and could of course be anti-Eden. Humans cannot recreate utopia. They cannot restore what has been lost.⁴

- H. Yet here, in Revelation 1:15 is the Original Strength. His feet are *not* burnished bronze, but *like* that alloy. It is two things brought together in a furnace that results in something else. That it points to both His Deity and His Humanity that were brought together in the Incarnation can be argued. And in that He walked among His brethren and delivered humanity from the iron furnace of the house of slavery to the devil. All other kings and empires are only a faint attempt to copy or mimic Him. But as Heiser notes, “they cannot restore what has been lost.” Only in Christ Jesus is Eden restored.
- I. *His voice was like the roar of many waters.* Mounce notes the description of the voice of the Son of Man as,

The voice of Christ is said to be “like the sound of rushing waters,” suggesting the awe-inspiring power of a great waterfall. The same description is used of the voice of God in Ezek 43:2 and also of the great multitude in Rev 19:6 (cf. 14:2).⁵

We should look closer however at John’s use of the Old Testament here, Mounce rightly suggests allusions to Ezekiel 43:2.

²*and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. (Ezek. 43:2 LSB)*

Ezekiel saw the *Kavod* (glory) of the God of Israel. And it is this *Glory* that spoke whose voice was like the *sound of many waters*. This same *sound* is a call back to Ezekiel 1:24 in the description of the Cherubim whose wings were like the *sound of many waters*, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of a tumult like the sound of an army camp. Ezekiel then is comparing the sound of many waters to more than *an awe-inspiring waterfall*, which it most certainly would include.

- J. The *Glory of God* is a mystery of the appearance of God Himself. The word itself doesn’t only mean *heavy* but also *wealth and riches* and *splendor and majesty*, as well as *distinction and honor*. Taken together it gives some manifestation of the *goodness* and *brilliance* of Yahweh. 1 Kings 8:10-11 records the account of the dedication of the Temple of Solomon where the *cloud filled the house of Yahweh, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of Yahweh filled the house of Yahweh*. It is again a mystery. The *Glory of Yahweh* is the same Person in the pillar of cloud and fire that appeared at the Tent of Meeting/Tabernacle in the Wilderness. The Cloud went with them and talked to Moses.

⁴ Michael S. Heiser. A Companion to the Book of Enoch: A Reader's Commentary, Vol I: The Book of the Watchers (Kindle Locations 1398-1402). DEFENDER. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Robert H. Mounce, The Book of Revelation, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 59.

³⁴Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle. ³⁵And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had dwelt on it, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle. (Ex. 40:34-35 LSB)

¹⁵Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle until morning. ¹⁶So it was continuously; the cloud would cover it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. (Num. 9:15-16 LSB)

The Targums of Exodus 40:34-35 both⁶ refer to *the Glory of the Shekinah*, a word not found in the Bible, but one of the descriptive brilliant light and flame. The Zohar, a Jewish *mystical/spiritual commentary* used in Kabbalah⁷ defines *Shekinah* as the equivalent to *Malchut*, the Hebrew word for Kingdom⁸, with *Shekinah* defined as, “Presence, divine immanence.”⁹

In an old Jewish writing by the Ninth Century Karaites who tried to wrangle out *what* the Scriptures were talking about when they viewed the *Person (like a Man)* in such passages a Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 7 that clearly say it is a *Man*, or *Son of Man*, the following excerpt shows they considered this to be a *created* Person, which we would clearly say, “No, we reject He was created!”; yet the substance of the language points to the Glory of God as the *Shekinah* as *that Person*.

It is a form nobler even than [that of] the angels, magnificent in character, resplendent with light, which is called the glory of the Lord. It is this form, too, that one of the prophets described as follows: I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit (Daniel 7: 9), and that the sages characterized as *Shekhinah*...that was called the glory of the Lord.¹⁰

Kinzer continues with a train of thought that the Jewish Mystics who wrote the Zohar actually accepted the reality the *Shekhinah* must be both separate and divine:

Like the Nicene fathers, those who championed the tradition of the Zohar agreed with their opponents on the ineffable and transcendent nature of God. These Jewish mystics employed the term *Eyn Sof* (i.e., the Infinite One) to refer to this aspect of the divine reality. However, also like the Nicene fathers, the kabbalists viewed the self-revelation of God (the biblical *Kavod*, whom they referred to as the *Sefirot*) as both distinct from and one with *Eyn Sof*¹¹. The infinite and transcendent nature of God required the distinction, but the objective reality and truthfulness of divine revelation required the unity. If the *Kavod* revealed to Israel is not truly and fully

⁶ See Targum Neofiti 1 and Ps. Jonathan; a *targum* is an Aramaic translation of the Hebrew text + commentary

⁷ Hebrew, קבלה (qabbalah), “receiving, that which is received, tradition”; originally referring to tradition in general (or to post-Mosaic Scripture), but from the thirteenth century onward, specifically to the esoteric teachings of Judaism. Daniel C. Matt. The Zohar (The Zohar_ Pritzker Edition) Vol 6_ Exodus -- Daniel C_ Matt -- 6, Pritzker, 2019 -- Stanford University Press (Kindle Locations 5825-5827). Kindle Edition.

⁸ Ibid., Malkhut “Kingdom”; the tenth sefirah, ruling the lower worlds; also called *Shekhinah*.

⁹ Ibid., p. Kindle Location 5894

¹⁰ Andrew Sparks. Keshet_ A Journal of Messianic Judaism _ Issue 24 _ Summer -- Andrew Sparks; -- 1, 2016 -- Lightning Source (Tier 4); Author Mark Kinzer; (Kindle Locations 1000-1003). Kindle Edition.

¹¹ The term “Ein Sof” literally means “no end” or “infinite” in Hebrew. It describes God’s ultimate, boundless nature that is completely without form, thought, or action.

divine, then God remains unknown to the world, and Israel's claim to a covenant with a redemptively self-revealing God is rendered fraudulent.¹²

My point is this: The Glory of God is revealed in Jesus, because He is the Glory of the Uncreated and Invisible God. Jesus is the Manifest Glory of God.

⁵ 'Indeed I, ' declares Yahweh, 'will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst. ' ' (Zech. 2:5 LSB)

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. (Matt. 25:31 NRSVue)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NRSVue)

¹⁴ The Word became a human being and lived with us, and we saw his Sh'khinah, the Sh'khinah of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 CJB)

³ He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3 NRSVue)

³ This Son is the radiance of the Sh'khinah, the very expression of God's essence, upholding all that exists by his powerful word; and after he had, through himself, made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of HaG'dulah BaM'romim. (Heb. 1:3 CJB)

- K. The use of the word *glory* does not always mean it is pointing to a manifestation of the resplendent brilliance of God the Father. It can mean praise and adoration. But in the sense of *Who God Is*, and how He has made Himself known, for us it is in the Son. And this Son is the radiance of the Sh'khinah, a visible Glory. In speaking of Wisdom in the 2TP work, *the Wisdom of Solomon* we find where the writer of Hebrews took the word for radiance (Gr. *apaugasma*) in describing the manifestation of Wisdom:

*[F]or the artisan of all teaches me wisdom. For in [him] is a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, gentle, movable, clear, undefiled, distinctive, invulnerable, loving goodness, sharp, unhindered, beneficent, humane, steady, secure, free from care, all powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent, pure, gentle. For wisdom is more mobile than any motion; and [he] pervades and penetrates everything because of [his] purity. For [he] is the breath of the power of God and the emanation of the pure glory of the Almighty; because of this nothing defiled creeps into [him]. **For [he] is the brightness [apaugasma] of the eternal light, and the spotless mirror of the activity of God, and the image of his goodness.** But although [he] is one, [he] is able to do all things; and although [he] remains in herself, [he] renews all things; and although [he] enters into holy souls in all generations, [he] makes them to be friends of God and to be prophets. For God loves no one except the one who lives with wisdom. For [he] is more beautiful*

¹² Andrew Sparkes. Keshar; Author M. Kinzer, KL 1026-1032

than the sun and above every constellation of the stars; compared with the light, [he] is found to be foremost (Wis. Of Sol. 7:22-29 LXX)

We know the writer of Hebrews, writing of Jesus in Hebrews chapter 1, was referring to the Wisdom of Solomon because he took the word *apaugasma* (the only place it is used in the Bible) and applied it to the radiance of the Son who is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). The root of the word is from *auge* meaning, “daybreak, sunrise, dawn.”

¹“Arise, shine, for your light has come, And the glory of Yahweh has risen upon you. ²“For behold, darkness will cover the earth And dense gloom the peoples; But Yahweh will rise upon you, And His glory will appear upon you. ³“Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isa. 60:1-3 LSB)

- L. The point of this discussion, is to show the Glory of the God of Israel is a way of saying the Son of Man is the manifestation of the brilliant light of Yahweh. And according to Ezekiel 34:2, His voice sounds like *many waters*. This we will see is the sound of His people and the nations that He has saved and delivered. It is the full and complete reversal of Babel that has been replaced with His voice and the voice of His New Covenant people.

¹Now the whole earth had the same language and the same words...⁶And Yahweh said, “**Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language.** And this is what they have begun to do. **So now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.** (Gen. 11:1,6 LSB)

²And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps (Rev. 14:2 NRSVue)

⁶Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord God the Almighty reigns. (Rev. 19:6 NRSVue)

- M. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. (Rev. 1:16 ESV)

The seven stars are identified in verse 20 as the *angels of the seven churches*. Every use of the word *angel(s)* in Revelation (27) references *divine messengers / sons of God* with the exception of the eight references to the churches. There is no reason to believe John is pointing to a human messenger given his consistent use of the word *angelos/angeloi* to speak of divine sons of God. Heiser writes in his book *Angels*

Each directive to each church concludes with the formulaic “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” indicates clearly that each message was for the congregation. Though each directive is addressed to an angel, its content is for the church.¹³ The angel of each church is therefore some sort of surrogate. The angels and the churches are not identical, but they are related. Given the other textual merits of understanding the angels in Revelation 1–3 as supernatural beings, it seems best to understand them as members of the heavenly host assigned to the churches in a surrogacy role.¹⁴ Angelic mediation of God’s will and word

to believers—which involved both praise and admonition, as we saw in the Old Testament—seems to be operative in this relationship.¹³

In other words, the *angel* is acting exactly like you would expect based on the use of the word, “*a divine messenger*” bringing the word of the LORD to the Church through John’s letters. The message of the angel and the message John is writing is one and the same. The angel of each church is there to support the mission and word of God in that congregation. They are real and they are present from God’s directive to support the mission of the church and to encourage believers.

¹⁴*Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:14 NRSVue)*

This is a New Covenant expression of the divine council at work and the unraveling of the powers of darkness over the nations. Ephesians 6:12 is one of the clearest points in the Bible concerning the *gods* of the nations and the powers of darkness over lands, regions, and the people of those lands:

¹²*for our struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6:12 NRSVue)*

Yet here in Revelation we see a reversal/answer to this issue. The powers of Heaven are revealed over and to the Church, in the heavenlies. This is a manifestation of the heavenly host, the divine sons who minister or serve the heirs of salvation, the saints, the Church. That John highlights this truth is both consistent with the Biblical narrative and an encouraging truth for believers to know *we are not alone in this fight*.

G. K. Beale, in his full commentary on Revelation makes the following insight into the relationship of the *angels to the seven churches*¹⁴:

¹³ Heiser, Michael S., *Angels: What the Bible Really Says About God’s Heavenly Host* (p. 153). Lexham Press. Kindle Edition.

¹⁴ Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013, p. 217.

μυστήριον follows in v 30. Brown sees a “connection” between Rev. 1:20a and Daniel 2 because of the similarity of usage, and Swete sees an explicit allusion to the “mystery” of Dan. 2:29 in v 20a, but neither sees an allusion to Dan. 2:28ff. in Rev. 1:19c.¹³² The margin of Kilpatrick’s edition of the Greek NT is the only source indicating an allusion to Dan. 2:29ff. in both v 19c and v 20a. Since “mystery” occurs with an eschatological sense only in Daniel, the appearance of the word in such a context in Rev. 1:20 confirms its link to Daniel. Perhaps the syntactical awkwardness of beginning v 20 with “the mystery” without any transitional wording was designed to make it a clear part of the larger Daniel 2 allusion that concludes v 19. For the interpretative significance of “mystery” see “Summary of 1:12-20” below, as well as Beale, *John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (ch. 3, section D), where uses of “mystery” in the OT, Judaism, and elsewhere in the NT are discussed in relation to the uses in Revelation.

20b The “lampstands” now are clearly explained to be the “churches.” The reference to “angels” has been variously identified as (1) heavenly beings, (2) heavenly beings who are representatives of or guardians over the churches so that the churches are also in mind,¹³³ (3) human leaders or representatives of the churches,¹³⁴ (4) or personifications of the prevailing spirit or character of the churches.¹³⁵ The observation that ἄγγελος (“angel”) refers without exception to heavenly beings in the visionary portion of Revelation (about 60 times) points to the same identification here. These angels could be identified with the seven archangels known to Jewish tradition (e.g., *1 En.* 20:1-8; Tob. 12:15), though this is far from certain.

The ἄγγελοι (“angels”) in 1:20 include *both* heavenly beings and the earthly churches, according to the idea of corporate representation, which is suggested further by recognizing that angelic beings are corporately identified with Christians as their heavenly counterparts elsewhere in the book: the angel in 19:10 and 22:9 says, “I am a fellow servant of you and your brothers.”¹³⁶ In addition, the angel in Rev. 8:3-4 seems to represent saints, since he receives their prayers and presents them before God.¹³⁷ Consequently, the “angels” in 1:20b refer to heavenly beings who also represent the church (see below for further analysis in favor of this conclusion).

Why are the churches addressed through their angelic representatives in the letters, especially since it does not seem logical to blame and reproach angels for the sins of the churches? The initial answer to this is that inherent to the concept of corporate representation is the representative’s accountability for the group and the group’s accountability for the actions of the representative. So there is *some* sense in which the angels are *accountable* (e.g., *responsibility* of oversight) for the churches, yet the churches also benefit from the position of the angels.

132. Brown, “Mystery,” 36. Swete, *Apocalypse*, cxxxvii.

133. E.g., Holtz, *Christologie*, 16; A. F. Johnson, “Revelation,” 430.

134. E.g., Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 69; alternatively human messengers who represent the churches and deliver Christ’s message to each church; so Thomas, *Revelation*, 118-19.

135. E.g., I. T. Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, 445-46.

136. Noted by Krodel, *Revelation*, 102, but not seen by him as relevant to the “angels” of chs. 1-3.

137. Similarly Mulholland, *Revelation*, 93.

- N. ¹⁶...*from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. (Rev. 1:16 ESV)*

While we have a fuller picture of this *sharp two-edged sword* as referring to the Word of God (see Hebrews 4:12), its use in Revelation appears to point (pardon the pun) to the use of this sword to strike or judge the nations that lead to the Rule and Reign of Messiah:

¹⁵*From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. (Rev. 19:5 ESV)*

We see the sharp two-edged sword also applied to those in faithful Israel who use it as an instrument to execute vengeance on the nations in the manner of *binding* kings and rulers.

⁵*Let the holy ones¹⁵ exult in glory; Let them sing for joy on their beds. ⁶Let the exaltations of God be in their throats, And a two-edged sword in their hand, ⁷To execute vengeance on the nations And punishments on the peoples, ⁸To bind their kings with chains And their honored men with fetters of iron, ⁹To execute on them the judgment written; This is the majesty of all His holy ones. Praise Yah! (Ps. 149:5-9 LSB)*

This truth will also appear in the Letter to the Church at Thyatira where the overcomer will have authority over the nations and rule them with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:26-27). This is another application of authority given to *the Messiah* by God in Psalm 2:7-9 and in Revelation 19:5 that appears in the Church, along with His Rule and Reign.

- O. Why is this important for us today? In an already-and-not-yet approach, we know the Kingdom has already broken into this present, evil age and the Kingdom of God is *eschatological*¹⁶. And with it, the power and authority of the King in/from the age to come (Heb. 6:5). He has given the Church the authority or permission to use that power to bind and loose, heal the sick, cast out demons, and raise the dead (Matt. 10:1,7-8; 16:19). One of the *weapons of our warfare* is the *sword of the Spirit*, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). This Word in our mouths acts as the offensive weapon of choice to bind and loose, to establish authority, and to execute divine judgment on our enemies (i.e., wicked spirits; see Eph. 6:12) as well as the means of setting the course of life.

²¹*Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit. (Prov. 18:21 LSB)*

²*For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is mature, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. ³If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. ⁴Or look at ships: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a such a small fire! (James 3:2-4 NRSVue)*

The power of the word is of profound and fundamental importance in the life of the *holy ones*, both for good and for evil.

¹⁵ Heb., lit. the faithful; from *ch-s-d*; see Lam. 3:22, i.e., covenant love

¹⁶ Referring to inaugurated eschatology; another way of saying the *already-and-not-yet* of the Kingdom of God.