



A TALE OF TWO KINGDOMS

WEEK 1

REVELATION 1:1-20

REV. JOE VALENTI

PRAYER PROMPTS:

- Pray that as we begin this series, God would help us read Revelation as it's meant to be read: not a code to decode, but a reality to receive.
- Pray that seeing Jesus as John saw him — robed in glory, blazing with holiness, holding his church — would produce genuine worship in us, not familiarity.
- Pray for believers around the world enduring significant tribulation for the name of Jesus, that they'd know his presence and hold fast.
- Pray for courage to stay loyal to Jesus as Lord in the specific places we're tempted to compromise for comfort, approval, or safety.
- Pray for anyone anxious about the state of the world, that they'd hear Jesus's own words to John — "fear not" — and rest in his reign.

INTRODUCTION

Apokalypsis: to reveal, to disclose, to make fully known.

Apocalyptic Literature: a genre of writing in which a heavenly messenger unveils symbolic pictures of hidden spiritual realities.

1. Apocalyptic speaks in symbols, not snapshots.
2. Numbers carry meaning, not math.
3. The images are borrowed, not invented.
4. It's written for people under pressure.
5. It shows you heaven's view of earth's story.

LISTEN UP (VV. 1-3)

QUESTION TO CONSIDER:

HOW AM I ALLOWING THE
HURRY AND DISTRACTIONS OF
MY LIFE TO DROWN OUT THE
VOICE OF JESUS?

BOW DOWN (VV. 4-8)

The Seven Churches: Seven literal, historical congregations in Asia Minor. And, in seven signals completeness in Scripture, a deliberate symbol for the whole church, in every place, across all time.

Faithful Witness: In Greek, “witness” is *martys*, the root of our word martyr.

Firstborn of the Dead: “Firstborn” is a rank and inheritance term: Jesus is first because his resurrection breaks death permanently, guaranteeing that everyone united to him follows into the same resurrection life.

Ruler of the Kings of the Earth: Not a future promise, but a present-tense fact. Jesus reigns over every throne on earth right now even while human power seems unshakable and the church looks powerless.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER:

WHAT AM I TEMPTED TO LOVE, SERVE, OR PRIORITIZE
OTHER THAN JESUS?

BE STRONG (V. 9)

"Persecution is the legacy bequeathed by Christ to his people." - Thomas Watson

QUESTION TO CONSIDER:

WHERE HAVE I BEEN TEMPTED TO COMPROMISE MY FAITH
BECAUSE FOLLOWING JESUS IS COSTLY?

FEAR NOT (VV. 10-18)

QUESTION TO CONSIDER:

WHAT AM I AFRAID OF RIGHT NOW THAT WOULD LOOK
DIFFERENT IF I REALLY BELIEVED THAT THE RISEN JESUS IS
PRESENT WITH ME AND POWERFUL FOR ME?



WEEK 1 - SYMBOLISM

Seven churches: Seven concrete churches in Asia Minor that also carry representative force for the wider church.

Seven spirits before the throne: The fullness of the Spirit of God.

Trumpet-like voice: A clear, piercing, authoritative summons that demands attention.

Seven golden lampstands: Explicitly interpreted as the seven churches among whom Jesus stands and walks.

One like a son of man: The risen Jesus (references from Daniel 7), heavenly, royal imagery.

Long robe and golden sash: Priestly and royal dignity. The imagery communicates rank, majesty, and sacred authority.

White head and hair: Ancient-of-Days imagery from Daniel 7 applied to Jesus, communicating his oneness with the Father (Ancient of Days).

Eyes like a flame of fire: Penetrating perception joined to judgment: Christ sees what is truly present in his churches and in the world.

Feet like burnished bronze: Strength, stability, purity, and judging authority.

Voice like many waters: Overwhelming, inescapable divine authority.

Seven stars: Explicitly identified as the angels of the seven churches.

Sharp two-edged sword from his mouth: Christ's effective word that judges, exposes, wounds, heals, and conquers.

Face like the sun: Radiant, overwhelming divine glory.

Keys of Death and Hades: Christ possesses authority over death and the realm of the dead.