**The endless love of God**

**Part 2: The author**

The focus of Part 2 is Jesus, the author of the book of Revelation. In Part 1 we learnt that it is the Revelation of Jesus. Whilst that is true of the whole book, he is introduced in chapter 1 in ways that are then expanded on, later in the book.

*Question to consider:*

If God is love (1 John 4.8), and he is always true to himself, how is his love reflected in the book of Revelation?

**Revelation 1.4-8, 11, 13-18 (NKJV)**

John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

11 saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” …

13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

v4 Grace to you and peace

The Revelation is all about Jesus (v1) and from the start we are reassured that his nature is tied to our peace. God’s nature abounds in grace (Nehemiah 9.17, Psalm 103.8, Lamentations 3.22, Jonah 4.2). The ultimate expression of God’s grace is Jesus, John 1.12-17 (NKJV):

as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name … **full of grace** … **of His fullness we have all received**, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

v4, 8 who is and who was and who is to come

This is an interpretation of the divine name YHWH (Exodus 3.14). In v4 this is the name of God the Father, and in v8 of God the Son.

v4 from the seven Spirits who are before His throne

Seven is the number of completeness or wholeness. We first see this in Genesis 1 when God created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh day, showing completeness. The seven Spirits is a way of referring to the Holy Spirit. We see this in Isaiah 11.2:

1. The Spirit of the Lord (YHWH) will rest on him—
2. the Spirit of wisdom
3. and of understanding,
4. the Spirit of counsel
5. and of might,
6. the Spirit of the knowledge
7. and fear of the Lord

v4-5 from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ

This salutation from our triune God has the Holy Spirit is in the middle. We are used to the order of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, because of baptism. But the order in the scriptures varies, showing that the three persons of the Godhead are equal: Father, Son, Spirit (Matthew 28.19), Father, Spirit, Son (1 Peter 1.2),

Son, Father, Spirit (2 Corinthians 13.14), Son, Spirit, Father (Ephesians 4.4-6), Spirit, Father, Son (Luke 1.35), Spirit, Son, Father (1 Corinthians 12.4-6).

As we saw in Part 1, John wrote what he saw and heard. But that does not mean that he was an automaton, without any control. He wrote it in his words. Yes it was not the polished style of his other books, but something of John still comes through. This is one example. It is consistent with John’s manner of arranging his thoughts so that a new sentence springs out of the final thought of the preceding sentence. We see this in the prologue of his Gospel, and also in verses 1-2 of this chapter. So here, John ends with Jesus Christ, because he then goes on into detail about Jesus in versus 5-8.

v5 Jesus Christ

This title is used five times in this chapter (v1, 2, 5, 9, 10). ‘Christ’ means ‘anointed’, following the Greek translation of the Hebrew word ‘Messiah’, which stems from the word ‘anoint’. The anointing has to do with three offices, the king, the priest and the prophet. Jesus is the Messiah (Acts 17.3; 18.5). Recall Acts 18.24-28 where Apollos powerfully showed (v28) “from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ”, the messiah. To believe that Jesus is the Christ is to believe that he is the Anointed, the Messiah, the Saviour, that he was what he claimed to be.

This also ties to ‘sonship’ in v13 (Genesis 22.18; Isaiah 7.14; 11.1, 10; Matthew 22.42; 1 John 5.1).

For those wanting to study this further, an interesting study will be to explore what the characteristics of the expected Messiah were, and how Jesus fulfilled them.

v5 the faithful witness (martyr)

The Greek word for ‘witness’ was ‘martur’. In other words, ‘martyr’ originally meant ‘faithful witness’, but it soon changed its meaning, because so many of the early Christians died for their faithful witness to Jesus.

God does not lie (Numbers 23.19; Titus 1.2; Hebrews 6.18) When God is involved, other witnesses are unnecessary, for God bears truthful and reliable witness.

v5 the firstborn from the dead

Jesus is the first to rise from the dead by his own power, showing his supremacy. Others were raised from the dead before him, but not by themselves, and they died again, for example, Lazarus (John 11). But Jesus lives forever. Colossians 1.18:

he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy

v5 the ruler over the kings of the earth

The kings of this earth may work against us, but Jesus is the King of kings. He rules the kings of earth. He rules over the whole world.

The titles of Jesus in Revelation 1 are used again later in the book. Therefore when later you see it refer to “the ruler over the kings of the earth” you know it is talking about Jesus.

v5 who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood

The Greek word used here for ‘loved’ means ‘loved and is loving’, that is, a perpetual love. The degree of God’s love for us is fathomless. Jesus loves us unceasingly.

We love God because he first loved us and freed us from sin and its power over us. He did this through his blood. He died for us on the cross. Romans 6.23:

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

God’s abiding character is love. 1 John 4.8:

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love

v6 to Him be glory

This is clearly a reference to Jesus as seen from v5: To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 … to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Yet scripture clearly tells us that God will not share His glory with another, Isaiah 48.11:

I will not give My glory to another.

This is therefore yet another affirmation that Jesus is God! Notice the similarity of the vision of Jesus starting in v13, to the description of God’s glory in Exodus 24, in the ‘was like’ in v17. Exodus 24:16-17:

Now the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 The sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.

‘Glory’ here connects v4 grace and v16-17 the word of God which is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6.17), as seen in John 1.14:

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

v6 Amen

Amen means: true, so be it; I’m telling you the absolute truth here; it is real; it is true. Notice the repeated use of Amen (6,7,18). In the letter to Laodicea this is a title of Jesus. Revelation 3.14:

These things says the Amen

It is effectively saying that “Jesus is the guarantee at the end of every promise of God that he will do it”:

* has made us kings and priests to His God and Father … Amen (v6)
* Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him … Even so, Amen (v7)
* behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. (v18)
* Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen. (7.12)
* He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (22.20)

v7 He is coming

Throughout the Bible Jesus is the ‘coming one’. Here are just some examples: Numbers 24.17; Deuteronomy 18.15-18; Psalm 118.26; Jeremiah 23.5-8; Daniel 9.25; Micah 5.2; Zechariah 2.8-11; Matthew 11.3; John 14.3; Acts 3.22. In Revelation this term is used 12 times, seven of those by Jesus (2.5, 16; 3.11; 16.15; 22.7, 12, 20).

v7 even they who pierced Him

Not only were there people who actually pierced him, but in a sense we all did, through our sin, which he took on himself on the cross. The head, hands and side of Jesus were pierced – he suffered because of his love for us!

John 19.1-2

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. 2 The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head

John 19.34

one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water

John 20.27-28

Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” 28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

As mentioned in regards to further study of the Christ in v5, see how Jesus fulfilled Zechariah 12.10:

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

v8 I am

This is the first of seven “I am” statements by Jesus (1.8, 11, 17, 18; 21.6; 22.13, 16). This recalls the name which God revealed to Moses in the burning bush at Mount Horeb, Exodus 3.1-2, 13-15:

13 Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” 14 And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”

Recall that the Jews tried to stone Jesus when he made this claim, which they recognised as an intentional identification with God, John 8.58:

Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

v8, 11 the Alpha and the Omega

In Greek ‘alpha’ is the first letter of the alphabet and ‘omega’ is the last letter of the alphabet. He is the beginning of history, the end of history and all that comes in between.

v8 the Beginning and the End

Here is another strong declaration of the divinity of Jesus. Genesis 1.1:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

God is the beginning, that is, the author and creator of all things. He is also the end, he brings everything to its conclusion. This is a way of saying, the whole. Jesus is the beginning, the end and everything in between.

v8 says the Lord

We first encountered this title in Part 1, in the discussion of the Lord’s Day (v10). The Greek word used here refers to the person to whom something belongs, about which he has power of deciding. The master or lord is the possessor and disposer of a thing, the owner; the one who has control. It was a title used of a prince, a chief, and of the Roman emperor. It expresses the respect and reverence with which servants greet their master. In the bible it is a title given to God and to the Messiah.

1 Corinthians 12.3

I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

v8 Almighty

This name of God appears 48 times in the bible, nine times in this book. The Greek word used here means ‘all ruling’, that is, no one is outside of his dominion. ‘Almighty’ means that nobody can oppose God’s power. His power is absolute. This name is first used in Genesis 17.1, when God identifies himself to Abram.

v11, 17 the First and the Last

Jesus is the first and the last. In the Old Testament this title is clearly a title of God (Isaiah 41.4; 48.12), for example, Isaiah 44.6

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God

Here again is a title of Jesus which is used later in the book (2.8; 22.13). Therefore when later you see it refer to “the First and the Last” you know it is talking about Jesus.

As stated at the start, the focus in Part 2 is on Jesus, the author of the Revelation. Until this point we have delved into the meanings of his many titles in this chapter. But now, although the focus remains on Jesus, it is no longer about his titles, but about his attributes. He is ‘like’:

* the Son of Man v13
* wool, as white as snow v14
* a flame of fire v14
* fine brass, as if refined in a furnace v15
* the sun shining in its strength v16

His voice ‘as’

* the sound of many waters v15

v13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man

in the midst … the Son

Two things come together here. Firstly, Jesus is in the midst of the Church. The church is inseparable from her head and centre Jesus. Secondly, the concept of sonship. Sonship is more than relationship. It assures us that we are inseparable from his love (Romans 8.38-39). John 8.34-36:

Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

1 Peter 1.17-23:

if you call on the Father … 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot … 20 He … was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. 22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever

One

We worship one God, whom we know him in three persons: Father, Son and Spirit. For instance, I am one person, but I am a father, a son and a friend. You might wonder why there are so many names for God? In my case, in my fathering role, I am not seen the same way by people who see me in this role, as the following three examples illustrate. Firstly, I have four sons by my first marriage. Secondly, when I married Gill, her three children were adults and had left home. I am their ‘step-father’, but they revere their original father, who tragically died in a drowning accident. For them, although I have a fathering role, it is more of a trusted advisor role, and not the same as my role with my biological children. The third example is from over a decade ago, in a former church. There were several boys aged 12-14 from single parent homes. Their fathers were dead, or in prison, or wanted nothing to do with them. That church formed a small group for those boys and I led it. I only met with them at church, not in their homes, although we did go to the park across the road from the church to kick a ball sometimes. I had a fathering type role. They could discuss things with me that they were not comfortable talking to their mothers about. All three examples involve me in a ‘father’ type role, but the way these people experience me as ‘father’ is different and could mean that I have different ‘father’ type names: dad, step-father, and more. God the Father is known to us by many names. Similarly, Jesus the Son is our high priest, our Lord, our Saviour, and much, much more. Many names, and yet, One.

like the Son of Man

In v5 Jesus had the name ‘Christ’ and as we saw, part of that involves sonship (Genesis 22.18; Isaiah 7.14; 11.1, 10; Matthew 22.42; 1 John 5.1). In the gospel of Luke, Jesus the ‘Son of Man’ is a major focus. Here he is ‘like’ the Son of Man. That is because at this point he is in his glorified state. Compare this description of Jesus to that of his transfiguration in Mark 9.2-9:

after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. 3 His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them … 7 And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” 8 Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves. 9 Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

v13 clothed with a garment down to the feet

A robe reaching down to the feet, yet so as to leave the feet themselves visible. This is an allusion to a long, loose, flowing robe worn by kings (Isaiah 6.1).

v13 and girded about the chest with a golden band

The high priest’s girdle was interwoven with gold (Exodus 28.8), but here the girdle is pure gold, the emblem of a royal presence.

v14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow

Exceedingly or perfectly white. This colour, white, appears again later in Revelation as stone (2.17), garments (3.5; 6.11; 7.9, 13) and horse (6.2). It occurs 75 times in the Bible. It has various meanings, but mostly to do with being clean (pure, holy) (Psalm 51.7).

He is the head of the body (Colossians 1.18). His head is perfectly clean, pure, holy. We, his body, should be that way too, and we are, not by our own doing, but washed clean through his endless love for us: To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood (v5).

v14 His head and hair were white like wool

The law was given in the desert, after the people of Israel had left Egypt. But a crucial event leading to their release from bondage in Egypt was the blood of the sacrificial lamb (like wool) protecting God’s people (Exodus 11-12). Here the love of Jesus for us is seen in terms of his sacrifice for us, the pure and holy (white) Jesus for us who were in sin (Romans 5.8). This brings together two images. One is of Jesus the lamb, who is the groom of the Church, the bride. The other is of Jesus the head, of the Church, the body. Both are images that are developed further in the chapters to come.

The two images are also combined in Ephesians 5.23:

For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body

The endless love that God has for us is seen through the courtship between him and his bride, which results in a marriage (Revelation 21-22) and we live happily ever after.

v14 and His eyes like a flame of fire

In v8 we saw the ‘I am’ of the Exodus 3 revelation of God’s name to Moses. In that same passage the way God manifested himself to Moses was as fire burning the bush, and yet the bush was not consumed. Similarly when God came down from Mount Sinai in Exodus 19.18, his presence was in fire.

This name of Jesus is seen again in the letter to Thyatira in Revelation 2.18:

These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass

Notice, the context of the church, who (v5) has been washed in his blood. The judgement of God on us as sinners was dealt with by Jesus at the cross. We are now white, pure, clean, holy, because of what Jesus did for us.

***So what is being judged?*** In the context of Revelation 2-3, it is our service. Two of the letters speak of the crowns we will receive for faithful service. In Revelation 4 the elders throw their crowns before Jesus in worship, showing that the heavenly rewards are not things to be grasped, but are relational and service oriented. Just as Jesus was the greatest servant, so our service is judged and rewarded.

This connection of fire to rewards is seen in 1 Corinthians 3.13-15:

the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

The imagery of crowns as symbolic of reward is seen 1 Corinthians 9.24-27, with the image of the race and the perishable crown that the victor wins. But our reward will not perish (1 Peter 5.4).

Notice that the crown is the result of faithfulness under testing conditions of those who love God. That is, the judgement is not of unbelievers, but believers. James 1.12:

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

We see this in 2 Timothy 4.8 as well – judgement of those who love God. Not a judging of sin, but of faithful service:

there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

For those wanting to study this further, notice that there is a …

* crown of life (James 1.12)
* crown of glory (1 Peter 5.4; Isaiah 28.5)
* crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4.8)
* crown of rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2.19)
* crown of lovingkindness and tender mercies (Psalm 103.4)

This connection to the imagery of crowns representing rewards tested by fire is reinforced in the example of Jesus. Revelation 19.12:

His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns.

We are saved (1 Corinthians 3.15) through Christ, washed in his blood. But the way we serve him in our christian walk is judged through his fire.

Connecting this part of v14 with the preceding passage that he was standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks (v13), suggests a close association between the light of Jesus and the light of the Church.

On the one hand, pictured this way (Jesus at the centre with the Church around him), his penetrating vision first falls on the Church, before it falls on those beyond the Church. Hence, Revelation 2-3 (how Jesus views the Church) precedes his view of what is beyond the Church.

On the other hand, pictured this way it suggests that when the light of the Church (candlesticks) is perfectly aligned with the light of Jesus at our centre, then the witness to those beyond the Church is astonishing!

v15 His feet were like fine brass (bronze), as if refined in a furnace

Some translations have brass, others bronze. The Greek here means ‘white brass’, and as in the previous verse, white means clean (pure, holy). The first use of ‘brass’ in the Bible is when the people disobeyed and many Israelites died from snake bites, which was a judgment of God on the sin of the people (Numbers 21.4-9). Following God’s instruction, Moses (Numbers 21.9):

made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

Jesus explained this to Nicodemus in John 3.14-16:

as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Both the brass and refined in a furnace speak of judgment of the power of sin. Jesus is completely clean and holy, as seen in that it is ‘white’ brass. As in John 3.14-16, we have life through the Son. We are clean through the son. See also Romans 6.4-11 (NLT):

just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. 5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. 9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. 11 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

Perhaps like me, you have often heard John 3.16 quoted, about God’s great love for us. But that verse is in the context of the judgment of the power of sin. Jesus, the sinless sacrifice, took upon himself the judgment that should have been ours.

v15-16 and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 … out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword

As is seen in the love letters in Revelation 2-3, where each starts with a title of Jesus and ends with an admonishment to listen to the Spirit, so here we have this emphasis on the connection between Jesus and his Spirit.

First the connection is seen between the voice of Jesus and the water of the Spirit. The association of the Spirit with water is first seen in Genesis 1.2:

the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters

The term “pneu`ma” (breath, Spirit) is found throughout the book of Revelation: 1.4, 10; 2.7, 11, 17, 29; 3.1, 6, 13, 22; 4.2, 5; 5.6; 11.11; 13.15; 14.13; 16.1-3, 14; 17.3; 18.2; 19.10; 21.10; 22.6, 17. The Spirit as breath coming out of the mouth of God and associated with life is first seen in Genesis 2.7:

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

This connection is made plain in John 7.37-39:

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

The first connection (v15) is then about Jesus as the source of life, with the sustaining of ongoing life being associated with his Spirit. This is evident from the start of the Bible (Genesis 1.2) to the end of the Bible (Revelation 22.1).

The second connection (v16) is seen between the mouth of Jesus and the sword of the Spirit. For example, the two-edged sword in Heb 4.12:

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Also Ephesians 6.17:

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Whilst the first connection (v15) concerned life, the second (v16) does too, but extends that to include discernment of the inner person. These connections are important to remember when looking at the love letters in Revelation 2-3. There Jesus speaks prophetically to each church, discerning what is happening internal to that church, and each letter ends with the encouragement to heed what his Spirit is saying to each of us individually (he who has an ear) and to all the churches. As seen in 1.3 blessing goes to those who ‘hear’ and ‘keep’ the things written in this book. One blessing is abundant life (John 10.10)!

v16 and His countenance (face) was like the sun shining in its strength

The Greek here does not describe a single feature of the face, but the whole face. The “in its strength” part is referring to when the sun is at its strongest. His eyes, his feet, and his face all attest to Jesus being the dazzling light at the centre of the seven lampstands.

This focus on his radiant and brilliant light builds on v1, this is a revealing (The Revelation) and on the preceding focus of the life giving water. Jesus is the light of the world (John 9.5) and the light of life (John 8.12). In other words, Jesus, the light at the centre of the Church (v13) is also the source of the life of the Church.

v18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death

Many other great leaders have lived and died (Budda, etc.). But only one died and lives again, Jesus! He won the victory over death. He is alive now and He will always be alive. He is with his people now. He will always be with his people. This is a great comfort to suffering Christians. Jesus has beaten death. He has brought life into the open.

Keys represent authority. Jesus holds the keys of Hades and death. He rules everywhere. This truth gives us great hope.

In Part 2 we have focussed on Jesus, the author of The Revelation. He loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood (v5). It was a free gift of grace from God, whose nature is grace (John 1.12-17). He did this so that we would not perish but have everlasting life (John 3.16), and unending relationship with him. God’s abiding character is love (1 John 4.8). His love for us is endless. Romans 8.38-39 (AMP):

For I am convinced [and continue to be convinced—beyond any doubt] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present and threatening, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the [unlimited] love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen!