

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Cornerstone Church of Alexandria MN

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Message Title: "A Heavenly Vision of Christ"

Today's Passage: **(Revelation 1:9-20 ESV).**

Introduction

Verse 9

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

- The tribulation John speaks of is the normal trials that all Christians who faithfully testify and live out their convictions are facing in the world today. The seven churches of Asia Minor were very familiar with persecution.
- The Kingdom is the here now and yet future Kingdom of Jesus Christ which is infinitely more powerful than any earthly or Satanic kingdom.
 - Because the Kingdom is a fighting force it is vehemently opposed by the world and if a kingdom soldier is not getting battle scars he may not be in the fight.

(2 Timothy 3:12 ESV) Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

- The patient endurance of suffering is a mark of the true believer,

(Matthew 13:21 ESV) yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

- And it (the expectancy of tribulation) is non-existent today in the teaching of the prosperity gospel evangelists. The disciples of Jesus instructed new converts the same way Jesus taught them (so why shouldn't we?).

(Acts 14:21-22 ESV) When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

- John's faithful witness for Christ got him exiled on an island called Patmos.
 - Typical life for a person in exile was, 1) loss of all property to the state, 2) scourgings that often left a person's bones exposed, 3) bondage in chains, 4) little food if any (except for what friends might bring) 5) sleeping on the ground, 6) sentenced to hard labor. Since John was in his 90's it is unlikely that he was forced to endure all of this but it was possible.
 - Is this the kind of life a famous apostle deserves?

Verses 10 & 11

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

- John was worshiping "in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day when this vision occurred.
 - Worshiping in the Spirit is not a matter of repeatedly asking the Spirit to fill you or to give you the gift of speaking in tongues or prophecy. It is,
 - Being so in love with Jesus that an hour or two in prayer and conversation with Jesus passes quickly (perhaps doing all-nighters on occasion because one is so desperate for Jesus) and,
 - if one is this much in love with Jesus, the rest of their life will reflect it in moral purity and holiness.
- The Lord's Day is a NT way of referring to Sunday as a day of worship.

(1 Corinthians 16:2 ESV) On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

- The early church departed from the Sabbath as a day of worship because we are no longer under the law but under grace. Every one of the 10 Commandments were re-commanded by Jesus and elevated except the fourth commandment.
- The Sabbath was a sign of the covenant between God and ancient ethnic Israel and no longer applies to the church. (This is what the Book of Galatians is all about).
- It would be an error in theology and doctrine to place the same Sabbath restrictions of work and travel on the NT's day of worship, however,
- Enjoying one day a week as a day of rest is built into creation by God's example of resting on the seventh day.
- The loud voice was loud like a trumpet blast and initiated John's out-of-body visit to heaven to see first-hand what was awaiting him and what was to come for the future of all believers.

Verse 12

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,

- The lampstands (menorah) was used to light the inner sanctuary of the temple since no outside light was available for the priests to do their work. This lampstand was kept lit 24 hours a day and became a symbol of Israel's pride (much like the Star of David does today, only much later).
- The lampstands in this verse refers to the churches about to be addressed. Their testimony of Jesus is giving light to the world of a much-needed Savior.
- The lampstands unite believing Israel to the Church of Jesus Christ giving us a clue as to the relationship between each. In one sense the church (bride of Christ) has always been in the OT and was comprised of all believers, both Jewish and Gentile. The large portion of the Gentile church in the NT was grafted in to the main body already present:

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not

be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. (Romans 11:17-18 ESV)

- Notice that Jesus is still standing (supreme) among the lampstands despite the seriousness of their sins as he will mention soon. Jesus is ultra-patient with his church, tolerating a significant amount of drift before he removes their lampstand (witness).

Verses 13-15

and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

- John sees His Lord but in such a way that it is not the same as he has always known him. He now sees Him as the Son of Man (same title as Jesus used before for Himself) but now with vestments that clearly identify Him as the Ultimate High Priest of His people, wearing priestly garments (the robe and the sash indicate this).
- Since John was such a student of the OT, and especially Daniel, it would be impossible for him to not make the comparison of what he remembered Daniel saying in:

“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. (Daniel 7:9 ESV)

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. (Daniel 7:13 ESV)

- The whiteness of Jesus' hair signifies the same “white as snow” hair worn by the Ancient of Days, (the Father) signifying their joint eternity (white hair symbolizing age and wisdom).
- This is the same vision of Jesus that Daniel saw while standing next to the Tigris River:

I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. (Daniel 10:5-6 ESV)

- The flaming eyes indicate passion and the ability to see through to the heart and so reveal purity or expose impurity. His voice was like the sound of Niagara Falls only louder.

Verse 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.

- Jesus will tell John in the next verses that the stars he holds are angels (we'll get to that) later but notice the sword. . .

(Isaiah 11:4 ESV) but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

- Jesus is a warrior king/God whose power (sword) is in his words.

Verses 17-20

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

- John was so overwhelmed by the glory and fearsome appearance of the Lord that he lost consciousness and fell on his face
- Jesus revived John so he could hear what Jesus had to say which was:
 - Jesus is the everlasting one who will live and has lived forever. He was also the one who,
 - Died and rose from the dead (take JW's directly to this verse. They do not know what to do with it since they believe that Jesus is Michael the archangel. Did he die and come back to life?)
 - That Jesus was the one and only who had the keys to Death and Hades meaning he is the only one who is able to bring people back to life from the dead. IN the power of Christ the church is bashing down the gates of Hades and rescuing those who are dead spiritually.
- The stars that Jesus is holding in his hands are the angels of the seven churches. Although the word angelos can mean messenger (or the one who reads this message to the church such as an elder) I take it to literally mean the guardian angels who stand guard over the churches.
- The lampstands are symbols for the churches themselves giving light to the world.

Application

1. How brightly does the oil burn in our lamp?
2. How does knowing an angel stands guard over our fellowship encourage us to carry on in faithful obedience?
3. If we could peer into heaven with a sneak peek and see Jesus' glory as John did, would it change your life? Your confidence to boldly witness? What if you meditated on this image before sharing your faith, would it embolden you?