



October 5

## Conquer Series: Jesus Vision

Revelation 1:1–20 (ESV) **1** The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, **2** who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. **3** Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

**4** John to the seven churches that 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 of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood **6** and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. **7** Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. **8** “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

**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. **10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet **11** 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.” **12** Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, **13** 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. **14** The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, **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. **17** 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, **18** and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. **19** Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. **20** 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.

Seven letters written to seven churches. The letters are specific to each church, but they were never meant to be exclusive to each church. The message to each one is also a message to every other church ever, including our church.

Let’s set the stage with a few minor details in Revelation 1:1.

- First, this book is Revelation. Singular. Just **ONE** revelation that was given to the apostle John. Not many revelations.
- Second: it’s a **revelation**, not an apocalypse. What John meant when he first wrote the word revelation was simply **uncover**. We’re not speculating or guessing, we’re uncovering. And what are we uncovering?
- That’s third: This is a revelation/uncovering of **Jesus Christ**. Above everything else you might do with this book, please use it most of all to get to know your Savior better.

In chapter 1 Jesus appears to his beloved apostle friend, John.

- The year is 90-95AD. John is an old man. He’s been exiled to an Island called Patmos.
- John records exactly what took place: He was worshipping, in the Spirit, and Jesus appears.
- This revelation/uncovering shows us some important things about Jesus.
- Let’s pick up three things in the text: *Clouds, Keys, and Lampstands*.

## Clouds.

- Verse 7. Jesus... *is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of earth will wail (mourn) because of him. Even so. Amen.*
- More than any other NT book, Revelation will pick up and use imagery found in the Old Testament.
- And this phrase *coming with the clouds* is exactly that. We’ve read this before in Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10.

- John picks up on these texts and describes the second coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world.
- Jesus will return to defeat all evil and to establish his reign.
- You need this reality in your life because ***it reverses your natural way to think.***
- A judgement day forces us to be very aware of our own sin (not dismissive), and very humble when it comes to the sins of others (not judgey). Why is this?
- It's because Jesus could come on the clouds in judgement **at any time.**
- The question becomes: *What if Jesus comes back right now?*
- Would I be embarrassed by my behavior if Jesus were to show up?
- This suddenly makes us very aware of ourselves. It humbles us. It puts guardrails up on our behavior. It makes us consider our flaws. It makes us evaluate our steps.
- Because we cannot predict the moment he comes, we situate ourselves to be ready at all moments.

It says, Jesus is coming **with** the clouds.

- What's that mean?
- Do you remember a place in the Old Testament where a cloud plays a prominent role with God's people?
- Moses has brought the Israelites out of Egypt, into the wilderness. And as they travel through the desert they are led by a cloud.
- Exodus 13:21 (ESV) *And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.*
- There are numerous texts just like it that all point to God showing up as a cloud.
- So now we get it. Jesus comes with the clouds. He's coming with the *shekinah* glory of God himself. He's bringing the presence of God back to the earth.
- We will be in God's *face to face* presence again.

Do you believe that Jesus is coming back?

- When you do...
- 1) You'll have a shield/hedge/fence for your actions.
- 2) You'll have a graciousness to forgive others when they fail.
- 3) And you'll have a hope that the world will be righted.

## Keys

- As a result of seeing this unbelievable sight of Jesus, John fell at his feet as though dead.
- Scripture tells us over and over that no person can look upon the face of God **and live**. It is death to see the face of God.
- John stares into the face of God. And he falls down as though dead.
- The operative phrase here is *as though*. He's stunned. ***But he doesn't die.***
- Not only does John not die from seeing the face of God, but Jesus will reach out with his right hand and touch John and say, "Don't be afraid."

- Why is that little thing so incredibly important?
- A: You were built for the face of God.
- Psalm 16 says that in his face there is fullness of joy. Everything you've ever wanted is in the face of God.
- One problem: We can't be in his face. The presence of God is fatal.
- See the problem? God's face is the one thing we long for and need, and the one thing we can't have. The one thing we most need is the one thing we most fear.
- In our sin we've said to God, "I am the real master." And now when we come into the presence of the true ultimate Master, we disintegrate. We crumble. We die.

Jesus, with the face of God, touches John and says, "Don't be afraid." How can that be?

- A: It's because the judge of the earth at the end of time came into the world in the middle of time and took our judgement for us.
- Jesus holds the key to death and hell. He's saying I died for you. I went to hell for you. I took your judgement. And in doing so I unlocked life eternal for you.
- He has the key. He lives, and you can now live too.

### Lampstands.

- There's a mystery here in what John sees first: seven golden lamp stands.
  - What in the world are those? Jesus himself solves the mystery for us. They are the churches. (vs 20). They are the seven churches that Jesus wants John to write letters to.
  - All these churches are experiencing tremendous suffering at the hands of the enemies of God because they trust in a risen, resurrected Jesus Christ.
  - (vs 13) In the midst of the lampstands, stands Jesus. He is with them in the fire.
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- Isaiah 43 (ESV) 43 ...“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; **when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.** 3 For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
- - Jesus walks into the fire with us.
  - He went to a cross, the very judgement of God, for us.
  - Jesus got the fire. Jesus got hell. Jesus got the judgement of God. He got ultimate suffering and persecution, and he took it for you.
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  - If the greatest king ever would die for you like this? It means you matter.
  - When suffering comes, you won't be destroyed. Even in death, you will live. You will overcome. You will conquer.

*God, thank you for the death of Jesus that unlocks for us the death of death itself. We get to*

*escape hell because Jesus went through hell for us. We praise the name of the first and the last, the living one, Jesus. Amen.*