

Sunday message notes  
8-16-20

## Revelation chapter 1:1-18

John's vision of Jesus, the Son of Man - the Glorified Christ.

The last few weeks, Pastor Evenson has shared messages of Hope and Encouragement. In one of my School of Ministry lessons a few weeks ago on Jesus as seen in vision of John the Apostle on the Isle of Patmos, I was struck by the imagery used to describe Jesus. A thought occurred to me that all I (all of us) needed to focus on during this very difficult time was Jesus: To really see and understand Him as He is, as John saw Him in Revelation chapter 1.

In these times of COVID, violence and unrest, we question and search for answers on things such as, who is in Charge? How do I protect myself and my family? How does a Christian live in the physical and spiritual reality at the same time? Who do we call for help?

I want to ask you to pause a moment and consider your own level of understanding of who Jesus really is. How well do you know Him? Is he just someone you seek or call upon in times of trouble? Do you have a relationship with Him but it is not vibrant or personal? Is it more a professional relationship rather than personal? Do you think that Jesus has His role (place) and you have your role (place), which leads you to remain independent and maintain an "I can do it myself attitude? How much do you really depend on Him?

Evaluate the depth of your relationship with Him. Is it casual and impersonal or is it reverential and honoring?

Is Jesus just a man to you or much more? As you think of these questions, I want to challenge you to be real in your evaluation of your answers. Do you like your answers? Are you so sure of your relationship with Jesus that there is no room for improvement?

I believe that WE ALL have room for improvement, growth, and a greater need for intimacy with Jesus!

In this message today, I want you to see Jesus in a new and fresh way, maybe in a way that you have never thought of Him before.

In order to best understand the importance of John's vision of Jesus, in Revelation chapter 1:9-18, we must understand the background and setting of his vision.

I. The Prologue: Revelation 1:1-3.

***“This is a revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants the events that must soon take place. He sent an angel to present this revelation to his servant John, who faithfully reported everything he saw. This is his report of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.” NLT***

Verse 1 - The “Revelation” from Jesus... The word Revelation is translated from the Greek word “apokalypsis”, which means an unveiling or disclosing of a reality that previously has not yet been perceived. This apocalypse came from God through Jesus Christ, whose Past, Present and Future position and work is the content of the revelation communicated to John by an angel (22:16).

The purpose of the book of Revelation is to show His servants – genuine believers in every age – what must ... take place between the First and Second Coming of Christ. The events will occur soon, (see 2:5, 16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:6, 7, 12, 20), meaning they can take place at any time.

Verse 2 – John has been a faithful witness, in his life and in his preaching (1:4, 9; 21:2; 22:8). Now, John is a faithful witness, in this book, to what is God's Word to men and Jesus' testimony to the Father and the Truth.

Verse 3 – Here is the first of seven beatitudes in The Revelation (see also 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7 and 22:14).

***“God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.” NLT***

This verse and beatitude implies a reading aloud to a gathering of Christians who then are expected to obey the words of this prophecy. The fact that the time is near is an urgent call to obedience, not a reference to a precise time in history.

II. John's Greeting to the Seven Churches: Revelation 1: 4-8.

*This letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come; from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne; and from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world. All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. He has made us a kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen. Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him – even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him. Yes! Amen! “I am the Alpha and the Omega – the beginning and the end,” says the Lord God. “I am the one who is, who always was, who is still to come – the Almighty One.”*

Verse 4 – John is writing to seven actual churches in the Roman Province of Asia, which are representative of all local churches in every age. The blessings he pronounces are coming from the triune God. The Father is described in terms of His eternal nature. The Sevenfold Spirit pictures the Holy Spirit in His manifold and perfect dynamic activity.

The number seven is a symbolic, qualitative number that conveys the idea of completeness and when related to God, the idea of perfection. The seven torches suggest the Holy Spirit's illuminating, purifying, and energizing activity.

Verse 5 – Jesus is presented in terms of His redeeming sacrifice, His Resurrection, and His eternal reign. Jesus as Messiah-King is a major theme in The Revelation.

Verse 6 – The sacrifice of Jesus has given to all believers the privileges that had belonged to ancient Israel. This is in the present tense reference to the believer's function now, in witness and in worship!

Verse 7 – The Lord's return will be actual, personal, and visible (see Acts 1:9-11. Here, clouds symbolize God's presence, protection, and leadership. Yet, in this verse the emphasis is on the Lord's coming judgment, Matthew 24:30, ***“And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power, and great glory.”***

Verse 8 – God seals the prophecy with the authority of His name. The Alpha and the Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, declare that **God is everything from A to Z**, therefore, He is in control of all history. As the Almighty One, God’s power is absolute.

III. John’s Vision of the Son of Man: Revelation 1: 9-18. (READ FROM BIBLE)

The first thing that catches my attention is the Title used here for Jesus, the Son of Man. This is a term that was prophesied as a title for the Messiah in the Old Testament. It is one of the main titles that Jesus used to describe Himself. Luke’s Gospel can be summed up in this Title of Jesus. I appreciate this title of Jesus. You and I can relate to it. It tells us that Jesus was in human form and that He experienced life as we experience it, except that He did so without sinning. He perfectly lived in human flesh so that He could be the perfect unblemished sacrifice for our sin. He only had to die once for ALL MANKIND. Not like the repeated sacrifices under the Law of Moses.

We can relate to Him and He can relate to US!!

Yet, in John’s vision we see so much more of who Jesus IS, not just who we think He WILL Be.

- A. John’s exile on the island of Patmos: v. 9. Patmos is a small volcanic island, in the Aegean Sea, located about 40 miles off the west coast of Turkey. It is known for its steep cliffs and rugged terrain. The Romans used it as a penal colony, forcing prisoners to work in the granite quarries. John does not tell us the circumstances that brought him to Patmos. However, he does tell us that he was exiled to the island of Patmos for preaching the Word of God and for his testimony about Jesus.
- B. John is not alone in suffering for the Gospel. In verse 9, John calls himself, **“your brother and your partner in suffering and in God’s Kingdom and in the patient endurance to which Jesus calls us.”** So, from this description and the contents of The Revelation, Christians were undergoing severe persecution at this time.
- C. John tells us that he **“was in the spirit on the Lord’s day”**, v. 10. This means that he was worshipping on the Christian day of worship: Sunday, as we see in Acts 20:7 & 1 Cor. 16:2. This is the earliest reference in Christian literature to the first day of the week as **the Lord’s Day**. John was worshipping, and some scholars suggest he was worshipping in a liturgical setting. Yet, while he was

worshipping in the Holy Spirit he received by the Spirit the visions told in The Revelation. Four times in The Revelation John is “*in the Spirit*” – here, 4:2; 17:3; 21:10. John’s experience in the Spirit was that of a biblical prophet receiving a supernatural revelation.

- D. Suddenly, John heard from behind him a trumpet-like voice that caught his attention, v. 10 and causing him to turn to see its source, v. 12. We know from the Old Testament that Trumpets accompanied victory, Joshua 6:6, and were part of the liturgical worship at seen in Leviticus 25:9; and Psalms 98:6. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul said that a sounding trumpet will accompany the coming of the Lord and initiate the resurrection of the dead, 1 Thess. 4:16 and 1 Cor. 15:51-52. Here, the Voice of the Glorified Christ, “as a trumpet” called John to behold the **One in whom is found the fulfillment of all the Biblical hopes and dreams.**
- E. John saw the Glorified Jesus standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands. The imagery used here recalls the sanctuary of the Temple. In the Old Testament, the Temple symbolized to Israel God’s presence in their midst and everywhere they might be. The Temple was regarded as the place where heaven and earth met, where God was enthroned between the golden cherubim above the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant.
- F. The last time John saw Jesus was when He was ascending up into heaven from the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem, Acts 1:9 & 12. Now, on Patmos, some 40 to 60 years later, John saw the ascended Jesus glorified with the glory He had with God the Father from eternity before the world was, John 17:5. The Glorified Jesus Christ appeared to John “like the Son of Man”, v. 13 and yet he was so much more.
- G. John’s description of Jesus is like the apocalyptic visions of Daniel, chapters 7 & 10 and Ezekiel, chapter 1. Jesus was dressed in the long robe and sash, that is reminiscent of the clothing (vestments) of the high priest of Israel, v. 13. His white hair was like that of the Ancient of days, v. 14. His blazing eyes spoke of both His passion and penetrating vision, in that nothing escapes His sight. Jesus’ feet of burnished bronze, v. 15, also suggest Old Testament allusions. In Daniel 10:6, this description is applied to the messenger sent to Daniel from Heaven. In Daniel chapter 2, the statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream, of the successive kingdoms of the ages, had feet of iron and clay. There is no such mixture seen in the feet of Jesus. There is no feebleness in the glorified Jesus. His Kingdom is forever. When He speaks, His voice

thunders like the deafening rush of a mighty river plunging over a fall or like mighty ocean waves crashing on the beach.

- H. The clothing of the Lord symbolizes priestly royalty. His white hair and flaming eyes symbolize eternity, wisdom, and omniscience and the polished bronze suggests immutability (He does not CHANGE) and omnipotence and the mighty ocean waves represent commanding authority.
- I. Jesus held seven stars in His right hand and a sharp two-edged sword came from His mouth. His face was like the sun in all its brilliance. His right hand signifying His strength and authority over ALL THINGS in heaven and on earth, Matt. 28:18. The “sharp two-edged sword” signifying that He speaks the Word of God, making known His judgments, Isa. 11:4; 2 Thess. 2:8 and Heb. 4:12. The Glorified Jesus’ face, “countenance”, shines like the sun at full strength. In his face we see the glory of God. Like the prophets of old who witnessed glimpses of God’s true splendor, John was overcome by the glory of Christ, and “fell at His feet as dead”, v. 17, showing the reverent response of a human to the overwhelming glory of God.
- J. John fell down as a dead man before Jesus. But **Jesus laid his right hand of John and said to him, “*Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living One. I died, but look – I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave*”, v. 17-18.** John was frail and weak yet Jesus laid His right hand on John and told him to not be afraid! The phrase “don’t be afraid” or “fear not” is found 80 times in scripture and it generally indicates God quieting the fear of man because of “His Presence!” In the Old Testament, the right hand was used to convey blessing, Gen. 48:17-19. The right hand of the priest was anointed during ordination, Lev. 14:17. In the right of the Lord is all authority and power. In His right hand we will find comfort, safety, and pleasure. With encouraging words and with the strength of His right hand, Jesus braces up His faithful servant John. Jesus identifies Himself as the resurrected Lord, ***“I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look – I am alive forever and ever!*”** Here Jesus underscores His power and authority to save those who trust in Him. He was before all things and will be after all things, Col. 1:15-20. We must not fear death, Jesus has triumphed over it and He possesses

the key of hell (hades – the abode of the dead) and death (Grave). By His resurrection, hell and death (grave) are stripped of their power over those who trust in Him.

Have you ever lost or misplaced your keys? I did recently, I used them to unlock the janitorial closet and thought I will leave them in the lock since I will return the bottle of the cleaner when I am finished. Well, I used the whole bottle and threw it away and went back to my office and worked for several hours. Later in the afternoon, I went to the copy room to make some copies and went to unlock the door and my keys were not on my belt loop. I looked everywhere for those keys. Finally, I decided to retrace my steps of the day and low and behold – where do you think I found my keys? Yep, hanging in the door right where I left them hours before.

Well, Jesus has never lost his keys! He gave the keys of this earth to Adam and Eve, but they lost them to Satan. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus reclaimed the master key to life. Jesus is the key holder! He has all authority and power!

Adam died on the day that he disobeyed God, Gen. 2:17, and as a result all mankind are born in the same spiritual condition, Rom. 5:12, 14, 17, 21, from which, however, those who believe in Jesus Christ are delivered, John 5:24 and 1 John 3:14. Death is the opposite of life and it never indicates “non-existence”. As spiritual life is “conscious existence in communion with God”, so spiritual death is “conscious existence in separation from God.” Jesus has the authority over the bodies and souls of men, yet He allows us the choice to decide if we want to be “in communion with God or separation from God!”

The grave, or Hades in Greek, was the place of waiting for the people who died before Jesus came. When Jesus died on the cross, He went to Hades and took the keys away from Satan. Jesus then led every Old Testament Saint to heaven. Why is this important? Because Jesus doesn't lock people up in hell. He leads them out to freedom! It is our choice that determines our spiritual destination.

The Lord instructed John to not be afraid! Death and the grave are not too be feared, for Jesus by His resurrection, stripped hell and the grave of

their power over those who TRUST in Him!

John's vision of the glorified Jesus is important to keep in mind. We must remember that above all and in all of the conditions and circumstances of our lives as believers in Christ, HE remains glorious, victorious and worthy of our trust and worship.

We should mediate on the vision of the glorified Jesus, in our prayer times. This vision can inspire us to have confidence in Jesus Christ our Lord, and direct our worship of Him. Take time in your private devotions to enter into praise and adoration of the glorified Jesus revealed in this first chapter of Revelation.

I realize that sometimes in our spiritual life we encounter seasons when it seems or feels that Jesus is far away. There are congregations around the world that are facing very difficult times. Seeing John's vision of Christ, we are encouraged to remember that Jesus is ALIVE and NEAR, in spite of our feelings or external circumstances. The truth about our situation is that the RISEN LORD JESUS stands NEAR AND STRENGTHENS US.

ASK THE LORD TO HELP YOU SENSE HIS NEARNESS IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR TRIALS.

We know that we are not called to an easy discipleship. He has called us to follow Him all of our lives, whether it is easy or hard, trusting Him, as our ALL-SUFFICIENT SAVIOR AND LORD!!

Just as Christ is always with us, remember He said He would never leave or forsake us!

Listen to what the Lord spoke to Joshua in chapter 1:5 – ***“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” KJV***

Now listen to the writer of Hebrews in chapter 13:5 – ***“Let your conversations be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” KJV***

***“Don’t love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, “I will never fail you, I will never abandon you.” NLT***

Here is my favorite:

***“Let your character (your moral essence, your inner nature) be free from the love of money (shun greed – be financially ethical), being content with what you have; for He has said, “I WILL NEVER (under any circumstances) DESERT YOU (nor give you up nor leave you without support, nor will I in any degree leave you helpless), NOR WILL I FORSAKE OR LET YOU DOWN OR RELAX MY HOLD ON YOU (assuredly not)! AMP***

We must follow His example. We need to be with fellow believers and others who need our presence. Ask Christ to bless you, and as Pastor Terrie always says, “BE A BLESSING!”