

A Future Journey with Christ

The Patmos Vision (Part 2)

Revelation 1:12-20

INTRODUCTION:

This is the second part of a message I have entitled The Patmos Vision.

This morning we get a glimpse of the first vision that Christ gives John on the isle of Patmos. He is going to proclaim a message for the "seven churches". But before he does, He gives John a vision of Himself. He wants believers down through the ages to know that the message to the churches is coming from the Supreme Majesty of the universe.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 1:12-20 (NASB)

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; ¹³ and in the middle of the lampstands *I saw* one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. ¹⁴ His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵ His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

¹⁷ When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

¹⁹ Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. ²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars which 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.

Prayer

BODY:

I. THE APPEARANCE.

John turned to SEE the VOICE that was speaking to him. We are told that he was "in the Spirit". I cannot imagine the astonishment he must have had to turn around and see a different dimension with overwhelming bright spiritual lights that were real and alive!

Revelation 1:12-13a (NASB)

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; ¹³ and in the middle of the lampstands *I saw one like a son of man,...*

Standing in the midst of the golden lamp stands or in the midst of the churches was the Son of Man, Christ Himself. This tells us that the message of Revelation is from the Lord Himself.

And there, in the midst of John's Patmos experience, there was a CONFRONTATION WITH THE PERSON of Jesus Christ. This is a majestic picture of the glorified Christ! Words are inadequate to describe what He saw. All we know for sure is He was like "a Son of Man," first seen in Daniel 7, before whom all nations and people will bow! Christ is more fully revealed and exalted in 'Revelation' than in any other book of the Bible!

I would like to briefly **recapitulate (or recap)** the significance of this verse because it is critical to understand in order to make sense of Revelation.

Daniel 7:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man (this is the exact phrase that is used here in Revelation 1:13) was coming, (it is important to note that the only time that "coming with the clouds of heaven" and "Son of man" are used together in the Old Testament is here) And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.

The Ancient of Days is God. Where is the Ancient of Days dwelling? He is in HEAVEN!

So here is the question. Where did the clouds of the Son of man take Him? HEAVEN!

Whenever we read " And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming," what do we immediately think of?

Christ's second coming, right? Jesus coming from the heavens to the earth.

But Daniel says "No! Coming in the clouds like a Son of man is coming from the earth and going to Heaven!

Isn't that what it says? Let me read it again.

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him."

The clouds take Him to the presence of the Ancient of Days in Heaven! Then we read verse 14. **This is the point! This is the point!** Every time that the phrase "Coming in the clouds like a Son of man" is used it is used as kingdom language. Listen to verse 14 once again.

¹⁴ "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

What is that describing? The establishment of the kingdom! It happens when Jesus goes from earth to Heaven. When did Jesus go from earth to Heaven in a cloud? **(Repeat)**

The ascension!

When did Jesus' kingdom get established? **When He went to heaven in a cloud!**

It is very important to understand what Daniel is telling us here in order to make sense of Revelation. The kingdom was established by Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection. John uses this passage in the Old Testament to describe the establishment of the everlasting kingdom that will not stop reigning.

Then John is going to UNVEIL or REVEAL Christ's appearance.

Revelation 1:13-16 (NASB)

¹³ and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. ¹⁴ His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

If you look closely, you'll see that the image of Christ was more awesome than John could explain. Jesus is a spirit. There is no human language to describe Him. All he could do was compare the image of Christ to some of the most awesome and precious things of earth and say the glorified Lord is like that.

1. He was clothed with a robe down to his feet that had a gold sash strapped across it. Jesus is depicted as wearing a long robe belted at the breasts with golden belt. In older times cloth was very expensive. The placement of the belt and the material of which it was made indicated the importance of the person. The higher it was worn and the more costly the material, the more important the individual. We see Jesus in a garment that roughly reminds a person of the priestly garments, but shows him to be far superior. It is also a kingly garment at the same time.

2. The head and hair of Jesus Christ were as white as wool and snow. This is the picture of Christ as the Ancient of Days, as being the eternal Lord of the universe. It's possible that this is also a picture of His sinlessness and purity of mind. For our purposes now, the brief description of Jesus includes: His head and hair was white, which stand for PURITY, WISDOM, AND DIGNITY.

3. He had eyes that were like blazing fire. This symbolizes a piercing, penetrating power. He sees everything—even in the dark places and behind closed doors. His eyes search the innermost region of the heart. No one will ever be able to hide from Him or hide anything from Him. His EYES were like a FLAME OF FIRE, which show His ABILITY TO DISCERN AND PENETRATE and have intimate knowledge of people and nations – it reflects His ability to get at the motives of the heart, to hold everyone accountable.

4. He had feet like glowing bronze symbolizing strength and perseverance. His feet were those that preached the gospel and brought the glad tidings of peace. But they were also the feet that shall tread down His enemies. His feet are also able to rush to the rescue of His people. His FEET are FIRM AND HOLY TO TRAMPLE SIN.

5. Jesus had a voice that was like the sound of rushing waters. Have you ever heard the sound of rushing water? It's deafening. That's all you can hear. This symbolizes authority. It's that voice that sends forth the glorious message of salvation, hope, joy, and comfort. But it also thunders rebuke, conviction, and judgment.

6. Jesus held 7 stars in His right hand. They symbolize the angels of the churches throughout the New Testament age.

7. Then John said "**and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword;**"

ILLUSTRATION:

Someone once told the preacher that his message was like a long knife.

The preacher, flattered by the assumed compliment, said, "You mean like a long two-edged sword; sharp and to the point?"

The person said, "No, like a long knife; long and dull.

Was Jesus a sword swallower? It appears He is swallowing the sword handle first and He is able to talk while doing it.

If there was any doubt whether John was using symbolic language, the use of symbolism should now be perfectly clear.

Hebrews 4:12 (NASB)

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

This may very well have been the verse that prompted this description.

This symbolizes the Word of God and its penetrating power. The two-edged sword symbolizes the gospel that came from the mouth of Jesus was sharp and two-sided. It was able to proclaim grace to those who repent and put their faith in God and the other side of the sword was able to strike judgment against the unbelieving. Jesus is able to judge, not based upon outward appearance, but based upon the very "**thoughts and intentions of the heart**". He can see right through you. You cannot hide anything from God.

8. The appearance of His face was like the sun shining in its full strength, symbolizing the dazzling brilliance of His presence in all of His majesty and honor and glory as God.

These same elements were used in Daniel 7:9 to describe the Ancient of Days are now used to describe Jesus. Why? He is the KING!

This is the best that John could describe. The vision is vivid. He describes what the appearance of Christ was like: Face shining like the sun, eyes as a flame of fire, hair of the purest whiteness, feet of burning brass, the word of God like a sharp two-edged sword issuing from His mouth, seven shining stars in His right hand, and a voice like the sound of many waters.

II. THE ASSURANCE.

Then John was given **the reassuring presence and care of the Lord.**

Revelation 1:17-19 (NASB)

¹⁷ When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

¹⁹ Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

John was terrified. He fell at the feet of the Lord as though he were dead. But did you notice the calm assurance of Christ? Jesus reached out His right hand and tenderly touched John, assuring him that He was not there to consume him. Christ said four things to John:

1. “**Do not be afraid.**” He was saying that He hadn’t appeared to John in judgment but in love and care. He was actually commissioning John to carry the mission of building up the churches and of reaching the lost for God.
2. “**I am the First and the Last.**” He’s the beginning and the end. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He’s the one who can be with a person forever—when he is born, while he is alive on earth, when he dies, and during all the days in heaven. John didn’t need to fear.
3. “**I am the Living One; I was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore.**” The exalted and glorified Lord need not be feared, because He’s the same Person who came to earth and died and arose for our salvation. He’s exalted and dwells in the most awesome glory, but He dwells there to save us, not to condemn us. He lives forever and ever to make us acceptable to God and to carry us through the evil death of this world.

John 10:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.

4. “**I hold the keys of death and Hades.**” The keys to death and Hades are not physical keys. Jesus is the Savior of the world. He has conquered death, and He can deliver us from judgment and Hades. He has the power to unlock both death and hell and to deliver us from the bondage of both.

Isaiah prophesied years before,

Isaiah 25:8 (NASB)

⁸ He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the Lord has spoken.

John was so overwhelmed that he fell at Jesus’ feet. As he looked at Christ the things of earth grew strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. Notice that Jesus put forth His right hand and touched John. The RIGHT HAND is one of AUTHORITY, the hand with which Jesus healed, raised from the dead, and broke bread. It is the hand with the power of blessing. And with that hand He reached out and touched John and said, “Fear not!” It was the same “fear not” John had heard so often in his life! And now he heard it again!

And why can Jesus still offer this peace? Because He descended into hell, arose, and ascended to Heaven; in doing so He obtained the keys to Heaven and hell. The keys are in His possession. He alone has the authority of life and death. He alone holds the keys to both the destiny of the world and to our destinies. He alone can send us to hell or take us to a room prepared in Heaven. IT IS CHRIST WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO DEAL.

Hebrews 4:13 (NASB)

¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

But, praise God, we have His promise, "Fear not. Your destiny is in My hand!"

So by studying Revelation we will gain, by the help of Christ's Spirit, encouragement.

III. THE INTERPRETATION.

Lastly in verse 20 we see Christ interpreting the vision for John.

Revelation 1:20 (NASB)

²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars which 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.

Jesus states it clearly:

- The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.
- The seven lampstands symbols are the "seven" churches. The message was not just for the seven churches listed, but for all the churches throughout this dispensation between Christ's first coming and His second coming.

CONCLUSION:

While it is true that there are many hidden truths in Revelation, it is also true that the important truths are accessible. It does not require special knowledge to be understand the truths that center on the holiness, power, and sovereignty of God, His victory over evil, and what we need to do to share in that victory. Such truths come through loud and clear even if we cannot decipher a single symbol correctly.

The most important truths are those that lead us to salvation so we can experience the promises that are revealed to us when Christ returns again.

Be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Live a life of witness for Christ. Let Christ be first in everything you do and say even if it means giving up your life for Him!

Revelation 2:29 (NASB)

²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

He is Lord!