

20230319 Revelation 1 9-20 A Vision Like No Other – How do you see Jesus?



Last week we learned that Martin Luther described the Book of Revelation as being “neither apostolic nor prophetic,” saying further that he “can [could] in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it” (LW 35:398).¹

I am not sure what Luther was reading, but it is very easy to discern that this is a book with Jesus as the central theme. He is the focal point. It is a book that unveils and reveals Jesus as the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah, the King of All Kings and the Lord of all Lords. Jesus is manifested and unveiled throughout the book.

Chapters 1-3 show Jesus Christ holding the lampstands and superintending His Church as a Priestly King. In awe, John fell before Him. You know this happened once before. John was there on the Mount of Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appeared there glorified with Jesus. The account tells us that they (Peter, James, and John) fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. Jesus told them, “Arise and do not be afraid” (Matthew 17).

Chapters 4 & 5 show Jesus in Heaven, as the glorified Lamb of God, and as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

Chapters 6-18 show Jesus as the Judge of all wickedness on the earth. All those who have done wrong will be held accountable by the only Judge that matters.

Chapter 19 shows Jesus coming back, returning to the earth from heaven as King of Kings and Lord of Lord.

Chapter 20 shows Jesus reigning as the Bridegroom with His bride, the Church.

Chapter 21-22 shows Jesus illuminating heaven with His glory.²

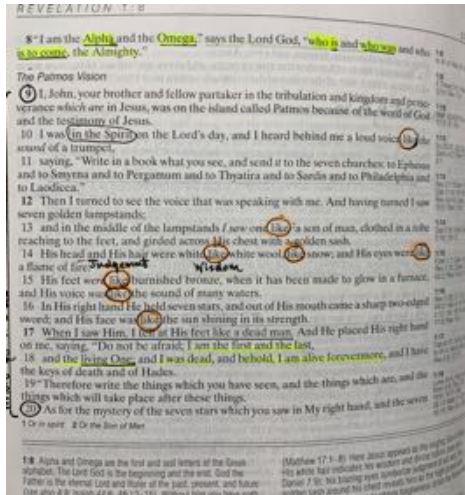
John had known Jesus, and walked with Him in His human journey. John now is receiving a vision of a very different Jesus. **This is a vision like no other.**

⁹I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹saying, “I am the Alpha

¹ <https://matthewhalsted.com/2021/10/10/thomas-jefferson-and-martin-luther-on-the-book-of-revelation/>

² Summation given by Skip Heitzig, Calvary Chapel Albuquerque

and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”



12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 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. 19 Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. 20 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 which you saw are the seven churches. (Revelation 1:9-20, NKJV).



Verse 9 - John was one of Jesus’ closest friends during His ministry on earth. They had walked together and talked together. But now, John receives a vision of a glorified Jesus. He sees Jesus in all of his divinity. John was out on Patmos in a cave, and that is where the messenger came to him with the vision we are reading. He had been exiled there because of his devotion to Jesus. When Sandy and I were there on Patmos, a guide told us

that some scholars think John was sent there to be put to work in a coal mine. In verse 9, John mentions that he is a “brother and a companion” to those hearing this. He is a partner in the tribulation and patience that come with serving Jesus. You know, we are all partners in the tribulation and the patience that come with serving Jesus. On Wednesday night, we read St Patrick’s Confession where he counted it joy that he had been in a situation of suffering that led to his coming to the end of himself and receiving Christ. I think it’s sort of interesting that John puts tribulation together with

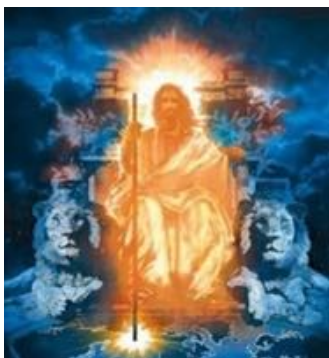
the word for patience. I'm not sure that I'm always as patient as I should be during my various tribulations.

Verse 10-11 – He tells us that he received this vision on the “Lord’s Day.” It could be that he received the vision on a Sunday, or it could mean that he was sent in his spirit to the “day of the Lord” where he viewed those things that would be going on in the future. Or, it could just mean that he received this vision during a special day he had “in the Lord.”

As he was in the Spirit, he heard a loud voice behind him like a trumpet, and he turned to see what was going on and he found himself looking at seven golden lampstands. He immediately recognized Who was talking to him because Jesus again proclaims, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega the first and the last.’ I will remind you that Jesus was there at the beginning of all time and He’ll be there at the end of time. Jesus tells him to write down what he sees, and to take it to the seven churches that are listed: **to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.**

My wife, Sandy, told me that when she was a little girl, she always wondered why Jesus was only writing to seven churches. After thinking about this for a couple of weeks and praying over it, I think the messages to each of the churches are messages for ALL churches as they go through different spiritual times. At times our churches are fervent. At other times they grow cold, weak, callous etc. These are words of encouragement and correction depending on our relationship with the Lord. I think that we’ll find lessons for our own church as we see what is told to these seven churches.

Verse 12-13 John then turns and sees seven golden lampstands. And there in the midst of these lampstands, is one that he describes to be “like the Son of Man.” It makes me wonder what he saw. He doesn’t describe Jesus as a “man,” but as being “like the Son of Man.” We know from verse 20 that these lampstands simply symbolize different assemblies of the Church, and Jesus is there in their midst tending to them. This description of the “Son of Man” was very familiar to the Jewish reader. Listen as Daniel speaks.



⁹ “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14, NKJV).

Daniel had seen the glorified Jesus, and now John was seeing this same “Son of Man.” John continues, describing the “Son of Man” as being

dressed in the garb of a high priest. This is similar to the dress of the priests described by Moses in Leviticus chapter eight.

⁶ Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. ⁷ And he put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the intricately woven band of the ephod, and with it tied the ephod on him. (Leviticus 8:6-7, NKJV).

This sash of Aaron and his sons was made of purple and gold yarn.³ John sees Jesus in priestly garments, but Jesus had on a sash made of pure gold. Jesus' sash was not just made of yarn, but of gold. We are seeing Jesus revealed as Prophet, Priest, and King. As we've made our way through the general epistles at the end of the New Testament, we've been reminded that because Jesus was fully Man, He is able to sympathize with us as our High Priest.

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16, NKJV).

We have a High Priest Who can sympathize with us in every way.

Concerning these seven lampstands, we should remember that in the Temple the Menorah (a seven stemmed lampstand) was designed by God. It was not used to produce light, but to symbolize the eternal presence of God.

Its Purpose Was Not to Give Light

"Did G-d need its light?" the [Talmud](#) asks rhetorically. "Rather it testified to all inhabitants of the earth that G-d's presence dwells amongst Israel." This also explains why the windows of the Holy Temple were built in a way that did not bring much sunlight in, but instead directed the menorah's light outward.⁴

Jesus now dwells among the Church. These lampstands that John sees are a symbol of the Church which now filled with the Holy Spirit, and administered by Jesus. The Holy Spirit in us shines in the darkness. The lampstands, the Church, lights the world with the light of Christ. The Church is the evidence of God's presence on the earth. John then describes Jesus' appearance. He appeared to be like a human, but He was something different.

³ <https://bible-history.com/tabernacle/the-priestly-garments>

⁴ https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/5154289/jewish/14-Facts-About-the-Menorah-in-the-Holy-Temple.htm Menachot 86b, Shabbat 22b

Verses 14-15 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;* (Revelation 1:14-15, NKJV).

John continues the description saying that His head and hair were white **like** wool, **like** snow, with eyes **like** fire. Again, they weren't these things, but it was something that John was seeing **LIKE** these things. I think if we were to glimpse into heaven we wouldn't even be able to describe what we might see. Scripture tells us, "But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."(1 Corinthians 2:9, **NKJV**).

This description of Jesus' appearance parallels the description of the "Son of Man" in the Book of Daniel.

⁵ *I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz!* ⁶ *His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.* (Daniel 10:5-6, NKJV).

This is Jesus. To Him will be given all power and glory and every people and nation will serve Him. And, His kingdom will not pass away. So what do these things mean?

His hair was white like wool gives a picture of His eternity as the "Ancient of Days" (Daniel 7:9). This is God - so ancient that He is outside of the limits of all of time. And **His eyes were like a flame of fire** speaks to the perfect knowledge and inescapable scrutiny of God. God sees all. He sees into the heart of all men. ¹³ *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.* (Hebrews 4:13, NKJV). His feet were like fine brass speaks of the refinement and judgment of God. His voice was like the white noise of the ocean's waves or the deafening roar of a great waterfall. If you've ever been next to a great waterfall, you know what this sounds like.

The Book of Revelation has 404 verses in it, and 278 point back to the Old Testament.

Verse 16 Says that **He held seven stars in his right hand**. He is in control and in possession of His Church. And out of His mouth came a **sharp two-edged sword** (Hebrews 4:12). His countenance was radiant as the sun. So, what does this all mean? John sees Christ in all of His perfection amongst His Church. He will judge His Church with the purpose of purification and reward, not for the purpose of condemnation.

Verse 17 This is a vision like no other, and it caused John to fall at His feet as though he were dead. Jesus is revealed as the First and the Last, a title for Yahweh Himself

(Isaiah 44:6; 48:12).⁵ John had known Jesus and interacted with Him personally, and now it was impossible for him to even stand in His presence. John was looking at Jesus glorified and revealed as the God of the Universe. And what did Jesus do?

Jesus “laid His right hand on John and told him to not be afraid.” Isn’t that what He does for each of us? He told John that He is now alive for evermore.

Verse 18 Jesus says he has the keys of Hades and Death. The person with the keys has the authority to come and go into the property. Jesus holds the keys to death, life, the grave and all else. Jesus is the key to our eternal life after this life. As I said last Sunday, Lazarus was raised only to die again. But we will be raised to never die again.

Verse 19 Jesus tells John to write down all that he is seeing and to write what is now and what is to come. Jesus is going to reveal to John the plan for the end of the world as we know it.

Verse 20 The mystery (something that is now revealed but was not previously) is this. The seven stars are the angels, “the messengers,” of the seven churches and the lampstands are the seven churches. Some think that these “stars” were the pastors themselves of the different assemblies.

In closing today, I want to ask you if you have ever seen or sensed the glory of the Lord. Have you ever fallen down before Him? I have. When I came to the end of myself, I finally fell before Him, and I’ve never been the same. When I let go of the control, and let God take the reins, my life changed. I didn’t just say I was doing it, but I did it. If your life is not where it needs to be, ask Him to reveal His glory to you. And when He does, fall down before Him, and do the only thing that will truly ever bring you peace. When I stopped struggling and submitted myself to the sovereignty of God, my life got easier. Peace came. When I finally understood that I am not God, that too was a great relief to my soul. If you are in need of peace, give up and let God have His way. You’ll never regret it or look back.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.

⁵ MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (p. 2354). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.