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A0515 – Apr. 10, 2005 – Revelation 1:9-20 – The Glorified Son of Man

The ascended and glorified Christ. This is a vision of Christ now on the Father's throne at His right hand. Most paintings of Jesus picture Him as He was in His earthly life. But John is given a glimpse of Jesus in His glorified body. This is who Christ is in the present and this is how we should picture him in light of the moral impetus of this letter. Not as a long-haired feminine hippie but as a king waiting to take His rightful throne.

John Commissioned to Write (Rev 1:9-11)

Revelation 1:9 Ego Ioannes, o adelphos umon kai sugkoinonos en te thlipsei kai basileia kai upomone en Iesou, egenomen en te neso te kaloumene Patmo dia ton logon tou theou kai ten marturian Iesou.

Translation 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance in Jesus, came to be on the Island of Patmos because of the word of God, even the testimony of Jesus.

I, John identifies for the third time the human author of Revelation, John the Apostle. Next he identifies with his readers in two ways. *First*, he says I am **your brother**. **John** doesn't exert his apostolic authority. He well could have but instead he puts himself on the same level of his readers. *Second*, he says I am a **fellow-partaker** in three things: 1) **the tribulation**, 2) **the kingdom**, and 3) **perseverance in Jesus**. First, John is a fellow-partaker with other believers in **the tribulation**. This does not refer to the seven-year tribulation but the general persecution that all Christians share. John was clearly under persecution having been banished to **the Island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus**. One thing Christians share is afflictions and persecutions. Fellowship in suffering was very frequent among the early Christians. Fellowship in all things is indispensable to Christian discipleship and following the example of Jesus (1 Thess 1:6; 1 Pt 2:21; 4:13; cf also 2 Cor 1:7; Phil 3:10; 1 Pt 5:1).

We have two more words associated with **fellow-partaker** and those are **kingdom and perseverance in Jesus**. The grammatical structure here is complex. This is a rare Greek figure of speech called a *hendiatriis*, where the author uses three words to communicate one thought. The one thought is **affliction**. The three words are **tribulation, kingdom, and perseverance**. The **affliction** Christians experience is not like the affliction of the world but an **affliction** that is connected with the **kingdom** and it requires **endurance or perseverance** as we wait for the **kingdoms** appearance. Paul taught a similar thing in Acts 14:22 when he said, “*Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*” We are not presently in the 7-year tribulation but, like John, together we patiently endure the general afflictions of the Christian life as we await the appearance of the kingdom. The **kingdom** is, of course, the future, earthly millennial kingdom.

John then describes his present affliction when he says, **I was on the Island of Patmos because of the word of God**. John had been an elder and teacher at the Church in Ephesus for 30 years and had been imprisoned on the **Island of Patmos** by Emperor Domitian (81-96AD). The **Island of Patmos** is one of a group of 50 islands known as the Dodecanese. The island was a rocky and barren place chosen by the Romans as a place to keep criminals. Tradition says John was forced to work in the mines of Patmos until Domitian died. Tradition also reports that when Domitian died John was permitted to return to Ephesus. Why was John imprisoned on Patmos?

because of the word of God, even the testimony of Jesus. The **word of God** refers to gospel preaching. Therefore, John was sent to Patmos as a prisoner by the Emperor Domitian for preaching the gospel in Ephesus and the rest of Asia. **the testimony of Jesus** is merely specifying exactly what is meant by **the word of God**. John’s preaching and teaching had to do with the person and work of **Jesus**.

Revelation 1:10 egenomen en pneumatic en te kuriake emera kai ekousa opiso mou phonen megalen os salpiggos

Translation 1:10 I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,

The difficulty here is the word **spirit**. Does it refer to the Holy Spirit or the human spirit? This cannot be decided by grammar. Grammatically it could be either. However, in this context it makes more sense to see this as an ecstatic state of John’s human **spirit**. To be **in the spirit** refers to a condition where God brings a man’s spirit into direct contact with the spiritual world and with things in God’s own mind, yet He does so in a way that human perception can understand. Luke called this a “trance” in Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17. This is

not a dream because John is still awake. His spirit is wide awake and in such a state that he can understand with an unusual clarity. The meaning of **Lord's day** is also difficult. Is John referring to Sunday? The early Christians referred to Sunday as the **Lord's day** because that was the day Christ was resurrected. This would mean John received the vision on a Sunday. Alternately, the word **Lord** is an adjective describing the type of **day**. The word **Lord** means "mastery". This could be translated **I was in the spirit on a lordy day**. In other words, this was a day when the Lord took total control of John's human spirit for the sake of revealing these visions. Either view could be correct. Either this was a Sunday or this was a day when the Lord took total control of John's spirit.

In this state, John **heard behind him a loud voice like a trumpet**. This voice was calling John to attention.

Revelation 1:11 legouses o blepeis grapson eis biblion kai pempson tai septa ekklesiais, eis Epheson kai eis Smurnan kai eis Pergamon kai eis Thuateira kai eis Sardeis kai eis Philadelpheian kai eis Laodikeian.

Translation 1:11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, 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."

What the voice said is found in v. 11. John is being commissioned **to** write what he sees in a scroll and to send it to the seven churches in Asia. Twelve times in the book John is commanded to write what he sees (1:19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5). John was to write what he sees **in a book**. **book** here is *biblion* which refers to a papyrus parchment. The parchments were rolled into a scroll. The original scroll of Revelation must have been about 15 feet long.

The list of the seven churches (Big MAP) gives the route which the messenger(s) would take in delivering the scroll of Revelation. First it would go to (Smaller MAP) Ephesus, then to Smyrna, then to Pergamum, etc... There was a great circular road which tied these seven cities together. These seven cities were the most populated, wealthy, and influential cities in Asia. Apparently, Christ's purpose in selecting these seven churches is because these seven churches best depicted the various spiritual conditions of churches in that region.

The Vision of the Glorified Son of Man (Rev 1:12-16)

Revelation 1:12 Kai epestrepsa blepein ten phonen etis elalei met emou, kai epistrepsas eidon epta luchnias chrusas

Translation 1:12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

vv. 12-16 are a Parenthesis in John's commission as John gets a look at the one who is commissioning him. Because of the loud voice John **turned to see the voice that was speaking with** him. Obviously you can't see a voice. The **voice** represents the person speaking (*metonymy* of effect). And what does John first see? John turns and sees **seven golden lampstands**. The **seven golden lampstands** are interpreted for us in v. 20. They represent the **seven churches**. These **lampstands** (*luchnias*) were stands for portable oil lamps. Their purpose was to put forth light. Local Christian churches are designed to give forth light from God to all the earth. One church my wife and I ministered at several years ago was a little Baptist Church at a stoplight in Galveston, TX on Jamaica Beach. The church had a little slogan. They liked to be known as "The Light at the light in Jamaica Beach". The little church was a lighthouse and churches are to be lighthouses in the sense of sending forth light to guide others and lead them to Christ. Thus, the seven lampstands refer to these seven 1st century lighthouses.

Descriptions of His Appearance and Attire (v. 13)

Revelation 1:13 kai en meso ton luchnion omoion uion anthropou endedumenon podere kai periezomenon pros tois mastois zonen chusan.

Translation 1:13 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.

in the middle of the lampstands. Walking **among** the seven churches is the Son of Man; that is Jesus.

one like a son of man - the son related to mankind. This title emphasizes Jesus glorified humanity. This is obviously a person that looks like a man but is supernatural. When John saw this supernatural person he was obviously drawn to think of Dan 7:13. Jesus had applied Dan 7:13 to Himself 65 years earlier in Mark 13:26. The title Son of Man signifies Jesus' Messiahship and capacity to judge, a function He carries out in Rev 2-3 and will carry out in the future.

clothed in a robe reaching to the feet - a long robe signified favor and dignity along with the function of the wearer as judge (similar to Joseph's coat of many colors which was actually a *full-length robe* Jacob gave him signifying his love and favor for Joseph and later his function as judge in Egypt (Gen 37:3)).

girded across His chest with a golden sash - John may have first thought of the imagery from Dan 10:5 but later recognized the similar dress of the seven angels who pour out the last seven judgments in **Rev 15:6**. The dress signifies that Jesus Christ is the one who holds the judgments and gives them to the seven angels who are similarly dressed to release them on the earth.

Descriptions of His Nature (vv 14-16)

Revelation 1:14 e de kephale autou kai ai triches leukai os erion leukon os chion kai oi opsthalmoi autou os plox puros

Translation 1:14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

His head and His hair were like white wool, like snow; - this description clearly alludes back to Dan 7:9 where this description was applied to God the Father. The application of the Father's titles to the Son shows the deity of Christ. The snow-white head and hair signify His great age, or we might better say, His eternal pre-existence.

His eyes were like a flame of fire - this description alludes back to Dan 10:6. The flaming eyes signify penetrating vision and supernatural intelligence. One who has flaming eyes sees all and knows all and metes out judgment on His adversaries.

Revelation 1:15 kai oi podes autou omoioi chalkolibano os en kamino pepuromenes kai e phone autou os phone udaton pollon,

Translation 1:15 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.

His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, - similar to Ezek 1:7; Dan 10:6; and repeated in Rev 2:18. Feet refer to movement, particularly Christ's movement among the churches. The burnished bronze which is glowing in the furnace signifies Christ's discipline and judgment within these churches to bring about moral purity.

His voice was like the sound of many waters - also similar to Ezek 1:7; Dan 10:6, and repeated in Rev 2:18. His voice is authoritative and powerful and therefore the words to the seven churches come with power and authority behind them.

Revelation 1:16 kai echon en te dexia cheiri autou asteras epta kai ek tou stomatos autou pomphaia distomos oxeia ekporeuomene kai e opsis autou os o elios phaine en te dunamei autou.

Translation 1:16 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.

In His right hand He held seven stars - the **right hand** is the position of favor and his holding of the **seven stars** signifies His authority and control over them. The **seven stars** are interpreted for us in v 20 as seven messengers to the seven churches. We'll identify whether these are human or angelic messengers when we get to chapter 2 since the word *aggelos* can be used either way.

out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword - imagery from Isa 49:2, used in Heb 4:12 of the word of God, repeated in 2:12 and used to smite the nations in Rev 19:15 and the Antichrist in particular in 2 Thess 2:8. Again this points to Jesus' judgmental authority as a military warrior. The word of God is like a sharp double-edged sword. The word for sword here refers to a Thracian sword which was a large-bladed sword. For us it is odd that a sword would be likened to words, but the short Roman sword was actually shaped like the human tongue and had two sharp edges. A two-sided sword is very advantageous for a warrior because he can strike an enemy from either direction. Jesus' words are here pictures as having the force of a warrior defeating his enemies in battle.

We hardly have the picture of a meek and mild Jesus. His 1st coming was *"To bring good news to the afflicted;* but His second coming will be *"the day of vengeance of our God;"* (Isaiah 61:1-2)

His face was like the sun shining in its strength - This is a portion of the song of Deborah and Barak in Judg 5:31. It also alludes to Matt 17:2 "the transfiguration" where John had seen Christ's face shining as the sun and it is used in Rev 10:1 of the face of an angel. The descriptions of Christ culminate in John's second preview of Christ in all His glory. Every eye will see Jesus in His full glorified humanity at the 2nd Coming (Rev 1:7).

John's Commission to Write Continued...(Rev 1:17-20)

Revelation 1:17 Kai ote eidon auton, epesa pros tous podas autou os nekros, kai etheken ten dexian autou ep eme legon; me phobou ego eimi o protos kai eschatos

Translation 1:17 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,

The vision of the Son of Man causes John to respond like a dead man. This is the same way Daniel responded to the Son of Man in Dan 10:9 and how John, Peter, and James responded when they saw the transfiguration as well as Paul on the Damascus road and Isaiah when he was commissioned. To see the Son of Man in all His glory is a sight that causes great terror and fear in light of His might and holiness. We have yet to realize the sinfulness of sin but when we see the Son of Man in all His glory we will at once be humiliated. The more we dwell on Christ's glorified humanity the more we recognize the hideousness of our sin nature and our sin. It turns us from sin toward righteousness. John was completely overwhelmed. He immediately drops to the dust of the ground from whence mankind was made. He is but dust in relation to the glorified Son of Man. He is still and lifeless in appearance. As was Jesus' custom **He placed His right hand on John, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last. and the living One.** Jesus' touching John with His right hand was meant to comfort John and to reassure him. This is exactly what the Son of Man did at the Transfiguration. Jesus says to him **"Do not be afraid"**. The word came with a loud commanding voice and the sound of many waters and the function of the words was to bring comfort. It is assumed that this touch of comfort with accompanying words eased John and he stood on his feet, dismissing his fear.

Then the Son of Man identifies Himself with the words **"I am the first and the last"**. The words **I am** (*ego eimi*) have a rich background reaching back to Exod 3:14 and the origin of the Tetragrammaton (YHWH). This is a title reserved for God in the OT and applied to Christ in the NT numerous times (e.g. John 8:58 "before Abraham was born, I AM". This self-identification would also comfort John because John had walked with the God-man for several years six decades earlier. Now he was once again in His presence. **the first and the last** clearly denotes His eternity. Again, it is a phrase applied to God and now applied to Christ. It is similar to saying Christ is the alpha and the omega having no beginning or end.

Revelation 1:18 kai o zon, kai egenomen nekros kai idou zon eimi eis tous aionas ton aionon kai echo task leis tou thanatou kai tou adou.

Translation 1:18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. At the empty tomb the angels asked the women "Why do you seek the living One among the dead. Jesus is **the living One** meaning He is eternal life. He always has life abiding in Him. This again refers to His eternal divine nature. One of his attributes is "life". Next he identifies Himself as the one who **was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore**. The phrase **I was dead** refers to His death on the cross. It was a real death in His perfect and full humanity. And yet, the Son of Man draws attention to the latter statement **behold, I am alive forevermore**. Even though He has a continual state of existence in His deity His humanity experienced temporary death. Now He is **alive forevermore** in His glorified humanity.

Therefore it follows that Jesus would say **I have the keys of death and of Hades**. Keys symbolize authority (Rev 9:1; 20:1) One who has keys to something has authority to open or close something. Here the Son of Man has charge over **death and Hades**. He has the power to give life (John 5:26-28). These are the keys that lock or unlock the "gates of death", the gates of "Sheol/Hades" (Matt 16:18). That the Son of Man has the **keys of death** shows that Christ is the only one who releases people from being prisoners of death. He will use these keys to resurrect all men. That he has the **keys of Hades** shows that no one can enter or escape **Hades** except by His choice. Christ has the keys.

Revelation 1:19 *grapson oun a eides kai a eisin kai a mellei genesthai meta tauta.*

Translation 1:19 "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

Revelation 1:19 gives us the three divisions of the Book of Revelation. This verse is the key to unlocking the structure of the book. This is a memory aid to help you keep the whole book in mind so you'll want to remember this verse and refer back to it whenever you get confused. "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. Notice the three divisions. First, John is commissioned to write the things which he has seen (aorist tense in contrast to present tense in v. 11). What has John seen so far? Beginning in v. 11 John saw a vision of the Glorified Son of Man. Second, John is commissioned to write...the things which are. When John wrote this in 96AD what were the things which are? Chapters 2-3 describe the present spiritual condition of the seven churches in Asia and throughout the period until the events foretold in Rev 4:1ff. So, the first division is Rev 1:11-20, the second division is chapter 2-3 and lastly we have the third division. John is commissioned to write...the things which will take place after these things. the things which will take place after these things begin in 4:1. Turn to Rev 4:1 to see this. Revelation 4:1 "After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a

trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." Notice the two-fold use of after these things. That is the same phrase as the one in 1:19. So, we have a three-fold division of the Book of Revelation. 1) 1:11-20 "The Things Which John Saw". 2) 2:1-3:22 "The Things Which Are". 3) 4:1-22:21 "The Things Which Will Take Place After These Things". This is the most important verse for outlining the book. You must keep this verse in mind as we move forward. This verse also reveals a crucial bit of information. Does anyone see what this verse also assumes? (Wait for an answer). This verse assumes a chronology. The things in 4:1-22 must take place AFTER the things mentioned in chapters 1-3. The things mentioned in chapters 2-3 refer to the Church age. The Church is NEVER mentioned after chapter 3:22 until the close of the letter in chapter 22:16. That's because the events of the Tribulation must happen AFTER the Church. The spiritual conditions in the Church described in chapters 2-3 will continue until a point and then AFTER these things the Tribulation will take place. So, this verse gives us the three-fold divisions as well as showing us that these things happen chronologically

Revelation 1:20 to musterion ton epta asteron ous eides ep tes dexias mou kai tas epta luchnias tas chrusas; oi epta asters aggeloi ton epta ekklesion eisin kai ai luchniai ai epta epta ekklesiai eisin.

Translation 1:20 "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.

v. 20 the Son of Man gives the interpretation of **the mystery of the seven stars** from v. 16 and the **seven lampstands** from v. 12. A "mystery" is something beyond the reach of natural human understanding that comes from study. It can only be grasped through special revelation from God. I find it extremely interesting that of all John saw in his vision of the Glorified Son of Man only two things are "mysteries". What this implies is that every other description of Christ can be understood from prior revelation. Scripture interprets Scripture. Each of the descriptions alluded to prior descriptions of either the Father or the Son of Man in the OT. The meaning of these descriptions was not a "mystery", they had already been revealed in scripture. By careful study any believer can discover and understand what these descriptions of the Son of Man stand for. However, there is no OT or NT passage that speaks of Christ having **seven stars** in His right hand or identifying the **seven lampstands**. No amount of study could unravel what the **seven stars** or **seven lampstands** referred to. Therefore, Christ Himself reveals their respective meanings in v. 20. The seven stars which are under Christ's control and authority (in His right hand) are **the angels/messengers of the seven churches**. We will have to identify these *aggelos* next

week because one *aggelos* is designated for each of the seven churches. **The seven lampstands are the seven churches** themselves. **Lampstands** give off light and churches are designed to give off light to the world. You get trained here and then you go out and spread the truth to the lost ships of the world. Most of the lost people are not in the lighthouses that teach the Bible. Most of them are in abandoned lighthouses or simply avoid lighthouses because they like to crash on the rocks.

- Summary. John commissioned to write to 7 churches (1:9-11)
- Vision of the Commissioner: The Glorified Son of Man (1:12-16)
- John's commission to 7 churches resumed (1:17-20)
- Give gospel (Son of Man is who they must deal with)

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