

Effect and Purpose of the Vision

Revelation 1: 17-20

Intro:

Last time we looked at this passage we considered John's vision of the glorious son of man, in verses 12-16.

We saw:

The order of the vision in verses 12-13

1} He hears the voice.

2} He turns and sees the candlesticks.

3} Then he sees the Son of Man.

We noted that the seven individual candlesticks represented the independency of the churches and yet they are one because of Christ.

We saw thirdly,

Who John saw:

“one like unto the Son of man” verse 13.

In verses 12-13;

We have the 3-fold redeeming office of our Lord outlined.

Prophet, Priest and King.

Verse 14:

The wisdom and knowledge of Christ.

Verse 15

The two natures of Christ

In verse 16 we saw the

1} Sovereignty = of our Lord Jesus Christ

2} Authority = of our Lord Jesus Christ

3} Majesty = of our Lord Jesus Christ

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Now we turn to verses 17-20

Which describe the Effect of the vision on John, and the purpose for which he received the vision.

John MacArthur outlined verses 17-19 as:

Fear, Assurance and Duty

We will use the same 3 words to outline these 3 verses.

First we have:

Fear.

Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

A very similar effect to that of Ezekiel.

Compare:

Ezekiel 1:26-28

Also:

Daniel 8:15-17

There were many others who had the same type of reaction to the vision of God.

Isaiah in particular. {Isaiah 6}

Consider:

To meet with God should cause fear.

Why?

Because we are sinners!

Compare:

*Isa 6:5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone;
because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in
the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes
have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

Compare also:

Luke 5:1-11

We could say much more of this.

But we will move to our second point.

Assurance.

The rest of verse 17 and verse 18.

*Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as
dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying
unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:*

Rev 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

John was given assurance from his Lord in two ways.

Touch and Speech.

“And he laid his right hand upon me”

The same hand that in verse 16:

Holds the seven stars!

This idea of an assuring touch is also in Isaiah 6.

Compare:

Isa 6:6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

Isa 6:7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Consider:

Both in the old and new test.

God’s people are commanded not to touch the unclean.

Compare:

*Isa 52:11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, **touch no unclean thing**; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.*

And:

*2Co 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and **touch not the unclean thing**; and I will receive you,*

Therefore:

When our Lord touches John it signifies that he is not considered as unclean!

Then:

There is what the glorified Son of Man says to his beloved Apostle.

*Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, **saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:***

Rev 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

We can break this down into 3 sections

1} The words of comfort to John

2} This is based on who Christ is

3} And on what he possesses.

So;

1} The words of comfort to John

“Fear Not”

This phrase is found in various scriptures.

It is common in Isaiah.

Compare:

Isa 41:13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

Isa 41:14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Also:

Isaiah 43:1-7

*Isa 44:2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; **Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.***

Consider:

The basis of not fearing is the relationship that exists between God and his people.

Only God can tell us not to fear in the fullest sense.

This leads us to the second point

John was not to fear because of:

2} Who Christ is

*Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; **I am the first and the last:***
Rev 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

First he says:

“I am the first and the last”

This is a clear reference to the Deity of Christ.

Compare:

Isa 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Isa 48:12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.

Even this phrase “I am”

ἔγώ εἰμί

Is particularly associated with God.

Compare:

Exo 3:13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

Exo 3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Next he says:

***Rev 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead;
and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen;
and have the keys of hell and of death.***

This without doubt identifies who it is that John saw.

Again, only God could make such a statement as:

“I am alive for evermore”

Compare:

***Rom 6:9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the
dead dieth no more; death hath no more
dominion over him.***

3} And on what he possesses.

“and have the keys of hell and of death”

What an assurance to know that the judge is also our
saviour!

Illus:

It would be like going to court and finding out that the
judge is also your defence lawyer.

Our third main point is the Duty to which John is called.

Rev 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

This is an outline of the whole book.

Revelation is a book which speaks of unfolding and progressive fulfillment of God's purposes in this world.

There are seven main sections in this book.

Each one representing the period between the first and second advent of Jesus Christ.

Chapters 1-3; 4-7; 8-11; 12-14; 15-16; 17-19; 20-22.

William Hendrikson points out in his commentary that each of these sections give a progressive thought regarding human conduct and divine moral government in this world.

“The lampstands give rise to the seals, the seals to the trumpets etc,”

He also gives a comparative scripture which summarizes each section.

1-3 = Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.
Mat 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

4-7 = Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

8-11 = Luk 18:7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

12-14 = Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

15-16 = Rom 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

17-19 = 1Jn 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

20=22 = Rom 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Verse 20 closes off chapter one and introduces chapter two.

Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.