

FIRST BAPTIST POWELL, 1-20-13 PM NOTES  
"A VISION OF THE AWESOME CHRIST"  
REVELATION 1:9-20  
#2 in Series, "Verse-by-Verse Through Revelation"

**Isaiah 53:2 (NIV)** "He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."

I. The Setting of the Vision (vv. 9-11)

**John 16:33 (NKJV)** "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

**2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV)** "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."

"I sought for the greatness and the genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there; in the fertile fields and the boundless prairies, and it was not there; her rich mines and her vast world commerce, and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America, and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness, did I understand the secrets of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

—Alexis de Tocqueville

"God used John at the *most unexpected time*—while in his nineties. In the *most unlikely place*—while exiled on Patmos. During the *most severe trial*—while a political prisoner of Rome. In the *most unusual way*—while 'in the spirit on the Lord's day.' To fulfill the *most incredible ministry*—to write the book of Revelation."

—Steven Lawson

II. The Unfolding of the Vision (vv. 12-16, 20)

A. The Resurrected Christ (vv. 12, 20b)

B. The Reigning Christ (v. 13)

**Daniel 7:13-14 (NKJV)** "<sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>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."

C. The Righteous Christ (v. 14a)

**Romans 3:10 (NKJV)** "There is none righteous, no, not one."

D. The Revealing Christ (v. 14b)

**Hebrews 4:13 (NKJV)** “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.”

**Revelation 2:2a (NKJV)** “I know your works...”

**Revelation 2:9a (NKJV)** “I know your... tribulation...”

**Revelation 2:13a (NKJV)** “I know...where you dwell...”

E. The Relentless Christ (v. 15a)

**John 5:22 (NKJV)** “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”

F. The Regal Christ (v. 15b)

**Psalms 29:3-4 (NKJV)** “<sup>3</sup>The voice of the Lord *is* over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord *is* over many waters. <sup>4</sup>The voice of the Lord *is* powerful; the voice of the Lord *is* full of majesty.”

**Revelation 2:5a (NKJV)** “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent...”

**Revelation 2:16a (NKJV)** “Repent, or else...”

G. The Ruling Christ (vv. 16a, 20a)

H. The Revenging Christ (v. 16b)

**Revelation 19:15a (NKJV)** “Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.”

**Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)** “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

I. The Resplendent Christ (v. 16c)

**Revelation 21:23 (NKJV)** “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light.”

III. The Response to the Vision (vv. 17-19)

A. Fear (v. 17a)

B. Comfort (vv. 17b, 18)

C. The Assignment (v. 19)

- The Things Which You Have Seen (Chapter 1)
- The Things Which Are (Chapters 2-3)
- The Things Which Will Take Place After This (Chapters 4-22)

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“A VISION OF THE AWESOME CHRIST”  
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Have you ever wondered what Jesus really looked like when He walked on earth those 33 years? How tall was He? Was He slender, muscular, or just average? We know that He didn't look some Renaissance painters imagined Him as light haired, light skinned, blue-eyed, effeminate person. He was Jewish and looked Jewish. Isaiah had an interesting word in a prophecy of Jesus some 700 years before He was born. He said in **Isaiah 53:2 (NIV)** “He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire Him.” That seems to say that while He was here with His glory veiled with flesh that there was nothing that would make people stop and stare at Him. The truth is that we don't know what Jesus looked like when He lived here on earth. But I have good news for you. We can know what He looks like now – the glorified Lord Jesus. Three times in Revelation, we are given a description of the glorified Christ – here in 1:9-20; 5:1-14; 19:11-21. These descriptions of the glorified Christ are highly symbolic, but we do get an idea of how He looks today, and He is not the “gentle Jesus, passive and mild”. He is the AWESOME beyond description glorious Lord. Most people will be shocked when they hear a description of the glorified Christ. People who say they have had a vision of Jesus and He chatted with them and they just had a good little talk cause me to doubt that it was truly Jesus that they had a vision of.

Tonight I want us to examine this description of the resurrected, glorified awesome Christ and to be encouraged, emboldened, and excited about seeing Him when we go to be with Him or He returns for us.

I. The Setting of the Vision (V9-11)

The John spoken of in this passage is the brother of James, the son of Zebedee, one of the original 12 disciples and one of the inner circle along with Peter and James. He is the same John who was the human author of the Gospel of John and the epistles of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John. He is the last of the Apostles and according to tradition the only one of the apostles who was not martyred. But don't get the idea that John lived an easy life. John had been through much tribulation and persecution. Some misguided people have the false view that the Christian life is all cherries and no pits. The truth is that Jesus did not come to get us out of trouble; He came to get into trouble with us. This same John recorded what Jesus said in the Gospel of **John 16:33b (NKJV)** “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” He was not talking about going through the great tribulation described in Revelation 6-19. He was saying what the Apostle Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 3:12 (NKJV)** “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

At the close of the first century when John received this revelation of Jesus Christ (about 95 AD), Christianity had become a hated and despised sect in the Roman Empire. The primary reason Christians were hated by the Roman authorities is because they refused to worship the Caesar and confess him as Lord. This made them seem disloyal to Roman officials. It is interesting that these early Christians were called atheists because they rejected the Roman pantheon of gods and worshipped an invisible God, and not an idol. As a recognized Christian leader who faithfully proclaimed the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, John became the focus of persecution by the Emperor Domitian. We get a little insight into Domitian's ego by learning that he loved to be addressed as *dominus et deus* (lord and god). John had been exiled to a small island called Patmos because he refused to worship the Emperor and because he proclaimed Jesus as Lord. Patmos was about 10 miles long and 5 miles wide. Patmos was what we would call today a penal colony. To be sent to Patmos would be comparable to a Russian being sent to Siberia in the winter. There were two kinds of prisoners on Patmos. If the prisoner was a political prisoner, they would have limited freedom to move about the island, but if the crime was religious or criminal, the sentence was hard labor. John was likely in his 80's or 90's and he would have been in the hard labor group. It is likely that he was laboring in the mines and quarries of Patmos. He was likely

without ample food or clothing, and he probably slept on the ground. Remember that his crime was “for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Verse 9).

This is the setting for when John was given what we call the book of Revelation. He says in verse 10 that he was “in the spirit on the Lord’s Day”. We don’t know exactly what being “in the spirit” means. We know that his experience transcended the bounds of normal apprehension. There is no indication that John was seeking this state. It is as if God the Spirit seized him. This heightened spiritual state brought him under the Spirit’s control; in other words John was in a state of perception beyond normal human senses. It was on the Lord’s Day which is what the early church called Sunday since it was the day of Christ’s resurrection. In this heightened state of spiritual apprehension, John heard behind him a voice like a trumpet. It was the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ. John must have nearly jumped out of his skin. Throughout the book of Revelation, a loud voice indicates that something very important is about to be revealed (5:2, 12; 6:10; 7:2, 10; and many more). What did this voice like a trumpet say? We know that it was Jesus because the same description as was used in 1:8 is used again. He is the Alpha and Omega and the first and the last. That is a reminder that He is all knowing and eternal. The glorified Lord tells John to write in a book what he is going to be shown and send it to the seven churches. Remember that seven is the number of completion and perfection. These seven churches were historical and representative. That is they were literal churches that represented all churches then and now.

Why did the Lord Jesus tell him to send the message of Revelation to the church? Why not send it to the Roman government or the Emperor Domitian? It is because God’s work on earth is accomplished primarily through His church! Jesus’ message was to the churches that they might be revived and bear his light to a dark world. America will be no stronger than the spiritual life of her churches. The account of the famous French political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville’s visit to our nation in its very early days is often told. His mission was to discover what quality enabled a handful of people to defeat the mighty British Empire. Here was what he discovered: “I sought for the greatness and the genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there; in the fertile fields and the boundless prairies, and it was not there; her rich mines and her vast world commerce, and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America, and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness, did I understand the secrets of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.” [Alexis de Tocqueville, quoted in Steven Lawson, *Final Call*, Page 31-32]. Jesus Christ addresses the churches in Asia Minor and not the Emperor in Rome. Our country needs revival in the church. This is our hope!

I am encouraged with how God so amazingly used John. Steven Lawson summarizes how amazing it is: “God used John at the *most unexpected time* – while in his nineties. In the *most unlikely place* – while exiled on Patmos. During the *most severe trial* – while a political prisoner of Rome. In the *most unusual way* – while ‘in the spirit on the Lord’s day’. To fulfill the *most incredible ministry* – to write the book of Revelation.” [Steven Lawson, Page 33].

## II. The Unfolding of the Vision (V12-16, 20)

How do you describe something indescribable? John cannot communicate the glory of the glorified Christ except in images, most of which come from the Old Testament. What did John see?

### A. The Resurrected Christ (V12, 20b)

When John turned around to see the source of this voice that sounded like a trumpet, he saw seven golden lampstands. A lampstand was used to hold a small oil lamp that lit up the room. The purpose of the lampstand was to hold up the lamp in a way that lit up the room. The lampstand wasn’t the light; it bore the light. We find in verse 20 that the seven lampstands symbolize the seven churches that represent all churches (V20b). The lampstands are made of gold, the most valuable metal. The church is of infinite value to Christ. It is His bride. The church does not produce the light; it holds the light who is Christ Himself so that the dark world can see the light. Standing among the lampstands was the resurrected Christ.

### B. The Reigning Christ (V13)

In the midst of the lampstands John saw “One like the Son of Man”. This was Jesus’ favorite title for Himself. It is used 81 times in the Gospels. It has its roots in the Old Testament book of Daniel. **Daniel 7:13-14 (NKJV)** <sup>13</sup> “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. <sup>14</sup> 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.” The title “Son of Man” for the Son of God is the reminder that He is fully man and fully God. He is as fully God as if He were not man at all; He is a fully man as if He were not God at all. He is not half God and half man; He is perfectly man and perfectly God – the God man!

John was struck by the fact that the Savior was among the Lampstands, among the churches. This illustrates the fact that He moves among His churches as the one who has all authority over each and every church and reigns over them as Lord. He is the head of each church body. This church is His church. A church is not a democracy; it is a dictatorship! The dictator is Jesus Christ. Our only concern is to do what He wills to be done in His church. He is the resurrected Christ, the Lord of His churches. He is the reigning Christ.

John also tells us what the glorified Christ is wearing. He is clothed in royal regalia. He is wearing the garments of the One in control. This description fits the garments of the High Priest, the Judge and the King. Jesus is all three. As Judge, all judgment has been committed to Him by the Father. When He comes again, He is coming as the judge. As the High Priest He intercedes for the people before God. As King, He rules over the people for God. This is how John sees Jesus – wearing the garments of regal majesty

#### C. The Righteous Christ (V14a)

It is literally, “His head, that is His hair”. This dazzling white is a symbol of His righteousness and purity. The word “white” here has the sense of bright, blazing, or brilliant. He is absolutely pure and righteous and holy. Because He is absolutely pure, no one can stand before Him in their own righteousness. Apart from the imputed righteousness of Christ [His righteousness put on our account by faith] no one can stand before the righteous Christ. We compare ourselves with others, but we are compared to Him and we all find that compared to Him, **Romans 3:10 (NKJV)** “*There is none righteous, no, not one*”.

#### D. The Revealing Christ (V14b)

This description symbolizes His penetrating vision from which nothing can hide. **Hebrews 4:13 (NKJV)** “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.” He sees what goes on in hotel rooms; He sees the thoughts in our minds; He sees every hypocrisy; He sees every attempt to deceive. He knows every detail about every member of every church. He doesn’t have to gather information; He is all knowing. Matthew Henry wrote, “He not only sees men, He sees through them”. In chapters 2 and 3 we see that He sees everything about His churches. To the church at Ephesus, He says in **Revelation 2:2 (NKJV)** “I know your works...” To the church at Smyrna, He says in **Revelation 2:9 (NKJV)** “I know your ... tribulation...” To the church at Pergamum He says in **Revelation 2:13 (NKJV)** “I know ... where you dwell...” To the churches at Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea He says “I know your deeds” He is all seeing with eyes like a flame of fire.

#### E. The Relentless Christ (V15a)

Brass pictures judgment in the Old Testament. The altar on which the sacrifices were offered was the “brazen altar” (brass). The fires burning on the brazen altar represented the burning anger of God against sin. Jesus is pictured as relentless as He goes forth with feet like brass to judge sin. **John 5:22 (NKJV)** “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son”. In His first coming, He came as Savior; when He comes again, it will be as judge.

#### F. The Regal Christ (V15b)

Several years ago several of us were in Brazil on a mission trip and visited the nearby Iguassu falls on the border of Brazil and Argentina. When first lady Eleanor Roosevelt saw this falls she reportedly said, "Poor Niagara". This falls is one of the largest in the world. As some of us stood at the base, we yelled at each other and we could not hear a word. The falls drowned out all other sounds. So it is with the regal Christ. When the lost stand before Him on judgment day they may desire to talk back to Him, but like a mighty waterfall, His voice drowns out every other voice. We find this description in the Old Testament also. **Psalms 29:3-4 (NKJV)** "3 The voice of the Lord *is* over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord *is* over many waters. 4 The voice of the Lord *is* powerful; the voice of the Lord *is* full of majesty." When the Son of God speaks to His churches, His word is the final word. His words are not to be debated, only obeyed. His word to all churches whose vibrancy and zeal for Him has waned is **Revelation 2:5a (NKJV)** "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent..." He says in **Revelation 2:16a (NKJV)** "Repent, or else..."

#### G. The Ruling Christ (V16a, 20a)

To have something in His right hand symbolizes His rule and power over. What are these stars? Verse 20 tells us that they are the angels of the seven churches. These seven stars are the ones that Christ speaks through to His churches. They are His mouthpieces. The word translated "angels" in verse 20 means "messenger". In the context, it is divinely commissioned messengers to His churches. Sometimes in Scripture these angels are spiritual beings and sometimes they are human beings. I think that these messengers are human messengers. The Lord would not have John giving a message to spiritual beings. I think that these are the preaching Elders, the spiritual leaders of the churches. It seems to be referring to the ones who have the responsibility to preach and to teach God's Word. To be held in Christ's hand is to be in the place of strictest accountability. No preacher is infallible, but as long as his message originates with the Word of God and it agrees with sound doctrine, the voice of Christ speaks through him to the congregation.

#### H. The Revenging Christ (V16b)

What is the symbolism of the sword proceeding from His mouth? We see this same symbolism toward the end of the book in **Revelation 19:15a (NKJV)** "Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations." The key to understanding the symbolism is **Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)** "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The weapon the Lord uses against His enemies and to discipline His church is the Word of God! When this sword is used against His enemies in the final battle in chapter 19 of Revelation, John Phillips says Jesus will say two words in that final battle and it will all be over. He said that Jesus will look across those plains filled with the armies of the Antichrist and say, "Drop Dead!" It will all be over!

#### I. The Resplendent Christ (V16c)

Saul of Tarsus (Paul) was blinded when he looked on the resplendent Christ on the road to Damascus. The brightness of His glory is so great that it lights all of Heaven – the New Jerusalem. **Revelation 21:23 (NKJV)** "The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light." Think of the brightness of His glory when He comes again. This has something to do with how every eye shall see Him (1:7).

Is this the Jesus you picture when you meditate on Him? Is this the Jesus you picture when we sing of Him? The number one reason people leave churches is that they find it boring. This Jesus is not boring!

### III. The Response to the Vision (V17-19)

How would you respond if the resurrected, glorified Lord Jesus walked into the service tonight? Probably the same way John did.

#### A. Fear (V17a)

That was a typical response to being in the Lord's presence. John fell like a cut tree. He was like a dead man.

#### B. Comfort (V17b, 18)

What the glorious resurrected Lord did next is amazing and comforting. This glorious Lord, the One so bright that He lights the New Jerusalem reaches down with a gentle touch and comforted John with the words, “do not be afraid” or literally “stop being afraid”. There must be a communicated balance between His awesome person and His compassionate heart. The comfort Jesus offered was based on who He is and the authority He possess. If you are in a fearful situation, this is what brings you comfort. It is focusing on who Christ is and on the fact that all authority is given to Him. The description “I am the First and the Last” is His claim to deity since this is a description of God in Isaiah 44:6 and 48:12. The description in verse 18a reminds us that He died on Calvary for our sin and now He is resurrected which affirms that He is the deity He claimed to be. The fact that He is alive proves that death has no hold on Him, Satan is conquered, and Hell holds no fear to those who are in Him.

When Jesus speaks of the keys of Hades and death He is speaking control and authority. He has control over Hades and death. Those two terms are practically synonymous. Death is the condition and Hades is the place. Jesus has control over death (no one dies until He says so) and Hades cannot hold those who are in Him!

#### C. Assignment (V19)

The assignment that Jesus gives to John is to write what we have – the book of Revelation. In verse 19, He gives us an outline of the book.

1. The Things You Have Seen (Chapter 1)
2. The Things Which Are (Chapters 2-3)
3. The Things Which Will Take Place After This (Chapters 4-22)

Now that we have seen the risen Christ, we are ready to look at the things which are – the Lord’s words to His churches, and the things which will be that culminates in the eternal state in Heaven. I can’t wait!