

Revelation 1:9-20 “The Son of Man”
Daniel 10
Psalm 80

April 28, 2019

In Daniel 10, Daniel sees a vision of a man clothed in linen –
and when he sees the vision, all strength leaves him.
Who is this man?

He is not named.

We are told that he is assisted by “Michael, your prince” –
but otherwise, all we have is this glorious appearance to go on!

As we’ll see shortly, the glorious man of Daniel is identified in Revelation 1
as our Lord Jesus.

Before he came in the flesh, he was the eternal Son of God –
and since he knew that he would be coming in our flesh,
he often appeared to humanity in human form.

Our Psalm of response helps articulate how the redeemer had to be God

“Restore us, O LORD God of hosts!

Let your face shine that we may be saved!”

And yet the redeemer had to be man:

“let your hand be on the man of your right hand,
the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself.”

Because we need a redeemer who is true God and true man in one person!

Introduction: Tribulation, Kingdom, and Endurance in Jesus (v9)

If you would understand the book of Revelation,
you could do worse than spend a day meditating on the first half of verse 9:

“I, John, your brother and partner
in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus...”

Tribulation.

Kingdom.

Endurance.

In Daniel chapter 7, Daniel sees a vision that starts with tribulation and suffering,
and then moves to the coming of God’s kingdom.

In Daniel 7, the coming of the Son of Man brings an end to the kingdom of the Beast,

and then the Son of Man makes everything right!

In Revelation it gets a little more complicated!

Yes, *in the end* the Lord Jesus – the Son of Man – will destroy the kingdom of the Beast
and make everything right!

But we're not quite there yet!

For *now*, tribulation and kingdom go together!

These are present realities for John.

And they are all present *in Jesus*.

Some people want to say that Tribulation comes first – and then Kingdom.

But John says that he is already a partner with us

in Tribulation *and Kingdom* – and patient endurance...

in Jesus.

Jesus is King.

And his kingdom comes in the context of tribulation and suffering.

How did Jesus' kingdom come?

Through the cross.

How does Jesus' kingdom continue to come?

As we bear the cross.

How do we participate in the kingdom?

We conquer by *not compromising* our faithful witness in the midst of trials.

We conquer by defeating sin in our lives – and walking faithfully with Jesus until the end!

That's why John calls it the tribulation and kingdom and *endurance* that is in Jesus.

The Christian life is a long obedience in the same direction.

Which direction?

The way of the cross.

And we see this illustrated in John himself:

1. Word and Spirit: The Book to the Seven Churches (v9-11)

a. The Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus (v9)

⁹*I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*

Patmos was an island in the Aegean (not far off the coast from Ephesus).

John doesn't explain exactly why is on Patmos –

but he says that he is there

“on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” –

which probably means that he had been banished to Patmos
on account of his preaching about Jesus.

This sort of thing was fairly common in those days.

If someone became unpopular – an annoyance to the government –
he would be banished to one of the many hundreds of islands in the Aegean.
He wouldn't be imprisoned.
He would just be forbidden to leave the island!
In one sense it would be very easy to leave –
just send a message to a friend to have a boat ready Tuesday afternoon...

But where would you go?

Back to Ephesus?

Where the procurator will *not* be happy to see you!

At least on Patmos John is free to preach to those who come to him –
and to write to those who are in Ephesus.

And when a new procurator is installed,

you have a pretty decent chance of being allowed to return!

(Whereas if you run away,

now you are a wanted criminal – and not very likely to find mercy from the next guy)

But the word of God is not bound!

God will accomplish his purposes even through the suffering inflicted by rulers!

So John tells us in verse 10:

b. In the Spirit on the Lord's Day – 1 Kings 18:12, Ezek. 3:12-15 (v10)

¹⁰ *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet*

In Ezekiel 1-3, when Ezekiel is called by God,

he sees a vision of four living creatures (like John will see),

he sees a vision of the heavenly throne (like John will see),

he is given a scroll to eat (like John will be later),

and the Spirit of God lifts him up and carries him away (like John will be).

So when John says "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" –

that's not saying "I had a good emotional feeling!"

I grieve over how much false teaching is out there!

Some people confuse their emotional state with the Holy Spirit!

If the music really got them grooving they call it being "in the Spirit"!

Music can certainly produce an enjoyable emotional experience!

When David played music for Saul,
it could even quiet the evil spirit that was tormenting Saul!
But if we ever think that music can invoke the Holy Spirit
then we have fallen into magical thinking!

To be “in the Spirit” (in the way that John is talking about!)
means to receive divine revelation!
I would hope that you would have a positive emotional reaction
to receiving divine revelation!
But being in the Spirit is not primarily an emotional experience!

John says that he was in the Spirit on *the Lord’s Day*.
Throughout the NT, the Lord’s Day is the first day of the week –
the day of the resurrection – the eighth day.
In the NT this is the primary day of worship.
In Acts 20, verse 7, Paul was in Troas, where he gathered with all the saints
on the first day of the week to break bread
(the early Christian way of talking about the worship service).

How often are you *in the Spirit*?
When you hear and believe the Word of God read and preached –
you are receiving divine revelation!
Because the Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word,
an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners,
and building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

Likewise, when you partake of the Lord’s Supper by faith –
you are receiving divine revelation!
Because the sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them,
or in him that does administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ
and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them!

To be “in the Spirit” means to join the beloved disciple – the apostle John –
in the presence of the Holy One!

and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet

c. Write What You See to the Seven Churches (v11)

¹¹ saying, “Write what you see in a book 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.”

The trumpet was not particularly useful for accompanying singing!
It is good for blowing loud blasts – calling people to assemble –
there are echoes here of Mt. Sinai where (in Ex 19-20)

the sound of the trumpet caused the people to tremble!
Here it summons John and calls him to *write* a book and send it
to the seven churches.

The seven churches of Asia Minor are arranged in a circular pattern –
the pattern that a messenger would take to deliver the book!

If a messenger were to take the book from Patmos to Asia Minor,
when he left the port of Patmos the nearest port on the mainland would be Ephesus.
(Well, the port of Ephesus was already silted in by this time,
so Miletus would be the port – and then he would walk a few miles to Ephesus)
He would then walk 44 miles north to Smyrna.
and then another 65 miles north to Pergamum,
and then 46 miles east to Thyatira,
and then 36 miles south east to Sardis,
and then 29 miles east to Philadelphia,
and then 57 miles southeast to Laodicea.

These seem to have been seven of the leading churches in the region.
but the reason why there are *seven churches*
is because seven is the number of completeness –
and these seven are representative of the whole church –
not just in Asia Minor, but in all the world.

John is told to write what he sees and send to these churches.

The vision is found in verses 12-16.

The explanation of the vision then follows in verses 17-20.

The point is simple:

Jesus is King and Judge.

He has passed through death and is now alive forevermore.

He holds the keys of Death and Hades.

And therefore you are called to faithfully witness ‘to the testimony of Jesus’
in the face of suffering.

“If [you] are faithful and are unjustly persecuted, then [you] need not fear (v17)
because [you] can be assured that [you] will ultimately overcome [your] defeat
in the same way that Christ did.” (Beale, 206)

2. “Seeing the Voice” – the One Like a Son of Man (v12-16)

a. Seven Golden Lampstands – Ex 25:37, Zech 4:2 (v12)

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,

We saw last time that we should not think of Revelation as a ‘puzzle book’ –
but as a *picture book*.

One theme that will recur over and over again
is the connection between *hearing* and *seeing*.

We need to *see the pictures* that John is drawing for us
in order to truly hear what John is saying!

We find this pattern already in verse 12:
“Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me...”

How do you *see* a voice?

John is clueing you in to a theme that he will use repeatedly going forward!

The first thing he sees is seven golden lampstands.
Anyone familiar with the scriptures would immediately think of the menorah –
the golden lampstand of the tabernacle and the temple.
And particularly Zechariah’s vision of the golden lampstand in Zechariah 4,
with seven lamps.

But before he can even begin to reflect on the seven lampstands,
he sees:

b. One Like a Son of Man – Daniel 7:13 (v13a)

¹³ *and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man,*

This was the term that Jesus had used of himself regularly in the gospels.
It is drawn from Daniel 7 (and also from Ezekiel –
although the description here is far more rooted in Daniel!).

We saw the theme of the Son of Man in verse 7
(the one with dominion coming on the clouds) –
and now the title is made explicit.

But the Son of Man is one who embodies both suffering and glory.

c. The Man of Daniel 10 (v13b-15a)

clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace,

The clothing combines aspects of the Son of Man with those of the Ancient of Days.

In Daniel 7, the Ancient of Days has “clothing white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.” (7:9)

So in that sense, he has the characteristics of the Ancient of Days.

But then the rest of the description connects him with the “man clothed in linen”
in Daniel 10.

“a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist.
His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning,
his eyes like flaming torches,
his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze,
and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.” (10:6)

In Daniel 10 it was the pre-incarnate Son of God who appeared to Daniel.
And upon seeing him, Daniel fell to the ground – losing all strength.
The same thing happens to John (v17).

d. The Voice of Many Waters – Ezekiel 1, 43:2 (v15b)

and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

God’s voice in Ezekiel 1 and 43 is compared to the sound of many waters –
again highlighting the way in which Jesus has divine attributes.

e. The Sword of His Mouth – Isaiah 49:2 (v16a)

¹⁶ *In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword,*

Verse 16 speaks of seven stars.

“In Jewish writings the Zech 4:2 lampstand is said to symbolize the righteous in Israel
and is equated with the wise who will shine like the stars in Dan 12:3” (B 211)

So the seven stars of verse 16 connects to the OT belief

“that Israel’s earthly temple and its furniture were the microcosmic copy
of the archetypal heavenly temple-house of God.” (B 211)

And he holds these seven stars in his *right hand*.
The right hand was the hand of judgment.

So these stars have something to do with judgment...

That idea is only heightened by its connection with the next line:
“from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.”

In Isaiah 49:2, it is the Servant of the LORD who says
that God has “made my mouth like a sharp sword.”

The sword of his mouth is the means by which he judges the nations.

f. His Face Like the Sun – Judges 5:31 (v16b)
and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

The language here is drawn from Judges 5:31 – the Song of Deborah.

At first it may seem like an odd connection.

All the others come from the prophets!

But, of course, what we call the “historical books”
were called the “former prophets” by the Jews.

And also, if you know the Song of Deborah,
you have the stars of heaven fighting for Israel in the Song of Deborah –
which Jewish writings also connected with the stars of Daniel 12:3.

Daniel 12:3 reads,

“And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above;
and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

The same picture can be found in Philippians 2:14-16 when Paul says,

“Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent,
children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,
among whom you shine as lights in the world,
holding fast to the word of life,
so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.”

You are called to shine as stars in the firmament.

And you shine as you hold fast the word of life –
as you *hold forth* the word of life –
as your light shines before the watching world.

Being a faithful Christian isn't just about being a “moral person.”

What is it that distinguishes a faithful Christian from an “upright Mormon”
or a “noble pagan”?

Any human being is capable of being a decent person.

What distinguishes the Christian is the gospel of Jesus –

and particularly *the cross of Jesus*.
How do you handle unjust suffering?
How do you bear the cross?

And if you look at the interpretation of the vision,
Jesus seems to think that this is central to who he is!

3. “I Am the First and the Last, and the Living One” – Christ Amidst His Church (v17-20)

a. Jesus Is God – Daniel 10:9 – Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12 (v17-18)

Remember that John was the disciple whom Jesus loved.

There was no one closer – humanly speaking – than John.

What happens when John sees Jesus?

What happens when he sees Jesus again for the first time in decades?!

¹⁷ *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.*

There is no place in the Christian life for thinking of Jesus as “my buddy.”
Yes, he is our brother – and he is our friend –
but he is our Lord and God!

When Jesus appears, we fall before his feet!

This is a pattern in both the Old and New Testaments.

The prophet sees a vision,

falls on his face in fear,

is strengthened by a heavenly being,

and then receives further revelation from that being.

And Jesus – who has seven stars in his right hand:

But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

By saying this, he makes clear that he is Jesus:

“I died, and behold I am alive forevermore.”

He also makes it clear that he is God –

“I am the first and the last” –

this is taken from Isaiah 41:4 (where Yahweh is speaking)

and echoed in Isaiah 44:6,

“I am the first and I am the last, besides me there is no god.” (cf 48:12)

In verse 8, the Lord God had said, “I am the Alpha and the Omega” –
which is another way of saying the same thing.

Jesus says to John,

The reason why you need not fear
is because I am God.

I am the first and the last.

The one who promised to deliver Israel from all their troubles
is the one who himself endured Death and Hell
to deliver us from all our troubles!

I’m not really fond of the translation of verse 18.

By putting a period after “the living one” it breaks the sentence
and disrupts the whole point!

But in Greek he says,

“I am the one who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.”

This is designed as a parallel structure to what God said in verse 8:

“who is and who was and who is to come.”

Jesus is the one who lives (the I AM) and was dead,
and now is the living one forever and ever.

And he holds the keys of Death and Hades.

Isaiah 22 speaks of the key of the house of David (a possible connection).

But the central point is that through the resurrection of Jesus,
he has triumphed over the power of death.

Because of sin – death held sway over all of humanity!

For generation after generation people died – and stayed dead.

All the dead were held under lock and key –
with no chance of getting out!

We needed someone who could get in – get the key –
and then get back out again!

But who has the power to conquer death?

John Calvin says this really well:

It was his task to swallow up death. Who but the Life could do this? It was his task to conquer sin. Who but very Righteousness could do this? It was his task to rout the powers of world and air. Who but a power higher than world and air could do this? Now where does life or righteousness, or lordship and authority of heaven lie but with God alone? Therefore our most

merciful God, when he willed that we be redeemed, made himself our Redeemer in the person of his only-begotten Son. [Calvin, J., 2011. *Institutes of the Christian Religion* & 2 J. T. McNeill, ed., Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press. II.xii.1-2]

So, *because* of who Christ is and because of what he has done in triumphing over death and Hades:

b. Therefore Write the Things that Are and Are to Take Place After This (v19)

¹⁹ *Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.*

Again you have this threefold pattern:

Because of who Jesus is – as the living one, who was dead and is alive forevermore –
because God is the one who is and who was and who is to come – the Almighty –
therefore write the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place.

If you think about it, this threefold pattern fits the content of the book of Revelation:
the things that you have seen (including Jesus’s death and resurrection),
those that are (the present realities of tribulation and kingdom and endurance),
and those that are to take place after this.

c. Stars and Lampstands – the Only Things Unclear in the Vision (v20)

²⁰ *As for the mystery of the seven stars that 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.*

And then finally, at the end, Jesus explains the only things that were possibly unclear:
First, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

The word “angel” means “messenger” –

and it is frequently used to refer to human messengers –

so many have argued that the “angels” of the seven churches
are the pastors of the seven churches.

Others think of these as heavenly beings who have particular care over each church.

There are good reasons to hold either position.

I think that the reference to Daniel 12:3 –

and particularly the idea that “those who turn many to righteousness
shall shine like the stars forever”

fits rather well with the idea

that the “messengers” are the pastors of the churches.

Of course, as we’ll see many times in Revelation –
with *many* of these interpretive decisions,

it really doesn't matter which one you choose!
Because very often, the picture has multiple references!

So even if I'm right that the seven stars refers to pastors –
it may also refer to heavenly beings!

And the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

The Jews had always understood the lampstand of the temple as representing Israel –
especially “the righteous gathered from all generations at the end time.” (B, 207)
The lamps on the lampstand represented God's presence – God's Spirit –
which shines forth in the midst of the darkness,
as the people of God hold forth the Word of God
before a crooked and perverse generation.

“Consequently, the ‘lampstand’ (the church) is given power by the seven lamps on it,
a power primarily to witness as a light uncompromisingly so that the gates of hell
(cf. 2:9-11, 13) will not prevail against the building of God's temple” (B 207)

You might wonder – why are there seven lampstands instead of one?

There had been *one* in the tabernacle.

But in Solomon's temple there were *ten*.

As a bigger building, there was need for more light!

And if that was true in the shift from a tent to a stone temple,

how much more is it true in the shift from a stone temple to the living temple
of the new humanity!

John has told us who we are:

he is our *brother and partner* in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance
that are in Jesus.

We are called to *shine* in the darkness –

holding forth the word of truth – the gospel.