

Revelation 1:9-20 – Hear, See, and Respond to Jesus

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The natural tendency when you have difficult times, is not to look to God to controls all circumstances, but to be distracted by the things that are causing troubles. This was what Peter did when he was walking water. He took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at the winds and waves and started to sink.

And that was what the 7 churches in Asia Minor were tempted to do. **They were tempted to take their eyes off of the Lord when they saw the troubles around them.**

So the Lord had **to get their attention and talk** to them so **they would know the one who cared for them and know the one who was in charge.** This would help the 7 churches of Asia Minor to refocus on the Lord and endure their suffering. This is what we will examine today.

Our headings are:

Hear Jesus

See Jesus

Respond to Jesus

Our goals are: That you **learn to listen to and look to Christ, the God of all circumstances,** instead of looking to the circumstances around you, **so you will find help in times of trouble.**

Hear Jesus

9 I, 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.**

1. Even though Apostle John was a prisoner in the penal Island of Patmos, he wrote in an endearing way to the 7 churches of Asia Minor – calling them “brothers and companions.”

John could have rightly said: “I am an Apostle, listen to me,” but this opportunity called for gentleness and so he appealed to his brotherly relationship.

John could have wrongly said, “What do I care? I’m in trouble as well.” But he did care. He was their brother and companion.

2. Apostle John identified 3 things in which he was their brother and friend:

a. He was their brother and companion in tribulations. John was exiled at this time. So he could empathize with them in their suffering. **Many of his readers would face being thrown to lions, burned alive – sometimes in hot oil, crucified, have their heads cut off, stopped from doing business, or lose their jobs.**

b. He was their brother and companion in the kingdom of Jesus. They were of the same family with one goal: the building of Christ’s kingdom.

c. He was their brother and companion in patience. They had to wait for the suffering to end.

These 3 things caused him to gain their trust!

3. When the suffering church endured their tribulations, they would confirm the words Jesus proclaimed on earth.

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

4. John told the 7 churches he heard the voice of Jesus as he was worshipping God.

He was in a spiritual mindset. It was the Lord's Day (contemporaries of John said it was Sunday), the new Sabbath. So John did not get this vision from eating too much pizza- like some of the wild dreams you might have. He was in deep meditation.

5. John said the voice of Jesus was clear, so there was no doubt as to what the Lord said. Also, the voice was loud so John would continue to pay attention. It was like a trumpet. Loud voices usually accompanied warning of great dangers.

Ezekiel 3:12 Then the Spirit lifted me up, and **I heard behind me a great thunderous voice**: "Blessed is the glory of the LORD from His place!"

11 saying, "**I am the Alpha 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."

6. The voice identified who was speaking and reminded the hearers of his ever-presence in their troubles.

It was Christ's voice. **Only he is described as the Alpha and Omega** – the First and the Last. (Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.)

Matthew 28:20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always**, even to the end of the age." Amen.

This knowledge of Christ's omnipresence and eternity was of utmost importance to every Christian who was suffering.

7. Jesus commanded John to write down what he heard in a book and to send it to the 7 churches of Asia Minor.

8. Lessons:

a. While living as a Christian, expect tribulations. If you are not persecuted, then be thankful. Learn to support and care for each other through trials. **Remember the sick. Remember the suffering. Remember the sad. Remember and "do."**

b. Be reminded Christ is always present. When human help fails, and it will from time to time, even from your spouse, parent, or friend, Jesus is with you. He was there at the beginning of your spiritual walk and he will be there at the end.

See Jesus

12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw **seven golden lampstands,**

1. Apostle John saw 7 lampstands, representing the 7 churches to which he was writing this Revelation.

These **lampstands were golden,** pointing to their value.

But don't forget that these **7 churches (7 marks completeness) represented the whole church throughout the ages.** So the principles of the letter apply to us today, just as it applied 1000 years ago.

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.**

2. Apostle John saw (not just heard) Christ in the midst of the lampstands, showing Christ is always among his people, though he may be absent in bodily form today.

What a beautiful picture this was! **This was encouragement without words.** Seeing could be more encouraging than words! They would give the churches confidence and hope to endure their present and future suffering.

3. Apostle John saw Christ was fully clothed and had a golden band on his chest showing he was the church's PRIEST.

Christ's clothing, and particularly the golden band around the chest was a mark of righteousness and honor, just as the priests of the Old Testament were dressed on the Day of Atonement. As priests, he would take care of the 7 golden lampstands!

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;**

4. Apostle John then described Christ's person, showing he was their KING.

Christ head and hair were like wool-and white as snow-showing **Christ's eternity-**
being from of old – and heavenly glory.

Christ's eyes were like fire. His eyes brought **terror to the wicked** and he brought judgment on them. His eyes searched the hearts of his people and **saw even their smallest needs.** This was an Old Testament picture of the Lord.

Daniel 10:6 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.**

Christ's feet were fine purified brass. They were strong and steadfast to support his suffering people and could crush his enemies to powder.

Christ's voice thundered...so all are able to hear his kingly authoritative voice.

Ezekiel 43:2 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. **His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.**

This language is very similar to Daniel's description of Christ. Dan 7:9,10:6. Remember, this was not an angel.

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.

5. Apostle John then described Christ's words as their PROPHET.

But first...According to Verse 20, the **7 stars in Christ's hand were the 7 angels** that protected the 7 churches. With the angels secured in Christ's hand, so were the churches they protected.

John 10:28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

Christ had a sharp two-edged sword...coming out of his mouth. This is the Word of God that gives direction to his suffering people and condemns the wicked. The "double-edged" shows the two purposes of the Bible: Comfort and condemnation.

Christ's face was shining brightly - a picture of Christ's light to give direction to those in darkness and to expose sins!

6. Lessons:

a. Jesus is your Priest, King, and Prophet. All your needs are met in him. Don't be scared of anything! **It is a sin to be afraid!** It is an insult to Jesus if you are afraid. Your sins are atoned for. Your enemies are under his control. He told you so!

b. Learn to love to listen to the voice of Jesus. But more, learn to love his presence! It is comforting. Meet with him and his people. Get encouraged. Eat of his flesh and drink of his blood! What a wonderful remind to Minho and all here today!

Respond to Jesus

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.**

1. John fell down, unable to bear the voice and the vision, but he was encouraged to get up by Jesus.

He could not stand up because he realized the sinfulness of himself and the 7 churches. How could they stand before God?

Christ then gave John the reasons he and the churches should not be afraid but could stand

in his presence:

Jesus meant no harm to him and Jesus would keep him eternally. Jesus had paid for his sins!

Jesus was alive, though once dead, and he would be alive forevermore.

Jesus was all powerful – having control of the hell. Having the keys meant that Christ determined who entered hell or who would not. And the persecutors of God's people would not escape. Nero was going to face the real God of the world!

19 "Write the things which you have seen, and **the things which are**, and the things which will take place after this.

2. John then is commanded again to write what he saw and what would happen-repetition for effect.

And notice Jesus himself confirmed that some things mentioned in this book were already happening! So you can see at least some things of this book were already being fulfilled! Jesus said so.

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**.

3. Jesus revealed the first mystery: The 7 stars in Jesus' hand are Jesus' 7 angels that watch over the 7 churches in Asia Minor.

4. Lessons:

a. While you are full of sin, as Zechariah pointed out, your sins have been atoned for and can never be used against you. More God has **your soul secured forever**. More, he continues to encourage you with his Word and Sacraments! This means you have grounds, more, responsibility, to worship God!

b. Guardian angels are common, individually, for families, for churches, and for nations. You can't see them, but they see you and know every circumstance of your life. But they also know the bad places you go...and the wicked things you do. So don't shame Christ.

Conclusion:

Christ spoke words of comfort for John to pass on to the 7 churches of Asia Minor who were faced with increasing tribulations. Christ then confirmed the words he spoke to John by **showing him a vision**. **John saw Christ's work as a Priest – pure and powerful. John saw Christ's work as King – an eternal King. John saw Christ as prophet – a guide of his people with his word and his light.** John realized neither he nor the 7 churches deserved any blessings, yet Christ told him to reassure the churches with those words.

Beloved in the Lord:

1. Jesus is your eternal prophet, priest, and king, who wants to reassure you he never abandons his church. He is with you always – even to the end of the world. Yes, it is true that you are not being thrown to lions, burned alive, crucified, or have heads cut off, but you do face demands to work on Sundays. You are pressured to live like others. Many want you to ignore complementarian lifestyle that God ordained for order in society. You are pressured to follow the government’s teaching on abortions, evolution and homosexuality. You feel social pressures to do what other parents are doing for their children. You feel like you have to join the rat race for people to affirm you! But stand firm! God never abandons you. Patiently endure.

2. Encourage others to endure as well. Mutual encouragement will strengthen others and give glory to Jesus.

Finally, while Christian tribulations will end, maybe in this life and certainly in heaven, if you are not a Christian, you have no such assurance. You may have an easy life now, but you will have eternal tribulations in hell. But your story doesn’t have to end in this sad way if you ask God to save you.