

## THE PATMOS VISION OF CHRIST GLORIFIED (Revelation 1:9-20)

Read the following verses and notes. Discuss the questions among your group. May be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

**Read Revelation 1:9- 20 (NIV)**

### **\*\*What Scholars Say\*\***

The location of the revelation of Christ recorded in this book was the island of Patmos, a small island southwest of Ephesus and between Asia Minor and Greece. One of the first commentators on the Book of Revelation stated that John worked as a prisoner in the mines on this small island. During John's bleak days on Patmos, God gave him the tremendous revelation embodied in this final book of the Bible.

***REV 1:[9] I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.***

**Verse 9** - The author introduces himself, **I, John, your brother**. He uses no titles or other identification, which implies he is well known to his readers. He is a brother of all those to whom he writes, that is, a fellow Christian, a fellow believer in Jesus Christ. John is an elder in the Christian church (2 Jn. 1:1; 3 Jn. 1:1) and one of Jesus twelve disciples (Jn. 21:24).

**Verse 9** - In these opening chapters addressed to the seven churches of Asia, John is described as **your brother and companion in suffering**. By John's times, Jews were persuading Roman authorities that Christianity was different from Judaism and therefore not an authorized religion. Though separated from other Christians by his imprisonment, John shared a sense of community with them **in suffering**, based on hope in God's **kingdom** and a willingness to endure persecution for the cause of Christ. Believers now live in a present form of God's **kingdom** though not yet in the promised future Messianic **kingdom**. John and his fellow believers must wait with **patient endurance** for the coming of the Kingdom. The exhortation to endure and remain faithful to Christ runs throughout Revelation (2:2, 3, 13, 19; 3:10; 14:12; 16:15; 18:4; 20:4; 22:7, 11, 14).

**Verse 9** - John's suffering had come because of his faithful proclamation of **the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus**. (Some Gr. texts add "Christ" after Jesus.) "The testimony of Jesus" means John's testimony for and about Jesus. Like many other well-known writers of Scripture (Moses, David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Peter), John was writing from a context of suffering because of his commitment to the true God. The Christian church was facing severe persecution. Almost all believers were socially, politically, or economically suffering and some where even being put to death for their faith (Rev. 2:10, 13). John was exiled to **Patmos** because he refused to stop preaching Jesus as the Christ.

**Rev. 1:[10] On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,**

**Verse 10** - John's revelation occurred **on the Lord's Day** while he was **in the Spirit**. The "Lord's Day" refers to the first day of the week. The earliest Christians worshiped in Jewish synagogues on the Sabbath, the last day of the week (Acts 18:4), but by the time of Revelation, they were excluded from synagogues and gathered on the day that celebrates the resurrection, the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

The idea that the entire Book of Revelation was given to John in one 24-hour day seems unlikely, especially if he had to write it all down. Being transported in the Spirit he then recorded his experience.

Hearing a **loud voice like a trumpet** may be that of Christ (Rev. 1:15). The text here does not say whose voice it is. A trumpet sound indicated that the message was a matter of great public importance.

**Rev. 1:[11] which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."**

John was instructed to write on a scroll what he saw and send it to the seven churches located in Asia Minor. The phrase **what you see** includes all the visions John will see, as recorded in the book. The **seven churches** (Rev. 1:4) to whom the book is sent, are named in the order messengers would carry the letters.

**REV 1:[12] I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lamp stands,**

**Verse 12** - Hearing **the voice** behind him, John **turned...to see the voice**. This is what the Greek text says, but it is clear that the meaning is "to see the person" or "to see who was speaking to me." What he saw was seven golden lamp stands - things on which lamps are placed (v. 20 - the seven churches in Asia Minor). The lamp stands symbolize the churches in their light-bearing or witness-bearing function. God's character as light is supremely manifested in Christ (Acts 26:13), but is also reflected in the churches, and in each individual who follows Christ (Matt. 5:14-16).

**Rev. 1:[13] and among the lamp stands was someone "like a son of man,"\* dressed in a robe reaching down to His feet and with a golden sash around His chest.**

**Verse 13** - **Among the lamp stands** (the seven churches) John saw **Someone "like a Son of Man,"** (someone with a human appearance) an expression used in Dan 7:13 to refer to the glorified Christ.

The description was that of a priest or judge **dressed in a long robe** (a vestment indicating dignity and rank)....**with a golden sash around his chest** (i.e. a broad band worn over the

shoulder). This represents Christ as our priest and man's judge. To some He will give everlasting life to others everlasting punishment from the presence of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:4-10).

***Rev. 1:[14] His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like blazing fire.***

**Verse 14** - The description of the Christ head and eyes is like that of Dan 7:9; 10:6. The **whiteness of His hair** corresponded to that of the Ancient of Days (cf. Dan 7:9), a reference to God the Father: the Son of God has the same resemblance as the Father. His white hair does not indicate advanced age but absolute wisdom, like that of a judge (Dan. 7:9-13).

***Rev. 1:[14] - and His eyes were like blazing fire.***

**Verse 14** - The **eyes like blazing fire** is probably related to Dan 10:6. As commentators note, this is generally understood to represent fierce opposition to enemies and His piercing ability to see into man's heart. His fiery **eyes** pierce the depths of the soul, seeing everything, right down to the motives of individuals. All masks of hypocrisy will disappear before Him (Rom. 2:16). Before Christ all things are an open book, even the secret thoughts and intents of men.

***Rev. 1:[15] His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters.***

**Verse 15** - This concept is further enhanced by **His feet which were like bronze glowing in a furnace** (cf. 2:18). The bronze altar in the temple was related to sacrifice for sin and divine judgment on it. The **feet of bronze** speak of the time when Jesus will put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed will be death (1 Cor. 15:26). The foes of Jesus will be utterly destroyed! Make no mistake, what Jesus did at the Cross will ultimately be realized throughout the whole Earth for all time and eternity.

***Rev. 1:[15] - and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters.***

**His voice** was compared to the roar **of rushing waters**. The **rushing waters** may be a waterfall or the roaring sea. The figure, of course, indicates the volume of sound, His voice was loud. His voice was powerful, as indicated in John 18:3-6, "[3] Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. [4] Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? [5] They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. [6] As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." Jesus identifies Himself with the great I AM of Exodus 3:13-14.

***Rev. 1:[16] In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. (NIV)***

**Verse 16** - John noticed that **in His right hand He held seven stars**, described in verse 20 as the angels or messengers of the seven churches. Significantly Christ held the pastors or leaders of these seven churches in His right hand. As the church is to show or reveal light on the lamp-stands, the leaders are to project their light as stars. This is the responsibility of the church and its leaders. So let your light shine! (Matt. 5:16).

**Rev. 1:[16] - and out of His mouth came a sharp double-edged sword.**

Speaking of Christ, John saw a **sharp double-edged sword** coming **out of His mouth**. This sword represents the Word, the message, of the glorified Christ (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12). This sword lays bare the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12) with it He lays bare the hidden hypocrisies of men. This is the weapon with which Christ will subdue His enemies.

**Rev. 1:[16] - His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. (NIV)**

**His face** glowed with a brilliance **like the sun shining**. This closes the description of the Personage who appeared to John. The design was evidently to impress him with a sense of the majesty and glory of Christ.

**REV 1:[17] When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. Then He placed His right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.**

**Verse 17** - Is this the Jesus who John had laid on his chest at the last Supper? When John saw the transformed, glorified Christ, he fell **at His feet as though dead**.

The phenomenon known as "slain in the Spirit," as commonly called, is not being able to stand in the Presence of God, therefore, falling to the ground." It has been questioned, "Is it Scriptural?"

We read of Daniel "falling upon his face," when the angel Gabriel appeared to him (Dan. 8:17).

Such was the effect upon Ezekiel when he had a vision of Christ (Ezek. 1:26-28).

At the Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John, "fell on their face" (Matt. 17:6)

Paul was struck to the ground in a similar way when he saw Christ in His glory (Acts 9:4).

The Power of God can definitely be so strong at certain times that an individual cannot remain on their feet.

**Verse [17] - Then he (Jesus) placed his right hand on me (John) and said: "Do not be afraid."**

This is the same hand that reached forth to heal the leper, to raise the sinking Peter (Matt. 14:31), to touch the wounded ear of Malchus. It is now stretched out to reassure His servant

John. God has power of unimagined degree, but it has never been used to hurt those He loves. But as regarding appearances such as is mentioned here, the natural result is "fear."

**Verse [17] - "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last."** Three times the "first" and the "last" is used of Jehovah God in the Old Testament (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12) and three times in this chapter Jesus uses this term for Himself.

**REV. 1:[18] I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.**

**Verse [18] – I am the Living One; I was dead.** The Living One entered into death. He atoned for all sin, which means the wages of sin, which are death, are no more, for those who believe (Jn. 3:16). On the cross, Jesus became the sin-bearer for us (2 Cor. 5:21).

**Verse [18] - and behold I am alive forever and ever!** (a) The Living One becomes dead. (b) The dead One is alive forevermore. If He had failed to atone for even one sin, due to the fact that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), He could not have risen from the dead.

**Verse [18] - And I hold the keys of death and Hades.** Here Christ affirms that He alone has the keys or authority over death and the place of the dead. The Christian's physical death and resurrection to life are both in His hands. No angel has that authority. It is Christ alone.

**REV 1:[19] "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later.**

**Verse 19 - 1.** Write the things you have seen: This is the vision of Christ in the midst of the seven churches (Rev. 1). **2.** Write the things that are, that is, the things concerning the seven churches (Rev. 2-3). **3.** Write the things that shall be hereafter: These are the events of Revelation 4-22.

**Rev. 1:[20] The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lamp stands is this: The seven stars are the angels (pastors, or leadership) of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches.**

### **\*\*Questions\*\***

1. Who is John? What do you know about him? (Rev. 1:9)
2. Why was John suffering? Why were the people John was writing to suffering? Should a Christian suffer? (1 Pet. 2:19-21)
3. Define "Kingdom" (past, present and future)? (1:9)
4. Why is it necessary to patiently endure in the Christian life? (1:9)

5. The Word of God and the testimony about Jesus will cause what kind of opposition? Why? (1:9)
6. What is the difference in the phrase “the Lord’s Day” and “the Day of the Lord”? (1:10)
7. How would you define “in the Spirit”? (1:10)
8. What does a loud voice signify? (Rev. 1:10)
9. What did John hear while being in the Spirit? (1:10)
10. What did God’s voice command John to do? (1:11)
11. When John turned around, what objects did he see? (1:12)
12. Whom did John observe standing behind him? (1:13)
13. How was the person "among the lamp-stands" dressed? (1:13)
14. What was the appearance of the one "like a son of man"? (1:14-16)
15. What was John’s reaction to his supernatural visitor? (1:17)
16. How did John react to seeing Christ in His glory? (1:17)
17. Why did Jesus comfort and reassure John? How? (1:17-18)
18. What did Jesus say about himself as He comforted John? (1:17-18)
19. What did Jesus tell John to do? (1:19)
20. How did Jesus interpret the meaning of the seven stars and golden lamp-stands? (1:20)

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