

## John's Vision of Christ on Patmos

**Text:** Revelation 1:9-20

### Introduction:

1. Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus Christ and in these verses, we are introduced to a glorious vision of the risen, glorified Christ.
2. This vision sets the tone for the rest of what is to come and is the first of 3 great visions of Christ in the Book.
3. In this lesson we will study this vision in three segments.

### I. John's Introduction to the Vision (Vs. 9-10a)

#### A. The Testimony (Vs. 9a)

John describes his relationship to the believers to whom he writes. He describes himself as...

1. A brother – “your brother”
  - a. John was a fellow member of the family of God.
  - b. John was not steeped in Ecclesiastical pride as an Apostle. He was humble.
2. A companion – “and companion”
  - a. A companion in suffering – “in tribulation”
    - i. John could empathize and identify with the suffering of the believers as he was also suffering for his faith.
    - ii. Jesus predicted, “...*In the world ye shall have tribulation...*” (John 16:33)
    - iii. As believers, “...*we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*” (Acts 14:22)
  - b. A companion in waiting – “in the kingdom and patience”
    - i. Positionally and spiritually, believers are already in the kingdom but we are waiting for the establishment of the future literal kingdom on earth in the future.
    - ii. ‘patience’ = bearing up under pressure, patient endurance (Linguistic Key)

#### B. The Topography (Vs. 9b)

John was on the Island of Patmos for 2 reasons:

1. For the Word of God
2. For the testimony of Jesus Christ
3. John, along with many other believers at that time, refused to pay homage to Caesar as lord, and was punished as a result. Domitian was a violent persecutor of the Christians and many thousands died under his reign.

#### C. The Time (Vs. 10)

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1. John received the vision on “the Lord’s day”. This is likely a reference to Sunday, the first day of the week which is the Christian day of worship (See Acts 20:7 & 1 Cor. 16:2).
2. John’s testimony was that he was “in the Spirit”. Though he was “in Patmos”, he was also “in the Spirit”. John was suffering in an earthly environment but was rejoicing and fellowshiping in a heavenly environment. John may have been in Patmos but he was still in Christ!
3. Illustration: A workman had a store in which he cobbled shoes. He also had an apartment upstairs over his shop. Someone asked him about his setup. He said, “I work down here, but I live up there!”
4. Challenge: **Keep Sunday special!** Spend the day filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit. Spend it like the early believers in worship and fellowship with God’s people, under the ministry of the Word of God.

## II. John’s Description of the Vision (Vs. 10b-16)

### A. The Sound He Heard (Vs. 10b-11; 15b)

John hears behind him “a great voice”. Observe three truths concerning Christ’s Divine voice:

1. The authority in the voice (Vs. 10b & 15b)
  - a. The sound of a trumpet
  - b. The sound of many waters
  - c. Christ’s voice had a tone of majesty and authority about it. It is a voice to be heeded and obeyed.
  - d. **Psalm 29:3-9** “The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD *is* upon many waters. The voice of the LORD *is* powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of *his* glory.”
2. The Identity of the voice (Vs. 11a)
  - a. “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” = identifies Christ as the Almighty of Vs. 8 and is a reference to His absolute Deity. This is a title of Jehovah in the Old Testament.
  - b. Isaiah 41:4 “*Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.*”

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- c. Isaiah 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.**"*
  - d. Isaiah 48:12 *"Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; **I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.**"*
  - e. Warning! In the modern Bible versions, the words "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" in this verse are omitted. E.g. the NIV – *"which said: [OMITTED! – "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last"] "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."*
  - f. William Newell: "In this phrase is gathered up all the revelations of God in the Old Testament: Adonai, Elohim, Jehovah, the Almighty. And 'without robbery,' nay with the calm of Deity, our Lord declares Himself to be all these! Blessed is the man who in his heart of hearts, like Thomas, cried: 'My Lord and my God!'"
3. The responsibility given by the voice (Vs. 11b)
- a. Write! See also Vs. 19. A command given 12 times to John throughout the Book.
  - b. Send!

### B. The Sight He Saw (Vs. 12-16)

John saw...

- 1. The Lampstands (Vs. 12)
  - a. 'golden' = speaks of their preciousness and value to Christ. Christ loved the church and shed His own blood for it (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25)
  - b. 'candlesticks' = not one candlestick with 7 branches but 7 individual lampstands.
  - c. Pictures the principle function of the church in being a light in a dark and sinful world. We are to shine forth the light of the Gospel, the light of the truth and the light of a good testimony in the darkness. Christ has ordained the church to be His vehicle of witness to the world.
  - d. Philippians 2:15 *"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, **among whom ye shine as lights in the world;**"*
  - e. Matthew 5:14 *"**Ye are the light of the world.** A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."*
  - f. Challenge: How brightly are we shining for Christ as a church?
- 2. The Lord (Vs. 13-16)

There is are is at least a nine-fold description of Christ in these verses:

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- a. His position – “in the midst of the seven candlesticks” Christ is central! He is the Head and sovereign over each local church.
- b. His Title – “the Son of man” This was Christ’s favorite title of Himself and emphasizes His humanity and Messianic character.
- c. His attire – “clothed with a garment...and girt about the paps”
  - i. The long robe pictures the high priest. It was the job of the high priest in the Old Testament to maintain the ‘lamps’ in the tabernacle (Lev. 24:3-4). Christ as our Great High Priest oversees his churches (candlesticks) and is the source of their light (John 8:12). He maintains their light by His own Spirit (pictured by the oil).
  - ii. The long robe pictures royalty. Christ is King and Judge, a truth powerfully demonstrated in Revelation. But He first judges His churches before judging the world! (See 1 Peter 4:17)
  - iii. The long robe speaks of modesty and decency. Christ is not a hippy, tattooed Jesus who drinks beer, listens to rock and roll and walks around wearing a singlet and a pair of stubbies.
  - iv. The golden girdle again highlights Christ’s royalty and high priestly position. It also speaks of judgment as the 7 angels in Rev. 15:6 who carry out God’s judgment are also girded with golden girdles.
- d. His head – “white like wool, as white as snow”
  - i. Speaks of Christ’s wisdom (Lev. 19:32; Prov. 16:31).
  - ii. Speaks of Christ’s eternity. Similar picture of the “Ancient of Days” in Daniel 7:9, 13 & 22.
  - iii. Speaks of Christ’s judgment (Dan. 7:9-10). “Judges in the UK wear white wigs, which originally symbolized the solemnity of their position and the fact that all judgment comes from God.” (David Cloud)
- e. His eyes – “as a flame of fire” Speaks of Christ’s absolute Omniscience. He sees through everything and everyone. He sees the deepest thoughts of the heart. He sees every detail of every one of his churches! Challenge: When Christ looks at our church, what does He see?
- f. His feet – “like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace” Brass speaks of judgment (e.g. brazen altar in O.T.). Christ will stamp and crush unrepentant men.
- g. His hand – “he had in his right hand seven stars” Identified in Vs. 20 as “the angels of the seven churches”. The word ‘angel’ is also translated ‘messenger’ so it likely refers to the pastors of these churches. In Christ’s right hand they are protected but

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most importantly, they are to be under His absolute and total control.

- h. His mouth – “out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword”  
Speaks of the Word of Christ which are sharp and powerful. The Word of God is described as “the sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17). Hebrews 4:12 says, “*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and **sharper than any twoedged sword**, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” Later in Rev. 19:15, it is this sword proceeding from Christ’s mouth that smites the nations in judgment.
- i. His countenance – “his countenance was as the sun shineth”  
Speaks of the radiant glory of Christ. Similar to what Peter, James and John witnessed on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-2) and Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:13).

### III. John’s Reaction to the Vision (Vs. 17-20)

#### A. John was Humbled (Vs. 17a)

- 1. “fell at his feet” = the posture of true worship and a common reaction in the Word of God when men were confronted with heavenly visions of God. John was the disciple who had enjoyed close fellowship with Christ, even leaning on Him at the Last Supper. But now he is in the presence of the risen, glorified Christ.
- 2. Note: This is the total opposite to the “in your face” worship of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement.

#### B. John was Helped (Vs. 17b-20)

Comforted by...

- 1. The touch of Christ (Vs. 17)
- 2. The truth of Christ (Vs. 18-20)
  - a. The truth concerning His Person (Vs. 17b-18)
    - 1. His eternality – he is the first and the last, he ever lives, was dead and is alive for evermore.
    - 2. His sovereignty – he holds the keys of hell and death.
  - b. The truth concerning His Vision (Vs. 19-20) Christ interprets the key symbols of the stars and the candlesticks for John.

### Conclusion: There’s a...

- 1. Challenge for the church: How brightly are we shining for Christ? What is our true character as He sees it?
- 2. Challenge for the individual: How high a view do you have of Christ? Do you know Him as Saviour or will you reject Him and know Him as judge?