

# Christ's Last Words to His Church Series: God's Reminder to Us— Keep Your Eyes on Jesus Revelation 1:9-20

Revelation is God lifting the lid off of Christ, or pulling back the wrapping paper on something very special about Jesus, but not yet fully seen or known. That is what the first word of this book says.

So, chapter 1 is God holding out for us: What Jesus is doing right now.

Chapters 2-3 are God showing us what Jesus sees in His Church.

Chapters 4-22 are what God wants us to know about His plans for the future.

Each of these sections of Revelation is a disclosure, and an unveiling of things not yet fully seen, or even really understood.

So the summary of the last book of the Bible is: God knows we need reminders.

That's why we have the last book in our Bibles. It is a book to remind us: that God has a plan, His plan is on target, and all we need to do is keep our eyes fixed on Christ.

God wants us to know what Jesus is at work right now. The purpose of Revelation is to remind the Church to focus on what Christ was doing on Earth, of what He left us here to do, and how we can get it done. That's the:

## **Reminder God Gives His Servants**

As we open to Revelation 1, think about the setting God used to send to us, Christ's Last Words to His Church. Remember that the believers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century were normal people with real problems. That is true about even the one God chose to record the words we will soon read.

John the apostle was a fisherman from small seaside town of Galilee. Now he is all alone, banished on Patmos, a prison colony island, off the coast of modern Turkey.

Yes, there were probably many other prisoners, but John was far from his family. As far as we know from history he was completely isolated from his wife and children, so he had no family encouragement.

As far as colleagues: his own brother James as well as all the other apostles, even Paul had been hunted down and murdered. So John had no dear old friends left to encourage him. It is not a real stretch to think that at a minimum, these were hard times.

For John, those days of following Christ, when Jesus called and taught him and all the other Apostles, seemed a long way off.

If any of us were in John's sandals, trudging along the paths of Patmos, we could easily confess that Jesus felt far away at times. For someone who knew Jesus face-to-face for 3 plus years, having Christ ascended to Heaven meant at the least: Jesus and His plan, that used to be so clear, seemed distant.

But what God wanted John to know then, and us who live today to know right now is that:

## **Jesus Never Changes**

Do you sometimes feel distant from the Lord? We have the Bible, we have the church, we have all those books and music, and tools that remind us of the Lord. But, as we go through all the struggles of life, most of us seem to arrive at those distant times, feeling far from the Lord.

Other times if we aren't careful to maintain spiritual disciplines, we get unhealthy. By not eating God's Word regularly and exercising ourselves in ministry, we become weak. Weakness can cause us to slowly drift away from some of the gracious assurances that we had felt in the past, and we just hurt, ache and struggle on going through the motions of a walk with the Lord.

If we take the time to fully understand what lies before us in this passage, we will find that Revelation 1 was a very special gift to the Church reminding each of them back 2,000 years ago, and each of us today that Jesus Christ is the same (as Hebrews 13:8 reminds us):

- **Yesterday** (when He walked the dusty trails of Galilee with the disciples, and later when He met with John on Patmos); and
- **Today** (as He walks up and down among us here in His gathered Church); and
- **Forever** (as we enjoy His presence in Heaven).

Did you catch that? Jesus wants His Church to know that He is still doing just what He did that Sunday morning with John on Patmos, and in the days that followed. So much of His ministry was assuring the disciples of what they already knew, and encouraging them to do what He left them here to do.

Revelation 1 uncovers, reveals, discloses, and displays for each member of Christ's church: what Jesus is **doing today**.

The purpose of Revelation, as v. 1 declares, is to SHOW us who are His servants the only eye witness, complete description of the Risen Christ. It was on a Sunday, a Lord's Day like today.

And in the flawless record of that meeting comes a perfect description of what Jesus looks like. And from that description we find out exactly what He is doing then and now! God pulls back the wrapping paper and says, "Look and:

## See Christ Today In His Church

Open with me to the last book in God's Word, Revelation 1.9-13. Stand with me, and as I read, notice the very precise specifics of what John saw about Jesus.

*Revelation 1:9-13 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. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, 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." 12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lamp stands [read that as representing all churches, v. 20], 13 and in the midst of the seven lamp stands: **One like the Son of Man; clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.***

### Pray

If you'll closely look at v. 13, you will find that John actually sees Him doing after the Resurrection just what He did while He was here on Earth before His death, burial and Resurrection.

Jesus is the same—yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). And how John needed that reminder—and so do we!

What did John see? Pencil these in your mind, mark them in your Bibles, and hold tight to them in your heart—He saw Jesus and tells us of it.

When John sees the Risen Christ, He is—

1. **Reminding us that He is Human.** v. 13a "One like a Son of Man". So He can truly have compassion upon us. **Jesus can feel my needs completely.**

2. **Praying for us as our Great High Priest.** v. 13b **Jesus is dressed like a priest to remind us that He is our High Priest.** "clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band". **Jesus defends us constantly as He prays and intercedes for us.** Jesus is the perfect priest, He can truly forgive us.

The purpose Revelation was written was to help Christ's servants: that's US! Jesus first revealed Himself as the help we all need.

Today, more than anything else, we need to experience Jesus Christ as He is right now. Starting in v. 13 we find a truth that keeps us through the daily struggles, and the growing challenges that life will always bring.

What was the first truth that God wants us to see about Jesus? Above everything else, God reveals to His servants that we need to always remember and never forget that Jesus is "One like a Son of Man". Jesus is completely human. Jesus is able to understand us where we are. He is not living so far away and above us that He is out of touch with where we struggle. That means the first truth God wants us to understand is:

## **Jesus Can Feel My Needs Completely: Do you Understand Christ's Humanity?**

### ***v. 13a "One like a Son of Man".***

All of the lessons of Revelation are previous truth that God wants to remind us about in a new, fresh, and powerful way. To grasp what is being said in this first half of Revelation 1:13, turn over with me to the book of Hebrews, chapter 2, where God's Word describes the purpose of the 100% humanity of Jesus Christ.

*Hebrews 2:14-18 Inasmuch then as the children **have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same**, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 **Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren**, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 **For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.** NKJV*

God wants to unwrap and hold out for us to see in a new, fresh, and powerful way that Jesus feels what we feel. He knows what we are going through. He understands where we are, what we struggle with and amazingly says that He has felt the same temptations!

Again, in Hebrews 4, Jesus reinforces this truth: He has felt what we feel, He has wrestled with what we wrestle with. Jesus is the only One who can really say to us, "I know what you're going through."

*Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, **but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.***

Jesus was made like us; He can feel our needs completely—so He can truly have compassion<sup>1</sup> upon us. What we need in all of our struggles is compassion.

What we long for in all of our temptations is to know that someone understands what we're struggling with.

As humans we have so many needs, such deep feelings, and such great struggles it often helps most just to know someone understands what we're going through.

There is One who understands BETTER than anyone else. There is One who "feel together with us" that is what the Greek word **sumpatheo** from which we get the English word "sympathy".

Jesus has sympathy upon us. Jesus feels completely what we are going through. And instead of anger, instead of condemnation: Jesus feels compassion for us.

## **Jesus Feels Compassion As He Watches us Struggle**

Every time the verb "showing/having compassion" is used in the New Testament (which is 12x) it always refers to Jesus!

As we read the Gospels, what do they emphasize about what Christ did on earth? They show His great compassion upon weak and wandering humans. Turn back with me to the first Gospel, by Matthew and look at chapter 20.

Matthew 20:34 So Jesus **had compassion** and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

Mark 6:34 And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was **moved with compassion** for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.

When Jesus walked around and saw what we were going through it moved Him to compassion. When Jesus saw the struggles, the confusion, and all the temptations the Devil flung at fallen humanity: He felt compassion.

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<sup>1</sup> Each of the eleven times in the Gospels that this verb **splangnidzomai** #4697 is used for a person, it is Jesus Christ that is described (Matthew 9:36; 14.14; 15.32; 18.27; 20.34; Mark 1.41; 6.34; 8.2; 9.22; Luke 7.13; 10.33 (Good Samaritan acted as Christ would have acted). The noun form also describes why God sent His Son in Luke 1.78; and is what each true believer is commanded to put on each day (Col. 3.12); and its presence is an evidence of salvation (I John 3.17).

Never forget that Christ's most frequent emotion was not anger, or disappointment, or frustration. Christ's most often expressed emotion is feeling for us in our needs. Jesus is most characterized in His humanity by a love that shows itself in compassion.

So what is Jesus like now, today, here: as He looks at you and me right now? He has compassion upon us in all our needs!

Remember when John saw Jesus in Revelation 1:13 "...and in the midst of the seven lamp stands [One] like the Son of Man"? Jesus was with His Church, us believers, His born-again saints. So that means Jesus is here this morning!

In the days of the Gospels, anyone felt they could come to Him, Jesus was approachable: a woman with blood, a leper, a dad with dying daughter, someone with a sick servant. Jesus has compassion.

## **Jesus is Approachable**

Jesus is checking our hearts to see if we came to church cleaned up and prepared to seek Him. And if He finds that we are cold, distant, wounded, sad, discouraged: He feels for us. Jesus is standing right beside each of us gathered here today and waiting to help us.

- ***Are you weak?*** He understands, and looks upon you with compassion.
- ***Are you afraid?*** He is acquainted with all we face, and knows our fears—and looks upon us with compassion.
- ***Are you alone?*** He faced the long loneliness of the Garden of Gethsemane, the Wilderness temptation, and the hours of darkness on the Cross—He know what it is like to be alone, He feels our weaknesses—and looks upon us with compassion.

Jesus Can Feel My Needs Completely: Do you Understand Christ's Humanity? He is full of compassion. He is right now: v. 13a "One like a Son of Man".

Now, look at the second half of v. 13. Here is what the compassion of Christ prompts. Jesus who feels all we are going through doesn't just feel for us in our needs: He also responds with what we most need. What do we most need that Christ is doing for us?

## **Jesus Defends Me Constantly: Do you Feel Christ's Intercession & Forgiveness?**

***v. 13b clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band***

What was the greatest miracle that Jesus did for people on earth? He went to the Father and asked for their sins to be forgiven. That was the greatest need of those He met, and the miracle that lasted forever. All His other miracles went away except forgiveness.

Watch what I mean as we turn back to the Gospel by Mark, chapter 2.

Mark 2:1-5 And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. 2 Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. 3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. 4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "**Son, your sins are forgiven you.**"

Forgiving sins was Christ's greatest, most enduring, and powerful miracle.

So what does He do now? He wants us to see Him still at work doing the same powerful miracle: He forgives our sins. Turn over with me to the Book of Hebrews, chapter 4.

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that **we have a great High Priest** who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Hebrews 7:24-25 **But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.** 25 Therefore He is also able to **save to the uttermost** those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Jesus is at work meeting the greatest need each of us has.

Jesus knows that we fail, He knows that we are weak and tempted, and that we sin. He always lives to cleanse and free us from our sins. He feels for us, knows our struggles, and wants us to rest in His never ending forgiveness no matter how many times we sin, no matter how badly we sin: He lives to forgive us!

- Do you feel defiled? He alone can forgive and cleanse.
- Do you feel the fear of future judgment? He can take that penalty you deserve away forever.

Jesus Prays for Me Constantly: Do you Feel Christ's Intercession & Forgiveness? He is right now as it says in v. 13b clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band, ever living to save us to the uttermost.

Jesus Can Feel My Needs Completely: Christ's Humanity means that He is full of compassion. He is right now: v. 13a "One like a Son of Man" standing by each of us with His arms open wide saying neither do I condemn you, follow me and turn away from those sins that beset you and displease Me.

## **Closing**

Since Jesus is here, since He is 100% human and knows what we face as we struggle each day, why not thank Him right now?

And as we thank Him, invite Him to help you in whatever way you need this morning.

There is a little chorus we can use to worship Jesus right now called: I Love you Lord.

Why not join me singing that to the Lord.

I Love You Lord,  
and I lift my voice,  
to worship You,  
Oh my soul rejoice;  
take joy my King  
in what You hear:  
may it be a sweet,  
sweet, sound  
in your ear.