

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL COME, LORD JESUS THE GOD WHO MAKES ALL THINGS NEW

John Has A Vision of Jesus

The Apostle John was one of those who saw Jesus on the first day of the week after Jesus had been crucified, buried and then rose alive from the grave! John would have been able to say like our modern-day song says:

I've just seen Jesus
I tell you he's alive
I've just seen Jesus
Our precious Lord alive

Have you seen Jesus? Do you know He is alive? He is the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the Dead, and the Ruler over kings of the earth. Today, we begin our study of *the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, Revelation 1:1 (ESV)* We are about to look in as the Holy Spirit pulls back the curtain of time for the purpose of opening our eyes to the glorified Jesus.

John recorded these words of Christ around A.D. 95, during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian. Domitian had demanded to be worshiped as 'Lord and God' and the refusal of Christians to do so led to severe persecution. Tradition says that it was Domitian who sent John to Patmos, a small rocky island used by the Romans as a penal colony off the coast of modern-day Turkey. John was exiled in an effort by the authorities to silence his testimony of Jesus. However, in that isolated place the beloved disciple was given the greatest revelation of Jesus Christ ever and that message continues to the ends of the earth!

Jesus reveals Himself in His glory.

Read Revelation 1:9-12 (ESV) 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. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 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." ¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands.

John writes that he *was in the Spirit on the Lord's day*. John had been walking in the Spirit for about 60 years. *Colossians 1:27 (ESV)* ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. However, on this particular day

on the Isle of Patmos, the physical limits of time and space were temporarily set aside for a specific reason which was to bear *witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.*

It had literally been a lifetime since John had seen Jesus or heard His voice. Notice John does not say that he heard an actual trumpet – he heard a *voice like a trumpet*. Before he turned around, John listened for a moment as he was told to write seven letters to seven churches. When John did turn, the first thing he mentioned seeing was seven lampstands. Later, John will be told that the lampstands represent the seven churches. From the beginning the readers of these words are to realize that the descriptions recorded are symbolic. However there is one important thing to remember recorded that is not symbolic.

Read Revelation 1:7-8 (ESV) ⁷ *Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.* ⁸ *“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”*

These words present the theme of the book. One glorious day we will be singing, “I’ve just seen Jesus!” For now, let’s look into the glorious depiction of Jesus as John described in human words.

Read Revelation 1:13-16 (ESV) ¹³ *and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, 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, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.* ¹⁶ *In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.*

Son of Man was the way Jesus described Himself in the Gospel Story. When Daniel had a vision, he said in **Daniel 7:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.* The largest number of ‘Son of Man’ sayings concern the final times when Christ will return. For example, Jesus said in **Matthew 24:30 (ESV)** ³⁰ *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

John describes the *Son of Man* by saying He was *clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest*. These priestly robes picture Jesus as our High Priest. In the Old Testament, the high priest was the supreme religious head of his people and functioned as the mediator between God and man. **1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV)** ⁵ *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* Our High Priest is interceding in heaven on our behalf. **Romans 8:34 (ESV)** ³⁴ *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*

The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. Daniel had a similar vision recorded in **Daniel 7:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool... The God who is the Ancient of Days is also the Son of Man born in a manger in Bethlehem! Yes, it is true – the One in the midst of the candlesticks is the*

Son of Man and at the same time the God of Ancient Days. Commentators give many descriptions concerning the hairs of His head being white like wool. He is pure. He is holy and that description brings to my mind *Isaiah 1:18 (ESV)*¹⁸ *“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.*

His eyes were like a flame of fire. Nothing is hidden from the eyes of God. What will be seen when the Holy One looks into your heart or my heart? Will we find favor with God like Noah did? *Genesis 6:8 (ESV)*⁸ *But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.*

His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace. The KJV translators called any copper alloy brass. His feet of burning brass suggest judgment. The bronze altar in the Old Testament was the place where the fire consumed the sin offering. *2 Chronicles 1:6 (ESV)*⁶ *And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which was at the tent of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.*

His voice was like the roar of many waters. This represents the voice of authority. It was a picture used by Ezekiel to describe the voice of God. *Ezekiel 43:2 (ESV)*² *And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory.* Remember when Jesus walked on earth the winds and the waves obeyed Him!

In his right hand he held seven stars. The right hand represents the hand of power. *Exodus 15:6 (ESV)*⁶ *Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power, your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.* An angel is a messenger who delivers God’s message. The stars are later described as being the angels (or ministers) to the seven churches.

From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword. That sword is the Word of God. *Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)*¹² *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* The swords of man disintegrate in the presence of the Sword of the Word of God.

His face was like the sun shining in full strength. The countenance of the glorified Christ is reminiscent of the countenance of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. John was there on that mountain and now he once again sees His glorified Lord. When I think of the sun, warmth and comfort come to my mind. Often physical pain is treated with warmth. The presence of the Son of Man in our lives brings blessing and healing. *Psalms 84:11 (ESV)*¹¹ *For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.*

Jesus reveals His power over time, death and hell.

*Read Revelation 1:17-18 (ESV)*¹⁷ *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. 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.*

In an effort to help us sing as though we were seeing Jesus for the very first time our former choir director, Doug, often asked what will our response be when we first see Jesus. Our answer to that question is found in John's response: *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.* This is the same man who had leaned on Jesus' breast on the night of the last supper but in the grandeur of His glory, John fell as though dead. This is the natural human response to Almighty God. Daniel had a similar response in his vision. **Daniel 10:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.*

But, then we read the glorified Christ *laid his right hand* on John. His right hand of power is also a caring hand. **Isaiah 41:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.* The reason He could tell John and us not to fear is because He is *the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.* Possessing the "keys of death" means that the risen Christ has control and authority over death! That is why we don't have to be fearful. He has destroyed death – our enemy.

Jesus reveals His Presence among His churches.

Read Revelation 1:19-20 (ESV) ¹⁹ *Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.* 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.*

Here we have the Spirit-filled outline of the book: the things which *you have seen* refers to the vision John had (chapter 1). The things *which are* refers to the special messages to the churches (chapters 2-3). The answer to what is meant by the things *that are to take place after this* is found in **Revelation 4:1 (ESV)** ¹ *After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."* (chapters 4-22).

Don't let the imagery of this book frighten you away from it. Read it and take it to heart and you will be blessed. **Revelation 1:3 (ESV)** ³ *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.*

Some day – perhaps even today – His children will say, 'I've just seen Jesus! He is alive!'