

THE REVELATION

The Things That John Saw

LOOK UP! CHRIST IS COMING SOON! HALLELUJAH!

Jesus while on earth often called Himself the *Son of Man*. John had spent much time with the *Son of Man* as he walked this earth. He even had the blessed opportunity to spend time with Him on earth after Christ rose from the dead and then suddenly Jesus was gone – caught up into the air and into heaven. Nevertheless, as an old man while enslaved on Patmos, John had a vision of Jesus Christ that he shared with all those who would follow!

Before we move to the verses, I want to mention that Jesus holds three offices, prophet, priest, and king. He does not function in all three at the same time but rather chronologically. His first office was prophet. He functioned as prophet in His First Coming. **Luke 7:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and “God has visited his people!”* The second office is that of priest. In fact, Jesus is functioning in that role now as he sits at the right hand of God the Father. He is High Priest for all believers. **Mark 16:19 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.* When Christ returns he will begin functioning in His third role – that of King. John saw Jesus as King but a king has many roles – including judge. Dr. Arnold G. Fructenbaum, a Messianic Jew, explains that Jesus is in the midst of His churches ready to move out in judgment. Christ's garments are those of a Judge-King, One with honor and authority. His eyes see all (**Rev. 19:12**) enabling Him to judge righteously.

Revelation 1:9-20 make up the first major section of **Revelation**, *the things that John saw*. What John saw was the glorified *Son of Man*.

Read Revelation 1:9-11 (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.”*

I John is used three times in **Revelation** -- the other two are at the end of the book. Although some argue over the book's author, for me this is a clear indication of who wrote the book – John. When John mentions going through tribulation, he is not referencing the Great Tribulation that is yet to come. However, in John's day the Christian church was facing severe persecution and some were even being killed for their faith. He is speaking of this tribulation he and the others were currently experiencing. John had been active in the church at Ephesus, and he supervised other churches and he taught the Word of God. For some reason I have always pictured John just being in a solitary place on Patmos. Sir William Ramsey writes of exile in that day. He said it was much like the death penalty. It was preceded by scourging, marked by perpetual fetters, scanty clothing, sleep on the bare ground, insufficient food, and working under the lash of military overseers. So maybe this island was not as solitary as I have envisioned.

John was commissioned to write what he saw to the seven churches that were listed.

The kingdom reference is to the present state of the kingdom. When we experience the new birth, which places a sinner in Christ, we are in the kingdom of God. However, this is not the millennial kingdom -- that has not yet been established. Christ will set up the millennial kingdom at His second coming.

John says, *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day*. Most Bible Dictionaries describe the Lord's Day as the first day of the week meaning Sunday. This is the only place that the *Lord's Day* is mentioned. When the believers spoke about Sunday they always called it the *first day of the week*. There is another way to interpret John being in the *Spirit on the Lord's Day*. That is to interpret *the Lord's day* as the *Day of the Lord*. *The Day of the Lord* opens at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation will open with a false peace. Both David Jeremiah and Fructenbaum share this interpretation.

No matter the day of the week, it was the *Lord's Day* and John was it in and he heard a voice that sounded like a trumpet behind him. It was Jesus Christ speaking! As far as we know, the apostle had not heard his Lord's voice since Christ had returned to heaven more than sixty years before. The voice of Jesus that sounded like a trumpet reminds me of a trumpet believers will one day hear: **1 Thessalonians 4:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.*

Read Revelation 1:12 (ESV) ¹² *Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,*

John mentions the lampstands which are described in verse 20 as being the churches. The book of **Revelation** describes symbols that help us understand the imagery of the book. The seven lampstands represent the seven churches that would receive the book. Each local church is the bearer of God's light in this dark world. We see a picture of Christ in the midst of the His churches. **Matthew 18:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ *For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.*”

Read Revelation 1:13 (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.*

Two parts of His clothing are mentioned. Jesus was clothed with a long garment and a sash. Isaiah saw a similar picture. **Isaiah 6:1 (ESV)** ¹ *In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.*

In the Old Testament Daniel had used the term *Son of Man* 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.* In fact, the different figures used in describing the *Son of Man* all come from the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus addressed Himself as the *Son of Man*.

That girdle speaks of the righteous of Christ. **Isaiah 11:5 (ESV)** ⁵ *Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.*

Read Revelation 1:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ *The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire,*

The white hair symbolizes His eternity, *the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9, 13, 22)*. The Ancient of Days is the Everlasting God. and may possibly mean one who forwards time or rules over it.

His hair was white like wool – white as snow. The white hair not only represents eternity but also the wisdom of a judge. **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; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.*

John was the one who walked closely with Jesus while on this earth. Eyes that were filled with tears then are now filled with fire. **Hebrews 4:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.* There is no way to fool God.

Psalms 11:4 (ESV) ⁴ *The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD’s throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.* Yes, the eyes of the Lord will try the children of men.

Read Revelation 1:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ *his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.*

Brass in the Bible always speak of judgment – the altar in the Jewish tabernacle was made of brass. His feet of brass speak of the time when the righteous Jesus shall put all His enemies beneath His feet. And yet these are the feet of Him who carried the good news of salvation. **Isaiah 52:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”*

His voice was as the sound of many waters. This one who stands in the midst of His churches has a voice that has a sound of many waters. **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.*

Read Revelation 1:16 (ESV) 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.*

The right hand always indicates a hand of authority or control. Jesus has the seven stars in His right hand. The stars are the angels or messengers of the seven churches. The word angel is the word we get our word messenger from. The stars he holds are the ministers to the seven churches. The Lord holds His messengers in the right hand. **Daniel 12:3 (ESV)** ³ *And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.*

Out of His mouth went a two-edged sword: **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.* I think that John had a deep understanding of Jesus being the Word because he wrote in **John 1:1 (ESV)** ¹ *In the beginning was the Word, and the*

*Word was with God, and the Word was God...**John 1:14 (ESV)**¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

The last thing that John sees is the face of the Lord Jesus. John had seen the face of Jesus when He was transfigured. **Matthew 17:2 (ESV)**² *And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.* John's glimpse of the face of the Christ reminds me of the words from the song Days of Elijah: Behold He comes riding on the clouds, Shining like the sun at the trumpet call, Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee, And out of Zion's hill salvation comes. The Year of Jubilee was the fiftieth year after seven cycles of seven years (*Lev. 25:10*) in which Israel's land and people gained freedom.

In verses 17-20 John receives the interpretation of the things he has seen.

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.*

Jesus describes Himself as the Eternal One – He said *I am the first and the last*. Jesus tells John to *fear not* and then He describes Himself as the Resurrected One: *and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades*. Jesus' mention of the keys of Death and Hades reminds of us of how He conquered Death and Hades when He rose from the grave. Is it any wonder that the devil does not want us to read this book!

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

Here John received his instructions. He is given an outline of the book he is about to write. (1) *the things which you have seen (1:9-20)*; (2) *those that are (2:1-3:22)*; (3) *and those that are to take place after this (4:1-22-21)*.

Read Revelation 1:20 (ESV)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.*

This verse verifies the items we have already gone over which is very helpful as we begin our study.

Last week in our introduction to *The Revelation* I mentioned **Matthew 24:27 (ESV)**²⁷ *For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* The question was asked whether this is a reference to the Rapture or the Second Coming. Those of us who believe in the rapture (the catching away of the saints as a thief in the night) just before the Tribulation comes will also believe in a public Second Coming of Christ. This particular verse is a reference to the Second Coming when every eye shall see Him.