

## A GLIMPSE OF THE GLORIFIED CHRIST Revelation 1:9-20

### **Main Idea of the Text:**

During his suffering for preaching the gospel John received a vision of Jesus Christ.

### **Main Idea of this Study:**

Jesus is with us in the midst of any persecution we may face because of the gospel.

*What should we remember when we are suffering for Christ?*

### **I. The Plan of Christ Involves Suffering and Service for Him (9-11).**

#### **A. We suffer for His Kingdom (9).**

John shows His identification with the readers by (1) using the term “your brother” and (2) linking suffering, the kingdom, and endurance. These key terms—tribulation, the kingdom, and perseverance—are examples of Jesus’ life which the readers, like John, are to emulate.

- *brother*-He is their brother in Christ. The people of God throughout the Bible are often depicted as a family.
- *companion*-The word literally means “something help in common.” John goes on to explain what he held in common with his audience.
- *tribulation*- This was the first persecution (“tribulation”) Christians were experiencing. This “tribulation” is not a reference to the Great Tribulation yet future.

John 16:33: These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. **In the world you will have tribulation;** but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

2 Timothy 3:12: Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus **will suffer persecution.**

- *kingdom*-they shared in the present and future “kingdom” of Jesus Christ.
- *patience*-“perseverance,” literally, “hold up under.” As they remained steadfast in the midst of affliction.
- *island that is called Patmos*- John was exiled to this small island, 37 miles from Miletus. The island was crescent shaped, facing east, ten miles long and six miles wide. It was used as a Roman penal colony. The Roman Emperor Domitian sent Paul to Patmos in AD 95 and he stayed there until the Emperor’s death in AD 96.
- *for the word of God*-There are three possible interpretations of this phrase. It can refer (1) to John’s preaching the gospel; (2) to John’s receiving the revelation; or (3) to John’s political banishment, which is the most likely. We have several historical references to John’s political banishment
- *for the testimony of Jesus Christ*-A portion of that “word” was John’s testimony about Jesus.

**B. We serve His church (10-11).**

- *in the Spirit*-The Holy "Spirit" apparently caught John up (took ahold of John) and projected him in his spirit to a future time in a vision. The phrase "I was in the Spirit" occurs four times in Revelation (1:10; 4:2; 17:3 21:10).
- *Lord's Day*-probably refers to Sunday, however it could refer to Easter Sunday. Christians in the first century began to refer to Sunday as the Lord's Day in the years after John wrote Revelation.
- *a loud voice, as of a trumpet*-The "trumpet" reference probably implies that submission to its command was necessary.
- *I am the Alpha and the Omega*-"I am" recalls Jesus' claims in the Gospels (John 6:20; 8:58), and connects Him with God in the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). He is the beginning and end.
- *the First and the Last*-*protos* and *eschatos*. Jesus is all encompassing.
- *What you see, write in a book*-This is the first of twelve times that John wrote that he received instruction to "write" what he saw (cf. v. 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5). "Write ... and send" is equivalent to the Old Testament command "go and tell." The "book" in view was a roll of papyrus made from a plant that grew in Egypt. Normally papyrus scrolls were about 15 feet long.
- *seven churches which are in Asia*-The cities where these churches met formed a wedge on the map pointing northwest. A messenger carrying John's revelation would have traveled north from Ephesus, to Smyrna, and on to Pergamum. He would then have turned southeast to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

**II. The Person of Christ should Awe and Inspire Us (12-16).**

**A. We should sense His presence (12).**

- *Then I turned to see the voice*-unusual wording. You normally turn to see a person but John turned to see the voice that was speaking.
- *seven golden lampstands*-The "seven golden lampstands" represent seven churches (v. 20). The tabernacle and temple housed a seven-branched lampstand, so the idea was well known. These lamps were the main source of light.  
Zechariah 4:2: And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and **on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps.**

**B. We should marvel at His person (13-16).**

- *One like the Son of Man*-The man looked like "a son of man." This expression refers to the Messiah in Daniel 7:13-14. "Son of Man" was Jesus' favorite title for Himself in the Gospels.  
Daniel 7:13: "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, **One like the Son of Man**, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

- *clothed with a garment down to the feet*-this is the closing of the priest in the Old Testament.  
Exodus 28:4: And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, **a skillfully woven tunic**, a turban, and **a sash**. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.
- *girded about the chest with a golden band*-wording indicates it was worn around the lower ribcage.  
Some interpreters have seen in this description an allusion to Jesus' ministry as Priest, King, and Prophet.
- *head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow*- His head, even His hair, was white like white wool, like snow, as Daniel described the "Ancient of Days" in Daniel 7:9 (i.e., God the Father). White hair often represents wisdom, purity, and the dignity of age in Scripture.  
Daniel 7:9: "I watched till thrones were [a]put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and **the hair of His head was like pure wool**. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire;  
Proverbs 16:31: The **silver-haired head is a crown of glory**, if it is found in the way of righteousness.
- *eyes like a flame of fire*-evidently an allusion to His piercing judgment and omniscient understanding. (Revelation 2:18)
- *feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace*-This is probably an allusion to His purity, permanence and strength as He moves among the churches.
- *His voice as the sound of many waters*- John, while he lived on Patmos, would have hardly ever been far away from the sound of ocean waves crashing on the shore.  
Psalm 29:3-4: The **voice of the Lord is over the waters**; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is over many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
- *He had in His right hand seven stars*-The right hand is the symbol of official honor and sovereign control, He held seven stars.
- *out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword*-The Greek word describes the type of sword that the Romans used to kill with. This sword was tongue-shaped. It may be a metaphor for the tongue. His word will judge His enemies.  
Isaiah 11:4: But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, **and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked**.  
Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is living and powerful, and **sharper than any two-edged sword**, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

- *countenance was like the sun shining in its strength*- a picture of pure holiness and righteousness. John had seen Jesus at the Transfiguration with such a "shining ... face." (Matt. 17:2).

### III. **The Power of Christ should Overwhelm and Encourage us (17-20).**

#### A. **He lives forever (17).**

- *I fell at His feet as dead*-Ezekiel, Isaiah and Paul had similar reactions when they were confronted with a vision of God.
- *laid His right hand on me*-compassion, tenderness, hand of authority of a sovereign King.
- *Do not be afraid*-Literally, "Stop being afraid." Present imperative with a negative particle, indicates stopping an action while in progress.
- *I am the First and the Last*-*protos* and *eschatos*. Jesus introduced Himself as the self-existent, eternal One. This term was used in the OT to refer to God the Father also. Jesus is equating Himself with God.

#### B. **He has authority over death (18).**

- *I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore*-Jesus is alive and victorious over death. He lives forever and will never die again.
- *I have the keys of Hades and of Death*- The Jews saw death as a prison with gates. This is symbolic of Jesus' authority over death for Himself and His followers. Hades is one of the difficult concepts in the New Testament. It is probably the realm of the dead.

#### C. **He has a plan (19).**

These three phrases provide a logical outline for the entire book of Revelation.

- *Write the things which you have seen*-Revelation 1:1-20
- *and the things which are*-Revelation 2:1-3:22
- *and the things which will take place after this*-Revelation 4:1-22:21

#### D. **He helped His people understand His Word (20).**

- *mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand*-things that once were hidden would now be revealed by Jesus to John.
- *angels of the seven churches*-Nowhere do we read that angels have any part in administration of the church. These may be angels that protected the church or the pastors of these local churches.
- *seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches*- The lampstands/churches are the witness of the Christians in each church ("you are the light of the world").