

Behold, He is Coming!

Revelation 1:9-20

January 17th 2015

Summary

Revelation is a series of visions God gives John to share with believers. John's first vision is of the glorified Jesus who appears nothing at all like John remembered him in the flesh. John encounters a vision of the risen Lord and falls flat on his face as a dead man because of the terrifying majesty of Jesus. Jesus reveals Himself to John as the resurrected Christ who stands among the seven churches. He omnisciently diagnoses each church's condition and sovereignly commands appropriate responses of repentance and persevering faithfulness for each church.

Getting Started

What do you believe Jesus would commend about our own church fellowship if he delivered a message to our congregation? What might he seek to correct? In the coming weeks, we will explore Jesus' message to seven churches in Asia Minor. His messages to these churches still hold meaning for us today. Consider the appearance of Jesus and the titles He uses to reveal Himself to John. Think about how Jesus' self revelation might give hope the churches as well as remind them of Jesus' supreme authority over all creation.

Understanding the Passage

What's significant about John's circumstances and the day when he received this vision?

Close your eyes and have someone read verses 12-18 slowly. Think about what you hear. What do these images suggest about Jesus? How are they different than you had previously pictured Him in your mind?

What do the seven stars symbolize?

What do the seven lamp stands symbolize?

What is the significance of Jesus' long robe? His golden sash? His white hair?

How does Jesus describe Himself in verses 17 and 18? What do these titles mean to you?

What did Jesus command John to do? To whom did Jesus want John to send letters?

When had John first seen the glorified Christ? See Matthew 17:1-3.

Applying the Passage

Jesus' voice sounded to John like many waters rushing together, as waves crashing onto the shore at the beach perhaps. What does Jesus' voice sound like to you? How do you listen to Him? What has Jesus said to you lately?

The Bible ascribes to Jesus many titles to denote his majesty and holiness. Which titles mean the most to you at this time in your life, and why? Review the ways Revelation chapter 1 reveals Jesus.

Jesus addressed seven churches in Asia Minor by commending and correcting them as necessary. What message do you imagine Jesus would deliver to you personally today? Could you expect any commendation or correction from Him? What might He ask you to change? Please explain.

Share Point

Read Revelation 1:9-20 and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God's Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

Commentary Notes

1:9 John's confinement on Patmos, an Aegean island to which Rome exiled political criminals, shows that he is a partner with the churches' tribulation and patient endurance. Patmos is an arid island approximately 24 square miles in area and roughly 40 miles from the mainland of Asia Minor. Since antiquity, it has possessed a working protected harbor near its center and other places for small boats to anchor. Inscriptions and archaeological remains indicated the existence of a fortress before John's arrival, and the clear presence of the Artemis cult afterward. The limited population of the island during John's day was probably largely pagan. Assuming that John had been officially banished to Patmos, he may have been granted some freedom of movement on the island and may not actually have been in a prison, though he would have been barred from leaving the island.

1:10 John was conscious of being surrounded by the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit. Such strong influence of the Holy Spirit leads to prophetic visions. The Lord's day is Sunday, the first day of the week, the day on which Christ rose.

1:11 The order in which the churches are listed traces the route along which a courier from Patmos would have carried the scroll.

1:13 Jesus' preferred self-designation in the Synoptic Gospels, derived primarily from the book of Daniel in contrast to four beasts, symbolizing evil kingdoms, the son of man

receives from the Ancient of Day, universal and eternal dominion as the saints' representative. Revelation 1:12-20 displays Christ's divine glory both visually and audibly, setting the scene for his royal edicts to the seven churches.

1:14 Jesus' hair shows infinite, divine wisdom. As he stands among the lamp stands, Jesus eyes like a flame of fire seeing through facades. He knows the deeds of ea church he addresses, as well as the motives behind those deeds.

1:15 Christ's feet will crush any opponents, and his voice commands attention and respect.

1:16 God's word which searches hearts and judges rebels comes from Jesus' mouth.

1:17 Jesus affirms his divine eternity, echoing the Lord's boast over deaf and mute idols.

1:18 Paradoxically, this ever-living one died to redeem believers and now lives forever as the firstborn of the dead. Because Jesus died and rose again, John must not fear. The churches should not fear death because Jesus has conquered death forever.

1:19 Jesus command to John to record what he sees forecasts the book's main division: the letters to the churches address the things that are. Thereafter, John's visions turn primarily to those that are to take place after this.

1:20 These angels might be human messengers such as pastors who led the churches. Jesus will address his encouragement and/or rebuke for each church to that church's angel.