

## THE VISION OF CHRIST - 2

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### I. CHRIST IS PRESENT WITH HIS CHURCH (Rev 1:13a)

- A. The descriptions of John's visions are, of course, in apocalyptic imagery. Such imagery belongs to the depiction of Christ regarding who He is and what He does in the book of Revelation.
- B. Nevertheless, this particular vision has application for the present church on earth. Christ, the "Son of Man," is in the midst of the seven churches (vs. 13 "**lampstands**"), but He is also in the midst of the present church on earth (Mat 28:20).
- C. The vision in Rev 1:12-16 is not only John's first vision in the book of Revelation, but it is the first vision of Christ. A second vision of Christ is recorded near the end of the book in Rev 19:11-16.

### II. CHRIST IS PRIEST TO HIS CHURCH (Rev 1:13b)

- A. John saw the Son of Man wearing a **robe reaching to the feet**. This pictures Christ as high priest to His church.
- B. Though kings wore robes (Jdg 8:26; 1Ki 22:10), OT priests wore **robe[s] reaching to the feet**. The Greek word for "robe" is *pōdêrê* [*pous - a foot*] and means a *long flowing garment reaching to the feet* (Friberg). These were especially worn by the priests (LXX *pōdêrês* - Exo 28:31; 29:5; Zec 3:4).
- C. To reinforce this idea, the Son of Man had a golden **sash** across his chest. The holy garments of OT priests included a sash (Exo 28:4; Lev 16:4).
- D. Though the OT priests had a golden thread in their sash (Walvoord), Christ's sash was completely **golden**, portraying Him as the ultimate and divine high priest.
  1. Christ is the believer's merciful high priest who became incarnate so that He could make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb 2:17).
  2. Christ is the believer's sympathetic high priest who was tempted [yet without sin, Heb 4:15] and is able to come to the aid [*boêtheō - run to the aid of one who cries for help, Friberg*] of those tempted (Heb 2:18).
  3. Christ is the believer's praying high priest who makes intercession for them (Heb 7:25 cf. Rom 8:34 cf. 1Jo 2:1-2).

### III. CHRIST IS PURIFIER OF HIS CHURCH (Rev 1:14-15a)

- A. After describing Christ's priestly apparel, John described His personal features, "**His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow.**" This description, along with the accompanying features, depicts Christ as both pure and the purifier of the church.
- B. In Dan 7:9, 13, God the Father is viewed as the "Ancient of Days." His vesture was white as snow and His hair like pure wool. As was mentioned in Heb 4:15, Christ is divine, holy, pure, and "without sin" (Heb 7:26).
- C. But He is also the purifier of the church. Paul related in Eph 5:26-27 that Christ has cleansed His church through His death resulting in salvation. In addition, He is sanctifying the church to present her to Himself as His bride. She will be a bride that is holy and blameless.
- D. The description, "**His eyes were like a flame of fire,**" speaks of the Lord's penetrating work in the soul of the believer (cf. Rev 2:18). Nothing can be hidden from the Lord and the Lord leads the believer to recognize his sin, confess it, and pursue walking in the light (Heb 4:13; 1Jo 1:7-9).
- E. In addition, the Lord has **feet...like burnished bronze, glow[ing] in a furnace**. This imagery can illustrate heavenly discipline upon His church. The Lord chastens those He loves (His children) and chastens them for the ultimate goal of becoming righteous and holy (Heb 12:5-11).

### IV. CHRIST IS POTENTATE OVER HIS CHURCH (Rev 1:15b-16a, 20)

- A. Christ is in control of His church and could be called the potentate of the church. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines "potentate" as "*ruler [or] sovereign [and] one who wields great power or sway*. The Bible describes Christ, not only as the Savior of the church, but also as the "Head of the church" (Eph 5:23).
- B. John heard Christ's voice as the **sound of many waters** (cf. Rev 14:2; 19:6 cf. Eze 43:2). Christ is potentate over His church through the authority of His word.
  1. Christ's word is equivalent to God's word (Col 3:16).
  2. Christ's authority and word has been affirmed by the Father (Mat 17:5).
  3. *Christ speaks to His church directly through the Holy Spirit-inspired Scriptures* (MacArthur).
- C. Christ's control over His church is represented in the imagery showing that "**in His right hand He held seven stars.**" Christ's "right hand" suggests His authority, strength, and control.

1. The “seven stars” are interpreted in Rev 1:20 as “the angels of the seven churches.”
2. Angels (*angeloi* - *messengers*), here, refer not to literal angels but to those who are spiritual leaders (men) in the churches.
  - a. Angels are not included in the leadership of the church in the NT.
  - b. Unfallen angels do not sin and there is no chance of repentance for fallen angels who have sinned (Rev 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3:3; 3:19).
  - c. Some usages of *angeloi* in the NT clearly refer to men as messengers (Luk 7:24; 9:52; Jam 2:25).
  - d. John was to write these things to the spiritual leadership of the churches. He was not writing to angels so that they in turn would give this message to the churches.

#### V. CHRIST IS PROTECTOR OF HIS CHURCH (Rev 1:16b)

- A. The imagery of a **sharp two-edged sword** coming **out of His mouth** often refers to judgment upon the unrighteous. At the same time, such judgment is a relief and a protection for the righteous. Christ is the protector of the church.
- B. Christ’s protection of the true church would apply to outside the church as well as inside the church.
  1. Christ protects the church from savage wolves from within the church (Act 20:28-30).
  2. Christ protects the church ultimately from the devil (Joh 17:15; Mat 16:18).
  3. Christ also protects the church in the sense of repaying the sin of evil men (2Th 1:6-8)

#### VI. CHRIST IS THE PRAISE OF HIS CHURCH (Rev 1:16c)

- A. John’s vision culminates in seeing the glorified Lord, for “**His face was like the sun shining in its strength.**” The glorified Christ is the praise of His church.
- B. The glory of the Lord is pictured in the OT as a brilliant light. The Talmud coined the phrase “Shekinah” (“the One Who dwells”) to represent not only the brilliance of God’s glory, but especially His divine presence (Exo 33:9 cf. Exo 34:29; 2Ch 7:1-2; Eze 10:3-4).
- C. Much of John’s imagery alluded to the deity of Christ, but the Shekinah manifested in Christ’s countenance confirmed this divine truth.
- D. In His high priestly prayer, Jesus prayed that He would be glorified with the glory which He had in the beginning (Joh 17:5). John saw a vision of that glorification.
- E. Christ is in the midst of His church as the glorified Lord. The church’s response should be one of praise for His person and His work. For He alone is worthy of praise (Psa 66:2; Rev 1:6; Rev 5:12-13).
- F. In addition, the church reflects the glory of the Lord in becoming more like Christ in word and deed (2Co 3:18; 4:6). The result is that Christ is glorified (Eph 3:21).

#### VII. JOHN’S RESPONSE TO THE VISION OF CHRIST (Rev 1:17-18)

- A. John **fell at His feet like a dead man**. John’s response was the involuntary response of any mortal who stands in the presence of God (Gen 17:3; Lev 9:24; Num 20:6; 1Ch 21:16; Eze 1:28). We see the same response repeated by others in heaven (Rev 5:8, 14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4). Twice John fell before the feet of angels and was reprimanded to get up and worship God only (Rev 19:10; 22:8-9).
- B. Nevertheless, the glorified Lord assured John **not be afraid**. John did not need to be afraid because he had a relationship with the glorified Lord. The Lord explained several reasons.
  1. Christ is the **first and the last, the Living One**. Christ is the living God and there are no other gods who could overthrow Christ (Isa 44:6; 48:12 cf. Rev 2:8; 22:13).
  2. Christ **was dead** and made atonement for sin (Rom 8:1, 34).
  3. Christ is now **alive forevermore**. Christ’s resurrection is the basis for the resurrection of all believers (Joh 11:25; 1Co 15:17-20; Rev 1:5).
  4. Christ has the **keys of death and of Hades**. Therefore, Christ has the authority over those who have placed their faith in Christ and will not experience the second death (Rev 20:14). He also has authority over those who reject Him and will experience the second death.

#### VIII. JOHN’S CHRONOLOGICAL COMMISSION (Rev 1:19)

- A. Christ commissioned John to write, and in so doing, Christ gave the outline for Revelation.
- B. It is made up of three sections.
  1. The “**things which you have seen**” would be the vision which John had just seen in chapter one.
  2. The “**things which are**” would be the letter to the seven churches in chapters two and three. The vision of Christ, the promises to the churches, and the warnings to the churches are in reference to the present age. Christ will explain and apply these to the church.
  3. The “**things which will take place after these things**” would encompass the prophetic events that have yet to be fulfilled. These are written in chapters four through twenty-two.

## IX. CONCLUSION

- A. The glorified Christ is in the midst of the church, but who is He and who is He for you?
- B. The following is John's summary of our glorified Christ
  1. He is High Priest to his church who satisfied the wrath of God on our behalf through His death. Now, Christ our High Priest prays for us at the right hand of the Father.
  2. He is the purifier of the church who is making all believers what they ought to be and what they will be at the Marriage of the Lamb.
  3. He is potentate over His church who rules His church based on His authoritative word. He has given the church His truth and the principles for living in the world. Those who ignore or disregard His Word and authority will have to stand before Him who has the keys of death and Hades.
  4. He is the protector of the church who will keep us from the evil one and all those under His influence. This does not mean they will never harm us, but they will not ultimately defeat us. It is Christ's victorious church and it will not be defeated.
  5. After hearing all that the glorified Lord is and does, our proper response is for our hearts to fall prostrate before Him in humility and worship. That is the only true position from which to praise Him and to live for Him. John gave comfort to the church in light of its persecution. May John's vision of Christ in the midst of His church be our comfort, praise, and glory until He comes.