

042 - Pastors As Stars - Revelation 1:16, 20

Revelation 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

REVIEW

“angels of the seven churches” refers not to heavenly angels like Gabriel, but to the ministers or pastors of the congregations.

The stars being in the right hand of the Son of Man shows us that even though pastors are just men, the work of the church can be done by them because they are being wielded like tools or played like instruments in the hand of the Lord Jesus.

Tonight we see what encouragement we can find in the fact that the pastors are symbolized by stars.

Genesis 1

We first meet the stars on the first page of the Bible.

Genesis 1:14-18 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: 15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made **the stars** also. 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

Note that the great light is the sun; the lesser light is the moon; the stars are even lesser lights than the moon

The lights, including the sun, the moon, and the stars, are made by God for purposes:

- v 14 for signs
- v 14 for seasons, and for days, and years
- v 15 to give light upon the earth
- v 18 to rule over the day and over the night
- v 18 to divide the light from the darkness

Note that the lights are placed by God in the firmament of the heaven

Psalm 19

General Revelation in Nature 1-6 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The **heavens** declare the glory of God; and the **firmament** sheweth his handywork. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Special Revelation in the Bible 7-11 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Our Response to Revelation 12-14 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. 13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Daniel 12

Daniel 12:1-3 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament [H7549 *raqiya*]; and **they that turn many to righteousness as the stars** for ever and ever.

Jude

Jude 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude 1:13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

-Greek *asteres planetai*

APPLICATION

Our Lord Jesus, having done what He came here to do, did not stay with us in person, but ascended back to heaven to sit on the throne there. In the symbolism of this vision, He, being like the Sun, is not personally shining His light on us. So, it is like we are walking in the nighttime. We know the sun will shine on us again, but for now we have to wait for that, and walk in the darkness. But He has not left us without light!

The congregations are lampstands, holding forth the light of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, although, of course, the lamps of the congregations do not shine with the awesome brightness of Jesus Christ personally.

The pastors are stars. In the presence of Jesus Christ, their light would seem dim indeed. But while Jesus Christ, the sun, is concealed from us, the same light by which He shines so brightly also shines on us by those pastors He has given to us.

When Jesus taught in person, people were astonished at how He could teach with authority; they said, "No one ever spoke like this man." Compared with Him teaching, any pastor teaching is just like a little star compared with the sun. Yet those little stars give light to us, also, even if much more dimly. We can still make it through this dark world by listening to our pastors' teaching.

When Jesus was accused and was being tried, and then was crucified, one witness after another said, "He has done nothing wrong" and "I found nothing in Him worthy of punishment." He resisted all temptation, and obeyed God in everything. Compared with His righteous life, any pastor's behavior is just like a star compared with the sun. Yet those faithful pastors the Lord Jesus has in His hand can still, by their example, shine some light by which we can see how we should act. We can still make it through this dark world by following our pastors' example.

When the Lord Jesus promised men and women, “Your sins are forgiven,” He would then heal the lame, open the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf, and drive out demons. Compared with the preaching of forgiveness that Jesus Christ did, any pastor’s preaching seems the twinkle of a little star compared with the brightness of the noon-day sun. Yet poor lost sinners, walking in darkness, can still hear the good news from mere pastors and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be converted to faith in Jesus Christ!

When the Lord Jesus saw corruption in the temple, in His great and perfect zeal for God’s house, He made a whip and whipped the merchants out of the temple. Compared with his zeal for God’s house, any pastor’s zeal seems a cold star compared with the blazing hot sun. Yet, the purity of the house of God still can be maintained even by mere pastors, because although they are not the sun itself, still they are stars shining.

When children came to Jesus, He took them on His lap, laid His hands on them, and blessed them. Compared with Him, any pastor's care for children is just like a star compared with the sun. Yet those little stars give light to us, also, even if much more dimly.

In the night, you do not see the light of the sun, but have the light of lamps and of the stars.

Knollys:

...Christ is called the Sun (Mal 4:2) so his ministers are called stars (Da 12:3) for their shining both in doctrine and conversation (Mt 5:14-16)

These names of dignity should put the ministers of Christ in mind of their duty, to wit, to let their light shine before men, for they are called stars {Mt 5:16}

Gill:

The ministers of the Gospel are compared to stars...chiefly for their usefulness, to give light to others, to direct to Christ, and point out the way of salvation, and to rule over the churches

Carroll:

The whole vision is one of light. The central light – Christ, the Sun of Righteousness; the lower lights – the churches and' the preachers; the instrumentality of dispensing the light – the Word of God.

In the next chapter we see that while Christ is in the midst of the churches, he is not there in person, but through the other Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, who is his "alter ego," his vicar here upon earth. John in his Gospel had previously represented Christ as the light of the world, but since he ascended into heaven this light is reflected in the churches and preachers through the Spirit and by the Word. The object of the vision is to show that

the whole world will be illumined by the churches and the preachers in the dispensation of the gospel, which dispensation is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, for when Christ speaks to the churches he says: "If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth to the churches."

The doctrine of this vision is of incalculable importance. It teaches that the Spirit dispensation, or Word dispensation through the churches and the preachers, is to accomplish the whole work of the application of the salvation achieved by our Lord's vicarious death. We will find in every subsequent revelation this ruling thought; the world to be illumined by these light-bearers. There is no hint of any other source or medium or instrumentality of light. There is no hint that the churches will fail on the earth and that some other divine interposition must take place to finish the mystery of the kingdom of God. This is in accord with the Great Commission in Mat_28:19 : "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I will be with you all the days, even unto the end of the world."

Malachi 4:1-6 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But unto you that fear my name shall the **Sun** of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. 4 Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. 5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Matthew 17:1-2 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

