

“Star Wars: Jesus Christ”

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I do want to encourage you to open your Bible to the last book of the Old Testament, the book of Revelation. Over the last couple of months we have been walking through, journeying through, one of the most mysterious, yet anticipated as far as content is concerned, books of the Bible. Over these last couple of weeks, we have discussed various subject matters such as this time period known as the great tribulation, an event known as the final judgment, the millennium, the person of the antichrist, the concept of the book of Revelation being prophetic rather than just simply being predictable.

That being said, today we come to the main character of the book of Revelation. In fact, the very first verse of Revelation says “The revelation of Jesus Christ.” And yes, we can study the antichrist. Yes, we can look at the millennium. Yes, we can talk about Armageddon, but if we neglect the person of Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation then we have neglected the whole purpose of the book of Revelation for it tells us that the purpose is to reveal, to show to us, to put on display for us the person of Jesus Christ.

As we go through the book of Revelation, yes, there are the famous seven seals, the famous trumpets, the vials, the antichrist, the mark of the beast; but throughout all of the text of Revelation there is a picture of the person of Jesus Christ. In the latter chapters He is reigning on a throne. In chapter 19, He is coming out of the clouds at His majestic second coming. In chapter 12, He is doing battle with what we know as the red dragon, that character known as Satan. In chapter 5, He takes the book sealed with seven seals and then at the beginning of chapter 6, He begins to open those seals in that event that we know as that great tribulation. There all kinds of passages we could go to, allude to, and study when looking at Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation.

Today as we turn to chapter 1, we find ourselves on the island of Patmos with

an individual by the name of John, one of the first apostles. He had a brother by the name of James, they were the Zebedees; they were fishermen by trade whom Jesus called out. It was in that latter part of the first century that John found himself cast to the island of Patmos by that Roman leader, Domitian. And as we are about to read, before anything is ever written in Revelation, before the mark of the beast is discussed, before New Jerusalem is given the measurements thereof, we find a scenario where John the apostle has a vision, has an appearance, sees Jesus Christ like he has never seen Him before.

Now understand before we begin to read in chapter 1 that this is the apostle whom the gospel of John calls the beloved disciple. This is the one who sat closest to Jesus at all of their meals. If there was anyone who had a good perspective, a good picture, and a good visualization of what Jesus should look like it should be John. And yet when Jesus shows up in Revelation it is a picture like none other; it is a perspective that he could never imagine which gives proof to the truth that truth is greater than fiction every time.

Revelation 1:9-20. “9I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the

sun shines in his strength. 17And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. 19Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20The mystery of the seven stars which thou saw 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 saw are the seven churches.”

As we go through this vision that Jesus Christ allows Himself to be seen by the Apostle John, it gives us some incredible insight through the entire content of the book of Revelation of how Jesus is pictured in the book of Revelation. Today we're going to do as we've done most Sundays; we're going to go through just a simple series of questions: who, what, when, why, where and how of this passage of scripture just to give us an overview, some insight.

But from the very beginning I want to be clear: there is going to be a word that you're going to hear in the answer to every one of these questions, and the word is “different.” What we see in Revelation, chapter 1 is that the picture of Jesus here is very different from the picture of Jesus riding in a fishing boat or turning the water to wine or taking the bread and feeding the five thousand. This is a completely different picture but I want to be very clear from the beginning: just because you use the word “different” does not mean that the person is different. It is the same Savior; it is the same God. It is the same Savior with a different picture. Even though the word “different” is going to be used, do not say that different means different as in another, but as in a different perspective or a different picture.

That being said, the very first question we need to address is the question who is pictured in Revelation, chapter 1. Now you may be thinking this is an obvious, simple question. We know who is pictured; we know that this is Jesus Christ. He's called Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He puts His right hand out and says fear not, I am He who is alive

forevermore; I have the keys to death and hell. Yes, that is the obvious answer, but what we are given is an absolutely different picture of Jesus than we have in the four gospels. If you will read through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, this is not the picture of Jesus that is given in those four gospels.

As we're going to see in a moment as we walk through, the perspective as we walk through the different items that He is wearing and the appearance that He has, this is a different picture of Jesus. And I want to state at the beginning of the message that this is the Jesus, not of someone who is inquisitive who comes and talks to, this is not the Jesus pictured when He is with Nicodemus or the woman at the well or the woman who has been caught in adultery. This is the Jesus from a completely different perspective, a completely different picture that you and I today in the twenty-first century must respond to appropriately or face grave consequences. That is who is pictured in Revelation, chapter 1.

The next question is very vital: when is this picture given to us? I want to give two time-frames here and then I want to explore them because this is a different period of time. The Jesus that is pictured in Revelation 1 is a Jesus that is post-ascension and pre-physical second coming. Let me explore what that means. When you study the personhood of who Jesus is, obviously as we will discuss in a moment, He has always been and will always be, but there was a point in history that we celebrate at Christmas known as the incarnation when He was born of a virgin. There was a period of time when He lived thirty plus years as a sinless individual. Yes, there was a period of time when He died on a cross. There was a period of time when He physically arose from the grave. And yes, there was a period of time when He physically, according to Acts, chapter 1 ascended up on high and according to Hebrews, chapter 7 He sits on the right hand of the Father to ever make intercession for us. He ascended into the heavens in Acts, chapter 1 and according to Revelation, chapter 19 one day the heavens are going to open up and He is going to descend at the Battle of Armageddon.

You say why is that so significant for us? Do you realize that you do not live

on the other side of the ascension; you do not live on the other side of the second coming? So the picture that John receives of Jesus is the same picture that you and I should have of Jesus. His response to Jesus in Revelation 1 should be the same response that we have toward Jesus. So when does this take place? When does chapter 1 occur? Understand that it's a very specific period of time. That period of time after the ascension and before the literal second coming is the same period of time that you and I live in today.

So in just a moment as we go through detail by detail the picture and the perspective that we have of Jesus Christ, do not fall into the trap of saying but that was 2,000 years ago. Don't fall into the trap of saying I'm not on the island of Patmos. Don't fall into the trap of saying that's in the book of Revelation that deals with all of these things in the future. Do you understand that the picture given to John of Jesus in Revelation is the picture that you and I need to have of Jesus. And by the way, we're going to discover that He does not have long, flowing blond hair, blue eyes and a completely white robe like many of the pictures show. The picture that we see is very different from the picture we paint. The picture we see is very different from the one we imagine. And maybe our response will be different as well if we understand the proper picture of Jesus. Who is this? Jesus. When does it take place? Between the ascension and the literal second coming.

And that begs the third question: what is actually given to us? What is the picture of Jesus that we have in Revelation, chapter 1? And I want to make this statement: it is a very different perspective; the perspective that we must acknowledge, the perspective that we must respond to. And what I want to do today in Revelation, chapter 1, beginning in verse 13 is just to walk with you through the scripture of these different items and show you how the Jesus of Revelation is very different than the Jesus of the gospels. Now once again: same person, same Savior, same soon-coming King, but the perspective is very different.

We begin in verse 13 and it says there is a garment all the way down to

His foot. In other words, there is a robe-type item. Now this is significant because if you will turn just a couple of verses to the left in verse 5, it says “Unto Jesus who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” It does say there in that simple verse the three “offices” of who Jesus was, is and will be. It describes Him as a prophet; it describes Him as a priest; it describes Him as a King. And yes, all three of those persons, all three of those offices wear a robe down to the feet.

Now for us to respond appropriately we need to understand which office you and I are to respond to. Today in the twenty-first century, do we respond to Jesus as a prophet? Do we respond to Him as a priest? Do we respond to Him as a King? In the gospels, Jesus was a prophet. In fact, in John, chapter 1 John the Baptist made the statement that Jesus would come after the likeness of the prophet Moses. In Deuteronomy 18:18 Moses said that the Savior would come in his likeness and after his manner. Everywhere He went He was forth-telling; He was foretelling. He was describing and proclaiming truth and at the same time He was speaking events that would take place in the days ahead, in the future. In the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Jesus is a prophet, He is a teacher. He is called Master; He is called Rabbi. By the thousands, people listened to every word He said.

In chapters 19 and 20, He comes as a King. He is one who sits on a throne; He is one who rules from Jerusalem. He is one who establishes a theocracy that is basically complete control by God Himself - which leaves that middle option. In the gospels He was Prophet. At the end of Revelation at His second coming, He is King which means in chapter 1, He is Priest. Why is that significant? Why should that change my perspective and my response to Him?

Do you understand the definition of priest? A priest, by definition, is the bridge between you and God. A priest is the one who is able to take your soul and determine its destination. That is why Jesus made the statement to call no man your Father but God alone. Never place your trust, your soul, and your

eternity in another human being whatsoever; turn it over to Jesus. He is the Priest which means that if He is the only one who can control your destiny, if He is the only one who can determine where you spend all of eternity, that changes how we respond to Him. This isn't just about walking around and seeing a miracle take place and somebody healed and hearing a great sermon – this is the picture of the great universal High Priest and He alone determines our destination. It's a different picture than what you have in the gospels.

Then it moves on and says He is girt about the chest with a golden girdle. In other words, this picture that John gets and we need to have is magisterial, that there is a rope around His chest. This is so significant and such a difference than in the gospels. In fact, the gospels say in Mark 10:44-45 that Jesus came not to be served but to serve many and to give His life as a ransom for many. Probably one of the greatest scenes in all the gospels of showing Jesus as a servant is in John, chapter 13 in what we know as that Passover meal, what we now call the Last Supper. After the meal was over, Jesus leaned down, took a basin of water and began to wash the feet of the disciples.

But what is significant about that passage is that it says He took a towel from across the rope of His waist. He took it off His waist and He began to serve; He began to help. He began to wash and to demonstrate servitude. In the gospels the towel is around the waist of Jesus. He is the servant; He is demonstrating and showing what God truly looks like to humanity, but in Revelation, chapter 1 He is not the servant of you – you are to be the servant of Him. The role has been reversed: in the gospels He was demonstrating to John who He was; here in Revelation 1 John is to serve who He is. The perspective is very different, it's completely contrasted. The robe is a robe of a Priest; the sash is one of majesty.

We get to the next passage in verse 14: “His head and his hairs were white like wool.” In the gospels, and we could belabor many minutes and many hours on this, I think one of the things we so struggle with in the gospels is not the deity of Jesus but it is the humanity of Jesus. We struggle with the fact that

God was wrapped in flesh. John 1:14 says that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Philippians 2 talks about He did not think it was strange to be equal with God but He allowed Himself to be conformed to the trappings of humanity and to flesh. In the gospels Jesus walked around and people said, “Is this not the son of a carpenter; is He not of this tribe; does He not belong to this family?” Let me tell you what Jesus looked like in the gospels. He didn’t look like the paintings that we paint. He looked like your normal, average Jewish man: most likely dark hair, beard, wearing the traditional garb.

Yet here in Revelation, chapter 1 His hair is white, everything is white about Him, there is this majesty to Him. Is that the picture that He is now old? No, in fact He is in a resurrected body; there is no age to Jesus because He is God. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. But in the prophet Daniel 7:9, God and Jesus are described as “the Ancient of days.” Jesus is not pictured here as a man who though sinless, grew up and died on the cross. He is pictured as God eternal; He is pictured as infinite; He is pictured as one who not only created time but is outside of time. He is for always. He is not just a man who some call Rabbi. He is not one who just has a following of some dedicated followers. He is God. His dress is different. The girdle is different. His head and hair are different.

But then we get to His eyes. Verse 14: “His eyes were as a flame of fire.” Now when you read through the four gospels, you will notice the eyes of Jesus were very distinct. He had just a certain way of seeing who needed compassion. When He saw Bartholomew under the tree He came and called him and said, “You are an Israelite without guile.” When He saw the man who was brought through the thatched roof, He had mercy on him. When He saw the woman who was caught in adultery, you can only imagine the look in His eyes when she looked up: it was one of love and of compassion. When Mary anointed His feet with the oil that all the others criticized, when she looked up you can only imagine the look of compassion in His eyes. In the gospels His eyes are looking to and fro showing compassion, showing love.

That's not the picture in Revelation. In fact, the picture in Revelation is as a flame of fire. Do you know what that means? Judgment. That means we are accountable for our sins; we are accountable for our rebellion. This isn't the Jesus of the gospels trying to show us that God loved us and came to save us. This is the Jesus who already went to the cross, already arose from the grave and said now I stand in judgment for who you are. So the question is, is He your priest or are you trusting another? His eyes are as a flame of fire.

Verse 15: "his feet are like fine brass." Think about the feet of Jesus in the gospels. They took Him from Jericho to Jerusalem. They took Him to the Mount of Olives, to the Garden of Gethsemane, ultimately they took Him that path, the way of the cross, up to Golgotha and ultimately were pierced on that cross for our sins. The feet of Jesus were very humble; they wore traditional sandals, they received the dirtiness of everybody else. They were humble feet always going into a place of humility and serving others.

Notice that the feet of Jesus in Revelation 1 are much different. They're not pictured in sandals; they're not pictured dusty; they're not pictured humbly going to the cross. What are they? It says they are pictured as brass: authority and judgment. The picture of Jesus in Revelation 1 isn't one of a humble servant. It's one of authority; it's one of power. It's one of ability. When Revelation 19 says He comes back, He treads the winepress of the transgressions of man. It's not a picture of a humble servant but one of authority and power.

It says in verse 15 that His voice is the sound of many waters. Look at the conversations that Jesus had in the gospels. He tells that woman who was caught in adultery in John 8 to go and sin no more. He tells the Phoenician woman who comes and asks for the crumbs from the table, "I have seen no such great faith; no, not in Israel." He tells the Centurion whose child has died on his watch, "Don't worry, just go back home, your son has been healed." He tells the little girl who has passed away when He goes into the upper room, "Rise out of your bed." It's the voice of healing; it's the voice of compassion.

But here it's the voice of many thunders. In fact, just a couple of chapters later in chapter 5 it says when He begins to instigate what we know as the seven seals that His voice goes out and it thunders. It's the voice of authority. It's the voice of judgment. It's a much different perspective than we had in the first four gospels.

It says in verse 16 his right hand contains the seven stars. When you go down into verses 19 and 20 it says the seven stars are the angels to the seven churches, that which we will study next week. But you think about the right hand of Jesus. The way I picture it, it was that right hand that Jesus took the mud and placed it on a blind man's eyes and said, "Now you are able to see." It was that right hand that took a little girl who was sick or a woman who was disdained and helped them up. It was that right hand that at the last supper took the elements and passed them out to the apostles. It was a hand of help; it was a hand of servitude; it was a hand of humbleness.

And yet now, it says in the right hand are the seven stars. It's the picture of control; it's the picture of authority. After all, you go to the eastern world and that's what the right hand is for: it is that which is of authority, power and control. And it very explicitly says not just His hands but His right hand. When John falls at His feet, how does Jesus touch him? With His right hand and He says, "Fear not."

But then there's His countenance. It says, "His countenance was as the sun." Have you ever thought about the countenance of Jesus in the gospels? Everywhere He went those who were wealthy were attracted to Him; those who were poor were attracted to Him; those who were injured and sick were attracted to him. Those who were even confident like Nicodemus, a religious leader, were attracted to Him. The Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees all came to Him, trying to trip Him up asking Him questions. The Bible says a specific lawyer comes to Him, yet at the same time there are lepers who come to Him. His countenance was of such magnitude that anybody and everybody was attracted to Him.

What is the picture here? His countenance was as the sun. Have you ever stared into the sun? You don't immediately gravitate toward it, you pull away. In Malachi 4, Jesus is called the Sun of Righteousness. In Matthew 17, Peter, James and John are taken to what we know as the Mount of Transfiguration and there with Moses and Elijah, Jesus is transfigured before them. His clothes as bright and as white as the sun and yet that is the picture in Revelation 1. One that is so bright and so majestic that one's eyes cannot even stare upon Him.

If you will notice that everything we've just done, the whole perspective of Revelation 1 is completely different than the gospels. In the gospels Jesus is preaching, teaching and healing. And one of the things He is saying is this: "I am showing you that I am who I say that I am. Would you follow Me to the cross?" In Revelation 1, Jesus has already been to the cross; Jesus has already risen from the dead. And what we see Jesus as here in Revelation 1 is how you and I should see Jesus every day of our lives. He is the majestic One; He is our High Priest; He is the one who has the ability to judge, not just with His feet, but with His eyes and out of His mouth and His countenance as the sun.

That begs the next question: where does Revelation 1 even take place? Now this is an interesting answer, and I know John is on the island of Patmos and I know he is caught up into the Spirit. But I want you to notice back in verse 13: "In the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man." When you get down to verse 20, it describes the candlesticks as the seven churches. Let me share with you why this is a different place. In the gospels, Jesus is proclaiming, preaching and instituting what we know as the church.

Here in Revelation 1, He is in the midst of the church. Now that means the church universal at large, that means the church in a specific culture, that means this specific church, but the word church literally means called out believers; that means in the midst of your family, in the midst of your life. Do you know what the different perspective is here than in the gospels? In the gospels if you didn't like what Jesus had to say you could go to a different city or wait for Him to leave yours. Here it says as a child of

His, as one who believes in Him, there is no running away, there is no escaping. He is in the midst of our lives; He is in the midst of our church.

And can you imagine how differently most of us would act if we knew that Jesus was with us when we went to those places? Can you imagine how differently we would talk if we knew that Jesus was there when we spoke to those people on the other line? Would we do what we do if Jesus was physically standing there with us? I would say dare not. But guess what? He is. He is in the midst. You cannot say I left Jesus at church because I'm at work right now. You can't say I'm going to leave Jesus in Bible study, I'm going to go out with my friends. He is in the midst of the candlestick. Guess what? If you are a child of God, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ then you are the church. This isn't the church; the building is a church, but you are the church and He is in the midst of everything and everywhere of our lives. The picture in Revelation 1 is very different than the picture in the gospels.

That leads to the most important question: why? Now we've looked at who Jesus is in Revelation. We've looked at when this takes place. We've looked at what is pictured and we've looked at where it happens. But this is the why. And I'm going to make a statement that may seem somewhat odd but I want to explain it in a moment. We actually see a different response. If you go back into the gospels and you see how people responded to Jesus, let me tell you what they did. They were so amazed and so marveled at the miracles and the teachings and everything that He did that they literally dropped everything they were doing and they just followed Him. You see that over and over with the apostles and others. They followed Him and they walked with Him. Yet when you get to the cross there are very few people there because most people abandoned Him when they saw how difficult it was truly going to be.

Here in Revelation what happens when John sees Jesus in this vision? Does he do as some of our culture would say, "Oh boy, isn't that neat? Isn't that cool? Isn't that special?" What does it say John does? It says he falls at His feet as if dead. Let me tell you something: you can sing all

day long but John worships without singing. You can give all day long but John worships without giving. Let me tell you what John does here. He gives us the proper response to how you and I should respond to Jesus today. When we realize who Jesus really is we bow down before Him and say, “You have all of me, not just Sunday, not just this part of my life, not just all but this. You have it all.” John fell as if dead because he realized that everything that was his life is wrapped up there in who this person is.

He falls as if dead and this is the most significant thing we see. Listen to what Jesus says: “I am he that lives and was dead; behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and I have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” Let me share with you why that is so significant. Do you see John argue? Do you see John gripe? Do you see John say, “But why do they always get to do the fun stuff, why can’t I?” Do you see John say, “Well, you just don’t understand. I don’t have time for this,” or “If it fits into my schedule maybe I’ll work it in.” When John got a proper perspective of who Jesus was it didn’t matter what He said to do, he just did it. And he just fell down, worshipped and said if you want it written, it will be written.

When we see Jesus as John saw Jesus, as Revelation describes Jesus, it gives us a different response than we often see in our culture. This isn’t the Jesus that we make into a celebrity. This isn’t the Jesus that we turn into a fad. This isn’t the Jesus that we sell trinkets about. This is the Jesus who is God in flesh and demands our utmost response.

Let me ask you a question before we come to our time of invitation. Do you know this Jesus or do you just know a Jesus who is convenient? Do you just know a Jesus who is your buddy? Do you know a Jesus, as I’ve seen the shirts, who is my BFF: best friend forever? Do you know a Jesus who, when you are in trouble, is convenient but when everything is going good in life you can do without? Or have you met the Jesus of Revelation 1? The Apostle John thought he knew what Jesus looked like. He was the closest one at dinner time;

he leaned on His chest but when he gets to Revelation 1, he bows down as if dead and says, “You are Lord and You are in control of every aspect of my life.”

Let me ask you a very important question, the most important question in all of life: do you know Jesus? Because do you realize that according to Revelation 1, Jesus has absolute control of your destiny and your eternity and how you respond to Him will determine everything. Let's pray.