

Look! Listen! - And Overcome!

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

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Look! Listen! – And Overcome!

"A Voice Like a Trumpet"

Lord's Day Morning

September 2, 2007

Pastor Jeff Crippen

Sermon Text: Revelation 1:7-16

Introduction

"When Jesus came to earth, He did not cease to be God; when He returned to heaven, He did not cease to be man."

[John Blanchard]

"Christ's ascension into heaven was the real commencement of His reign."

[John Calvin]

"The head that once was crowned with thorns,

Is crowned with glory now;

A royal diadem adorns

The mighty Victor's brow."

[Thomas Kelly]

"If Socrates would enter the room, we should rise and do him honor. But if Jesus Christ came into the room, we

should fall down on our knees and worship Him." [Napoleon Bonaparte]

When you think of the Lord Jesus Christ, what image comes into your mind? The second commandment forbids us from making any image of God, yet it is so difficult to conceive of Christ without conjuring up some type of picture. And yet, does that picture have the result upon you that Christ's appearance had upon John –

NKJ Revelation 1:17a And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.

To make Napoleon's quote a bit more accurate, it should be amended to read – *if Jesus Christ came into the room, we would all fall down as dead men.*

Here in this first chapter of the Revelation, the risen, ascended, and glorified Christ appears to the Apostle John with the Revelation given Him by His Father to show to His bond-servants. The faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth – this One who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood and Who has made us a kingdom and priests – this is the One

Who reveals Himself to John. And here we have John's own account of it.

Before we hear John tell us of this encounter, we must make a few more comments concerning verses 7 and 8.

Behold, He is Coming With the Clouds (vs 7)

NKJ Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

This is what we have called the *heralding of the King*. The King is coming, He is even at the door. Be sure of it – we have this herald's announcement sealed with a double oath –

- So it is to be, and
- Amen

The oath is just two short but powerful words in the original – "*nai, amen.*" "Certainly so! Truly, indeed!" He IS coming! Revelation begins and *ends* with this absolute affirmation –

NKJ Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "**Surely** I am coming quickly." **Amen.** Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

These are the very same words – "*nai! Amen!*"

Notice – you really cannot miss it – that when Christ comes, His coming will be in the sky, visible to *every* eye. No secret. No guessing required. All will see Him. [NOTE: This is remarkable in that there has never been a time when every eye on this globe saw the same thing at the same time!]

"*Behold, He is coming with the clouds...*". This is an Old Testament quotation taken from Daniel –

NKJ 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.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in other words, IS that Messiah seen by Daniel. This phrase is a very powerful statement of the deity of Jesus Christ. It identifies Him as the Lord God who is so often described in these very terms –

NKJ Psalm 97:1 The LORD reigns; Let the earth rejoice; Let the multitude of isles be glad! 2 Clouds and darkness surround Him;

Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne.

NKJ Isaiah 19:1 The burden against Egypt. Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud, And will come into Egypt; The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, And the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst.

NKJ Nahum 1:3 The LORD *is* slow to anger and great in power, And will not at all acquit *the wicked*. The LORD has His way In the whirlwind and in the storm, And the clouds *are* the dust of His feet.

NKJ Exodus 16:10 Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

NKJ Exodus 19:9 And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

NKJ Exodus 24:15 Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. 16 Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the

seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

There was a cloud on the mount of transfiguration (Mark 9:7).

The announcement of Christ coming with the clouds concurs with the Lord Jesus' own words –

NKJ Matthew 24:30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

NKJ Matthew 26:64 Jesus said to him, "*It is as you said*. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

What is the full significance of the clouds? I do not have a full answer, but this much is very clear – when you have Christ coming with the clouds, you have *God* appearing. It is the glory of God. Clouds are a sign of God's majesty and authority to judge.

And Every Eye Shall See Him

NKJ Revelation 1:7b ... and every eye will see Him, even they who

pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Here again we have an Old Testament allusion –

NKJ Zechariah 12:10 " And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

Zechariah's prophecy of Christ's crucifixion (confirmed by John 19:34-37) leaps now much further into the future to the time when Christ comes again and every eye sees Him. Not just the eyes of those who love His appearing, but the eyes of those who are His enemies as well.

"The announcement of Revelation 1:7 has a simple but profound point; the One who was pierced in rejection (John 19:34, 37) has been invested with supreme authority, and His appearance will strike deep sorrow to the hearts of His tormentors from all the tribes and nations of the earth."
[Dennis Johnson]

"The Bible knows nothing about an invisible or secret second coming. Nowhere is this taught. On the

contrary, 'every eye shall see him.' Those who pierced His side shall also see Him. It is possible that the expression, 'and they that pierced him,' also indicates all others who have pierced Christ by means of their disobedient lives." [Hendriksen]

The mourning spoken of here by all the tribes of the earth is most probably *not* the mourning of repentance, but of deep, intense anguish at seeing the King whom they have hated –

NKJ Revelation 6:15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

NOTE: Now, pause for a moment. *'Every eye shall see Him.'* Will YOUR eye see Him when He comes? Of course. If you love Christ, you will see Him on that Day. If you hate Christ, *you will see Him on that Day.* You will be there! I will be there.

The nations of the earth who worship Allah and persecute Christ will see

Him in His glory on that day. Every idolater, every religious hypocrite, every tyrant dictator who set himself up as god – every eye will see Him. And how they will wail!

You see the double oath at the end of verse 7 not only affirms the first part of the verse – *Behold, He is coming with the clouds* – but it affirms that every eye will see Him, AND that all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. *So it is to be. Amen.*

Do you believe this? Are you ready? What will you be doing on that day? Rejoicing? Or mourning? And do not miss the intensity of this mourning. It isn't a few tears or regrets – oh no –

NKJ Matthew 8:12 "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

NKJ Luke 13:27 "But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' 28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.

I am the Alpha and the Omega

If this double oath from the Lord Himself is not enough to make us sit up and listen, the Lord God, the Almighty, speaks once more –

NKJ Revelation 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

All that the Revelation contains is stamped with this divine seal – I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. These are, of course, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Every part of verse 8 speaks of the eternal self-existence of God –

- I Am (ego eimi)
- The Alpha and the Omega (see also 1:11, 17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13)
- The Beginning and the End
- Who is, and who was, and who is to come

All of this speaks of *the certainty of the fulfillment of everything promised here in the Revelation*. You see it back in Isaiah 41 –

NKJ Isaiah 41:4 Who has performed and done *it*, Calling the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He.' "

Also, consider Isaiah 43 –

NKJ Isaiah 43:10 "You *are* My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I *am* He. **Before Me** there was no God formed, Nor shall there be **after Me**. 11 I, *even* I, *am* the LORD, And besides Me *there is* no savior.

See it? First and Last, Alpha & Omega, the Beginning and the End are all designations of God which declare that He alone is God. He is the –

"Pantokrator" (1:8), ie, "The Almighty"

There is no other God – there never has been nor will there ever be. ALL might and power belong to Him. He brought ALL things to pass and He will bring ALL things to the end which He has decreed. NOTHING can prevent Him. He has created all things – no creature can stand against Him to thwart His ways. Everything we shall read in this book, every seal broken by the Lamb – all shall come to pass just as He has ordained.

See again –

NKJ Isaiah 44:6 " Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his

Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.

NKJ Isaiah 48:11 For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do *it*; For how should *My name* be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another. 12 " Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last. 13 Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, And My right hand has stretched out the heavens; *When* I call to them, They stand up together.

NKJ Isaiah 46:3 " Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, And all the remnant of the house of Israel, Who have been upheld by Me from birth, Who have been carried from the womb: 4 Even to your old age, I am He, And *even* to gray hairs I will carry *you!* I have made, and I will bear; Even I will carry, and will deliver *you.*

In the beginning, there was God – only God. And for all eternity – world without end – God will be there. The only God. The Almighty God. All things began in Him, are sustained by Him, and have their fruition in Him. He IS, He WAS, and He SHALL BE.

NKJ Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, Or

ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You *are* God.

NOTE: There is only ONE thing – one Person – that a man will have to deal with for all eternity, forever and ever. And that One is – God. Whatever you are dealing with now in this life will soon be past. But when this earth and universe are all rolled up, God will still *be*. It behooves a man to ask himself then – *just what terms am I on with this Almighty, Eternal One?*

O God, the Rock of Ages,
Who evermore hast been,
What time the tempest rages,
Our dwelling place serene;

Before Thy first creations,
O Lord, the same as now,
To endless generations
The Everlasting Thou!

One Like the Son of Man

NKJ Revelation 1:13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

We now come to the actual revelation of the glorified Christ to the Apostle John. One like the Son of Man. He

does not appear to some exalted sovereign or archbishop – He comes to an old man on a barren rock called Patmos -

"A small rocky island lying off the SW coast of Asia Minor, about 35 miles West of Miletus, used by the Romans as a place of exile for criminals." [PC Bible Atlas]

And why is John there? He tells us –

- Because of the word of God
- Because of the testimony of Jesus

John is brother to all who are partaking with him in –

- the tribulation
- the kingdom
- the perseverance

...all of which are in Jesus. This is what and who a Christian is. A Christian partakes ("koinonia," "communion") in *the tribulation*, in the kingdom of God, and in persevering in that kingdom during this tribulation. The world is going to try to put every real Christian on Patmos. Why? For the same reason John was there – because the Christian keeps speaking the Word of God and giving witness of Jesus.

NOTE: Christian – if you are a Christian – *then you are going to Patmos*. But notice very carefully – *it is on Patmos that Christ comes to John*.

NKJ Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, 11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

I was in the Spirit. The NASB and NKJV capitalize "Spirit," indicating that John's condition was somehow an effect of the Holy Spirit. But the meaning could be "spirit," to describe some kind of prophetic state John was in – though that would also have been effected by the Spirit of God. Some related Scriptures might help us understand –

NKJ Revelation 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." 2 Immediately I was in the

Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 12:1 It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago -- whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows -- such a one was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man - - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows --

"In the Spirit" then seems to indicate an "out of the body" state – a prophetic trance in which God reveals Himself.

It was, John says, *on the Lord's day* that Christ came to him. This is one of the key verses in the New Testament that lead us to conclude that the seventh day Sabbath was changed in the New Covenant to the first day, no doubt because that was the day Christ was raised from the dead. (See also John 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2).

I Heard Behind Me a Loud Voice

John does not first *see* – he *hears*. It was a sound that could not be missed – *a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet*. Later, in verse 15, John will use another image to describe the volume of the voice –

"...and His voice was like the sound of many waters."

And again in chapter 4 –

NKJ Revelation 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

When the risen Christ speaks, the world listens – *and every ear shall hear Him*. Heaven, opened to John, is filled not only with sights, but with sounds.

NKJ Revelation 4:5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire *were* burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

NKJ Revelation 5:11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

When God appears, when Christ returns, men will see AND men will hear. It reminds us of that scene way back at Mt. Sinai, described for us in Hebrews –

NKJ Hebrews 12:18 For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." 21 And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")

The voice of God, you see. This is what John heard.

What would it be like to hear the voice of God? To hear a voice, a sound – so terrifying, so loud, so fearful, that you could not endure it and you pleaded that it would stop? What can we compare it to? Every likeness we can think of falls short, but we do have the reports of people who have survived huge tornados. They all say that as the thing was approaching, they could only describe its *sound* – that was the

thing that stood out. And the likeness they usually compare it to is that of a train approaching.

NKJ Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: 2 "Who *is* this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge?

NOTE: You have often heard people (foolish people) talking about when they get "to heaven" and God says.....then they will say to Him....., and so on. Right? You've heard that drivel. They will say *nothing*. Except perhaps to plead that He stop.

NKJ Hebrews 12:25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven, 26 **whose voice then shook the earth;** but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and

godly fear. 29 For our God *is* a consuming fire.

Here then is the amazing thing – in Christ the majesty of God's voice remains, but its terror is gone –

NKJ Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 **to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant,** and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel.

Think about this carefully. Who is Christ? He is *the Word of God*. He comes and He speaks for His Father. And yet we do not perish. His voice, John says, was majestic and awe-full, and yet this One touches John –

NKJ Revelation 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

God has spoken to us in Christ –

NKJ Hebrews 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways

spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

This One Who shook the earth with His voice, and Who will one more time speak and destroy His enemies and shake this present creation with consuming fire – *this One has come and dwelt among us*. He has spoken, and we can endure it.

Do you see it? *There is only one ground upon which men can meet the Almighty One and live, and that ground is the Lord Jesus Christ*. Any man who thinks he can come into the presence of Almighty God on his own merits and "speak" with God and live is horribly deceived.

That trumpet voice is going to sound any moment. Are you ready?

NKJ 1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

NKJ 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.

"See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking." (Heb 12:25a)

This, then, is the Voice John heard with a message to us His bond-servants. *"Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches...."*

John is about to turn to see Who is speaking. If the voice He heard got his attention, what he is about to see knocked him down as a dead man. This is our Lord Jesus Christ as He is. He has a message for *us*.

The voice, the Word of God, you see. It is a terror for those who hate Him. It is life for those who love Him – *"Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last."*

Closing Hymn: #316 Trinity Hymnal, The Mighty God, the Lord