

Transcendent Vision

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 16th, 2012 • Pastor Chris Lankford

Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.

~Revelation 1:19 (NASB)

1) The Seven Churches Of The Apocalypse

- A) John's family oriented self-identification as a fellow partaker in "tribulation, kingdom, and perseverance" (Revelation 1:9) is also a deeper identification of what it means to be "in Christ" and follow the pattern of Jesus' life. John is a leader in the trenches, even in exile, not safely tucked away in an "ivory tower."
- B) John's exile,* credited to his preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1:10), put him in the perfect place for hearing the voice of God's Holy Spirit. John notes he hears a "loud voice" on Sunday, the Lord's day. The voice, "like a trumpet," is a significant biblical metaphor, signaling an appearance by a King coming with a message!
- C) The voice commands John to write what he sees for sending to the "seven churches" (see map for locations,

*John seems to indicate that he "was" on Patmos (Greek aorist tense ἐγενόμην from γίνομαι, often used to express a completed past action). This usage does not, in itself, prove that John was no longer on Patmos when writing, but does imply the possibility. It is true that those banished by a particular emperor could be recalled or given amnesty upon that emperor's death. Eusebius (early church father) specifically claims that this happened to John and that, following the death of Domitian, Nerva, the successor to Domitian, and the Roman senate recalled all those who had been banished in 96 AD, and John, he claims, went from Patmos to Ephesus (Historia Ecclesiastica, 3.20.8-9). While not terribly important, it is notable that it provides time for John to develop and organize "the things which you have seen" (Revelation 1:19). Collected from various sources, esp. *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 52A, Revelation 1-5*, by David E. Aune, pgs. 77-78.

1:11). The use of “seven” should alert us that while these seven churches are historically real, they also represent all churches in all places – reinforced again later (cf. 1:20).

2) A Transcendent Vision Of Jesus Christ

- A) When John turns to see the voice speaking to him, he first sees seven (!) golden lampstands (1:12), and among the lampstands, “one like a son of man” (1:13), described as:
- 1) dressed in fine clothing and a golden sash (1:13),
 - 2) with snowy white hair and eyes like flaming fire (1:14),
 - 3) glowing shining bronze feet (1:15),
 - 4) a voice like a giant crashing waterfall (1:15),
 - 5) holding seven stars (?) in his right hand (1:16),
 - 6) a sharp two-edged sword from His mouth (1:16),
 - 7) and a radiant, glowing face of strength (1:16).
- B) You can imagine that the extraordinary sight of all of this rendered John paralyzed in awe and wonder, collapsing like a rag-doll to the ground (1:17). But the “one like a son of man” touches John (with his right hand), saying “fear not!” It’s an almost comical scene! Seriously?! FEAR NOT?? How in the world do you NOT fear (cf. Isaiah 6:1-7)?
- C) Here is why John should not fear... The “one like the son of man” identifies Himself as “I AM the first and the last” (1:17, cf. Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12); “the Living One – dead and resurrected” (1:18); who has “the keys of death & of Hades” (1:18, master of cosmic entities and forces).
- D) John need not fear, because the “one like the son of man” is Jesus Christ! He is asking John to write this book (cf. 1:11). The things which “you have seen” (vision of Jesus), “the things which are” (visions upcoming), and “things which will take place after” (future things, 1:19).
- E) In one of the most important patterns in Revelation, some of the metaphors just shared are explained (1:20). The seven stars are the “seven angels” of the “seven churches,” represented by the seven lampstands (cf. 1:11, 16).

■ Major Highways ■ Minor Highways



Structure of the Letters To The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)*

Command to Write to the Angel of a Particular Church in Introductory Verse	Prophetic Introduction/ Features Of "Son of Man" (Revelation 1)	Statement of Knowledge of Local Situation	Statement of Commendation/ Condemnation	Call to Repentance & Consequence for Disobedience	Individual Call to Listen: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches..."	Eschatological Description of Rewards for the Overcomer
Revelation 2:1-7 (Ephesus)	One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, walks among seven golden lampstands...	I know your deeds, toil, and perseverance...	+/- Cannot endure evil men or false apostles/Left first love	+ Remove lampstand	x	Eat from tree of life in Paradise of God
Revelation 2:8-11 (Smyrna)	First and the last, who was dead, and has come to life...	I know your tribulation and poverty (but you are rich)...	+ Perseverance under persecution by false Jews (synagogue of Satan).	+ Crown of life for continued faithfulness during suffering and 10 days tribulation by Devil	x	Not hurt by second death
Revelation 2:12-17 (Pergamum)	One who has the sharp two-edged sword...	I know you dwell where Satan's throne is located...	+/- Hold fast name of Christ when persecuted (Antipas martyred) /Some adhere to a false, immoral, idolatrous teaching of Balaam	+ Christ makes war against them with sword of mouth	x	Hidden manna and stone with new, private name
Revelation 2:18-29 (Thyatira)	Son of God, who eyes like flame of fire, feet like burnished bronze...	I know your love, faith, service, perseverance, and that your deeds are greater than your first deeds...	+/- Faithful and growing service and love/ Some tolerate false, immoral, idolatrous prophetess Jezebel	+ Cast her on a sick bed, cast her and followers into great tribulation, kill her children	x	Psalms 2 - Authority with Christ
Revelation 3:1-6 (Sardis)	Has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars...	I know that your name is alive, but only some remain...	-/+ Dead and dying, works not complete/ a few have not soiled their garments	+ Christ comes upon them as a thief	x	Clothed in white, name not erased from book of life, name confessed before God and angels
Revelation 3:7-13 (Philadelphia)	He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens...	I know you are weak, so I have placed an open door which no one can shut before you...	+ Not denied name, kept word of perseverance	- False Jews (synagogue of Satan) to acknowledge them as God's people, preserved from coming global trial, hold fast so none take your crown	x	Permanent pillar in temple, name of God, NJ and Christ's new name written on them
Revelation 3:14-21 (Laodicea)	Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God...	I know that you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold...	- Lukewarm and unaware of spiritual destitution	+ Spit out of Christ's mouth	x	Sit with Christ on his throne

* I am indebted to Dr. Alan Hultberg for the original concept of this summary document. Used by permission, ©2007, Alan Hultberg, Ph.D., Associate Professor of New Testament & Bible Exposition at Talbot School of Theology.



Growth Group Homework



Powering Up

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message on "*Transcendent Vision*" did you find to be the most helpful, surprising, or challenging? Explain your answer.
2. ***Fact or Fiction.*** Everyone in the group needs to write three things about themselves (you can use the space below), preferably things which others do not know about you (this might be tough if your spouse is in the group!) – but here's the catch... Two of the facts about yourself are TRUE, but one of them is NOT TRUE. Take turns to read your three factoids out loud (don't give your false "fact" away!). The rest of the group votes on which facts are true and false. You get to confirm the truth, and shoot down the not-so-true thing about yourself. Have fun!



Digging In

1. Rather than spend our time analyzing every single metaphor John was using, let's do something a little different together this week... On the next page, you will find two side-by-side columns. The first column is labeled "Revelation 1:10-20," and the second column is labeled "Daniel 7:9-14 & 10:1-19." First, have someone read Revelation 1:10-20, writing down metaphors which you read or hear in the left column. Next, have someone else read Daniel 7:9-14 & 10:1-19, noting the parallel connection between Daniel & John's symbols.

Finally, once you feel like everyone has had a chance to "connect the dots" between John & Daniel, take a step back from all the details. Look at the whole picture which John is presenting. Together, discuss this bigger picture of John's overall vision about Jesus Christ. What does John want his reader to see? Why would John use these vivid images/symbols? What does the imagery communicate that regular descriptions cannot? What is your own impression of Jesus, based on the symbols and imagery used in Revelation 1:10-20? Why do you think John uses so many similar symbols from Daniel? What impact would this kind of imagery have on John's New Testament audience? Why would this imagery and these symbols be significant to them? Allow the imagery to fill your mind; dwell on Jesus; see Him in all His splendor.



Revelation 1:10-20

Daniel 7:9-14 & 10:1-19



Connecting To Life

How do the symbols, imagery, and visual picture of Jesus impact you? Do you think of Jesus in this way very often? Thinking of some of the issues you (or others) face in life, how could a more vivid view of Jesus change their lives and their issues?

Share with your Growth Group about the most interesting and/or troubling metaphor in Revelation 1:10-20. Give a brief explanation of your perspective.