**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 12-27-2020
 The Exalted Jesus Christ**

It’s funny how sometimes when we do not see people in a while, we tend to still see them in our mind as the same age and size when we last interacted with them.

I’ve had this happen several times in my life, when I’ve seen a friend or a cousin or someone that I haven’t seen a while. It takes a moment to reorient our minds to the new look that they now have.

Has this happened to you?

I believe that something similar happened to the apostle John. As you read the gospels, John was one of the closest followers of Jesus. He was there from the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. He saw miracle after miracle. He witnessed Jesus being transfigured in a mountain with Peter and James. He was there at Christ’s crucifixion and saw Jesus after his resurrection several times. He had seen Him be taken up from them in heaven.

And yet, this man who loved and knew Jesus saw well, becomes completely undone when he sees him again.

So let’s allow John to describe this amazing encounter with Christ Himself and then we will unpack it together for a bit.

We find this scene in the book of **Revelation 1:9-20**

**9I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, 11which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.”**

**12I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man,[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A9-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30711a)**] dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.**

**17When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.**

**19“Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. 20The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels[**[**b**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A9-20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30718b)**] of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.**

Wow! What a powerful encounter John has with Jesus. The book of revelation was written about 60 years after Jesus had ascended into heaven. But this time, John along with all the other apostles, had preached and traveled to places far and wide to bring the good news of Jesus to the world. According to church history, by the time of this encounter John has with Jesus, all of the other original apostles had been put to death for their sharing of Jesus. While they were all with Jesus in heaven, John remained on the earth.

John himself, according to church tradition, was tortured for his testimony of Jesus as well. We read in this passage that John was on the island of Patmos when he sees Jesus in this vision. Patmos was sort of like an Alcatraz. It was a place where people that the Roman Empire didn’t want around were sent to as a form of punishment.

The Roman Emperor Domitian hated Christians and persecuted them severely. It was likely during his reign that John was exiled to Patmos.

**John tells us that he was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.**

If the early church historian Eusebius was correct, John was probably exiled for about a year, between the year 95 and the year 96. When Domitian died in 96, most likely John was free to return to Ephesus, which was likely where he settled down eventually.

But, John, who knew Jesus so well, was overwhelmed when he has this vision of the exalted Christ in heaven.

Just a few days ago we celebrated Christmas together. At Christmas we celebrate that God becomes human in Jesus Christ. And we have this little helpless baby.

And when we read the gospels, we are reminded that Jesus while on earth, laid down some of his glory. It was very possible to people to not recognize that this was deity on the earth. He just looked like an ordinary Joe.

But even though John, perhaps more than anyone, witnessed Jesus’ glory on earth, when we saw Jesus glorified and exalted in heaven, he was overwhelmed. After seeing Jesus and hearing some of his words, John falls at Jesus’ feet as though dead. And Jesus then tells him ‘**do not be afraid.’**

And Jesus tells John that he is to record a message that is to be delivered to 7 churches of that region. In the weeks to come, we will explore what Jesus has to say to these churches. It is quite profound.

But today, I would like for us to focus on the exalted Christ Himself as John describes him. I would like to read this section of the text again to us.

Please keep in mind that Jesus was communicating in the way that John saw Jesus. The symbols would be like another language. But we’ll do our best to unpack them together.

John sees Jesus **dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.**

**First, Jesus has a robe that reaches down to His feet and is wearing a golden sash around his chest**.

This robe and golden sash reveal Christ as exalted king and possibly as our high priest as well. Jesus stands before God the Father on humanity’s behalf.

**Second, John records that Christ’s hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow.**

This whiteness would tell John and the readers of Revelation 2 important things. First, Jesus is God just as the Father is God.

In Daniel 7:9 we read a very similar description of God the Father. In Daniel’s vision of God the Father, or the Ancient of Days, Daniel writes, **“the hair of his head was white like wool.”**

So this vision of Jesus is to remind John and all of us that Jesus is God just as much as the Father is God.

He knows what’s best and always chooses to do what is right. He knows what’s best for us and seeks to direct our steps **Second, the whiteness of Christ’s hair symbolizes Jesus’ perfect wisdom** as we follow after Him.

**Third, John then notices that his eyes “were like blazing fire.”**

It is important to know that this vision that John had of Jesus does not mean that Jesus literally has red or blazing eyes. It is a picture that Christ offered of Himself in order to convey something about himself.

The blazing eyes of Jesus in this vision remind John that Jesus sees all things and He will rightly judge everything. It is a reminder that it is foolish to oppose Christ.

**Fourth, John mentions that Jesus’ feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace.**

This image depicts Christ’s strength and purity. There is no weakness at the core of Christ’s foundation.

**Fifth, we see that Jesus’ voice was like the sound of rushing waters**.

This again echoes Yahweh in the Old Testament. And like Father, like Son. Jesus’ is all powerful. Jesus is as divine as God the Father.

I think of the power of quickly moving water in the oceans or rivers. Jesus’ words are all-powerful.

**Sixth, in his right hand he held seven stars.**

**In Scripture, the right hand is symbolic of power and authority. And here Jesus holds 7 stars, which speaks of his authority over the angels.**

**Seventh, John describes a sword coming from Christ’s mouth.** This sword symbol speaks of the judgment of Christ. Part of the goodness of God is revealed in His just nature and in His righteous judgments.

**And eighth and finally, John sees Jesus’ radiant face, shining like the sun in all of its brilliance.**

In this John would be reminded of the glory of Jesus and His holiness and purity.

I’m reminded of the Apostle Paul’s conversion to Christ on the road to Damascus. Perhaps this is similar to how Jesus appeared to him as well. And the Book of Acts tells us that Paul was blinded by his powerful encounter with the risen Lord.

Again, this is like a foreign language to us today. But for John and the early readers of Revelation, what the Lord was revealing about Himself in this vision could not be any clearer.

What was being conveyed in John’s vision of Jesus?

That Jesus is God. That Jesus along with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit is sovereign and without comparison.

That Jesus is altogether good and pure and powerful and He also will rightly judge all who oppose Him and choose to walk in darkness.

**So as readers of Revelation today, why does this apply to us?**

**First, remember that Jesus is now in this glorified position.** Sometimes people what to keep Jesus a baby in their thinking. To try to make him into someone that they can control and something that doesn’t demand complete allegiance from them.

**It is important for everyone to at least catch a glimpse of Jesus as He is today in all His glory.**

**Second, this vision of Jesus should lead us to worship.** John hit the floor and sometimes we all need to hit the floor, physically or metaphorically, in being undone by his glory and majesty.

**And third and finally, John saw Jesus amongst the lampstands of his churches and it reminds us that his presence is with his church today. He is with Chestnut Grove as he is with every church.**

We need to seek His will and His Spirit’s leading in order to fulfill His purposes for Chestnut Grove. As we impact Jesus’ words to 7 church communities found in Revelation chapters 2 & 3 in the coming weeks, we will be better equipped to follow His leadership in our church.

[Revelation 1:9-20 NIV - John’s Vision of Christ - I, John, - Bible Gateway](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3A9-20&version=NIV)

[Patmos and Ephesus | Watchful (wordpress.com)](https://gregorysmagee.wordpress.com/2013/01/28/patmos-and-ephesus/)

Revelation – Commentary by Grant R. Osborne