

“I saw...one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire...” (Rev 1:12-14).

I. THE GLORIOUS VISION OF CHRIST THE MESSIAH 1:9-20 (READ ALOUD)

A. THE PHYSICAL SETTING OF THE VISION 1:9

1. *I, John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation...and patience in Jesus.*
2. Out of the throes of pain and suffering, the servants of the LORD have been entrusted with the highest calling and spiritual revelation. The great Prophet Daniel and John the Seer have much in common, both were entrusted to bring to the saints the highest of revelatory experiences.
3. John like Daniel never exalted himself but walked out his call, setting an example for all who were to follow.
4. He was exiled on the island of Patmos for the word of God and his testimony for his Messiah.

B. THE SPIRITUAL SETTING OF THE VISION 1:10-11

1. John states, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet (shofar)...” (Rev1:10).
2. Scholarship holds two interpretations over the meaning of “The Lord’s day.”
 - a. First position, the passage refers to the first day of the week, Sunday (Matt 28:1; Mk 16: 2, 9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1, 19; Acts 20:1).
 - b. Second position, the passage refers to the The “Day of the LORD,” that is, the Tribulation and the Millennium, the subject of much of the prophecy.
 - c. The challenges of each is that the Biblical text does not fully support either position.
Since the focus is the Apocalypse, the *Day of Judgment* and “Lord’s” is an adjective describing day, it is possible this is Tishri 1. John could be in worship honoring the LORD of Creation coupled with the solemnity of the High Holy Days, when he hears the voice of Messiah like a trumpet (shofar). John, being Jewish, would know Tishri 1 is a Day of Judgment, the when the shofar is blown, the Books are opened and decrees written for the coming year.
3. John heard these words from the Messiah, ***Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea*** (Rev 1:11).
 - Ryrie states, “all that John saw, not just the particular letter to each church, was to be communicated to all seven churches.

C. THE SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPS 1:12

1. John records, *I turned back to see the voice which spake with me, and having turned, I saw seven golden lamps.*
2. From 1:17 we are made to understand that the seven golden lamps are the seven churches.
3. J. Sidlow Baxter in *Explore the Book* addresses verse 12, “In the vision of the Son of Man amid the lampstands...we are meant to get a vivid, moving impression of the Christ in heaven operating through the Church on earth....Equally clear is that of the church on earth functioning for the Christ in heaven.”

4. Baxter's words underscore Paul's teaching, as Christ is the Head of the Church, collectively believers are His Body (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:22; Col. 1:18, 24).
5. Oliver Green in his book *Revelation* writes, "Gold, the most precious of metals, signifies divine righteousness. **Therefore, in the symbol of seven golden lamps, we have the Church in its completeness and perfection here upon the earth. The true Church is perfect, and without spot or wrinkle...not the local assembly, the visible church, but the invisible Church as described in Ephesians 5.**"

D. GLORIOUS VISION OF THE MESSIAH 1:13-16

1. In the midst of the lampstands John saw a Person, the Messiah, the *Son of Man*.
2. Walter Scott relates Ezekiel uses this term about one hundred times and Daniel once. The Savior used it around seventy times for Himself. Scott writes, "The title is one which expresses a wider range of dominion and glory than that of king of Israel....As Son of God He quickens the dead, spiritually and physically (Jn 5:25, 28). As Son of Man He judges (v. 22), and executes His judgment (v.27)." **It seems both titles should be cause for a "holy" hush.**
3. He was "**Clothed with a garment down to the foot...**" (v.13) Scott draws our attention, "There is an evident allusion to the ephod, the preeminent garment of the high priest" (Ex 28:31).
4. "**Girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle.**" The girdle of gold depicts divine *righteousness* and *faithfulness*.
5. In verse 14 John writes, "**His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow.**" The Messiah is seen with similarity to Daniel's vision of the "Ancient of Days" (Dan 7:9). The whiteness of the hair is associated with **Divine wisdom**, with absolute **power** and **authority**.
6. "**His eyes as a flame of fire,**" Theodore Epp states, "His eyes speak of infinite and infallible knowledge." Thus eyes that penetrate in depth rendering a keen assessment in judgment, exposing evil behavior, motives and cover up.
7. Verse 15 "**His feet like fine brass, as burning in a furnace.**" Concerning His feet, Epp points out, "Brass speaks of strength, and the furnace where brass has been burned speaks of purification." The brazen laver in the Tabernacle/Temple spoke of judgment on sin and the water provision for cleansing.
8. "**His voice was like to the roar of many waters.**" Ezekiel experienced His voice (43:2). Oliver Green shares, "The grandeur of His mighty voice exceeds the noise of Niagara Falls with all of its thunderous roar." The psalmist wrote, "The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty" (Ps 29:4). This is the voice John heard.
9. Verse 16 "**In His right hand He held seven stars.**" The seven stars are the seven messengers of the seven churches (v. 20). Epp poignantly identifies, "Being in His right hand they are in the place of perfect rest, perfect power and perfect protection." A gracious word and consolation for the pastor, teacher and believers properly aligned with His will.
10. "**From His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword...**" The sword is the Word of Yahveh, quick and powerful, all discerning...(Heb 4:12). John Phillips in *Exploring Revelation* states, "Nothing can stand before God's Word. Ten times in Genesis one we read, 'And God said, 'Worlds sprang into space, darkness fled, the earth arose and flung back the sea,

life forms appeared in countless multitude. When the Word was made flesh (John 1:14), demons, disease, and death fled....His mighty Word is invincible.” **“His face like the sun shining in full strength.”** Phillips continues, “He is the unapproachable One. Saul of Tarsus saw *It* and was blinded (Acts 9:3-7). We cannot look upon the sun shining in its strength; still less can we approach it. One pound of heat can raise twenty million tons of rock by twenty-five hundred degrees centigrade and turn it into incandescent lava. You cannot approach a power like that.” Yet, when He walked on earth the Apostle John leaned on His breast, little children sought Him, Simon the leper was healed, Mary with seven demons came finding His arms open and His heart responsive; each found Him approachable and available at their time of need Phillips states, “no longer” **can mortal eyes look upon this Glorified One, the Son of God.**

11. **The Effect of the Vision, v. 17-18** **“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead.”** In the Spirit John is at the of feet His Messiah, the Savior he had known so well, now reveals His glorious aura. The awesomeness of His presence brought John to prostration. However, John says, **‘He laid his right hand on me, saying, Fear not, I am the First and the Last, and the Living One. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.’**” John the beloved is given full assurance that the Lord he serves is aware of his tribulation, that He is the key to life and possesses the keys conquering death and Hades.

II. THE DISTINCT MESSAGE—MAKING READY FOR THE LORD A PEOPLE PREPARED (1:19-20).

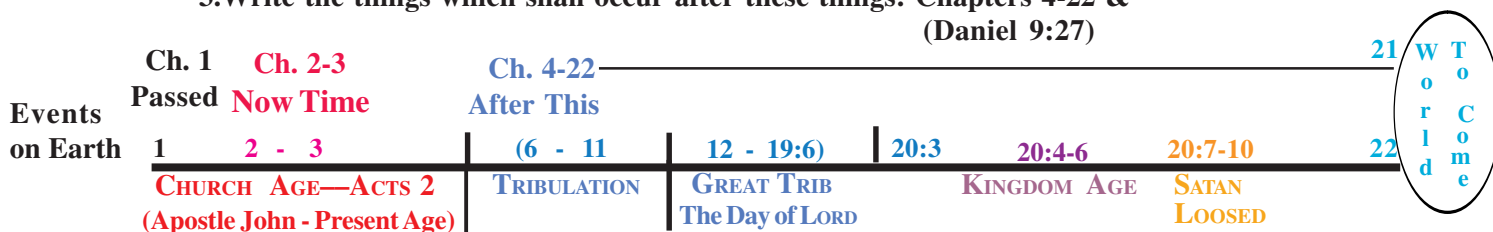
A. DISCERNING THE MESSAGE

1. **“Write therefore the things you have seen,**
2. **Those that are and**
3. **Those that are to take place after this.”**

B. VERSE 19 KEY TO CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK

The angel gives John one verse identifying a threefold approach to the prophecy. Dr. Feinberg comments, “It is the only safe guide to its correct interpretation.” John was told:

1. **Write the things He saw, Chapter 1.**
2. **Write the things which are, Chapters. 2, 3.**
3. **Write the things which shall occur after these things: Chapters 4-22 & (Daniel 9:27)**



C. IN VERSE 20 THE SAVIOR GIVES EXPLANATION OF TWO IMPORTANT FEATURES:

1. The “Stars” are the angels over each of the seven Churches. Some scholars feel these angels are the pastor or spiritual leader over the local church. Others believe these are literal angel appointed by the Lord.
2. The “lampstands” represent light-bearing local churches.

III. CONCLUSION

Reflecting on John’s vision of the glorified Messiah, Donald Grey Barnhouse states in his book, *Revelation*, This is the vision of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Church will one day meet Him.”