

## VISIONS OF REVELATION

### Session 1: John's Vision of Christ (Revelation 1)

#### INTRODUCTION

A. The Apocalyptic Genre:

1. Apocalyptic Style: Symbolism, including symbolic numbers
2. Apocalyptic Theology: Focus on the end times

B. The Apocalypse or Revelation of John:

1. First Readers: Churches in the Roman Province of Asia (now western Turkey)
2. Date: AD 95-96, late in the reign of Emperor Domitian
3. Occasion: Persecution
4. Interpretive Approach: What did these symbols mean to the \_\_\_\_\_?

#### THE STRUCTURE OF JOHN'S APOCALYPSE

"Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later." (Rev 1:19)

"After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'" (Rev 4:1)

"The angel said to me, 'These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.'" (Rev 22:6)

**A. Prologue (Rev 1:1-20)**

**B. Part I: The Revelation of "What Is Now" [= John's Present] (Rev 2:1-3:22)**

C. Part II: The Revelation of "What Will Take Place Later" [John's Future] (Rev 4:1-22:6)

1. Introduction: John's Heavenly Vantage Point (Rev 4:1-5:14)
2. First Vision of the Future (Rev 6:1-8:1)
3. Second Vision of the Future (Rev 8:2-11:19)
- 4. Third Vision of the Future (Rev 12:1-22:6)**

D. Epilogue (Rev 22:7-21)

## COURSE OUTLINE

- October 26: John's Vision of Christ (Revelation 1)  
November 2: John's Vision of the Churches (Revelation 2-3)  
November 9: John's Vision of the Dragon (Revelation 12-13)  
November 16: John's Vision of Victory (Revelation 21-22)

## JOHN'S VISION OF CHRIST (REVELATION 1:9-20)

<sup>9</sup>I, 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. <sup>10</sup>On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, <sup>11</sup>which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

<sup>12</sup>I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup>and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. <sup>14</sup>His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. <sup>15</sup>His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. <sup>16</sup>In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

<sup>17</sup>When 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. <sup>18</sup>I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

<sup>19</sup>"Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. <sup>20</sup>The 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 of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."

A. "a loud voice like a trumpet" (vv. 10, 12):

<sup>16</sup>And it came to pass on the third day, as the morning drew nigh, there were voices and lightnings and a dark cloud on mount Sina: the voice of the trumpet sounded loud, and all the people in the camp trembled. <sup>17</sup>And Moses led the people forth out of the camp to meet God, and they stood by under the camp. <sup>18</sup>The mound of Sina was altogether on a smoke, because God had descended upon it in fire; and the smoke went up as the smoke of a furnace, and the people were exceedingly amazed. <sup>19</sup>And the voices of the trumpet were waxing very much louder. Moses spoke, and God answered him with a voice. (Exodus 19:16-19, LXX)

B. "someone 'like a son of man'" (v. 13; cf. 14:14):

1. This language could identify Jesus as:

a. \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. Psalm 8:4; Ezekiel 2:1)

"Son of..." can express \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_.

b. \_\_\_\_\_ (Daniel 7:13, 18, 22, 27)

c. \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. 1 Enoch 37:71 and 46:1-4 [quoted below])

2. This illustrates Dr. Eugene Boring's point that Revelation's symbolism is:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

C. "dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet (*poderos*)" (v. 13):

See Exodus 28:4, 27; 29:5; Ezekiel 9:2-3, 11; Zechariah 3:5; Wisdom of Solomon 18:24; Sirach 45:8 (LXX).

D. "a golden sash around his chest" (v. 13):

1. Joseph and Aseneth 10:10  
(2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. – A.D. 200)

2. Daniel 10:5, 13, 16 (LXX)

3. Exodus 39:5

E. "His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow" (v. 14):

As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. (Daniel 7:9)

At that place, I saw the One to whom belongs the time before time. And his head was white like wool, and there was with him another individual, whose face was like that of a human being. His countenance was full of grace like that of one among the holy angels. And I asked the one—from among the angels—who was going with me, and who had revealed to me all the secrets regarding the One who was born of human beings, "Who is this, and from whence is he who is going as the prototype of the Before-Time?" And he answered me and said to me, "This is the Son of Man, to whom belongs righteousness, and with whom righteousness dwells. And he will open all the hidden storerooms; for the Lord of the Spirits has chosen him, and he is destined to be victorious before the Lord of the Spirits in eternal uprightness. This Son of Man whom you have seen is the One who would remove the kings and the mighty ones from their comfortable seats and the strong ones from their thrones. He shall loosen the reigns of the strong and crush the teeth of the sinners. He shall depose the kings from their thrones and kingdoms. For they do not extol and glorify him, and neither do they obey him, the source of their kingship. (1 Enoch 46:1-4 [1<sup>st</sup> cent. B.C.]

White hair indicates that Jesus is:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

F. "...his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace,...His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance" (vv. 14-16):

1. *Doxa*:
2. Jewish literature most often uses *doxa* language to describe three types of persons:

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. Daniel 10:4-6)

<sup>4</sup>On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, <sup>5</sup>I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. <sup>6</sup>His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. (Daniel 10:4-6)

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. Exodus 24:15-17;  
Psalm 104:1-2; Ezekiel  
1:26-28)

<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. <sup>2</sup>He wraps himself in light as with a garment.... (Psalm 104:1-2)

<sup>39</sup>Not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. <sup>40</sup>There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. <sup>41</sup>There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. <sup>42</sup>So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup>It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. <sup>44a</sup>It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:39-44a, RSV)

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. 1 Cor 15:39-44a)

The Resurrection body is characterized by:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_

G. "His voice was like the sound of rushing waters" (v. 15):

1. The *Shekinah* Glory of God:
2. Ezekiel 10:
3. Ezekiel 43:1-5:

<sup>1</sup>Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, <sup>2</sup>and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters (cf. 1:24), and the land was radiant with his glory. <sup>3</sup>The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he came to destroy the city and like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown. <sup>4</sup>The glory of the LORD entered the temple through the gate facing east. <sup>5</sup>Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

H. "Out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword" (v. 16):

1. The sword symbolizes the fact that Christ speaks the \_\_\_\_\_,  
which is both a word of \_\_\_\_\_ to those who serve God and,  
at the same time, a word of \_\_\_\_\_ to those who oppose Him.
2. Evidence:
  - a. Revelation 19:11-16:

<sup>11</sup>I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup>His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. <sup>13</sup>He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. <sup>14</sup>The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. <sup>15</sup>Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." [Psalm 2:9] He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. <sup>16</sup>On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

- b. Compare Isaiah 11:4; 49:2; 4 Ezra 13; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12-13.

I. "holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands"  
(1:12-13; 2:1):

1. Christ's interpretation of the symbolism (Rev 1:20):

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches,  
and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

2. Apocalyptic Background:

a. Angels and Nations:

b. This is a way of expressing the truths that:

(1) God is \_\_\_\_\_ over all.

(2) There is a \_\_\_\_\_ world beyond the \_\_\_\_\_  
world, which is partially corrupted by \_\_\_\_\_, and which shapes or influences  
reality in the \_\_\_\_\_ world.

c. Example—Daniel 10:12-14:

<sup>12</sup>Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. <sup>13</sup>But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. <sup>14</sup>Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

d. Compare Ephesians 6:11-12:

<sup>11</sup>Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

<sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

3. Interpretation of the Symbolism in Revelation:

a. **“the seven golden lampstands”** (compare Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 42:6; Matthew 5:14-16):

b. “[Christ walks] **among the seven golden lampstands**” (compare Matthew 28:20):

c. **“the seven stars”**:

d. **“in his right hand”**:

J. Jesus' Words (vv. 17-18):

**<sup>17</sup>When 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. <sup>18</sup>I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.**

## SUMMARY: JOHN'S PORTRAIT OF CHRIST IN REVELATION 1:12-20

A. \_\_\_\_\_:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ("**head and hair white as wool, as white as snow**")
2. \_\_\_\_\_ ("**head and hair white as wool, as white as snow**")
3. \_\_\_\_\_ ("**eyes like blazing fire,**" "**feet like glowing bronze,**" "**face like the sun shining in its brilliance**")—the visible manifestation of \_\_\_\_\_ among his people ("**voice like the sound of rushing waters**")
4. He speaks with the \_\_\_\_\_ ("**a loud voice like a trumpet**"), pronouncing the \_\_\_\_\_, which are words of \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ and words of \_\_\_\_\_ for those who \_\_\_\_\_ him ("**out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword**")

B. \_\_\_\_\_ ("**someone 'like a son of man'**"):

1. Susceptible to \_\_\_\_\_ ("**I was dead**")
2. First of the "**saints of the Most High**" to be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to glorious "eschatological life" in the Kingdom ("**someone 'like a son of man,' face like the sun shining in its brilliance,**" "**alive for ever and ever**")
3. The embodiment of \_\_\_\_\_—everything God intended His \_\_\_\_\_ to be ("**someone 'like a son of man'**")

C. \_\_\_\_\_ ("**someone 'like a son of man'**"):

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ("**a loud voice like a trumpet**")
2. \_\_\_\_\_ ("**a robe reaching down to his feet**")
3. \_\_\_\_\_ ("**a golden sash around his chest**"), who is \_\_\_\_\_ over:
  - a. Both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. The \_\_\_\_\_ ("**in his right hand he held seven stars**")
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ ("**I hold the keys of death and Hades**")