

An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages

Chapter Two The Patmos Vision

Revelation 1:9-20

John On Patmos

Revelation 1:9,

"I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

This series of visions of the Revelation of the Person of Jesus Christ was given to John while he was banished to the Isle of Patmos. This small island is thirty miles off the coast of Asia Minor in the Aegean Sea. Being rocky and infested with snakes, lizards and scorpions, it had little commercial value, so it was used by the Roman Empire for a penal colony where were housed the more desperate criminals, political prisoners, etc.

You will notice that John has addressed himself to the Christians as a brother in tribulation. It was at this time that the early church was going through great persecutions. Their religion was not only "everywhere spoken against" but the people themselves were imprisoned and killed. John, like multitudes of others, was now suffering imprisonment for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. When arrested, they tried in vain to kill him by boiling him in oil for twenty-four hours. The enraged and powerless officials then sentenced him to Patmos as a witch. But God was with him, and he was spared to leave the island and return to Ephesus where he again continued as pastor until the time of his death.

The visions that John received covered a period of two years, AD 95-96. They are the most remarkable of all visions in the Word. The entire book is set forth in symbols, and therefore is the target of much criticism and dispute. However, it does have the seal of God upon it. That makes it authentic and of tremendous value to all who read or listen to its sacred pages.

In The Spirit On The Lord's Day

Revelation 1:10,

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."

"I was in the Spirit." Isn't that just beautiful? My, I love that. You could just call those words, "The whole of the Christian life." If we are going to live as Christians, we have to be in HIS Spirit. John was not talking about being in his own spirit. That would not have brought these visions. It had to be the Spirit of God. It has to be the Spirit of God with us, too, or all our efforts are in vain. Paul said, "I will pray in the Spirit, I will sing in the Spirit, I will live in the Spirit." If there is anything good that will come to me it has to be revealed by the Spirit, confirmed by the Word, and made manifest by the results it bears. As surely as John needed to be in the Spirit to receive these tremendous revelations fresh from Jesus, we need to be in the Spirit to understand the revelations that God has given to us to live by in His Word, for it is the same Spirit.

Look at it this way. All too many read the Bible where it says in Acts 2:38,

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,"

and just pass right on. They don't see it. If they saw it, by getting in the Spirit, they would know that if they want to receive the Holy Spirit, they need to repent and be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus and then God would be duty bound to fulfill His Word by filling them with the Holy Ghost. They never get in His Spirit or it would happen

to them exactly as the Word says. Pray to God for a revelation by His Spirit. That is the first step. Get in the Spirit.

Let me just use another illustration. Suppose you need healing. What does the Word say? Well, we have all read it countless times, but did not get in the Spirit when reading it. Did we ask God for His Spirit to teach us the real truth of it? If we did, we would call the elders, confess our sins, be anointed and prayed for, and that would be that. It might not come immediately, but in His Spirit, it is all over. There is no other court of appeal. God will fulfill His Word. Oh, we need to get in the Spirit, and then things will be done. **DON'T GO THROUGH THE ACTS FIRST. GET IN THE SPIRIT AND THEN GO THROUGH THE ACTS AND WATCH WHAT GOD WILL DO.**

Have you ever noticed how the world gets into the spirit of things that are in the world? They go to their ball games, their sporting events, and their dances. They enter into the spirit of it. They don't sit there like wall flowers, old dried up sticks. They enter right into the feel of things and become a part of things. But, oh, how they hate the Christians for getting into the Spirit of God's Word. They call us fanatics and holy-rollers. There is nothing they won't do to show their hatred and disapproval. But ignore that. You can expect it, knowing where it is coming from. Just go on and get in the Spirit of worship.

Our spirit is clean. It is fresh. It is real. It is sober and serious but nonetheless, full of the joy of the Lord. The Christian ought to be just as exuberant and full of his pleasure in the Lord as the world is when it savors and delights in its pleasures. Both Christians and the world are human; both have emotions. The difference is the Christians' hearts and emotions are purely on the Lord of Glory and His love, while the world satisfies the flesh.

Now it says that John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

Oh, my, here is a verse that really causes some dissension. Not that it needs to, or ought to, but some just don't see what the Word really says.

First of all we find some fine folks that call the Lord's Day, the Sabbath Day, which to them is Saturday. Then there are the others who call the Lord's Day, Sunday, the first day of the week. But how could it be either of these days, or even the two put together, for John was in the Spirit receiving those visions for a period of two years. Actually what had happened was that John was caught up in the Spirit and transported into the Lord's Day, which is yet to come. The Bible speaks of the Day of the Lord which is to be in the future, and John is now seeing the things of that future day. But in the meantime, just to settle our minds, let us find out exactly what the Sabbath is today.

The Sabbath, as we know it from the New Testament, is NOT the keeping of a certain day. We have no command whatsoever to keep Saturday for a Sabbath, nor do we have any commandment to keep the first day of the week, which is Sunday. Here is the truth of the Sabbath, which means "rest." Hebrews 4:8, "For if Jesus had given them rest (or rest day), then would He not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest (Sabbath keeping) to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His." Did you hear that key phrase in the last part of the verse? "God ceased from His own works." God gave Israel the seventh day for their Sabbath, in commemoration of His own work wherein He created the world and all that was therein, and then stopped creating. He ceased from His labors. He rested. Now it was fine to give a Sabbath rest to a people who were all in one place at one time, so they could all keep a certain day. Today half the world is in light while the other half is in darkness, so it wouldn't work at all. But that is just an argument from the natural.

Let's see what the Bible teaches us about this Sabbath rest. "For he that is entered into his rest." This entering in is not only entering in, but remaining in, the rest. It is an eternal rest' of which the seventh day is but a type. Seven' is completion. Eight' is the first' day again. Jesus' resurrection was in the first day of the week, giving us eternal life and eternal Sabbath rest. Thus we see why God could not give us any one certain day of the week as a Sabbath (rest). We've entered into' and do remain in' our rest, which Israel could not do, having only a shadow of the true substance which we enjoy. Why go back to a shadow when we have reality now?

How we receive this rest, or continuing Sabbath, is at the invitation of Jesus. He said in Matthew 11:28,29,

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me;

... and ye shall find rest (or keeping of the Sabbath, not a day, but eternal life, Sabbath) unto your souls."

No matter how long you have been laboring under your load of sin, whether it is ten years, thirty years or fifty years, or longer, come with your tired weary life and you will find His rest (the true Sabbath). Jesus will give you rest.

Now exactly what is that rest that Jesus will give? Isaiah 28:8-12,

"For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people.

To whom He said, This is the rest (Sabbath) wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest (or keeping of His Sabbath); and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear."

Here it is prophesied right here in Isaiah. And it came to pass about 700 years later at Pentecost when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost exactly as it was said they would be. This is the true Sabbath that was promised. Thus when they were filled with the Holy Ghost they ceased from their worldly works, their worldly doings, their evil ways. The Holy Ghost took charge of their lives. They entered into rest. There is your rest. That is your Sabbath. It is not a day, nor a year, but the eternity of being filled and blessed in the Holy Spirit. It is you ceasing, and God doing. It is God in you willing and doing of His good pleasure.

Let me make one more note about the Saturdarians who claim that we meet on the wrong day of the week when we meet on Sunday, the first day. Here is what Justin said in the second century. "On Sunday a meeting is held of all who live in cities and villages, and a section is read of the memoirs of the apostles and the writings as long as time permits. When the reading is finished, the president in a discourse gives the admonition and exhortation to imitate those noble things. After this we all arise to offer common prayer. At the close of the prayer, as we have described, bread and wine are placed before us, and thanksgiving made and the congregation answers, "Amen". Then the elements are distributed to each one and are partaken of and carried by the deacons to the house of the absent. The wealthy and willing then give contributions according to their free will and this collection is deposited with the president who therewith supplies orphans, widows, prisoners, strangers in want." Thus we see that those who claim the early church carried on the Judaic tradition of assembling on the last day of the week are grossly ignorant of what history actually sets forth, and are therefore not worthy of confidence.

Oh, that people might come unto Him and find that rest. There is a cry in all hearts for that rest but the majority don't know the answer. So they try to still the cry by a religious process of keeping certain days or accepting denominational creeds and dogmas. But failing in that, many try drinking, carousing, and every physical excess, thinking that by worldly pleasures there can be some satisfaction. But in such there is no rest. They smoke and take pills to quiet their nerves. But there is no rest in earthly potions. They need Jesus. They need the heavenly remedy, the rest of the Spirit.

Then the most of them go to church on Sunday. That is good but even there they have no idea of how to approach God and how to worship Him. Jesus said that true worship was in Spirit and in truth, John 4:24. But what kind of worship can you get in a church that knows so little of God it puts up a Santa Claus at Christmas and bunnies at Easter? Where did they get that? They got it from the pagans and made it a part of the church doctrine. But when one turns to the Lord and is filled with the Holy Ghost he ceases from all such things. He has a rest in his soul. He really begins to live, and love God and worship Him.

Now let's get back to our Scripture. We know what the Lord's Day is not. If it is not Saturday or Sunday, what is it? Well, let's put it this way. Today is certainly not the Lord's Day. This is man's day. It is man's doing, man's work, man's church, man's idea of worship, man's everything, for it is man's world (cosmos). BUT THE DAY OF THE

LORD IS COMING. Yes, it is. It is just that at this time of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, John was taken up by the Spirit and transported by the Spirit to that Great Day that is coming. The Lord's Day is when the days of man are over. The kingdoms of this world will then become the kingdoms of our God. The day of the Lord is when the judgments fall, and after that comes the millennium. Right now the world does what it wants to do with the Christian. They call him all manner of evil names, making fun of him. But there is coming that great and notable day when they will wail and howl, for the Lamb is coming in wrath to judge the world. That is when the righteous will have their day with the Lord, for the wicked shall burn and the righteous will walk over their ashes into the millennium. Malachi 4:3,

"And ye shall tread down the wicked for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."

The Voice Like A Trumpet

Revelation 1:10,

"... And heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."

John was in the Spirit, and when he was, he saw the great and wonderful day of the Lord Jesus and all His holy power. The future was about to unfold for God was about to teach him. John did not say it was a trumpet. It was like a trumpet. Now when a trumpet is blown it has an urgency about it. It is like the herald, the king's messenger, coming to the people. He blows on a trumpet. It is an urgent call. The people gather to listen. (Israel was always assembled by the sounding of a trumpet.) Something important is at hand. "Listen to it." So this voice had the same urgency of appeal as did the trumpet. Clear and strong it was, startling and awakening. Oh, that we might hear the voice of God as a trumpet this day, for it is the Gospel Trumpet' sounding forth the Word of Prophecy' to make us aware of, and prepared for, what is coming upon the earth.

The Command To Write

Revelation 1:11,

"Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

Here it is. The First and Last, the Alpha and Omega: that's ALL of it. The one true God. The Voice and Word of God. Reality and truth is at hand. What a thing it is to be in the Spirit. My, to be in the presence of God and hear from Him... "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches." The voice that sounded forth His Word in the Garden of Eden and upon Mt. Sinai, which voice was also heard in the excellent glory of the Mount of Transfiguration, was once again sounding forth, and this time to the seven churches with a complete and final revelation of Jesus Christ.

"Write the visions, John. Make a record of them for the ages which are to follow, for they are the true prophecies which MUST come to pass. Write them and send them out, making them known."

John recognized that voice. Oh, you will recognize that voice when He calls if you are one of His own.

The Golden Lampstands

Revelation 1:12,

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks."

John does not say that he turned to see the one whose voice he heard, but he turned to see the voice. Oh, I like that. He turned to see the voice. The voice and the person are one and the same. Jesus is the WORD. John 1:1-3,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made."

If you can ever get to really see the Word you will be seeing Jesus.

When John turned he saw seven golden candlesticks. Actually they were lampstands. And according to verse 20, they are the seven churches: "the seven candlesticks that thou sawest are the seven churches." To represent the churches they could hardly be candles. A candle burns but awhile and then is burned out. It dies. There would be no more to it. But lampstands possess a lasting quality not found in candles.

If you want to get a beautiful picture of the lamp, read about it in Zechariah 4:1-6,

"And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep.

And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof.

And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my Lord?

Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the Word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit', saith the Lord of Hosts."

Here is another lamp of pure gold. It is burning brightly because it has plenty of oil which it is getting from the two olive trees, which stand on either side. The two trees represent the Old and New Testament, and of course the oil typifies the Holy Ghost, Who alone can give the light of God to the people. The angel who spoke to Zechariah was as much as saying "this what you see means that the church cannot accomplish anything by its own might or power, but by the Holy Ghost."

Now examine this lampstand. You will notice that it has a large bowl, or reservoir, that is central to seven arms that come out of it. This bowl is filled with olive oil which flows through seven wicks which are placed in the seven arms. It is the same oil that burns and makes a light at the end of the seven pipes. This light never went out. The priests just kept pouring oil into the bowl.

The lamp was lit in a special way. First, the priest took fire from the sacred altar which was originally lighted by the fire of God. He lit, first of all, the lamp that was sitting on top of the bowl. He then lit the second lamp from the flame of the first lamp. The third lamp received its fire from the second lamp, as did the fourth receive its from the third, and so on, until all the seven lamps were burning. This holy fire from the altar, being passed from lamp to lamp, is a wonderful type of the Holy Spirit in the seven Church Ages. The original outpouring of Pentecost (which outpouring came direct from Jesus on the Mercy Seat) is enduing His Church through all the seven ages, and showing forth perfectly that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever, the never changing God in His essence and His ways.

In John 15, Jesus said, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." He is the main Vine, that which comes out of the original root from the original seed that has the life in it. Now the vine does not bear fruit; it is the branches that do that. Now watch this: You can take a citrus tree such as an orange tree, and graft into it a grapefruit limb, a lemon limb, a tangelo limb, and other kinds of that variety, and all those limbs will grow. But those grafted limbs will not bear oranges. No sir. The lemon limb will bear lemons, and the grapefruit limb will bear grapefruit and so on. Yet those limbs will be thriving off the life in the tree. But if that tree ever puts forth another branch of itself it will be an orange branch and bear oranges. Why? Because the life in the limb and the life in the trunk are identical whereas it wasn't so with the grafted limbs. Those grafted branches had their sources in other kinds of life from other trees, from other roots, from other seeds. Oh, they will bear fruit all right, but they won't bear oranges. They cannot because they are not the original.

That's the way the church is. The vine has been split and limbs have been grafted in. They have grafted in Baptist limbs, Methodist limbs, Presbyterian limbs, and Pentecostal limbs. And those limbs are bearing Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, and Presbyterian

fruit. (Denominational seeds from which they produce their fruit.) But if the vine ever brings forth another branch of itself, that branch will be exactly like the vine itself. It will be the same kind of a branch that was brought forth at Pentecost. It will speak in tongues, prophesy, and have the power and signs of the resurrected Jesus Christ in it. Why? Because it's thriving on the natural resources of the vine itself. You see, it wasn't grafted into the vine; it was BORN in the vine. When those other branches were grafted in, all they could do was bear their own fruit for they were not born of that vine. They don't know about that original life and original fruit. They cannot know for they were not born of it. But if they had been born of it, that same life that was in the original stem (Jesus) would have come through them and manifested through them. John 14:12,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father."

Denominations which are man directed cannot be born of God; for it is the Spirit, NOT MAN, that gives life.

How thrilling it is to think of those seven lamps drawing life and light from the resources of that main bowl because they had their wicks dipped therein. Each church age messenger is depicted here. His life is on fire with the Holy Ghost. His wick (life) has been immersed in Christ. Through that wick he is drawing the very life of Christ, and by it gives out light to the church. What kind of a light is he giving? The very same light that was in the first lamp that was lit. And right on down the ages to the present time of the last day messenger the same life and the same light is manifested by a life that is hid with Christ in God.

Not only can we speak thus of the messengers, but every true believer is dramatically depicted here. They are all drawing from the same source. They have all been dipped into the same bowl. They are dead to themselves and their lives are hid with Christ in God. They are sealed in by the Holy Ghost. Ephesians 4:30,

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

No man can pluck them out of His hand. Their lives cannot be tampered with. The visible life is burning and shining, giving light and manifestations of the Holy Ghost. The inner, invisible life is hidden in God and fed by the Lord's Word. Satan cannot touch them. Not even death can touch them, for death has lost its sting; the grave has lost its victory. Thanks be unto God, they have this victory in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen and amen.

No Longer The Priest

Revelation 1:13,

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."

There He stands, One like unto the Son of Man. As the jewel is beautified by the mounting of the ring, so He is glorified in the midst of the churches. It is the Lord's Day; for John sees Him standing, not as a priest, but as the coming Judge. The golden girdle is no longer girt around the waist where the priest must wear it as he ministers to God in the Holiest Place, but it is now around His shoulders, for He is not now the priest but the JUDGE. Now has John 5:22 come to pass,

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

His service has been rendered. The priesthood is over. The days of the prophecy are finished. He stands girded as the JUDGE.

The Sevenfold Glory Of His Person

Revelation 1:14-16,

"His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire."

And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters."

And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

How deeply moving and inspiring was the appearing of Jesus to John, who was in exile

for the cause of the Word, and behold, the Living WORD now stands before him. What an illuminating vision, for every descriptive attribute has a significance. What a revelation of His glorious Being.

1. His Hair as White as Snow.

John first notices and mentions the whiteness of His hair. It was white, and as bright as snow. This was not because of His age. Oh, no. The brilliantly white hair does not signify age but experience, maturity, and wisdom. The Eternal One does not age. What is time to God? Time means little to God, but wisdom means much. It is as when Solomon called to God for wisdom to judge the people of Israel. Now He is coming, the Judge of all the earth. He will be crowned with wisdom. That is what the white and glistening hair signifies. See this in Daniel 7:9-14,

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the Judgment was set, and the books were opened.

I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

There it is. Daniel saw Him with that white hair. He was the Judge opening the books and judging out of them. Daniel saw Him coming in clouds. That is exactly what John saw. They both saw Him exactly the same. They saw the Judge with His judgment girdle over His shoulders, standing pure and holy, full of wisdom, fully qualified to judge the world in righteousness. Hallelujah.

Even the world understands this symbology, for in ancient times the judge would appear and convene court, dressed in a white wig and a long robe that signified his complete authority (head to foot robe) to mete out justice.

2. His Eyes as Fire.

Think of it. Those eyes that were once dimmed with tears of sorrow and pity. Those eyes that wept with compassion at the grave of Lazarus. Those eyes that saw not the evil of the murderers who hanged Him on a cross but in sorrow cried, "Father forgive them." Now those eyes are a flame of fire, the eyes of the Judge Who will recompense those who rejected Him.

Of all the human emotions He manifested the most when He appeared as the Son of Man was this one, He wept often. Yet behind that weeping and that sorrow there was still God.

Those same eyes saw visions. They looked deep within the hearts of men and read their very thoughts and knew all their various ways. Blazing out of mortal eyes was God, Who cried to those who knew Him not for what He was, "... If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." John 8:24.

"If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do (the works of My Father), though ye believe not Me, believe the works..."

John 10:37,38. Like Jeremiah of old, He was the weeping prophet, for men received not the Word of God and thrust aside the revelation.

Those fiery flaming eyes of the Judge are even now recording the lives of all flesh. Running to and fro throughout the earth, there is nothing He does not know. He knows the desires of the heart and what each one intends to do. There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed, for all things are naked before Him with Whom we have to do. Think of it, He knows even now what you are thinking.

Yes, there He stands as Judge with flaming eyes to mete out judgment. The day of

mercy is over. Oh, that men might repent and seek His face in righteousness while there is yet time. That they might make His bosom their pillow ere the world dissolves in fire.

3. The Feet of Brass.

"And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." Brass is noted for its remarkable hardness. There is nothing that is known that you can put with it to temper it. But this brass that describes His feet is more remarkable yet in that it has stood the test of the fiery furnace, a test that no other one has gone through. And that is exactly right. For brass signifies Divine Judgment: a judgment that God decreed and brought to pass. John 3:14-19,

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Numbers 21:8, 9,

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."

Israel had sinned. Sin had to be judged. So God commanded Moses to place a brazen serpent on a pole, and he who looked was saved from the penalty of his sin.

The brazen serpent on the pole symbolized sin from the Garden of Eden, where the serpent beguiled Eve, causing her to sin. Brass speaks of judgment, as is seen in the brazen altar where the penalty for sin was met in the sacrifice upon the altar. When God judged Israel for her sins in the days of Elijah, He withheld the rain and the fiery heavens became as brass. Now in this illustration we see that the serpent upon the pole represents sin already judged, for it is made of brass, showing Divine judgment had already fallen upon sin. Then whoever looked at the serpent on the pole, accepting the significance of it, was made whole, for this was the work or salvation of the Lord.

The serpent on the pole is a type of what Jesus came into the earth to accomplish. He was made flesh in order to take upon Himself the judgments of God for sin. The foundation of the altar of sacrifice was solid brass, typifying the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. Judgment had already passed upon Him when as yet there were no sinners. Salvation being entirely of the Lord, He trod the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of God alone. His vestures were dyed crimson with His own blood. The fiery furnace of the just judgment and wrath of God was His portion. He suffered, the just for the unjust.

"Thou art worthy, O Lamb of God, for Thou hast redeemed us by Thine own blood."

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquity, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. He suffered as no man had ever suffered. Even before the cross He had shed great drops of sweat like blood from His body as in the intense agony of the ordeal ahead the very blood separated in His veins. Luke 22:44,

"And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

But some day those feet of brass will stand upon the earth. And the Judge of all the earth He shall be, and with equity and perfection will He judge mankind. And there will be no evading that judgment. No turning of that justice. There will be no tempering of it. He that is unjust will be unjust still; he that is filthy will be filthy still. The Unchanging One will not change then, for He never has and never will. Those feet of brass will crush the enemy. They will destroy the anti-christ, the beast and the image and all that is vile

in His sight. He will destroy the church systems that have taken His Name only to corrupt its brilliance and crush them along with the antichrist. All the wicked, the atheists, the agnostics, the modernists, the liberals, will all be there. Death, hell, and the grave will be there. Yes they will. For when He comes, the books will be opened. That is when even the lukewarm church and the five foolish virgins will appear. He will separate the sheep from the goats. When He comes He will take over the kingdom, for it is His, and with Him will be the thousands times ten thousands, His Bride, who come to minister to Him. Glory! Oh, it is now or never. Repent before it is too late. Wake up from amongst the dead and seek God to be filled with His Spirit or you will miss eternal life. Do it now while there is time.

4. His Voice Was as the Sound of Many Waters.

Now what do the waters represent? Hear it in Revelation 17:15,

"... the waters which thou sawest,... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

His voice was as the sound of multitudes speaking. What is it? It is the judgment. For these are the voices of the multitudes of witnesses, who by the Holy Spirit all through the ages have testified to Christ and preached His Gospel. It will be the voice of every man rising in judgment against the sinner who would not take warning. The voices of the seven messengers will be heard loud and clear. Those faithful preachers who preached the saving power of Jesus, who preached water baptism in Jesus' Name, who preached the in-filling and power of the Holy Ghost, who stood with the Word more than they stood with their own lives; all of them were the voice of Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost down through the ages. John 17:20,

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word."

Have you ever thought how terrifying it is to a man drifting helplessly toward a cataract? Think now of that roar as he approaches his sure and certain doom. And just exactly like that is coming the day of judgment when the roar of the multitude of voices condemns you for not having paid heed ere it was too late. Take heed this very hour. For at this moment your thoughts are being recorded in heaven. There your thoughts speak louder than your words. Like the Pharisee who claimed so much with his mouth, but not listening to the Lord, his heart became corrupt and evil until it was too late, even now this could be your last call to hear the Word and receive it unto eternal life. It will be too late when you approach the roar of the many voices of judgment and doom.

But have you ever noticed how sweet and relaxing the sound of water can be? I like to fish, and I like to find a spot where the water is whispering in ripples. I can just lie back and hear it speaking peace and joy and contentment to my heart. How glad I am to be anchored in the haven of rest where the voice of the Lord speaks peace, as the Word of the waters of separation hath declared. How thankful we should be to hear His voice of love and care and guidance and protection. And some day we will hear that same sweet voice speak, not in judgment, but in welcome to us whose sins have been remitted by His blood, whose lives have been Spirit-filled, and whose walk was in the Word. What could be more precious than to hear the multitudes of welcoming voices and be surrounded by those multitudes who have believed unto eternal life? Oh, there is nothing like it. I pray that you will hear His voice and harden not your heart, but receive Him as your King.

Oh, if you would only see it. It was the waters that destroyed the world, but it was the same waters that saved Noah and also saved the whole earth for Noah. Listen to His voice, the voice of His servants, as it calls to repentance and life.

5. In His Right Hand Were Seven Stars.

"And He had in His right hand seven stars." Now of course we already know from verse twenty what the seven stars actually are. "And the mystery of the seven stars are the angels (messengers) of the seven churches." Now we couldn't make a mistake here on any account, as He interprets it for us. These seven stars are the messengers to the seven successive church ages. They are not called by name. They are just set forth as seven, one to each age. From the Ephesian Age on down to this Laodicean Age each messenger brought the message of truth to the people, never failing to keep it the Word of God to that particular church age. Each one held to it. They were steadfast in their loyalty to the original light. As each age pulled away from God, His faithful messenger

turned that age back to the Word. Their strength was from the Lord or they never could have stemmed the tide. They were safe in His care, for nothing could pluck them out of His hand, and neither could anything separate them from the love of God, let it be sickness, peril, nakedness, famine, sword, life or death. They were truly yielded to Him and kept by His omnipotence. They were not concerned about the persecution that came their way. Pain and derision was but cause to give glory to God that they were counted worthy to suffer for Him. And in thankfulness for His salvation they burned with the light of His life and reflected His love, patience, meekness, temperance, gentleness, faithfulness. And God backed them up with wonders, signs, and miracles. They were accused of being fanatics, and holy-rollers. They were denounced by organizations and held in mockery, but they kept true to the Word.

Now it is not hard to stand up and keep true to a creed. It is easy, for the devil is right behind all that. But it is something else to be true to God's Word and go back to what the Word originally produced after Pentecost.

Not long ago a man said to me that the Roman Catholic church had to be the true church as it had been true to what it believed over all the years, and kept on growing and not changing. That isn't so at all. Any church with the government behind it, and with its own creed which isn't the Word at all, and with no manifested ministry to cause the devil to get aroused, could surely carry on. That was not a criterion. But when you think of that little group whose members were sawn asunder, fed to lions, persecuted and driven from pillar to post and yet stayed true to the Word - now definitely that would have to be God. How they survived their battle of faith and carried on still: THAT is a miracle.

And this comfort is not for the seven church age messengers only. Every true believer is in the hand of God and can draw from His love and power, and receive the full benefit of all that God is to the believer. What God gives the messenger, and how He blesses and uses the messenger, is an example to all believers of His goodness and care to ALL members of His body. Amen.

6. The Two-edged Sword.

"And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." In Hebrews 4:12, "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Out of His mouth went the sharp two-edged sword which is the WORD OF GOD. Revelation 19:11-16,

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.

His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself.

And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His Name is called The Word of God.

And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

John 1:48,

"Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."

There it is. When He comes, that Word will come against all nations and all men. And none will be able to stand against it. It will reveal what was in every heart as He did with Nathanael. The Word of God will show who did the will of God and who didn't. It will make known the secret works of every man and why he did them. It will divide asunder. That is what it says in Romans 2:3,

"And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"

Then it goes on to say how God is going to judge men. Here it is in verses 5 to 17. The hard impenitent heart will be judged. The works will be judged. The motives will be judged. There won't be any respect before God; but all will be judged by that Word, no one escaping it. Those who heard and wouldn't listen will be judged by what they heard. Those that rested in it saying they believed it, but didn't live it, will be judged. Every secret will come out in the open and be shouted from the housetops. Oh, we will really understand history then. There won't be a mystery left from all the ages.

But do you know that He is revealing the heart-secrets of men and women in this age in which we are living? Who else could reveal the secrets of the heart but the Word, Himself? Hebrews 4:12,

"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

It is the Word. It is performing where-unto It was sent, for It (the Word) is full of power. It is the same Spirit that was in Jesus (the Word) that is present again in the church in this last age as a last sign trying to head the people off from judgment, for they that reject Him (the Word) are now already come into judgment, crucifying Him afresh. Hebrews 6:6,

"If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

Now Paul said that the Word came in power as well as voice. The Word preached actually demonstrated itself. Like a flaming, cutting sword it went to the consciences of men, and like a surgeon's knife it cut out the diseases and set captives free. Everywhere those early believers went, "they went preaching the Gospel (Word) and God confirmed that Word with signs following." The sick were healed, devils were cast out, and they spoke in new tongues. That was the Word in action. That Word has never failed in the mouths of believing Christians. And in this last age it is here stronger and greater than ever in the true Word bride. Oh, little flock, you little minority, hold on to the Word, fill your mouth and heart with it, and some day God will give you the kingdom.

7. His Face Like The Sun.

"And His countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength."

Matthew 17:1-13,

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.

And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him.

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses and one for Elias.

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead.

And His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise, shall also the Son of Man suffer of them.

Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist."

Now in Matthew 16:28, prefacing Matthew 17:1-13, Jesus had said,

"... There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

And the three apostles did see just that - the order of His second coming. They saw Him transfigured there on the mountain top. His raiment was blazing white and His face shone like the sun at its zenith. And there as He appeared, stood Moses and Elijah on either side. That is exactly how He is coming again. Truly Elijah will first come and turn the hearts of the children (bride) back to the fathers' Apostolic Word Doctrine. Malachi 4:5,6,

"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Israel is already a nation. She is established now with her armies, navy, postal system, flag, and all that pertains to nation-hood. But there is still to be fulfilled the Scripture that says, "... or shall a nation be born at once?..." Isaiah 66:8. That day is coming soon. The fig tree has put forth her buds. The Israelites are waiting for the Messiah. They are expecting Him and their expectations are about to be fulfilled. Israel will be reborn Spiritually, for her Light and her Life are about to be revealed to her.

In Revelation 21:23,

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

This is the New Jerusalem. The Lamb will be in that city, and because of His presence, there will be no light needed. The sun won't rise and shine there, for He is the Sun and Light thereof, Himself. The nations that come into it will walk in His light. Aren't you happy that day is upon us? John saw that day coming. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Malachi 4:1-3,

"For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts."

There it is again. The SUN shining out in all its strength. Oh, the strength of the Son of God shining in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. There He stands, the Judge, the One who suffered and died for us. He took the wrath of Divine judgment upon Himself. He tread the wine press of the fierceness of the wrath of God alone. As we have already stated, to the sinner His voice is as the sound of the cataract or the surf pounding in waves of death upon the rocky shores. But to the saint, His voice is as the sound of the sweetly singing brook as you lie at rest, satisfied in Christ. Shining upon us with His warming rays of love He says, "Fear not, I am He Which Was, Which Is, Which Is To Come; I am the Almighty. Beside Me there is no other. I am the Alpha and Omega, the ALL of it." He's the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star. He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul. Yes, that great day is ready to break and the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings.

The Victorious Christ

Revelation 1:17,18,

"And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last;

I am He That liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

No human being could stand the full effect of that vision. His strength utterly gone, John fell at His feet as though dead. But the hand of the Lord in love touched him, and the voice of blessing said, "Fear not. Don't be afraid. I am the First and Last. I am He That liveth, and was dead; and, behold I am alive for evermore." What is there to fear? The judgment that fell upon Him at the cross, at the grave, and when He descended,

was for us. He absorbed the full brunt of the wound of sin and there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. See for a surety our "Attorney" is our "Judge". He is both "Attorney" and "Judge." As Judge the "case is settled" - it is finished. There is now therefore no condemnation. Why should the church fear? What promise has He ever failed to manifest before us? Why should it fear punishment or death? It has all been overcome. Here is the mighty conqueror. Here is the One Who conquered both worlds of the seen and unseen. Not like Alexander, who conquered the world at the age of thirty-three and knew no other way to turn for further conquest, so he died a victim of sin and riotous living. Not like Napoleon, who conquered all Europe but finally was defeated at Waterloo and banished to Elba, only to find himself conquered. But nothing could conquer Christ. He that descended has now ascended above all, and unto Him has been given a Name that is above every name. Yes, He conquered death, hell, and the grave, and has the keys thereof. What He looses is loosed, and what He binds is bound. There is no changing of it. There was no conqueror before Him and there is none beside Him. He alone is the Saviour, Redeemer. He is the ONLY God: and "Lord Jesus Christ" is His Name.

"Don't fear, John. Don't fear, little flock. All that I am, you are heir to. All my power is yours. My omnipotence is yours as I stand in your midst. I have not come to bring fear and failure, but love and courage and ability. All power is given unto Me and it is yours to use. You speak the Word and I will perform it. That is My covenant and it can never fail."

The Seven Stars And Candlesticks

Revelation 1:20,

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels (messengers) of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

We have already discovered the truth of these two mysteries. Oh, we haven't revealed who these seven messengers were, but by the help of God we will and that mystery will be accomplished. The seven ages we know. They are listed in the Word, and we will deal with each so as to come up to this last age in which we live.

But in one last closing glimpse of this chapter, see Him as He stands there in the midst of the golden lampstands with the seven stars in His right hand. Oh, it is breathtaking to see Him standing there in His Supreme Deity. He is the Judge, the Priest, the King, the Eagle, the Lamb, the Lion, the Alpha, the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Father, Son, Holy Ghost, He Which Was, Which Is, Which Is To Come, the Almighty, the ALL IN ALL. There He is, the Author and Finisher. Worthy is that Lamb! He proved His worth as He bought our salvation by Himself. Now He stands in all His power and all His glory with all things committed unto Him as Judge.

Yes, there He stands amidst the lampstands, with the stars in His hand. It is night, for that is when we use lamps for light, and that is when the stars are seen shining and reflecting the light of the sun. And it is dark. The church is walking by faith in the darkness. Her Lord departed this earth but the Holy Spirit still shines out through the church, giving light to this old sin-cursed world. And those stars reflect His light also. The only light they have is His light. How dark it is - how spiritually cold. Yet when He comes into the midst it is light and warm, and the church is empowered and through Him does the works that He did.

Oh, that we might get a glimpse of Him as did John. What manner of people we ought to be, standing before Him at that day!

If you have not already given your life to Him, may you turn your heart to God this moment, and kneel down right where you are, and ask His forgiveness for your sins, and surrender your life to Him. Then we will attempt to approach the Seven Church Ages together; and as we do I pray that God will help this unworthy servant to reveal His Word to you.



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William Marrion Branham
"... in the days of the voice ..." Rev. 10:7