

A Journey Into the Heavens

The Patmos Vision

September 16, 2015

The location and occasion for writing the book of Revelation was the island of Patmos where John was banished by _____ “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (1:9).

Patmos is a small island in the Aegean Sea. It is mainly volcanic hills and rocky ground, with neither trees, rivers, or any land for cultivation. The island is about 10 miles long and 6 miles wide at the north end. It was used by the Romans for _____ banishment, and the inmates wore fetters and scanty clothing, had insufficient food, slept on the bare ground, and were made to work in the mines under military overseers.

John was around 90 years of age when he was banished to Patmos in 96 A.D. John's exile lasted about _____ months. Tradition affirms that John returned to Ephesus, where he died at 102 years of age. Domitian banished John to Patmos to _____ his influence on other Christians, but little did he know that while in exile John would receive the visions that today we call the book of Revelation. This book sparked even greater _____ and resistance among the Christians. So far as Domitian was concerned, the circumstances of John on Patmos were to be permanent, but the circumstances of God's people are always subject to God's divine intervention.

I. The _____ of the Patmos Vision (1:9-11)

We have already discussed the physical circumstances - the reason and the place of John's banishment - as revealed in verse 9. Now in verses 10-11, his _____ circumstances are described. John says, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day...” This is the only place in the New Testament the phrase “the Lord's day” is found. Though some believe it refers to Easter Sunday or the coming of the Lord, most commentators take the expression to mean _____, the first day of the week.

John was “in the spirit on the Lord’s day”, which means he was worshipping and praising God. When you are in the Spirit, you do not sit around feeling sorry for yourself or asking, Lord, why did you let this happen to me?” When we are in the Spirit, we do not _____ God; instead, we know we are where God wants us to be, and even if we are in the most adverse circumstances, we know God has us there for a reason. (Romans 8:28)

Being in the Spirit, John says “... and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet” (1:10c). The sounding of a trumpet meant the message to be given was of _____ importance. To find the meaning of Jesus’ voice being like a trumpet we must observe the rule of “first _____.” This rule, which is very important in interpreting the book of Revelation, simply states that the first time a word, object, incident, or phrase occurs in the Bible it contains the key to its meaning elsewhere in Scripture. The first time we find trumpets used for announcements is in Numbers 10, where they had two important meanings. (Numbers 10:1-3; Numbers 10:9)

By using the comparison as of a trumpet in Revelation 1:10, John indicates the forth coming revelation is of divine origin, and in the battle described, the Lord is leading and will rescue His people. The voice commanded John, “What thou seest write in a book and send it unto the seven churches... (1:11).” Each of the seven churches listed here was a local church, and the order in which they are mentioned begins with Ephesus on the coast, proceeds north, and then swings east and south. The Spiritual _____ of these seven churches portray almost every known spiritual deficiency that has affected Christian churches throughout history. These conditions have been present in churches of every period, even though various ones seem to be dominant in certain periods.

II. The _____ of the Patmos Vision (1:12-16)

Hearing the voice behind him, John turned to see its source (1:12). What he saw was seven golden candlesticks. These candlesticks were not like the lamp stand in the tabernacle or the temple, for it was seven-branched, having a central shaft and three branches on each side. What John saw in verse 12 were seven _____ lamp stands. These lamp stands of course represented the seven churches.

In the midst of the churches John saw One "... like unto the Son of man... (vs.13). This same expression is used in Daniel 7:13 to refer to Christ. Also Jesus referred to Himself as the "Son of Man" more than _____ times during His earthly ministry, though on occasion He also used the phrase "Son of God". This self-designation of Jesus is often used in association with the necessity of His suffering and death (Mark 10:45).

"Clothed with a garment down to the foot" (1:13) begins a sevenfold description of Christ by John. The long robe is similar to that worn by the high priest, identifying Christ as the great High Priest to the churches.

The "golden girdle" in verse 13 corresponds to that used by the high priest to bind his garments high on the belt and at the waist. The high priest's girdle had golden thread in it, but the one described by John was of pure Gold.

Verse 14 says, "His head and his hairs were white as wool..." The white hair was a sign of maturity, wisdom, and purity. It reminds us of the appearance of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration in Mark 9:3.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire (v.14)". This reveals the all-penetrating, all knowing intelligence of Jesus - His power to read secrets, to bring hidden things to light, and to search all lives and hearts at a glance. (John 4:16-19&20; Matthew 12:24-25; I Corinthians 3:13)

His feet like unto fine brass, as if they had burned in a furnace... is the next characteristic John mentions (vs.5). This indicates the _____ Jesus experienced in His earthly life, which made Him an all-knowing and experienced Judge. Feet of brass also represents strength and stability. Another point to be noted is that the temple's alter of sacrifice, where sin was punished by the shedding of blood, was made of brass. Jesus' feet once had rough spikes driven through them, but when He comes again, it will not be as a humble servant but as a priest and judge with impermeable feet of brass.

His voice as the sound of many waters is John's next description (1:15). Like the mighty sound of Niagara Falls, His voice will drown out all other sounds.

And he had in his right hand seven stars (vs.16). Verse 20 tells us the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. All ecclesiastical authority is vested in Christ. The word angel means _____. So the angels are messengers to the churches. This could very well refer to the pastors of local churches. Being in the right hand could refer to the divine calling of a pastor to be the Lord's messenger on earth. This does not imply pastors are closer to the Lord, but they are divinely called to lead the church.

And out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword (vs.16). We have been given the Word of God to live by, and when the Lord comes again it will be the Bible by which we are judged. (Hebrews 4:12)

And His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength (Rev 1:16). The presence of the glorified Christ radiates immense light. Peter, James, and John saw it on the Mount of Transfiguration. (Matthew 17:2)

III. The _____ of the Patmos Vision (vs. 17-20)

The sheer awesomeness of the presence of Christ caused John to fall ...at his feet dead (vs.17). This was the same John who had leaned against Jesus' chest at the Last Supper (John 13:25). The Lord reassuringly told John in verses 17-18 that He had nothing to Fear, that the Lord is who He says He is and that He is alive forever more! That is our reassurance today as well!!

Though the risen and glorified Lord is to be revered, faithful believers like John can be sure they are safe in His hands. Moreover Christ has ...the keys of hell and death (vs. 18). Keys grant the holder Sovereignty. Jesus is sovereign over death and Hades. The Greek word translated hell in our passage is HADES, which refers to the immediate state of death, awaiting judgement, while hell (Lake of Fire) refers to the eternal state of judgement. Christ is in complete control of both!

Be encouraged today that we serve a powerful God who holds everything in His hands including us, however we should also be in _____ of the powerful and righteous God that we serve as well!!