

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 4/19/92
Revelation 1:9-18 "The Real Picture of the Risen Christ"

Intro (of service): I want to invite you back for our Easter Celebration tonight...

Intro: Story about football game between Big and Little animals...

The game's not over until it's over. The story's not complete until the final page is turned.

Today is Easter. Today we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Q: What picture do you have in mind when you think of the Risen Christ?

Problem: Most people know Jesus from what is written in the Gospels.

Illust: Pictures of Jesus on living room walls...

How is Jesus presented in the Gospels? A great teacher. A miracle worker. A humble servant. A suffering Messiah. A crucified martyr. A resurrected Savior. Many look at the Gospels and see only the humanity of Jesus. We see him sitting by the well at Samaria, hungry, and thirsty, and exhausted after a long day's trek in the hot Palestinian sun. We see Him weeping at the death of His friend Lazarus.

Q: How do you picture the Risen Christ?

Listen. If you picture Jesus merely as I've just described Him, you have a deficient view of Jesus. Why?

Key: God gave us another book besides the 4 gospels designed to "reveal" Jesus Christ as He is NOW and shall be FOREVER.

Q: If you were to see the resurrected Christ today, what would you see?

A: This morning I want to announce to you the actual testimony of a man who had such an experience. This man had the awesome opportunity to actually HEAR and SEE the Resurrected Christ. In fact, his encounter took place more than 60 years after Jesus gave His life on Calvary and conquered the grave. The amazing thing is that after seeing the resurrected Christ, he lived to write about it! His record is the last book of the Bible.

See: Revelation 1:1 "The Revelation (apocalypse) of Jesus Christ."

Proposition: This morning we want to see the Risen Christ as He IS today, from the perspective of an eyewitness, John. Let's notice 4 descriptions from John's eyewitness encounter with the Risen Christ, as revealed in Revelation 1:9-18.

I. What John Heard (9-11)

A. John heard an Identification.

B. John heard Instructions.

II. What John Saw (12-16)

III. What John Did (17a)

IV. What Jesus Announced (17b-18)

Note: We studied this passage a year ago in our series on worship.

Q: What is the real picture of the Risen Christ?

Key: How you VIEW Jesus affects what you DO with Jesus in your life.
This morning, I want you to see how John viewed Jesus.

I. What John Heard (9-11)

Preliminary note:

1:1 "The Revelation of Jesus."

--not plural --This book reveals a Person, Jesus Christ!

This revelation was delivered to the last surviving apostle, John. John in turn was given the task of passing this revelation on to 7 local churches in Asia Minor (4).

1:4-8 In these verses, John looks back to Jesus' earthly ministry...

--He is the First begotten of the dead (5)

--He loves us (5)

--He washed us from our sins in his own blood (5)

--He made us a kingdom of priests (6)

note: The Koran claims that Jesus only pretended to be dead. John said He died. John would know! He saw the tomb and graveclothes.

Then John looks ahead--V 7 "Behold He comes!"

Q: But what about NOW? What picture does the Bible give us of Jesus Now?

A: John tells us about his encounter in vv 9-18.

V 9 "I John who also am your brother..."

John tells us about himself. Remembering he's writing to 7 local churches in Asia minor. He used to pastor the church in Ephesus. But he was exiled to an island called Patmos.

Patmos is a barren, rocky little island, 40 miles off the coast of Asia Minor. It's 10 miles long, 5 miles wide. The Romans banished political prisoners there. Often that exile involved hard labor in the quarries.

Why was John there?

v 9b "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

For more than 60 years, this son of Zebedee had labored to make his Savior known. Now, because of his faithful service, he tasted the fellowship of His sufferings.

While on Patmos, John experienced something dramatic.

V 10 "I was in the Spirit...heard..."

John had an unusual encounter, a revelation. Notice the first sense impacted. John "heard."

Q: What did John hear? "A voice"

Q: What kind of voice?

--A Voice Behind him

--A Great Voice (impressive, impacting)

--A Trumpet-like Voice (loud, penetrating)

Stop there. In the OT, with what were trumpets associated? Trumpets signified majesty, royalty, judgment, and divinity. Trumpets were sounded to indicate you were

in the presence of a King, a Warrior (eg--Jericho), a Judge, and ultimately the presence of God (Ex 19:16, 19 God spoke in the "voice of a trumpet" at Sinai).

Q: What did the Voice reveal to John? John heard 2 things...

A. John heard an Identification.

V 11 "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last..." (see 1:8, 11, 17; 21:6; 22:13)
What title did John use to reveal Jesus in his Gospel?

Jn 1:1 "In the beginning was the WORD..."

What does it take to make a Word? Letters!

What were Alpha and Omega? The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

Whose voice did John hear? He heard the voice of Him who has the first and final word, the One who created the world and will one day judge the world.

Illust:

We'll see more of the Identity of this Person in a moment. John heard something else...

B. John heard Instructions.

V 11 "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the 7 churches..."

See v 19 "Write the things which thou hast seen..."

Key: Here's the Outline of the Book of Revelation.

John was not to conceal his experience. Rather he was to pass it on to local churches. Specific local assemblies of Christians. Real churches in real places, just like W'burg, needed to hear what John heard!

Illust:

Q: What would you do if you heard a voice like that?!

A: Probably the same thing John did--v 12 "I turned to see..."

Tran: V 12 brings us to John's second description...

II. What John Saw (12-16)

Interesting wording in v 12--"I turned to SEE THE VOICE."

Q: When John turned, what did he see first?

A: Not the Voice, but what?

V 12 "...I saw 7 golden lampstands."

Q: What are the 7 golden lampstands?

A: see 1:20 = 7 Churches

That's important. Why? Because what did John see next?

V 13 "And in the MIDST of the 7 lampstands one like the Son of man..."

Who's the Son of man? That phrase, as well as the imagery that follows, comes right out of the OT.

See: Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

Listen. John knew his OT. When he saw that awesome scene which he describes in Rev 1, he immediately thought of Daniel 7. He said, "I saw one like the Son of man, just like the One Daniel described!"

Who did John see? The Risen Christ

Where did John see the Risen Christ?

V 13 "...in the midst of the 7 lampstands."

Do you know what that means practically? Do you know what Jesus Christ is doing right now? He's taking care of His Church! When John saw the Risen Christ, He saw Him in the midst of 7 local churches.

John lived in a day when pagan Roman emperors like Nero and Domitian hounded defenseless Christians. Christians lost their jobs, their homes, even their lives. Didn't anyone care?! Was there anyone that even knew about the injustices endured by God's people?

Yes! Jesus cares! Jesus knows!

Heb 13:5-6 "He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Illust:

John saw the Resurrected Christ! Remember this is the same John that spent 3 years with Jesus, that reclined on the chest of the Lord the night before His Crucifixion. This is the Beloved Apostle. But on that awesome day on Patmos, John saw Jesus in a very different light.

Listen. The scene John describes in vv 13-16 is beyond the comprehension of our finite minds. It's staggering. It's also full of symbolic language, growing out of the OT.

Q: What did John see when he saw Jesus?

A: Look carefully at his description... 3 Offices of the Resurrected Christ!

1. John saw Jesus as the Great High Priest.

V 13 "Clothed with a garment down to the foot"

Who in the OT wore a robe that reached down to their feet, and the girdle around their torso? Who wore that attire? The High Priest in Israel (Ex 28:4; 29:5).

What did the High Priest do? He was the go-between, the Mediator, the Representative. He was the link between sinful people and the Holy God.

Q: Why is the Resurrected Christ wearing the attire of a Priest now?

A: He is our Great High Priest! (see Heb)

He is right now in the presence of God. Doing what? Pleading for us! He has opened the way up for us to be right with a holy God!

Illust: Not like the newspaper article, "Priest offers penance at halfprice"

2. John saw Jesus as the Almighty King.

V 14 "His head and hair were white like wool..." (from Dan 7:9)

This comes from the description of the "Ancient of Days" in Dan 7:9. The white hair is symbolic of His age, in fact, His eternal existence. It also speaks of His divine purity. His flaming eyes speak of His omniscience. Jesus' eyes see all.

V 15 "And His feet like fine bronze, His voice..." (from Ezek 1:13, 27; 8:2)

Jesus' feet of burning bronze depict strength, stability, and judgment. His voice which sounds like many waters represents His awesome authority (eg--Niagra Falls).

Listen. When John saw the Resurrected Christ, He saw Him not only as the Great High Priest, but also as the Almighty Ruler, the Sovereign King of Kings!

3. John saw Jesus as the Great Prophet.

V 16 "...out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword..."

Q: Where do warriors usually carry their swords when in battle? Their hand!

Q: Where did John see Jesus' sword? In His mouth!

Why? Jesus prevails by His Word! "The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb 4:12)."

How will Christ conquer the world? Through His Word! Listen. When we proclaim the Word concerning His death and Resurrection, we are swinging a powerful sword, that cuts at men's depraved hearts!

The climax comes at the end of v 16. John sums it up and says seeing Jesus was like looking at "the sun shining in its strength" (16b)!

Illust: Have you ever looked at a photograph of someone... "That picture doesn't do justice to him!"

Listen. If you know Jesus only as He's revealed in the Gospels, you're not looking at His most recent picture! Yes, the Gospels make it clear that Jesus is the Messiah. He came to suffer and die, to give His life a ransom for many. When Jesus walked on the earth 2000 years ago, He put a veil on His majesty and glory.

But the Book of the Revelation reveals Jesus Christ in His full splendor. What a picture! Jesus is the Great High Priest. He is the Mighty King of Kings! He is the Powerful Prophet! That's the True Picture of the Resurrected Christ!

Have you ever seen Jesus in that light?

Q: What's the right way to respond when you see Jesus like this?

Tran: We've seen what John Heard, and what John Saw. Now...

III. What John Did (17a)

V 17a "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead."

I find it amazing to look at the way people responded in the NT when they saw the Resurrected Christ.

--The Disciples were terrified and frightened and held His feet and worshipped (Lk 24:37; Mt 28:9)

--Thomas worshipped Jesus (Jn 20:28)

--Peter jumped into the water (Jn 21:7)

--Paul fell prostrate (Acts 9:4)
And so did John. He fell on his face, as though dead.

Q: How should people respond today when they see Christ as He is?

Illust:

Q: How have you responded to the Risen Christ? Have you admitted the ugly stain of your sin as you've beheld His spotless glory? Have you bowed your life to Him? Have you ever called out for His forgiveness? Are you worshipping Him with your life right now?

Problem: We have a shallow, deficient, inadequate view of Jesus today in modern Christianity. We have quit pictures of a dark-haired, dark-skinned Jew in mind. And no wonder our evangelism is so ineffective. We tell people they need to believe in Jesus. They don't. Why not? They don't see the need. And why not? We've not given them an accurate picture of Who the Risen Christ really is!

Listen. When we see Jesus as John did, it will revolutionize our lives!

Tran: There's one more scene...

IV. What Jesus Announced (17b-18)

If we saw the Resurrected Jesus as John did, our first reaction would be to DREAD Him. That's what John did.

But what did Jesus do? He dispelled the DREAD and said...

V 17b "Fear not."

Don't dread Jesus. Worship Him today!

How many times do we see those words coming from Jesus' lips in the Gospels?

"Fear not."

Illust: John's experience on Patmos reminds me of a similar event that occurred 60 years earlier. Look at Mt 17...

17:1-2 "Jesus took Peter, James, John..."

17:3 "And was transfigured before them..."

17:5 "...a bright cloud overshadowed them... This is my Beloved Son..."

17:6 "the disciples...fell on their face."

17:7 "Jesus came and touched them...Arise, and be not afraid."

Q: How should we respond to the Risen Christ today?

A: Not with Dread, but with Worship and Adoration and Trust.

Why? Because of What He Announced.

V 18 "I am {He's the Great "I AM"!} He that liveth..."

Notice what Jesus told John about Himself."

1. First and Last (17)
2. He that Liveth (18)
3. Alive forevermore
4. Have the keys of Hades and Death

Q: What's the significance of keys?

A: Keys signify authority and power and control.

Conclusion:

Quote: Wiersbe (Revel, 570), "What the Church needs today is a new awareness of Christ and His glory. We need to see Him 'high and lifted up' (Is 6:1). There is a dangerous absence of awe and worship in our assemblies today. We are boasting about standing on our own feet, instead of breaking and falling at His feet."

We've seen the Real Picture of the Risen Christ today.

Q: What are you going to do with Him?

Illust: