

Sent: Wednesday, September 22, 2021, 6:42 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Revelation 1:9-20

"Therefore, write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things!" (Revelation 1:19)

This was a command from God the Father which He gave to His Son, Jesus Christ, communicated through an angel, to His "bond-servant," John, the "beloved apostle"--while he was exiled on the isle of Patmos. Max Lucado said to imagine an old man (in his 90's), with stooped shoulders, and a shuffling walk! The years had long gone by since he was a young disciple with Jesus in Galilee. Most of his friends had passed on, persecuted and some martyred for the faith! Then, on one particular day, he was suddenly "caught up in the Spirit...and heard behind him a loud voice, like the sound of a trumpet"! And told to write down on a scroll what he saw and to send it to the "seven churches"!

What he saw was "one like the son of man" (the title most used of Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry)--obviously the awesome Jesus Christ in His glorious heavenly state--"in the midst of seven golden lampstands"! He was clothed "in a robe reaching to His feet and girded across His chest with a golden sash (picturing Christ in the role of an Old Testament priest--imagery by MacArthur, with more to follow)! His head and His hair "were white like white wool (picturing His hole estate)! His eyes were like a flame of fire (the eyes of the exalted Lord with a penetrating gaze)! His feet were like "burnished bronze, when it is has been made to glow in a furnace" (a clear reference to divine judgment)! And His voice was "the sound of many waters" (like the crashing of the surf against the rocks of the island--the voice of authority)! The awesomeness of the resurrected Christ!

John continues: "In His right hand He held seven stars" (the messengers representing the seven churches), and "out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword" (signifying judgment on those who dared attack His people and destroy the church)! And His face was like the sun shining in its strength"!

Revelation 1:17 says that when John saw Him (Christ in His glorified state), he "fell at His feet like a dead man"! The vision was so vivid! The impression so powerful, that it knocked him out cold! A common response of those seeing the awesome glory of the Lord! For example, when God appeared to Abram (at 93 years of age) with His covenant promise (Genesis 17:3); or when Isaiah "saw the Lord sitting on the throne" (in Isaiah 6:1-5); or when Saul "heard the voice of the Lord" on the road to Damascus! (To cite a few!)

What does it mean that John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day"? Tim LaHaye wrote that John was not daydreaming or just imagining things, but was "under the influence of spiritual guidance, perhaps deep in prayer, but certainly in communication with God"! MacArthur says, "his experience transcended the bound of normal human understanding...and in a state where God supernaturally revealed things to him"! The apostle Paul, in II Corinthians 12:1, "boasted" of the "visions and revelations" he received from the Lord!

The vision that John experienced must have been a vivid reminder of his experience with Jesus during His earthly ministry on the Mount of Transfiguration, when Jesus was "transfigured" before him (along with Peter and James). Matthew 17:2 says, "His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light...and a bright cloud overshadowed them, and voice out of the cloud said: 'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased' (at which point they-- Peter, James, and John--"fell face down to the ground and were terrified")!

John's vision in our Revelation text may be seen, in some ways, as a "preview" of what we might expect at the Rapture of the church! Only not in a vision but in a "real life" experience! I Thessalonians 4:16-17 says, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord! Therefore comfort one another with these words!" And while we're on the subject, we also have I Corinthians 1:51-58, as a basis for our belief in the coming Rapture (which we believe will precede the Tribulation, which we'll be talking a lot about in our study of Revelation)! The apostle Paul writes: "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on the immortality... and death is swallowed up in victory... Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ..."! (You'll have to read it all in your Bible and may want to underline it for future reference!)

Well, there's at least one other thing I want to bring out about our Revelation text! And that's the way the resurrected Christ, who John saw, responded to the fear John experienced in the vision. This too must have brought back great and comforting memories for John--and for us! John must have remembered the terrible storm on the Sea of Galilee (which he himself had written about, in John 6:14-21) when the disciples were struggling and afraid (until they saw Jesus walking on the water and stilling the storm) and saying, "It is I, be not afraid!"

Or in John 14:1-3 (also written by John) after He told them that He was leaving them but that they "should not let their hearts be troubled," for He was going to prepare a place for them and "would come again" to receive them unto Himself, that where He was, they might be also!

Or, in our text again, last nite, when the resurrected Jesus, in Revelation 1:17, "placed His right hand on John and said, 'Do not be afraid; I AM the first and the last' (applying the Old Testament name for Yahweh to Himself, thus claiming to be God)! And then identifying Himself as the "Living One"! "I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys to death and Hades"! Wow!

MacArthur notes that "knowing that Christ has authority over death provides assurance and so believers need no longer fear! John's own writings must have been re-affirmed by the vision he experienced in our text! Not that he would ever doubt the words God inspired, right? He must have thought about his own writing of John 11:25, where Jesus had said: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies!" Or in actually seeing a fulfillment

here of the words Jesus gave him in John 14:19--"After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also!

Doesn't the story of John, as an old man in exile, shuffling around on the isle of Patmos, make you feel sorry for him? Not anymore! Isn't it amazing that sometimes when we're experiencing our greatest struggles, we end up experiencing our greatest triumphs and blessings? John could relate to that, I think! What a privilege he had to be the one chosen to write the last book of the Bible! A fitting conclusion and "wrap-up" to God's redemptive story!

And how privileged we are as MOBsters to be able to meet together (or zoom) to share what we're learning from this wonderful closing book of God's Word!

Well, on Revelation 2 and the things that were (and are), the "seven lampstands" or the "seven churches," which were (and are) to give light to a darkened world! (See Matthew 5:14-16)

May God be with you and bless your week!

Lowell