



Part 2: Seeing the Cosmic Christ Revelation 1:9-20

The antidote to fear is a vision of the cosmic Christ.

I. Challenging and Fearful Circumstances (Revelation 1:9-11)

These churches were living under Domitian's "reign of terror" when in a single year in A.D. 92, he had 40,000 Christians killed. This was the period when Timothy was beaten to death as well.

John was exiled to the island of Patmos for refusing to swear ultimate allegiance to the Caesar, and it's clear the church and the State were on a collision course (Revelation 1:9).

There is a clear motif of suffering that permeates this letter, and there is a clear call and need for "patient endurance" or perseverance (Revelation 1:9; 2:2-3, 9-10, 19; 3:10; 7:24; 14:12).

In this context, the resurrected Jesus Christ tells John and these early followers of Jesus, "Don't be afraid" (Revelation 1:17).

II. Faith and Perseverance are Fueled by Spirit-Empowered Vision (Revelation 1:10-12)

John is following his regular rhythm of weekly worship when he receives a Spirit-empowered vision. The Holy Spirit is empowering John to see reality and to have God's perspective on his earthly situation. In this letter, John is the Spirit-filled man who sees reality for us.

"The secret to freedom from enslaving patterns of sin is worship. You need worship. You need great worship. You need weeping worship. You need glorious worship. You need to sense God's greatness and to be moved by it – moved to tears and moved to laughter – moved by who God is and what He has done for you. And this needs to be happening all the time." Tim Keller

III. Faith is fueled by a vision of the cosmic Christ (Revelation 1:12-18)

"I do not read Revelation to get additional information about the life of faith in Christ. ... Everything in Revelation can be found in the previous sixty-five books of the Bible. ...I read Revelation not to get more information but to revive my imagination." Eugene Peterson, "Reversed Thunder"

John's vision is a composite of visions given to Ezekiel and Daniel (Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7 and 10). John sees one among the churches "like a son of man" (Revelation 1:13), which is a direct allusion to Daniel 7:13-14.

John sees Jesus:

- Dressed in a robe with a golden sash around His chest – representing Him as both King and High Priest;
- His head and hair were white like wool – representing His agelessness and wisdom (Daniel 7:9, Proverbs 16:31);
- His eyes were like a blazing fire – representing His penetrating and purifying gaze;
- His feet were like bronze – representing His steady and unshakable strength, unlike Nebuchadnezzar's weak kingdom (Daniel 2);
- His voice was like the sound of rushing waters – the language in Ezekiel to describe God's voice (Ezekiel 1:24; 43:2);
- His right hand holds seven stars – contradicting the astrological myth that human life was influenced by the seven known planets;
- From His mouth comes a double-edged sword – His words cut through the world's opinions about God and reality (Isaiah 49:2); this imagery is later used to speak of God's judgment of His enemies (Revelation 2:12-16; 19:15, 21);
- His face was like the sun – radiating God's glory like in His transfiguration (Matthew 17:2).

Jesus is revealing two great truths that we desperately need when we are afraid:

1. Resurrection means to live forever;
2. He has stripped death and hell of its power (Revelation 20:11-15, 1 Corinthians 15).

*"Biblical faith is not guesswork in a moral-spiritual fog.
It is a response to an exact word spoken by Jesus Christ."
Eugene Peterson, "Reversed Thunder"*

IV. Christ is With Us (Revelation 1:12-13, 19-20)

Discussion Questions:

Remember, the notes from 9.13.20 are an "Introduction to Revelation."

1. How are you feeling in our current cultural moment? What words describe your mental and emotional state?
2. Look closely at John's vision of Jesus in Revelation 1:12-16 and the main Old Testament background Scripture of Daniel 7:13-14. What is this vision revealing about Jesus Christ?
3. Describe your response to Doug's main point: "The antidote to fear is a vision of the cosmic Christ." How does Jesus' response to John speak to you (Revelation 1:17-18)?
4. How can you put yourself in a posture to receive ministry from the Holy Spirit? How do you need the Spirit to minister to you? Pray this way.