

## “Awesome and Awestruck” (Revelation 1:9-20)

“It’s a beautiful day in the neighborhood. . . a beautiful day in the neighborhood. Won’t you be mine? Won’t you be mine? Won’t you be my neighbor?” Most people are familiar with this song. It is the theme song of *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*. I grew up watching *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*. Fred Rogers was a Christian gentleman who epitomized gentleness, patience, and love. He was amazing! Even more astounding is that Fred Rogers lived out his Mister Rogers character when the film crews weren’t taping. Most of us don’t know another man quite like Fred Rogers.

That is, with the exception of Jesus. Be honest. Most of us have always thought of Jesus as a deified Mister Rogers with a beard. Our minds picture Jesus as a baby born in a Bethlehem manger, a carpenter who worked with His father in Nazareth, a teaching rabbi who walked the streets of Jerusalem, a lover of children, a beaten and wounded prophet who died on a cross.

Of course, this describes Jesus. Yet this describes Him incompletely. This is not the Jesus of Revelation. The Jesus of Revelation is the God of all the ages who sits in judgment.<sup>1</sup> Many of us don’t like this Jesus. We only like a Jesus that manifests grace, compassion, and mercy. We’re much like children going through a buffet line. We pick and choose what to include and exclude. Most children select desserts and other appetizing foods and bypass vegetables, salads, and fruits. We too can be guilty of picking and choosing what attributes of Jesus we find appetizing and neglecting the rest.

There are two extremes: one that sees Jesus only as King and Judge; the other that only sees Jesus as Savior and Servant. What happens if you only see Jesus as King and Judge? It’s easy to corrupt Him into a distant or capricious or even abusive authority figure to be afraid of and keep your distance from. Some of you come from a family or church background in which this corrupted picture predominated. If so, you need to realize that this same Jesus who is so powerful and holy also loves you deeply, and is far more interested in what He can do for you and give you than in what you can do for or give to Him. He wants to have a love relationship with you that is full of security and goodness.

What happens if you only see Jesus as Savior and Servant? It’s easy to corrupt Him into your domesticated pet who entertains you instead of a Lion who awes you, your emasculated Servant who facilitates your agenda instead of a mighty Ruler who calls you to give your life to His agenda, your personal therapist who helps you manage your sin instead of an authoritative Leader who calls you to healing through repentance. I think this is the more common error in our culture which wants a spirituality that leaves us firmly in control of our lives. Yet, after studying Revelation 1:9-20, I’m convinced that you will conclude that this is not an option. Let’s study these 12 verses and get prepared to be awestruck by the awesome, Lord Jesus Christ.

**1:9:** John<sup>2</sup> begins this section by calling himself “**your brother and fellow-partaker.**”<sup>3</sup> The word “**brother**” stresses the family relationship that we have when we are born into God’s spiritual family. The word “**fellow partaker**”<sup>4</sup> means “to share jointly, to have in common with others.” The uniting factor and the basis for our fellowship is the phrase “**in Jesus.**” John lists three things that he had in common with the seven churches. These three nouns are linked together as three related things that often come simultaneously to believers in Christ.<sup>5</sup> (1) John speaks of himself as “**a fellow partaker in tribulation.**” The word “**tribulation**” refers to “trouble, affliction, and distress.”<sup>6</sup> It refers to the general tribulations that all Christians experience. Jesus Himself said, “In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).<sup>7</sup>

So many of us cry, “Why me?” when problems pile one upon another. Yet the question should be, “Why not me?” Why should I be exempt from trials? (2) John also spoke of a **“kingdom.”** This word refers to Christ’s rule<sup>8</sup> and assures us that even though we will suffer tribulation, we are members of Christ’s present and future kingdom. (3) John then referred to **“perseverance”** (*hupomone*) as the final common thing we share in Jesus.<sup>9</sup> The word carries the idea of “endurance, the ability to abide under pressure, regardless of the intensity or length of time.” This is an empowerment from God that is not guaranteed but must be accomplished through rigorous discipline. The discipline required is a walk of faith with eyes fixed on Christ. Are you striving to persevere in your faith? Is this your joy?

Before moving on to describe the visions he was able to witness, John tells us he was **“on the island called Patmos.”**<sup>10</sup> John was exiled to Patmos, **“because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.”**<sup>11</sup> John’s faithful stand is an example for each one of us. This points to the source of his affliction and endurance as a partaker of Christ’s rule and reign in his life.

When did John receive the Revelation of Jesus Christ? It was at the end of his life, undergoing persecution on a forsaken island. John was a man who practiced the Scripture, “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps 46:10). Moses wrote the Pentateuch in the wilderness. David wrote many psalms while being pursued by Saul. Isaiah lived in difficult days and died a martyr’s death. Ezekiel wrote in exile. Jeremiah’s life was one of trial and persecution. Peter wrote his two letters shortly before martyrdom. Paul wrote several letters from prison. When do we hear best from God? Often, it is in the midst of a crisis. If you are going through a severe time of testing, be still and know that God is God. Let Him speak to you. Let Him reveal Himself to you in a fuller way.

**1:10-11:** John writes that he was **“in the Spirit”** (1:10).<sup>12</sup> This refers to an entrance into an unusual state.<sup>13</sup> This vision took place **“on the Lord’s day.”** This is a reference to Sunday, the first day of the week.<sup>14</sup> Although this is the only reference to Sunday as being called the Lord’s day, the following does support this interpretation: the same adjective is used this way (similar grammatical construction) when speaking of “the Lord’s Supper” in 1 Corinthians 11:20. Early Christians found this to be an appropriate title for Sunday since Christ’s resurrection was on a Sunday.<sup>15</sup> This phrase was commonly used by the second century to refer to Sunday. This term came to be used in Asia Minor shortly after the time of the writing of Revelation.<sup>16</sup>

John was commanded to **“Write in a book what you see”** (1:11). This is one of 12 times John was told to write in a book what he saw.<sup>17</sup> This indicates that John was to write after seeing each vision.<sup>18</sup> The phrase **“and send it to the seven churches,”** shows us again that God intends for the church to have and to know the contents of the book of Revelation (cf. 1:4).<sup>19</sup>

Before we look at 1:12-13, I am going to do something I normally don’t do. I’m going to ask you to skip down to 1:19. If we look at this verse now, it will help us better understand how 1:12-20 fits in the whole of the book. This verse serves as the outline of the book and provides the key to unlock Revelation. In this verse, John writes, **“Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.”** As far as interpretation goes, this is the single most important verse of Revelation. This outline is God’s intended outline for the book and shows us that we should have a futuristic approach to the great majority of Revelation. The simple three-point outline is as follows: (1) **“The things which you have seen”** (the things past). The past things refer to those things which John had seen from 1:9-19 including 1:20, which is an explanation of part of the vision of the glorified Christ (1:9-20). (2) **“The things which are”** (the things present). The things present deal with the message to the seven churches and the state of the church, of the church age (2:1-3:22).

(3) **“The things which will take place after these things”** (the future things). This dominant section looks at the events that will occur after the church age: the tribulation, the millennium, and the eternal state (4:1-22:21).

Although not all interpreters subscribe to this particular outline, it is this writer’s choice for the following reasons: First, the use of the phrase **“after these things”** (*meta tauta*) points to the purpose of the tribulation. The predominant purpose of the tribulation is to bring the nation of Israel to the realization that Jesus Christ (whom they crucified) is their promised Messiah. If the above outline is correct, what will take place “after these things” relates to what happens after the church age is complete, when the tribulation begins. Second, the phrase **“after these things”** is used twice in 4:1. This phrase seems to be borrowed from the book of Daniel (surprise!). In Daniel 2:29, Daniel is told that Nebuchadnezzar’s dream is intended to reveal **“what will take place.”** Whenever this phrase is used, a future fulfillment is always anticipated. Third, this outline is the most logical. It is clear and consistent with the book. James has provided a similar three-point outline in James 1:19: “But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.” These three points coincide quite nicely with the purpose of James’ book. Without a God-inspired outline, both of these books would otherwise be rather difficult to outline. This is especially true of the book of Revelation, which definitely needs to have some clear structure and direction.

**1:12-13a:** After hearing the voice of the Lord, John turned and saw seven golden lampstands (1:12).<sup>20</sup> At this point, we don’t know if these lampstands are to depict something or if they are to be taken as literal lampstands. If we were to guess, it could be that the lampstands are a reference to the seven churches that were just mentioned by name in the previous verse. In 1:20, we learn that this is indeed accurate.<sup>21</sup>

The lampstands are the churches portraying their function in the world and the stars are the angels of the seven churches. The churches were to emit light as a lampstand and the angels were to project light as stars. It is important to note that the churches are no more than “lampstands.” The light is Christ, and they are to show Him forth.<sup>22</sup>

The reason John sees the lampstands first is because Christianity is the church. Throughout the New Testament, Christianity and the church are practically synonymous. It is inconceivable that you could have one and not the other. It is also important to note that the focus of this section is on the risen Lord Jesus Christ who is **“in the middle”** of these lampstands (1:13a). This demonstrates that He has a direct relationship with each church. He is in the midst to minister to us, to search us, and to enable us. Bear in mind, the purpose of the lampstand was not the light itself. It was to bear the light. The church is to bear the light of Jesus Christ to a dark world (see Matt 5:14; Phil 2:15; Eph 5:8-13). Sadly, many churches today are known for great worship, great preaching, great facilities, or great programs. Yet, this is not the true measure of success. Ultimately, we are successful to the degree that we reflect Christ.

**1:13b-16:** The following verses describe the Lord Jesus for us in incredibly intense detail.<sup>23</sup> The description shows who Jesus is and reveals how His qualifications will enable Him to carry out the events that we will study in the following chapters. But before the vivid description begins, note how Jesus is defined: as **“one like a son of man.”**<sup>24</sup> This title points to His true humanity and messianic character. Though portrayed in all the glory of His deity in the similes that follow, He is still the Son of Man, One made like His brethren that He might be a faithful High Priest and reclaim what Adam lost in the fall (cf. Heb 2:9). Note also as the Son of Man, He is seen **“clothed in a robe reaching His feet, and girded across His breast with a golden sash.”** In many weddings the bride has a long train that sweeps across the white runner of the church aisle.<sup>25</sup> This is meant to be impressive and beautiful. Likewise, in biblical times a long robe was a sign of greatness. Either a priest or judge wore a long robe. However, a priest would wear his girdle around his waist, signifying service. He would often lift the hem of his garment and tuck it under his girdle as he went about some of his priestly duties.

By contrast, a judge wore the girdle over one shoulder and across his chest as an insignia of the magisterial office he held.<sup>26</sup> This description makes it clear that Jesus is to be understood as a Judge. During His first coming, Christ looked like an average Palestinian Jew (Isa 53:2; Luke 2:52; Phil 2:5-8). His glory was veiled. He, for a time sacrificially gave up His “rights.” Since His first coming, Jesus looks like God in human form (Dan 7:13; Mark 8:31). His glory is unveiled!

**1. His head and hair (1:14a): “were white like white wool, like snow.”** This is intended to remind us of the vision in Daniel of “the Ancient of Days” (Dan 7:9).<sup>27</sup> The double emphasis of “**white**” is symbolic of Jesus Christ’s absolute purity. It also refers to Jesus’ wisdom.<sup>28</sup> A quick side note: in the Old Testament, white hair was the emblem of age, honor, and wisdom. It symbolized the respect due to the aged for the wisdom of their advanced years.<sup>29</sup> Sadly, in American culture today, we respect the process of aging less and less. A person is admired if he can keep looking young, not if he has the dignity of age. Yet, with age comes wisdom. We need those who are wise in our midst. Without them we have an incomplete body.<sup>30</sup>

**2. His eyes (1:14b): “were like a flame of fire.”** Fire is used often in Scripture of God’s judgment. This phrase looks to that day when every man’s works will be tested by fire (1 Cor 3:13). Christ’s eyes will be searching, penetrating, and revealing (Hab 1:13; Heb 4:12-13). This is reminiscent of when Jesus looked upon Peter after his predicted denial. After Peter denied his Lord three times, Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, awakening him to the stark reality of what he had done (Luke 22:61). The Lord’s look, at this time, was far more than just a brief glance. The Greek word used (*emblepo*) points to Christ fixing His eyes upon Peter in an intently searching sense. Peter came under scrutiny for his actions, causing him to remember that which had previously occurred. This resulted in Peter going out and weeping bitterly (Luke 22:62). When we stand before Jesus Christ and see those same eyes described here as a “**flame of fire,**” we too may weep in shame.

**3. His feet (1:15a): “were like burnished bronze.”** The word “**bronze**” is only used here and in Revelation 2:18, in the New Testament. However, in the Old Testament, bronze stands for divine judgment as seen in the brazen altar and other items of brass used in connection with sacrifice for sin (Exod 38:30). The picture of Christ’s feet is verification that He is holy from his head to His feet.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, He is the awesome One. It also refers to His trampling down of sin and wickedness. There’s no need to ever moan, “I just don’t know what this world is coming to!” This phrase teaches that one day Jesus will put all His enemies and every evil power under His feet. The foes of Jesus will be utterly crushed!

**4. His voice (1:15c): “was like the sound of many waters.”** His voice, as John heard it, was “**like the sound of many waters.**”<sup>32</sup> On a vacation with my family, I experienced the all-encompassing sound of Niagara Falls. If you have ever been to Niagara Falls you will quickly discover that this momentous waterfall is so loud that it silences everything and everyone in its vicinity. About 35 million gallons per minute roar over the brink of the two Niagara Falls.<sup>33</sup> In the same way, it is Christ’s voice of absolute authority to which all humanity must bow.

Do you remember the old E.F. Hutton TV commercials? The setting was typically a busy restaurant or other public place. Two people would be talking about financial matters, and the first person would repeat something his broker had said concerning a certain investment. The second person would say, “Well, my broker is E.F. Hutton, and E.F. Hutton says...” At that point, every single person in the bustling restaurant would stop dead in his tracks, turn, and listen to what the man was about to say. “When E.F. Hutton speaks, people listen,” was their motto. So it would be if Jesus Christ were to give His evaluation of the church. If Christ were to speak, the churches would listen.

**5. His right hand (1:16a): “And in His right hand He held seven stars.”** The “right hand” is a symbol of strength, power, and honor. Again, the mystery of the seven stars in the right hand of the Savior is found in 1:20. It is symbolic of the “angels.” The word “angel” (*angelos*) means “messenger.” In Scripture it is used of both men<sup>34</sup> and angelic beings.<sup>35</sup> So the question is, in this context, which meaning is intended?<sup>36</sup> Is this a reference to angelic beings that function somewhat like guardian angels? Or, do we take it as a reference to human messengers who are leaders of the seven churches? It seems to me that John is referring to spirit beings.<sup>37</sup>

The evidence is as follows: First, the normal New Testament meaning of the word “angel” is of spirit beings that minister to believers. Second, the Greek word *angelos* appears 176 times in the New Testament. In the NASB, the word *angelos* is only translated “messenger(s)” 7 times. So obviously, the vast majority of these occurrences refer to spirit beings. Third, interpreting the book of Revelation depends heavily on an understanding of the book of Daniel. In Daniel, there is precedence for understanding these angels as possible guardian angels for each congregation (Dan 10:13). Fourth, the author of Hebrews asks the rhetorical question: “Are they (angels) not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?” Fifth, it would be unlikely for John to interpret one symbol by using another. Although *angelos* can definitely refer to human messengers, would Jesus have chosen that particular word in this context when he was making a rather concise interpretation? Finally, the figure of the lampstands is not used elsewhere in the Scriptures. However, the stars, as symbols of angels, are used elsewhere. Wherever the word star is used symbolically, it is always used of an angel. This is true in both the Old and New Testaments.<sup>38</sup>

In this present age, angels seem to have authority over and responsibility for churches. The situation will be reversed in the kingdom of God. In 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, Paul informs us that believers will judge angels.

**6. His sword (1:16b): “and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.”** A “sword” in Scripture is symbolic of God’s Word (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12). In these two contexts, the word refers to a short dagger. However, in 1:16b, a different Greek word is used that describes a long, heavy, broad sword used for the purpose of executing justice and wrath on the unbelieving world (see 19:15, 21). It symbolizes the irresistible authority and devastating force of the Lord’s judgment. Interestingly, this word is also used with reference to believers. In Christ’s message to the church at Pergamos, the church was warned that unless those in the church repented, Christ would come quickly and “war against them with the sword of His mouth” (2:16).<sup>39</sup> The principle is this: Christ will judge every person by the standard of His holy Word. On that day, there will be no debate or discussion.

**7. His face (1:16c): “and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.”** The energy of the sun is so great that it gives off 40,000 watts of light from every square inch of its surface. Yet, only half-a-billionth of this energy reaches the earth. The rest is lost in space.<sup>40</sup> In the beginning of the world the Lord made the sun to rule the day.<sup>41</sup> Christ is to the world more than the sun is to the earth. This is a clear reference to the deity and holiness of Christ. Jesus Christ is the sun (Son) shining in the midst of the church. In Christ alone is our source of light and righteousness.

**1:17-18:** After seeing a vision as awesome as John witnessed, there can be only one response and that is to fall prostrate before the glory and majesty of God. Our text says that John fell at Jesus’ feet “as a dead man.” Now keep in mind, this is John. The one who laid his head on Jesus’ chest, the one called the “Beloved Disciple.” The one who saw Jesus at the transfiguration (Matt 17:2). Yet, when John saw the unveiled glory of Jesus he was utterly overwhelmed.<sup>42</sup> What is interesting is Jesus immediately placed His right hand upon John. Throughout the Scriptures, when men caught a glimpse of God’s glory and naturally bowed low, God always spoke or touched them or both (Dan 10:8-10, 15-16; Matt. 17:6-7). This is a wonderful expression of the grace of God.

Although the holiness and awesomeness of God is beyond our wildest imagination, God grants His children comfort and protection from His wrath. But for those who reject Christ, there will be no such thing! Indeed, this is a frightening reality. This knowledge should motivate us to do all that we can to prevent those who are outside of Christ from dying apart from the grace of God.

After touching John, Jesus comforts him with these words, **“Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades.”** The basis for having no fear is Jesus’ words, **“I am the first and the last.”** The phrase **“I am”** recalls Jesus’ claims in the Gospels (cf. Matt 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 6:20; 8:58) and connects Him with God the Father (Exod 3:14; Isa 48:12). The title **“the first and the last”** is essentially the same as “the Alpha and the Omega” (1:8) and “the beginning and the end” (22:13).<sup>43</sup> This is similar to 1:8 and both of these statements are applied to Christ later in the book (2:8; 22:13). This passage helps us to grapple with God’s independent, self-existence, and self-sufficiency as the transcendent God of the universe. He stands independent of all creation.

Jesus also informs us that He is **“the living One”** (cf. Dan 6:26-27; Rev 4:9; 10:6; 15:7) who became dead and is alive forevermore! This is the bedrock for our salvation and assurance. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is the guarantee that we will live forever with Him. But Jesus does not stop there. He goes on to explain that He has **“the keys of death and Hades.”** Death is the state or condition, while Hades is the place of the dead. In the Bible a key is a sign of access and authority. Jesus Christ has the authority to decide who dies and who lives; He controls life and death.

If you’ve ever been asked to watch a neighbor or friend’s home, you understand this principle. You are responsible to feed pets, water the lawn, pick up the mail, and keep an eye on the home. You are in turn given a house key. Although a key is just a mere piece of metal it represents all authority and power. You have access and authority to everything that your neighbor or friend owns. What Jesus is saying, is that His resurrection granted Him preeminence over death, Hades, and the grave. He alone is in complete control of the eternal state/realm (Heb 2:14-15). All of the above descriptions and truths validate the deity and majesty of Jesus Christ.

Imagine with me for a moment that we are at a zoo. As we are looking at the animals, you reach down and pet the head of a small lamb. As you do the lamb lifts its head and licks your hand. You think, “That’s nice,” but move on to the other animals. Suddenly, someone yells, “Look out!” and you turn around to see what the commotion is about. But it’s too late. Standing right in front of you is the biggest, fiercest lion you have ever seen. He has just escaped his cage and you are his lunch if he chooses. There is no way to escape. Slowly he moves toward you opening his jaws wider and wider. Then he gets right up to you, he reaches out and licks your hand and stands peacefully at your side. You breathe a huge sigh of relief. Let me ask you a question: Which lick would mean more to you, the lick of the lion or the lick of the lamb? Obviously, it would be the lion. Why? Because the lion could crush you in his jaws just as easily as lick your hand, but the lamb doesn’t have that option. The primary reason people are not astonished and exuberant at the Lamb of God’s forgiveness of their sins is that they have little or no sense of the Lion’s raging fury against their sins. Until we have trembled on death row we will not dance at the granting of our pardon.<sup>44</sup>

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> "...He judges the churches (2:1-3:22), the whole earth (4:1-16:21), the evil world system (17:1-18:24), world rulers at Armageddon (19:19-21), and Satan (20:1-3, 10). He also judges the earth during the millennium (20:4-6), the rebellious earth at the end of the millennium (20:7-9), and all the unsaved dead (20:11-15). The first 20 chapters of the book deal with judgment and the last two with the new creation." Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Revelation*, 2003 Edition, 20. <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/revelation.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Since John was well known by the churches of Asia Minor, he could simply identify himself as "John" (1:1, 4) or "I John" (1:9; 22:8).

<sup>3</sup> In his epistles, John described himself as an elder (2 John 1; 3 John 1), but in this verse he simply calls himself "a brother and fellow partaker."

<sup>4</sup> Gk. *sunkoinonos*, from the word *koinonia* ("fellowship").

<sup>5</sup> The Greek has the article with the word "tribulation," but it is joined with all three nouns.

<sup>6</sup> The root of this word means, "to crush, press hard."

<sup>7</sup> See also Acts 14:22 "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

Romans 5:3-5 "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Ephesians 3:13 "Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory."

1 Thessalonians 1:6 "You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit."

2 Thessalonians 1:4 "Therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure."

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Rev 20; Luke 12:32; 22:29; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5; Jas 2:5.

<sup>9</sup> E.g., 1 Thess 1:6; 1 Pet 2:21; 4:13; cf. also 2 Cor 1:7; Phil 3:10; 1 Pet 5:1.

<sup>10</sup> Church tradition indicates that John was banished to Patmos by the emperor. Rulers used banishment to an island as a means to rid themselves of influential troublemakers, without having to kill them. See Steve Gregg, ed., *Revelation: Four Views* (Nashville: Nelson, 1997), 58.

<sup>11</sup> Apparently, Patmos was a place where prisoners and undesirables were banished and forced to work in the mines. According to early church fathers (e.g., Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius), John was sent here and forced to work in the mines though way up in years.

<sup>12</sup> The word "in" (*ginomai*) means, "to come to be, become." A literal translation would be, "I came to be in the Spirit."

<sup>13</sup> Such was the experience of Ezekiel (Ezek 2:2; 3:12, 14, etc.), Peter (Acts 10:10-11; 11:15), and Paul (Acts 22:17-18).

<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere in the New Testament, Sunday is called "the first day of the week" (Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2).

<sup>15</sup> Jesus was in the grave on the Jewish Sabbath; He rose on Sunday morning.

<sup>16</sup> Some have suggested that this term became popular to the counterpart term used by the Roman Empire in which they would refer to the first day of the week as "Emperor's day."

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Rev 1:19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5.

<sup>18</sup> In Rev 10:4, John was told not to write, but to seal up what was spoken.

<sup>19</sup> This was before denominations came about. There was no Baptist, Nazarene, Methodist, Lutheran or Assemblies of God church. This is just as well because there aren't going to be any Baptists, Nazarenes, Methodists, Lutherans or Assemblies of God in heaven. There's just going to be Christians. Jesus is concerned about communicating to Christians everywhere. I don't think He is principally worried about what kind of stripes and spots you have. He is looking for doctrinal purity and devotion of heart.

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<sup>20</sup> This recalls the seven-branched lamp, by whose light the priests offered their incense in the tabernacle (Exod 25:31-37).

<sup>21</sup> The lampstands and stars (1:20) are called a “mystery.” However, it is important to note that in Scripture, “mystery” refers to that which was before unknown, but then is revealed by revelation from God (i.e., the inclusion of the Gentiles). It is not something mysterious, but previously unknown.

<sup>22</sup> Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976 [c. 1969]), 57.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas writes, “The titles of Jesus Christ found in the introductions to six of the seven messages in chapters 2 and 3 are drawn largely from this vision of 1:12-20 and its descriptive phrases. Only the message to Laodicea (3:14-22) is devoid of one of these. One of the titles is used in two messages (cf. 2:1 and 3:1)...It is apparent that the appearance of Christ in this vision is designed to emphasize the aspects of His nature that are most relevant to the needs and circumstances of the seven churches who are the primary recipients of this book.” Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 97.

<sup>24</sup> Bible students agree that this description of Christ agrees, to a great extent, with that of the messenger who brought the information to Daniel in his final vision (cf. Dan 10:5-6) with the following exceptions: (1) Daniel’s messenger had His golden band around His waist, whereas Jesus here has His about His chest (1:13). (2) His voice in Daniel was like that of a multitude. Here it is compared with the sound of many waters (1:15). (3) The countenance in Daniel had the appearance of lightning, but in Revelation it is as the sun shining in full strength (1:16). (4) The following particulars in John’s vision are not found in Daniel: white head and hair (1:14), a sword coming from the mouth (1:16), and the seven stars in His right hand (1:16). Gregg, *Revelation: Four Views*, 60.

<sup>25</sup> David Jeremiah, *Escape the Coming Night* (Dallas: Word, 1997 c. 1990)], 46.

<sup>26</sup> Arlen L. Chitwood, *In the Lord’s Day: Book 1* (Norman, OK: The Lamp Broadcast, 1991), 18.

<sup>27</sup> In Dan 7:9, for example, the person with the white hair is God, but the white hair symbolizes wisdom. It may be improper to conclude that God meant John to understand that the person with the white hair in Rev 1:14 is God. He definitely meant him to understand that the person with the white hair is wise.

<sup>28</sup> Micah prophesied, “His [The Messiah’s] goings forth are from old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

<sup>29</sup> Prov 16:31 “A gray heads is the crown of glory.”

<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting that in the Law God commanded, “You will rise up before the white head, and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God; I am the Lord” (Lev 19:32).

<sup>31</sup> When Moses had an encounter with the Angel of the Lord and the burning bush, the Lord spoke out of the bush, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet for the place where you stand is holy ground” (Exod 3:5). Now, if the mere ground that God abides near is holy, how much more so is He?

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Rev 14:2; 19:6; Ps 93:4; Isa 17:13; Ezek 1:24; 43:2.

<sup>33</sup> Niagara Falls Face and Information, <http://www.personaltours.toronto.on.ca/niagara-info.html>.

<sup>34</sup> See Matt 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24, 27; 9:52; 2 Cor 8:23; Jas 2:25.

<sup>35</sup> In the book of Revelation, the Greek word *angelos* is used 77 times. In each case it is used of super natural beings (with the possible exception of the eight usage’s within 1:20-3:22).

<sup>36</sup> For the most thorough treatment see David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5: WBC* (Dallas: Word, 1997), 108-112.

<sup>37</sup> In the past, I’ve leaned toward the human messenger view, but after further study, there seems to be more evidence for the spirit beings view.

<sup>38</sup> Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah* (Tustin: CA, Ariel, 1999 [c. 1983]), 15.

<sup>39</sup> It must be kept in mind that this vision of Christ introduces the letters addressed to the seven churches. See G.R. Beasley-Murray, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992 [c. 1974]), 67.

<sup>40</sup> NASA’s Observatorium, “*How the Sun Works*,” [http://observe.arc.nasa.gov/nasa/exhibits/sun/sun\\_5.html](http://observe.arc.nasa.gov/nasa/exhibits/sun/sun_5.html)

<sup>41</sup> Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 30.

<sup>42</sup> God’s glory is so awesome that no mortal on earth can see it and live (Exod 33:20; 1 Tim 6:16). Just a glimpse of His glory overwhelmed Job (42:1-6), Ezekiel (1:28), and Daniel (7:28; 8:27). Herb Vander Lugt, *Knowing God Through Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Radio Bible Class, 1995), 5.

<sup>43</sup> What is the significance of this title? The prophet Isaiah helps us here. Isaiah writes, “Who has performed and accomplished it, calling forth generation from the beginning? ‘I, the Lord, and the first, and with the last. I am He. Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last. Surely My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens; when I call them, they stand together’” (41:4, 12-13).

<sup>44</sup> Dwight Edwards, *Revolution Within* (Colorado Springs: Water Brook, 2001), 68.