

THE REVELATION

FEBRUARY 18, 2024

Chapter 1:10-16

IV. The Introduction of the Setting, the Things John Saw (1:10-11)

A. The Day (1:10a)

Rev 1:10a I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day,

And so the story started that he had been commanded to write to the seven Churches. He started by describing the setting. He said, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.” In other words, John was praying, just like we all do, with the help of the Holy Spirit on a Sunday.

B. The Voice (1:10b)

Rev 1:10b and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,

While he was praying, he heard this voice and John wrote, “and I heard behind me a loud voice like ~~the sound~~ of a trumpet.” It was sudden. It was unexpected. It was loud. It was not like the sound of a ram’s horn, a *shofar* as in the Old Testament. By 96 AD, brass trumpets were in use everywhere, not the instrument of old made from the horn of a ram but a straight instrument that could deafen the ear of anyone. But it was not a trumpet. It was a voice that was as loud as a brass trumpet.

C. The Instruction (1:11)

1. Record It (1:11a)

Rev 1:11a saying, " Write in a book what you see,

The loud voice said to John, “Write in a book what you see.” John was about to see something wonderful, something marvelous, something magnificent. It would be the events of the future Second Coming of the LORD played out in living color. It was John’s job to describe what he was seeing to the best of his ability. John lived in 96 AD. It has now been almost 1900 years since this vision was given to John. The events in REVELATION that will begin in chapter 4 have not occurred yet. John knew nothing of cars, airplanes, trains, rocket ships, televisions, cell phones, skyscrapers, copiers, computers or remote controls. Yet, the LORD was going to reveal to him all the events just as they will occur still in our future and John was going to have great difficulty putting into words the description of what he was seeing, things he had never seen in real life and things he will never see in 95 AD. Some of the things he was trying to describe we might not have seen either because they have not been invented yet. We have never seen them because they do not exist! The instruction to John from the LORD was this, record it! Write what you see! A big task for a man in 95 AD.

2. Send It (1:11b)

Rev 1:11b and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

Then the loud voice said to John, “When you get all of what you see written down, ‘send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.’” John was not totally responsible for the establishment of these Churches. Paul was most likely responsible because he was the one who personally evangelized a great swath across the Eastern Roman Empire all the way from Syria to Yugoslavia. These were not new Churches; they had most likely been established more than sixty years before. But the connection with John was special for each of these Churches because he had placed one of his own disciples, trained by him, in the position of pastor in each. Without a doubt, those pastors would have taken a letter from John extremely seriously, especially one as phenomenal as this one. Coming from their mentor, it would not be doubted.

D. The Response (1:12)

1. What John Did (1:12a)

Rev 1:12a And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me.

John responded as we would expect when he said, “And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me.” When he turned, he saw the first scene he had to put into words.

2. What John Saw (1:12b-c)

a) Lampstands (1:12b)

Rev 1:12b And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

John said, “And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,” seven individual lampstands. This was not a menorah which was one lampstand with seven branches that had flaming wicks. These were individual candlesticks. We do not know their size; however, they are large enough for the Person speaking with a loud voice to walk between them.

b) Son of Man (1:13a-16c)

Rev 1:13a and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man,

John then said, “and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man.” This title comes from the Old Testament. When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace to see the plight of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, he was surprised to see a fourth man in the fire, one who looked like the “son of man” (Dan. 7:13). It was the pre-incarnate Jesus then and it is the resurrected Jesus now in this passage.

(1) His Robe (1:13b)

Rev 1:13b clothed in a robe reaching to the feet,

John said, He was “clothed in a robe reaching to the feet.” We understand this description and so did John. Jews were always modest in their dress. Long robes were common in his day in opposition to the short clothing worn by the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans.

(2) His Girdle (1:13c)

Rev 1:13c and girded across His breast with a golden girdle.

John said, “and girded across His breast with a golden girdle.” What is a girdle? It is best that we think of this as a sash wrapped around His chest. It may have been sewn rather than wrapped but John does not address its construction.

(3) His Hair (1:14a)

Rev 1:14a And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow;

John looked up from His chest and said, “And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow.” This is new in the Scripture as the description of Jesus. It meant that Jesus had taken on the same characteristic as the “Ancient of Days” mentioned in Daniel (Dan 7:9). This, too, is a reference to the pre-incarnate Jesus and now the resurrected Jesus. In other words, before He humbled Himself to become a babe, He appeared at least once with snow white hair.

(4) His Eyes (1:14b)

Rev 1:14b and His eyes were like a flame of fire;

But the eyes drew John’s attention. They were not human eyes as we might expect. Rather, John said, “and His eyes were like a flame of fire.” Everything so far in John’s description speaks of Jesus’ royalty and priesthood, but the eyes reveal something different. Just His eyes instill fear – fear of His eternal and final judgment!

(5) His Feet (1:15a)

Rev 1:15a and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace,

John must have dropped his eyes as soon as he saw the flaming eyes of Jesus. In his gaze downward, he saw Jesus’ feet. He said, “and His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace.” John was already struggling with his descriptive words and that shows here as well. Jesus’ feet looked like burnished or rather polished bronze. But that definition was not good enough. John may have been able to see himself in the reflection of Jesus’ feet, but the glow was so intense that they looked like hot molten metal still sitting in the crucible in the fire – such a glow that it burned the eyes.

(6) His Voice (1:15b)

Rev 1:15b and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

John had already mentioned that His voice was loud like a trumpet, but here he added to that description by saying, “and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters.” Five times I have visited Niagara Falls. Five times I have been awed at the incredible noise of Niagara Falls. It is so loud that you cannot hear the normal speaking voice of a person one foot away – a person must scream to be heard.

(7) His Hand (1:16a)

Rev 1:16a And in His right hand He held seven stars;

John did not need to look up to explain the sound of Jesus' voice; most likely his eyes were still focused on the LORD's feet. As he looked up toward the waist of the LORD, he saw His right hand which held seven stars. We understand the robe, girdle, hair, eyes, feet, voice, and the hand, but what was the meaning of these seven stars? We will have to wait for that answer.

(8) His Mouth (1:16b)

Rev 1:16b and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword;

As John continued to lift his eyes, he saw the mouth of the LORD and said, "and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword." We cannot see it in the English translation, but the Greek uses the word *romphaia* in describing this type of sword. We will see it used again in this book five times (Rev 2:12; 2:16; 6:8; 19:15; 19:21). It was the kind of short sword used by Romans for stabbing with the intent to kill. It was not a long sword used in sword fights – no dueling action on the part of the LORD and His enemy. This short sword was meant to inflict death in hand-to-hand combat.

(9) His Face (1:16c)

Rev 1:16c and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

Finally, as John traced the line of the sword upward, he, once again, saw the face of the LORD. Who can look directly into the sun and bear it? Not one of us. We can move around in this world as we do our daily tasks under its brilliance, we count on it for all it does for us, it is stronger and mightier than all of us, but to look into it is impossible except for a milli-second's glance – the time he could stand to look into the face of the resurrected LORD of glory.