

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation 1:13-16

Introduction

1. The Apostle John was banished to the lonely island of Patmos “on account of the Word of God and on account of the testimony of Jesus Christ” (v. 9).

2. While on Patmos, John was brought under the revelatory power of the Holy Spirit. Hearing a divine voice, he was commanded to write what he saw in a Book and send the same to seven local churches of Asia indicated (vv. 10, 11).

3. Turning “to see” the voice which spoke “with” him, John “saw” (as in his soul) seven golden (therefore very precious) candlesticks (i.e. seven separate light bearers). In the midst of these seven individual candlesticks (not a menorah), John saw one like the Son of Man (v. 13).

4. “Son of Man” is a title used of Ezekiel about 100 times, once of Daniel (8:17), about seventy times in the Gospels of our Lord. Paul never uses it of Christ. The title expresses a characteristic of the Lord. It focuses on the Lord Jesus as God’s mediatorial King who will ultimately rule the world. The vision views Jesus after His ascension, relating to the future, and evidently the permanency of the incarnation.

5. The Lord’s humanity is a patent Biblical doctrine. It is the view of Him “in the midst” which fills John’s vision, not the candlesticks! Here is the description of His Person in all His divine perfection:-

1. HIS CLOTHES v. 13

The verb “was clothed” () is a classic perfect passive participle. The extensive aspect of His clothes is clear. The clothes are sectioned on His body.

a. To the Feet

The adjective employed is only found here in the N.T. It indicates His outer garment went down to His feet, but did not cover them (cf. v. 15). This same term is used of the “ephod” in the LXX (Septuagint or Greek of the O.T., Ex. 28:31). Hence, our Lord wears the robe of the Priest, but more than that. Here is royal dignity as the Judge (cf. Isa. 6:1; other description here). Surely He judges each church’s use of its light!

b. About the Chest

As above, the verb here is also a perfect passive form (). This kind of high girding is a mark of high dignity (cf. Isa. 11:5; Eve. 15:6). Among other considerations, this connotes His judgment will be executed according to His innate nature.

2. HIS PERSON vv. 14-16

Note: A seven-fold glory of the Lord is presented:-

a. His Head and Hair

There can be no question that the thoughts expressed relate to the Ancient of Days in the O.T. (cf. Dan. 7:9, 10, 13, 22). Certain characteristics are common to both Son of Man and Ancient of Days, yet they are distinct persons (cf. Jn. 5:22). The fullness of divine wisdom in absolute purity like wool or snow may well be the impact of the dazzling whiteness of the head and hair. Antiquity or age must not be construed from the white hair (cf. Psa. 102:25-27).

b. His Eyes v. 14

During His earthly sojourn, the Lord’s eyes often dimmed with tears (cf. Jn. 11:25). Now

there is penetrating judgment. His omniscience possessing total information is evident. Everything is manifest to Him (Heb. 4:13). For the obedient saint, this is comfort, but for the hypocrite and godless this is consuming terror. The mention of fire is significant (cf. 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:1-13; Ro. 14:12). The all knowing eyes of the Lord were known to Peter (Luke 22:61). Eschatologically, at His coming, His eyes will be as described here (19:12).

c. His Feet v. 15

The Greek word for “fine brass” () has defeated all the ingenious efforts of translators. Some, therefore, merely transliterate it. That it refers to a composite metal produced through fire and dazzled the eyes of John is a given. The thought here may well be wrath - judgment upon sin, upholding God’s holiness, exhibited at Calvary. The Lord stands in the midst of the churches on earth. He is gracious because of Calvary, but He is obligated to judge according to the glory for the Father for which He died to secure (cf. Isa. 63:1-6).

d. His Voice v. 15

The Psalmist refers to God’s mighty voice (29; 93:4). The millennial temple speaks of His voice (Ezek. 43:2) and Daniel’s vision mentions it (10:6). It was this same voice which stilled the waters (Mt. 8:23-27). The “many waters” surely notes His absolute sovereignty and majesty and suggests the plenitude of attributes of deity found in Messiah.

Note: Three major attributes of deity are indicated in this context (vv. 14b, 15); Omniscience (eyes), Omnipresence (feet), Omnipotence (voice). What a mighty God is our blessed Lord.

e. His Hand v. 16

The “right” hand speaks of possession, authority and honor (Ps. 110; Eph. 1:20; Rev. 5:1, 7). The stars are the “angels” of the seven churches. While some view these as angelic beings, it is more accurate to take them as the “messengers” or “pastors” of the churches. A very solemn lesson is taught here. The “Pastor” derives his power and office from the Lord. He is the One Who holds them in His right hand. What an honorable and responsible position for every leader of the local church to possess (v. 20).

f. His Mouth v. 16

From the Lord’s mouth comes a two edged sword (cf. Isa. 11:4; 49:2). The sword is regarded as proceeding from the mouth like the spoken word (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17). His word is incisive i.e. it excises diseased and defiled areas and what is contrary to His will. It also penetrates every part of one’s being. Christ speaks -- full stop!

g. His Countenance

This final aspect of the Son of Man seen by John is His face (cf. Jn. 11:44 for same word). Once spittle fell on Him (Mt. 26:67, but different noun), but now divine glory more brilliant than the midday sun. Thinking of His splendor, consider this: Christ is the light to the world (Mal. 4:2). Christ is the Son of Righteousness to Israel (Mal. 4:2). Christ is the bright and Morning Star to the Church (Rev. 22:16).

Conclusion

When John turned to see the “voice” behind him, he was given a vision of the Lord’s Person, Powers, Prerogatives, and Preeminence. Oh, what abounding glory is His. Let us extol Him as the Lord of heaven. Amen.