



# LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES



June 4th 2017 — Part 5

Rev. 1:9-16 — “John’s Vision of the Son of Man”

## The Introduction to the Vision

Rev. 1:9— *I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*

“...partner...”

- John is not writing about things which he has not experienced himself. The image here is of a business partner (someone who shares in the risks and rewards). He shares the glories and difficulties of being in Christ along with them.

“...in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance...in Jesus,” (NASB)

“Only one Greek article precedes these three words, which conveys the idea that all three are part of the same reality.” —G.K. Beale

Those “in Jesus” share in

(1) The tribulation (*thlipsis*) - “Trouble that inflicts distress. Oppression, affliction, tribulation.”

(2) The kingdom (*basileia*) - There is a present reality to the kingdom in which all believers participate (Rev. 1:6).

(3) The endurance (*hypomonē*) - “The capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty.”

➔ Because believers are “in Christ” we share in the things which were and are His. In this life that means that we will experience tribulation. Ironically, however, we \_\_\_\_\_ with Him when we endure these sufferings and maintain faithful witness to the Word of God just as He did.

### Patmos

- A small island (13.15 sq mi) southwest of Miletus in the Icarian Sea. In *Annals*, the Roman historian Tacitus refers to islands such as Patmos as places where political prisoners were banished. According to Eusebius John was banished to the island by the emperor Domitian in A.D. 95.

⇒ John has been sent to this island because of his faithful witness to Christ.

## The Instruction

Rev. 1:10-11— <sup>10</sup>*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet* <sup>11</sup>*saying, “Write what you see in a book 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.”*

### The “Prophet” John

- These verses serve to connect John to the OT prophetic tradition. Like Ezekiel, John was given visions “in the Spirit.”

Ezek. 3:12, 14— <sup>12</sup>*Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great earthquake: “Blessed be the glory of the Lord from its place!”* <sup>14</sup>*The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the Lord being strong upon me.*

- John was also instructed to write down the things he saw in book or scroll as were Moses (Exod. 17:14), Isaiah (Isa. 30:8), and Jeremiah.

Jer. 36:1-2a— <sup>1</sup>*In the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord:* <sup>2</sup>*“Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations...”*

“...voice like a trumpet...”

Exod. 19:16-17— <sup>16</sup>*On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.* <sup>17</sup>*Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.*

## The Seven Churches

- We really don’t know why John is instructed to write to these specific churches. It is possible that these were the leading churches within this part of the Roman empire or that John had a hand in the founding of each of these churches.

# The Vision of the Son of Man

## His Present Work

Rev. 1:12-13— <sup>12</sup>Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup>and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

### The Lampstands

- In Exod. 25:31 Moses was instructed to create a seven-branched lampstand to place within the Tabernacle. When the temple was built, the Holy Place contained ten lampstands, five on the north and five on the south (2 Chron. 4:7).  
⇒ The lampstands were the only source of light in the Holy Place and had to be tended by the priests who made sure they had the required amount of oil which was the fuel for the lamp.

“...one like a son of man...”

- This description once again recalls the Messianic prophecy of Daniel 7:13. The title “Son of Man” was also Jesus’ favorite title to use for Himself throughout His earthly ministry.

Observations: 1. The Son of Man is a \_\_\_\_\_

⇒ His position “in the midst” of the lampstands shows that He as at work tending them as did the OT priests (Exod. 30:7). The long robe was similar to that which was worn by the priests (1 Chron. 15:27)

2. The Son of Man is a \_\_\_\_\_

⇒ The reference to Dan. 7:13 as well as the description of him wearing a golden (royal) sash points to the position of kingly authority that the risen Christ possesses.

## His Attributes (Rev. 1:14-16)

“The hairs of his head were white...” — The Son of Man possesses all the \_\_\_\_\_ & knowledge of God Almighty.

Dan. 7:9—“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.

“...His eyes were like a flame of fire...” — The Son of Man sees clearly what is true and can therefore \_\_\_\_\_ accurately.

⇒ This imagery is found in other parts of Revelation (2:18, 19:12) as well as in Daniel (10:6).

“...his feet were like burnished bronze...” — The Son of Man’s judgment is morally \_\_\_\_\_ because He is God.

⇒ This imagery is found in both Ezekiel (1:13, 27, 8:2) and Daniel (10:6) in association with God’s glory. It is also imagery that is used in Rev. 3:18 to call the church to receive from Him the things which can make them pure.

“... his voice was like the roar of many waters.” — The Son of Man speaks with the power and \_\_\_\_\_ of God Almighty.

Ezek. 43:2—And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory.

“In his right hand he held seven stars...” — The Son of Man \_\_\_\_\_ His church and her leaders by His power.

⇒ The right hand of God is the place of His power and might (Ps. 17:7; Isa. 41:10) and is therefore the place of protection for Christ’s church.

“...from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword...” — The Son of Man will execute judgement by His powerful \_\_\_\_\_.

Isa. 11:4—but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Isa. 49:2— He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.

“...and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.” — The Son of Man is the Divine \_\_\_\_\_ who will defeat those who make themselves His enemies and the enemies of His people.

Matt. 17:2—And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

Judges 5:31—Lord, may all your enemies perish...But may those who love Him be like the rising of the sun in its strength.