

# Face to Face

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*Rev. 1:12-18*

## **INTRODUCTION**

- A. “Face to face with Christ my Savior, Face to face — what will it be, When with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ who died for me?”
- B. Imagine seeing Jesus arrayed in all his glory and splendor.
  - 1. Surely such a sight would take our breath away.
  - 2. The guards at the tomb saw him after his resurrection when his “countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow” (Mt. 28:3); they “shook for fear of him, and became like dead men” (Mt. 28:4).
- C. This morning, we want to examine a passage in the NT which graphically portrays the glory and splendor of Jesus.
  - 1. One Lord’s day, while John was in exile on Patmos, Jesus appeared to him to give him the Revelation.
  - 2. When John turned to see the great voice that spoke to him, he saw Jesus face to face in all his glory and splendor.
  - 3. This morning, we want to examine what John saw so that we can see Jesus in all his glory and splendor.

## **JOHN SAW THE SOVEREIGN LORD, vv. 12-13**

- A. John saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands, he saw one like the Son of Man.
- B. Jesus describes the seven golden lampstands as the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:20).
  - 1. This imagery is certainly taken from the tabernacle that had a 7-pronged lampstand (Ex 25:31-32).
  - 2. These lampstands form a circle around Christ which probably show the independence of these churches from one another.
- C. Christ’s standing in the midst of these lampstands shows his headship over the church.
  - 1. Being in the midst of these lampstands, he is both able to move among them and control them (cf Rev. 2:5).
  - 2. Jesus is the head of the church.
    - a. “Christ is head of the church” (Eph. 5:23).
    - b. “He is the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18).
  - 3. Since Jesus is the head of the church, the church needs to give Jesus the reverence he deserves — Everything about the church needs to be exactly the way Jesus wants, for he is the church’s head.

## **JOHN SAW THE SINNER’S HIGH PRIEST, v. 13**

- A. John saw Jesus clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.
- B. This was the official robe of the high priest.
  - 1. The Greek term occurs only here in the Greek New Testament.
    - a. However, the term does occur several times in the LXX.
    - b. Each time the term occurs, it refers to the official robe worn by the high priest.
  - 2. These high priestly garments are described in Ex. 28:31ff.
  - 3. Josephus records that the Levitical priests were girded about the breast.

- C. Jesus serves as our High Priest.
  1. He is a merciful and faithful High Priest, for he lived as a man (Heb. 2:17).
  2. We have a sympathetic High Priest, who understands our weakness (Heb. 4:14-15).
  3. Jesus is forever our High Priest, not like the high priest under the Old Testament who died (Heb. 6:20).
  4. He does not need to offer sacrifices continually, for he offered himself once and for all (Heb. 7:26-27).
  5. Our High Priest is seated at the right hand of God's throne (Heb. 8:1).
- D. Since Jesus is our High Priest, we can have confidence before God.
  1. With Jesus as our High Priest, we can go "boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).
  2. If we go to the throne of God when we have sinned, we can rest assured that God will hear us and that he will forgive us.

### **JOHN SAW THE SAPIENT LORD, v. 14**

- A. His head and hair were white like wool, this should probably be translated something like "his head, that is his hair, was white like wool."
- B. When Daniel saw the Ancient of Days, his hair was like pure wool (Dan. 7:9); the statement here is surely an allusion to that vision.
- C. This white hair could have something to do with his eternity: being of great age his hair is white.
- D. This white hair could also have something to do with his purity.
  1. White, of course, is often a sign of purity.
  2. "Many shall be purified, made white and refined" (Dan. 12:10).
- E. However, this could very likely refer to Jesus' wisdom.
  1. The Bible speaks of a gray head being the glory of old age.
    - a. "The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, If it is found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16:31).
    - b. "The glory of young men is their strength, And the splendor of old men is their gray head" (Prov. 20:29).
  2. Old men, those with gray hair, are fair wiser than those who are young.
- F. Jesus, with his gray hair, has unsurpassable wisdom.
  1. "The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding" (Is. 11:2).
  2. Christians recognize Christ as "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24).
  3. If Christ is so wise, we would do well to heed his counsel.
    - a. "Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Mt. 7:24).
    - b. "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (Jn. 6:63).
    - c. Let us turn to the pages of Scripture to find the advice we need in all of life's situations.

### **JOHN SAW THE SHARP-EYED LORD, v. 14**

- A. John saw that Jesus' eyes were "like a flame of fire."
- B. That his eyes were like a "flame of fire" means that he can penetrate into the souls of men; before Jesus man is not able to hid behind a facade that he can hide behind with others.
- C. The Lord searches us and knows us; he penetrates us.
  1. "Hell and Destructions are before the LORD; So how much more the hearts of the sons of men" (Prov. 15:11).
  2. God "knows the heart" (Acts 15:8).
- D. There is no sin we can hide from the Lord Jesus, for he sees all and knows all.
  1. When the Samaritan woman was at the well, he knew that she had been married five times

and was then living with a man not her husband (Jn. 4: 17-18).

2. God knows your sins. Are there things about you that you wish God did not know?

### **JOHN SAW THE SENTENCING LORD, vv. 15-16**

- A. John sees these image of Jesus as a judge in two different ways.
  1. He sees Jesus' feet as fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, v. 15. These feet of brass just refined in a fire can trample underfoot those who do wrong.
  2. He sees a sharp two-edged sword coming from Jesus' mouth, v. 16.
    - a. The sword is always a symbol of judgment in Revelation (2:16; 19:15).
    - b. That this sword comes from Jesus' mouth probably shows that the basis for judgment will be Jesus' words — "The word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (Jn. 12:48).
- B. Jesus is going to judge us at the last day.
  1. God "will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained" (Acts 17:30).
  2. "God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2: 16).
  3. The Lord Jesus Christ "will judge the living and the dead at His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:1).
- C. Illustration about Brutus the Elder's condemning his sons to death, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, #6543.
  1. Brutus loved his sons, but he knew they had been disobedient to the law and they had to be punished.
  2. Likewise, Jesus loves us, but if we are disobedient to his Law, he will have no choice but to judge us. Are you ready to be judged?

### **JOHN SAW THE SUN-LIKE LORD, v. 16**

- A. John saw Jesus' face shining like the sun in its strength.
- B. There is a tradition that emphasizes the brightness of the faces of the righteous.
  1. "The righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Mt. 13:43).
  2. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he "did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him" (Ex. 34:29).
  3. "Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).
- C. Jesus Christ is righteous.
  1. The Apostle John refers to Jesus Christ as the "righteous" (1 Jn. 2:1).
  2. "He is righteous" (1 Jn. 3:7).
- D. Righteousness refers to that which is right; Jesus always does that which is right.

### **CONCLUSION**

- A. When John saw the Lord, he fell at his feet as though dead, v. 17.
  1. When John saw Jesus, he was simply amazed; he had never seen anything like this before.
  2. When we gaze at Jesus though the pages of Scripture, we ought to fall at his feet as though dead.
    - a. He is, without a doubt, the most amazing thing we could ever behold.
    - b. His glory is so great that our minds cannot conceive of it.
- B. Just as John was overpowered at the sight of Jesus Christ, may we be overpowered at his sight as well!
  1. May we come to appreciate his glory and his honor.
  2. May we come to worship that glory and honor.
  3. May we serve him for his glory and honor. Are you serving him for his glory and honor?