

Revelation 1:9-20 John's Commission As A Prophet

I. John's Identification To The Churches (9)

A. A Fellow Sharer In Kingdom Tribulations (9a)

1. John Identifies Himself as the Brother of The Believers
2. John is Also Persecuted As They Are
3. John Is a Partaker in the Kingdom As They are
 - a. Despite persecution, the Kingdom is still in force
 - b. Despite persecution, the believers are part of God's authoritative kingdom

B. Exiled Because of His Testimony (9b)

1. John was Exiled to the Island of Patmos
2. John Was Exiled For the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus

II. John's Vision Of The Exalted God (10-16)

A. John is Commissioned To Write (10-11)

1. John was "in the Spirit" (10)
 - a. This doesn't mean he was in a trance or possessed
 - b. This language is similar to Ezekiel's when he received his prophetic revelation (Ezek. 2:2; 3:12, 14, 24)
 - c. This language places John in the company of the OT prophets
2. This occurred on "The Lord's Day"
 - a. Some have connected this with the OT "day of the Lord" which refers to the last day
 - b. More likely this refers to Sunday and the Christian Church worshiped on the first day of the week in remembrance of the Resurrection
 - c. The word used here for the Lord's day is κυριακή – this word is never used in the OT or NT for the eschatological day of the Lord
3. John hears a Voice Like a Trumpet
 - a. This is the sound Israel heard at Sinai when God revealed Himself (Ex. 19:16-20)
 - b. The voice as a Trumpet is associated with the voice of God Himself
4. John is Commanded to Write What He Sees (11)
 - a. Many OT prophets were told to write God's Words for the benefit of the people (Ex. 17:14; Isa. 30:8; Jer. 36:2; Dan. 12:4)
 - b. All these commands to write in the OT were commands to write testaments of judgment against Israel (See also Isa. 8:1; Jer. 36:1; Hab. 2:2)

NOTE: This section follows the OT Apocalyptic vision pattern

The initial vision (12-16), The seer's response (17a), The interpretation (17b-20)

B. John Sees Seven Golden Lampstands (12)

1. The Seven Lampstands are images from Ex. 25:31-32 and Numbers 8:2 and Zech. 4:2-6
 - a. The lampstands represent the church (see v. 20)
 - b. The seven lamps in Zech. 4 represent the Spirit's power among God's people (the power to rebuild the city)
2. Jewish writing see the seven lamps (Menorah) as representative of Israel
 - a. This connection between the Spirit and the church as God's people will be seen throughout Revelation
 - b. Because the lamps represent God's Spirit and the people of God, we already see a connection between the church and the true people of God
 - c. Because the lamps were important furnishings in the Tabernacle (Num. 8:1-4), we also see that the church is the True Temple of God

C. John Sees The Prophesied Messiah (13-16)

1. The Messiah will be seen here as both King and Priest
 - a. He is tending the lampstands which was a priestly duty
 - b. His description identifies Him as the divine judge
2. The Son of Man (13a)
 - a. This is the Messiah from Dan. 7:13
 - b. In Daniel, he ascends to the Ancient of Days and receives a kingdom and dominion
3. A Robe Down To His Feet (13b)
 - a. Not readily apparent in English the word ποδήρης is used in the OT as the long robe (ephod) worn by the priest
 - b. See Exodus 25:7; 28:4; 29:5; 35:9 and Zech. 3:5
 - c. Also shows his role as priest tending to the churches
4. A Golden Belt (13c)
 - a. The image comes from Dan. 10:5 – the Divine Messiah
5. White Head and Hair (14a)
 - a. This comes from the description of the Ancient of Days in Dan. 7:9
6. Fiery Eyes (14b)
 - a. From Dan. 10:6
7. Feet of Polished Brass (15a)
 - a. From Dan. 10:6
 - b. Also, feet of brass refined in a furnace, comes from the description of God from Eze. 1:27
8. Voice Like Many Waters (15b)
 - a. From God's Description in Eze. 1:24 and more specifically Eze. 43:2
9. Seven Stars in Right Hand (16a)

- a. Later identified as the seven angels (or messengers) of the churches
 - b. We will examine these later
- 10. Sword From His Mouth (16b)
 - a. From the prophecies of Isa. 49:2 showing his judgment and right as the end time judge that fulfill Isaiah's prophecies
 - b. Later in Rev. 19:15 we will see that this sword from his mouth is used to strike down the nations, which is the exact phrase used in Isa. 11:4
- 11. Face Shone Like the Sun (16c)
 - a. This exact phrase comes from Judges 5:31 (LXX) which pictures the victorious warrior of Israel
 - b. Jesus is the priest, judge, and the warrior that delivers his people

NOTE: We see in these descriptions a picture of Jesus as the fulfillment of all the prophets spoke concerning God as King, judge, and priest. He is the messiah promised from the OT and those steeped in the prophets of the OT would recognize that these aren't just fanciful visions denoting strength and power, but direct fulfillments of the OT prophets. The end of the age – promised in the OT has come in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

III. John's Instructions From The Exalted God (17-20)

A. Jesus Identifies Himself To John (17-18)

- 1. John falls at the Son of Man's feet as if dead (like in Eze. 1:28 and Dan. 10:15)
- 2. John is then strengthened and told to rise
- 3. Jesus Identifies Himself (17b-18)
 - a. The first and the last – using God's words in Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12
 - i. What is said of Yahweh is true of Christ
 - ii. He is identified as God Himself
 - b. The Resurrected one alive forever more
 - i. God uses the same phrase of himself in Deut 32:40
 - ii. This is also spoken about God's kingdom in Dan. 4:34
 - c. He has the Keys to Death and Hell
 - i. This doesn't mean he had to go to hell and wrestle them away from Satan – he has always had them
 - ii. The allusion here is from Isa. 22:22, where the key of David's house is given and no one can shut what God has opened (see also Rev. 3:7)

- iii. It is by the resurrection that he has this authority. He submitted to death and now reigns over it

B. Jesus Commands John To Write The Vision (19)

- 1. John's commission to write is restated here
- 2. John is God's chosen prophet who receives the vision

C. Jesus Identifies the Stars and Lampstands (20)

1. The Stars

- a. Angels have been variously identified by people as heavenly beings that guard the churches
- b. Others see them as human leaders (messengers) or representatives for the churches
- c. Some see them as personifications of the spirit or character of the churches

2. The Lampstands

- a. These are the seven churches
- b. Representing the presence and the people of God

John uses Daniel extensively through this section, showing that Daniel's Son of Man who has dominion and kingdom is none other than Jesus. Daniel's prophecies are beginning to be fulfilled. Daniel predicted the kingdom and tribulation but Christ's presence with the church as priest, king, and judge shows that he is still sovereign.