

Revelation 1:9-17a

John Meets Jesus

John - Just Like Us

<p>[9] I, John, your brother</p> <p>and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus,</p> <p>was on the island of Patmos</p> <p>because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.</p>	<p>A. John - "one of us"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - our brother - our companion - one who shares with us in the following: <p>B. These are ours, if we belong to Jesus...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suffering - Kingdom - Patient endurance <p>C. The way John was experiencing these three things:</p> <p><i>Where he was:</i> on the island of Patmos (in exile)</p> <p><i>Why:</i> because of God's Word (God's message) & Jesus' testimony.</p>	<p><u>Brother</u> - In Christ, we all belong to a new family. Our old family relationships have less meaning.</p> <p><u>Companion</u> - John <i>shares</i> with us the following. All of us who are in Christ have these things in common.</p> <p><u>Suffering</u> - "Our present condition." Compare to 1 Peter 4:12-13. We share in Jesus' suffering now... and will share in his glory later.</p> <p><u>The kingdom</u> - "What we are looking forward to." Some aspects of the kingdom are partially realized now; other aspects will be fulfilled when Jesus returns.</p> <p><u>Patient endurance</u> - "How we get from the one to the other." This is the means by which we gain the "prize" - see Hebrews 6:12; Philippians 3:14, etc.</p> <p>These things are ours to <i>share</i>, because of God's message about Jesus (and the impact it has had on us).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each of us shares in these things, but each of us does so within the context of <i>our own</i> circumstances. <p>Jesus' testimony - Jesus bore witness (testimony) to the truth (John 18:37) and about himself (John 8:18).</p>
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Commissioned to Write [John Hears the Voice]

<p>[10] On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit,</p> <p>and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,</p> <p>[11] which said: "Write on a scroll what you see</p> <p>and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."</p>	<p>A. John's circumstances:</p> <p>The Lord's Day In the Spirit</p> <p>B. The Voice Speaks (probably Jesus)</p> <p>The sound of his voice - like a loud trumpet. [See also verse 15b, in the description of Jesus (below).]</p> <p>His instructions - write and send to seven specific churches.</p>	<p><u>Lord's Day / in the Spirit</u> - (See the comments given below.)</p> <p><u>Voice</u> - A sudden, loud, clear sound, probably startling him, announcing something very important. [It may have been Jesus speaking, although the verse does not directly state this.]</p> <p><u>Write</u> - John's words will be those of an eyewitness.</p> <p><u>Seven churches</u> - chosen with a specific purpose in mind; representative in nature. [To be examined more fully, later.]</p>
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Lord's Day / In the Spirit - The meaning is uncertain. Possible interpretations include:

1. John may have been worshipping ("in the Spirit") on Sunday (the "Lord's day"). [It is uncertain when this use of the term "Lord's day" came into existence. Some believe that it may have come into existence at a later time in history.]
2. John may have been carried away ("in the Spirit" or "by the Spirit") into the future - to the time of the Lord's return (the "Lord's Day").

Face to Face with the King

<p>[12] I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned</p> <p>I saw seven golden lampstands,</p> <p>[13] and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man,"</p> <p>dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet</p> <p>and with a golden sash around his chest.</p> <p>[14] His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow,</p> <p>and his eyes were like blazing fire.</p> <p>[15] His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace,</p> <p>and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.</p> <p>[16] In his right hand he held seven stars,</p> <p>and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword.</p> <p>His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.</p> <p>[17] When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.</p> <p>Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[to be continued]</p>	<p>A. What John saw</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lampstands [explained later] • Someone "like a son of man" (Jesus) <p>B. A description of the one he saw</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>His clothes</i> - a robe, a golden sash • <i>His head/hair</i> - dazzling bright white • <i>His eyes</i> - blazing fire-like • <i>His feet</i> - glowing bronze-like • <i>His voice</i> - rushing, crashing waters [v. 10 - loud trumpet] • <i>His hand</i> - holding seven stars [which will be explained later] • <i>His mouth [tongue]</i> - sharp two-edged sword • <i>His face</i> - bright as the sun <p>C. What happened, when John saw Jesus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>John's reaction</i> - fall to the ground, as though dead. • <i>Jesus' encouragement</i> - "Don't be afraid." 	<p><u>"See the voice"</u> - Basically, he didn't know what to expect. [He possibly turned while the voice was still speaking.]</p> <p><u>"Like a son of man"</u> - Jesus, who though God, was willing to associate with us people.</p> <p><u>What he saw...</u></p> <p>This is real. The description of Jesus' glory requires figurative language because his glory is far greater than anything we have ever seen; it far goes beyond our comprehension. For us to get even a small idea of what Jesus looks like, John has to compare it to something we <i>can</i> comprehend. This description gives us a brief "glance" at what we are going to see, when we stand face-to-face with Jesus.</p> <p>We are told that we will see him as he is - 1 John 3:2. Do you realize how glorious this will be? Why would any one <i>not</i> want to fall down before him - even now - and to obey him and live for him?</p> <p>We cannot draw this picture on paper, because paper is not bright enough. It would have to be blinding in brightness!</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Stars</i> - bright, shining points of light. <i>Sword</i> - compare to Hebrews 4:12. The focus here is on what he says, not on a piece of sharp metal protruding out of his mouth! <i>Face</i> - too bright to look at.</p> <p><u>John's Reaction</u>: paralyzing terror. [How would <i>you</i> react?]</p> <p><u>Jesus Response</u>: a gentleness and encouragement that strengthens John.</p>
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If this is how John - a *saved* person and a close friend of Jesus - would respond to seeing Jesus, how do you think the *unsaved* will someday respond? Jesus won't have any encouraging words for them.

Rev. 1:9-17a - Supplementary Study Information

Verse 9

BROTHER

In Christ, we have been adopted into a new family (Ephesians 1:5). Those who belong to Christ are all brothers and sisters.

- See Matthew 12:50; Romans 8:29; 12:10; 1 Timothy 6:2; Hebrews 2:11; 1 Peter 2:17.

The apostles and prophets never considered themselves to be "better" than the rest of us. They were simply doing what God called them to do - just like we have an obligation to do.

- They often describe themselves as "brothers" or "fellow workers" to others who served God.
- Look at the way James describes Elijah: a human just like us (James 5:17). He wasn't a "super-spiritual" person who was superior to everyone else!

THINGS WE SHARE IN COMMON ("companion")...

In Christ, there are certain things we all share in common. Here John lists three of them: Suffering, Kingdom, and Patient Endurance.

SUFFERING - Many passages mention our sharing in both suffering and God's blessings. Some of these passages are: 2 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 3:10; 4:14; Hebrews 10:33; 1 Peter 4:13. At times, the blessings will accompany the suffering; at other times, they will be the result, or fruit, of that suffering.

- **SOMETHING TO CONSIDER:** Many people want the blessings... but they're not willing to accept the suffering that comes first!
- **SOMETHING TO BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT:** When you suffer, don't let it be due to sin you've committed - 1 Peter 2:20.

KINGDOM - We *now* belong to God's kingdom (Philippians 3:20). This means that, if we are *genuine* disciples, the world is now like a foreign country to us (1 Peter 2:11). The day is coming, in which our king will return and will conquer this world and make it part of his kingdom. (Don't forget that, originally, it was his. The present situation in the world is one of rebellion against the rightful owner and king.)

PATIENT ENDURANCE / PERSEVERANCE - This is one of the factors that distinguishes between the genuine and the counterfeit. The genuine Christians will have this patient endurance; the fakes won't. Compare to Hebrews 6:12; 10:36.

PATMOS

An island in the Aegean Sea (between Greece & Turkey), about 50 miles from Ephesus. John was in exile here. He was probably forced to work in the mines, in spite of his age.

WORD OF GOD / TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Other places in Revelation, where these phrases (or something similar) can be found - Revelation 1:2; 6:9; 12:17; 20:4.

- Similar concepts: "the message about God"; "the Bible"; "the testimony *about* Jesus"; "the testimony *from* Jesus" (that is, given to us, by him).

Verse 10

IN THE SPIRIT

A condition in which he was controlled by the Spirit. In this context, it may indicate that he was controlled in a special way.

- Here are some of the verses that use this phrase to indicate being controlled by the Spirit in a special way: Matthew 22:43; Revelation 4:2; 17:3; 21:10.
- Note, however, that there is a sense in which we *all* are to be controlled by the Spirit - Galatians 5:16.

THE LORD'S DAY

This may be a reference to a day of worship (for example, Sunday), although some think it has reference to the future "Day of the Lord," suggesting that John was "caught-up" into the future. (The term, "Day of the Lord" occurs frequently in the Old Testament, in reference to end-time events.)

TRUMPET-LIKE VOICE

The trumpet is used both as a call to battle, and as a proclamation of triumph. Also seen in Revelation 4:1.

Verse 11

Some translations, such as the KJV, add "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." This is a repetition of phrases mentioned elsewhere: "Alpha and Omega" in Revelation 1:8; 21:6 and 22:13; and "the first and the last" in Revelation 1:17; 2:8 and 22:13.

WRITE...

This summarizes what John must do. Verse 19 gives more specific details.

Verse 12

In this description (verses 12-16), we see Jesus' greatness as God and King (also in verses 5-8). [In verses 17-18, we have the added dimension of Jesus as friend and Savior.] This description of Jesus has many striking similarities to visions described by Daniel and Ezekiel, in the Old Testament. Compare to Daniel 7:9-10; 10:5-6; and Ezekiel 1:25-28.

LAMPSTANDS

Olive oil lamps - explained in v. 20 as symbolically representing the churches.

Verse 13

"LIKE A SON OF MAN"

This phrase is a quote of Daniel 7:13. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. Though he was by very nature deity (Philippians 2:6), Jesus chose to associate with us.

ROBE AND GOLDEN SASH

Comparable to that worn by a priest or king. Jesus is our high priest and our king.

Verse 14

HEAD/HAIR

The same attributes as belong to the "Ancient of Days" in Daniel 7:9 (the "Father," in the New Testament). This term has a greater focus on his purity and holiness, than on age - although his eternal existence *as deity* may also be implied.

EYES

This description focuses on his omniscience. He accurately sees and knows all, and can *accurately* judge between what is righteous and what is impure.

Verse 15

FEET

Emphasizes his ability to exercise divine judgment. [Note that, in the temple, the altar was made of bronze. So were various other items that were used in connection with sacrifices for sin.] Some suggest that this description of his feet may also symbolize strength.

VOICE

Majesty, power, authority.

Verse 16

IN HIS RIGHT HAND

Represents strength, as well as protection and guidance of those being held.

STARS

These possibly represent the leaders or pastors, who were responsible for the spiritual welfare of the people. Or they could represent heavenly beings - angels - who work behind the scenes to protect and build-up the people of the church. Further explanation is given in verse 20.

- Interestingly, in John's day, Emperor Domitian minted a coin that commemorated the death of his son. Stars were used to symbolically portray his son as having heavenly dominion over the world.

DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

The sword is often used to represent God's *word*. This term would apply to *anything* God says. Two different words for "sword" are commonly used in this type of context. In this specific passage, the reference is to a heavy sword that is used to kill. The focus is on divine judgment, comparable to Revelation 19:15. Jesus will conquer by means of his Word - by what he says.

- This heavy sword is also mentioned in Revelation 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21. It is also mentioned in Luke 2:35.

There is a different word for "sword," which is more commonly found in the New Testament. It refers to a short sword or dagger. Two of the verses that use this second word, in connection with "the word of God," are:

- Ephesians 6:17: The spoken word of God is described as a sword ("the sword of the Spirit").
- Hebrews 4:12: The word of God is described as a double-edged sword - one that can accurately judge the hidden thoughts of a person's heart. In this verse, it is used to expose unbelief (and thus to enable repentance), rather than to destroy the person in judgment (which the "sword" of Revelation 1:16 would do).

HIS FACE - LIKE THE SUN

A blinding, sun-like light; the brilliant glory of his countenance. A picture of his deity and majesty.

- Someday we who are "in Christ" will also "shine like the stars" - Daniel 12:3. We will reflect his glory.

Verse 17

FELL... AS DEAD

When you consider how John reacted, consider this... at the Day of Justice, *heaven and earth* will flee from Jesus' presence (Revelation 20:11). Standing face to face with the King of the Universe is no trivial matter!

WHAT IS "GLORY"?

"Glory" doesn't always refer to something like "shining brightness" - although that is often part of what is mentioned, when the *God's* glory is described. When we "glorify" God, we are acknowledging his perfections, and living according to his ways; we are "reflecting" his moral and righteous character.

This is the way **Easton's Bible Dictionary** describes glory:

GLORY (Heb. kabhod; Gr. doxa).

- (1.) Abundance, wealth, treasure, and hence honour (Psalm 49:12); glory (Genesis 31:1; Matthew 4:8; Rev. 21:24, 26).
- (2.) Honour, dignity (1 Kings 3:13; Hebrews 2:7; 1 Peter 1:24); of God (Psalm 19:1; Psalm 29:1); of the mind or heart (Genesis 49:6; Psalm 7:5; Acts 2:46).
- (3.) Splendour, brightness, majesty (Genesis 45:13; Isaiah 4:5; Acts 22:11; 2 Cor. 3:7); of Jehovah (Isaiah 59:19; Isaiah 60:1; 2 Thes. 1:9).
- (4.) The glorious moral attributes, the infinite perfections of God (Isaiah 40:5; Acts 7:2; Romans 1:23; Romans 9:23; Ephes. 1:12). Jesus is the "brightness of the Father's glory" (Hebrews 1:3; John 1:14; John 2:11).
- (5.) The bliss of heaven (Romans 2:7, 10; Romans 5:2; Romans 8:18; Hebrews 2:10; 1 Peter 5:1, 10).
- (6.) The phrase "Give glory to God" (Joshua 7:19; Jeremiah 13:16) is a Hebrew idiom meaning, "Confess your sins." The words of the Jews to the blind man, "Give God the praise" (John 9:24), are an adjuration to confess. They are equivalent to, "Confess that you are an impostor," "Give God the glory by speaking the truth;" for they denied that a miracle had been wrought.

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MEETING GOD IN HUMAN FORM: SOME OF THE TIMES PEOPLE HAVE DONE SO

In the Old Testament: People Who Saw God

In theological circles, the term "theophany" is used to refer to instances in which God took on a human form in the Old Testament. There are numerous instances in which this happened, and most likely all of them have their counterpart in the New Testament Jesus. In at least one instance, the New Testament makes a direct claim that one of these Old Testament manifestations was Christ. (See John 12:39-41, compared to Isaiah 6.)

* ADAM AND EVE, IN THE GARDEN

Adam and Eve walked with God, in the garden. Before they sinned, this interaction brought joy and friendship. After they sinned, they were filled with fear and shame (an awareness of their sinfulness), when God was present. (Adam and Eve are the ones who caused this shame. They are the ones who broke the fellowship.)

* NUMEROUS PEOPLE WHO SAW "THE ANGEL OF THE JEHOVAH" [Also known as "The Angel of the LORD," in some translations.]

Many Old Testament passages make reference to a specific being, called, "*the* Angel of Jehovah (or LORD)." (In at least one passage, he is described as "the angel of God.") This being is introduced as "the" angel, rather than "an" angel. A comparison of various passages in which this being is mentioned reveals some interesting facts:

- Some passages describe him as *being with* the LORD - as though two different individuals were present. (Example: 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:21; and Isaiah 37:36 - *Jehovah* sends *the Angel of Jehovah* to kill the Assyrians.)
- Some passages describe him as *being* the LORD - as though one individual was present. (Example: Genesis 31:11+ , in which *the Angel of God* claims to be the *God* of Bethel.)
- Some passages describe him as *both!* This is reminiscent of John 1:1, where Jesus (the "Word") is described as *being with* God, while at the same time he *is* God. (Example: Genesis 16:7+ - *The Angel of Jehovah* talks to Hagar and promises to multiply her seed, and tells her that *Jehovah* has heard her affliction. In v. 13, the Scriptures say that it was *Jehovah* who had been speaking to her.)

This "angel," though a visible manifestation of God, normally looked like a human. When people saw him, they responded in different ways, depending on whether or not they knew who he really was. At times, they acted the way they would normally respond to a mere human, since they didn't know any better. At other times, once they realized who was before them, they responded with reverence and sometimes terror.

* ISAIAH

Isaiah saw the LORD (Isaiah 6) and immediately became aware of how sinful and unworthy he was. His perspective on life was permanently changed. In the New Testament, John tells us that it was *Jesus*, who Isaiah saw (John 12:39-41).

* EZEKIEL

Ezekiel saw God's glory, in the form of a man. His first reaction was to fall face down on the ground. (Ezekiel 1:27-28). This was a finite "appearance" of God's glory, for to see God's glory in all its fullness would have meant instant death. (Note God's comments to Moses, when he asked to see God - Exodus 33:19-20.)

In the New Testament: People Who Saw Jesus

Jesus is the radiance of God's glory (Hebrews 1:3), but during most of his time on earth, between his birth and death on the cross, the visible expression of this radiant glory was hidden. To say it another way, Jesus' glory was "veiled." Since people tend to judge others, based on external appearances and other false criteria, most people did not recognize his glory. The demons, however, clearly understood who he was - Mark 1:34. If the people had been willing to look beyond the surface, to his life and teachings, they would have also recognized who he was, but most of them weren't willing to do so. (Some did, however - John 1:14.)

Physically, Jesus looked just like a "normal" person and was not recognized as anyone special. He was a typical "nobody." (See Isaiah 53: 2-3.) He belonged to the "working class" and was *thought* to be a carpenter's son (Matthew 13:55) - though some may have questioned this.

There was a time that Jesus revealed his glory to three of the disciples, while they were together on a mountain - Matthew 17:1-8. This was a glimpse into the future, to the time when Jesus would come in his kingdom (Matthew 16:27-28). Peter later mentions this event, in 2 Peter 1:16-18.

In some instances, the "glory of the Lord" was visibly present, but it was being reflected from angels, rather than being seen in Jesus. At the time Jesus was raised from the dead, the brightness of God's glory was seen in the angels, and it terrified the guards (Matthew 28:2-5). Jesus' appearance is not described at this point, but later, when he appeared to Mary, he looked like a "normal" human (John 20:14-16). [Sometimes, God's angels could be seen reflecting the glory of the Lord, even when the Lord himself was not visibly present - as in Luke 2:9. At other times, they looked like mere humans, dressed in white - as in Acts 1:10.]

When Jesus appeared to people after the resurrection, before his ascension into heaven, he tended to have the appearance of a "typical" human - so that he was not always recognized as being Jesus. (In that culture, it was considered impolite to look directly into the face of strangers, so it would have been easy for Jesus to remain unrecognized for a while - especially during the time they thought he was dead. See, for example, Luke 24:13-16.) However, he did have capabilities that went beyond what a normal human could do, such as simply "appearing" into a locked room - John 20:19, 26.

After his ascension into heaven, he appeared to Paul, with his glory unveiled - Acts 9. John also saw him, in all his glory - Revelation 1:12-17.

WHAT WILL WE BE LIKE, AFTER OUR RESURRECTIONS?

In eternity, the righteous will shine like stars - Daniel 12:3. We will reflect the glory of the Lord.

- Moses temporarily reflected the glory of the Lord - see Exodus 34:29-35 and 2 Corinthians 3:7, 13.

In some manner, we will be like Jesus - 1 John 3:2 We won't become deity, but we will reflect his character. (To be "like" him doesn't mean we will be "identical to" him.)

There is much that we don't know, about what we will be like. But we do know that there will be many differences from what we now are. Using the analogy of a plant, our present physical bodies are compared to a "seed," and our resurrection bodies are compared to a mature plant. (See 1 Corinthians 15:35+.) Our present bodies can be described in terms, such as: perishable, dishonorable, weak, and natural (empowered by what is physical). Our future bodies will be described in terms, such as: imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual (empowered by the Spirit).