

The book of Revelation

1:12-20

Welcome to the bible study in the book of Revelation.
Make sure you pray before you start this, or any bible study.

Last week we ended with John hearing the voice of Jesus. John didn't see Jesus at this point; he just heard Jesus' voice. So John was about to turn around and look at Jesus, and that's where we stopped the study last week.

This week we get to turn around with John and look at Jesus.
Let's do it.

✠ **Rev 1:12-16** *Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.*

I have to wonder if one of the first things people will say to Jesus when they see Him in Heaven is, "Wow, you look nothing like your pictures."
Hundreds of pictures painted that are supposed to be Jesus. They are usually a white guy, with long brown hair, blue eyes and a perfect complexion.
But what I just read sounds nothing like these pictures. In fact, the bible doesn't say anything about what Jesus looks like, at least not the color of His hair or skin or eyes, how much He weighed or how tall Jesus was.
But one thing I know for sure, Jesus didn't look at all like these paintings that we always associate with Jesus. How do I know? Well, it's pretty simple if you think about it, Jesus was Jewish, which would mean that He may have had curly black hair and dark skin and possibly brown eyes.
I also think that the bible purposely doesn't tell us what Jesus looked like, because if it did, we would worship an image instead of the person of Jesus.
But don't we do that even know?
If you have one of these pictures of Jesus, how many times have you looked at it and even prayed to it or held it close crying on it?
When you do this you are worshiping an image and not God Himself, and God says not to do that.

† **Ex 20:4-6** *You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

I think God makes it very clear that we are not to worship an image, and since we don't know what God or Jesus looks like, anything we make up and paint or carve are false images of God and is an abomination to Him!

† **Deut 12:29-32** *When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.*

When Israel left Egypt, they were leaving behind all these carved images of false gods. When they came into the Promised Land they were once again confronted with these false images, and were instructed not to worship them and not to worship God in this same manner.

Sure, we are not Israel, but what gives us the right to paint pictures of Jesus and worship this picture or image?

“So what does all of this have to do with the book of Revelation?” You may be wondering.

There have been those who have done pictures based upon the verses here in Revelation. Sure they look cool, but are we worshipping them or even calling this our God?

I think when we get to heaven we will be very surprised, because all the pictures we have seen that are supposed to represent Jesus, we won't see this guy in heaven.

So how will we know which one is Jesus?

Just look for the nail holes in His hands and feet as well as the pierced hole in His side!

So as we go through the book of Revelation, a key word to look for is “like”, which means just what it says. So when we read ***His head and hair were white like wool*** it doesn't mean it was wool, but rather “like” wool, there is a difference.

✠ ***Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands***

The first thing that John saw when he turned around was *seven golden lampstands*. Once again the number seven representing completeness. So what are these seven golden lampstands? I could write many pages trying to explain it all, or I could let Jesus tell us in one simple verse.

✠ **Rev 1:20** *The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.*

The seven churches we will read about starting in chapter two. So if the lampstands represent the churches, and seven represents completeness, then what we will read in chapters two and three will represent the complete church.

So why are there seven different churches?

Even today we have several different denominations of Christian churches, they are all true churches and believe in Jesus Christ, but have different ways of doing things.

Example: The Baptist church is very conservative concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You won't see or hear people speaking in tongues or making any type of show in the Baptist church (I also grew up in the Baptist church, and was saved in a Baptist church). On the other hand, the Pentecostal church you will hear people speaking in tongues and dancing around during the worship service.

So who is right and who is wrong?

I will not judge either, but the real question is, do they believe in Jesus Christ. That He died and rose on the third day from the dead. That He is God come in the flesh. That the word of God is without error and inspired by the Holy Spirit. That the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ and that you cannot get there by any other means.

Whether you believe that speaking in tongues is for today or not will not get you into heaven depending upon which way you believe. No, it's in what Jesus has done for us that we get to heaven and nothing else.

So in these two examples I choose them because they seem to be the extreme on either side, and I am not saying that one is wrong or right, I just wanted to get a point across, and that point is that both of these churches are a part of the body of Jesus Christ.

And just as there are seven churches in the book of Revelation, this would help us to understand why there are seven.

So why seven? I think we all have different ways of expressing our faith, some are conservative and some are outgoing, then there are those in between.

God created us all different with different likes and dislikes.

I think of a husband and wife who have different things they like and dislike. Maybe she likes vegetables, and he could do without them.

He likes video games and she can live without them.

But the one thing they have in common is that they both love Jesus. Sure, they may have other things in common, but without them both being committed to Jesus, their marriage would be incomplete.

So it's ok for them to like and dislike different things as husband and wife, it's part of how God made us.

It's also ok for some to like certain things in the church and to attend a church that will help that person express his or her worship to the Lord in a way that they feel comfortable with, as long as it's in the bible

So maybe you like the conservative approach and a Baptist type of church would be good for you, or maybe you like to really express yourself in worship, then a Pentecostal type of church may be good for you. Me, I'm in the middle between the two, not too loud, yet not too soft.

But the simple fact is that we all love Jesus Christ. We all believe that He died and rose from the dead. That He is God come in the flesh. That the word of God is without error and inspired by the Holy Spirit. That the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ and that you cannot get there by any other means.

So as we go through the seven churches, just remember that there are different types of people in each church. But also we will read of good, as well as bad things happening in each church.

✠ *and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man.*

Son of Man, what is that?

Easton's Bible Dictionary explains it as:

In the New Testament it is used forty-three times as a distinctive title of the Savior. In the Old Testament it is used only in Ps 80:17 and Dan 7:13 with this application. It denotes the true humanity of our Lord. He had a true body (Heb 2:14; Luke 24:39) and a rational soul. He was perfect man.

Here is Jesus definition of it:

✠ **John 12:34-36** *The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.*

Based upon what Jesus just said, I think it's safe to say that the Son of Man, is the true light, who we know to be Jesus.

✠ **John 8:12** *Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

Revelation goes on to describe Jesus as: *clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.*

If you read the gospel of John, it talks about where the soldiers gambled for Jesus' garment or tunic?

† **John 19:23** *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.*

The world had taken the old garment of Jesus, but the world would not be able to touch this new garment, which represents Jesus' glory and beauty.

† **Ex 28:2 & 31-32** *And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it does not tear.*

† **Isaiah 11:5** *Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.*

The ordinary girding for one actively engaged, was at the loins; but JOSEPHUS [Antiquities, 3.7.2], expressly tells us that the Levitical priests were girt higher up, about the breasts or paps, appropriate to calm, majestic movement. The girdle bracing the frame together, symbolizes collected powers. Righteousness and faithfulness are Christ's girdle. The high priest's girdle was only interwoven with gold, but Christ's is all of gold; the antitype exceeds the type.

✠ *His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire.*

White represents a cleansing or purity.

† **Prov 16:31** *The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, If it is found in the way of righteousness.*

† **Prov 20:29** *The glory of young men is their strength, And the splendor of old men is their gray head.*

If this is the case for those with gray or silver hair, how much more so for Him with white hair.

Jesus mentions in the letter to Thyatira His eyes like a flame of fire:

† **Rev 2:18 & 23b** *"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,*

'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:

and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

Jesus knows all and sees all; fire represents a cleansing of those things that have impurity in them.

† ***Zech 13:9 I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.' "***

† ***1 Cor 3:13-17 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.***

The Lord knows all and sees all, and He wants to refine us all by the fire, because He can see that sin in our lives that needs to be burned away so that we may be a clean and holy vessel unto our Lord.

✠ ***His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace.***

"Brass," is used in Scripture as the symbol of what is firm, strong, lasting.

✠ ***and His voice as the sound of many waters;***

Waterfalls are an awesome thing to be around. The sound of the mighty waters as they come crashing down is overwhelming.

Water represents a cleansing and God's word:

† ***Ezek 36:25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.***

† ***Eph 5:26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,***

Jesus spoke and His word would cleanse those that He spoke to.

† ***Matt 8:3 Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.***

† **John 15:3** *You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*

We often associate a whisper as God's voice.

† **1 Kings 19:12** *and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.*

But as we just read, Jesus' voice in heaven is not *a still small voice*, but rather *His voice as the sound of many waters*

Mighty and commanding, no one can refute it!

✠ *He had in His right hand seven stars.*

Once again Jesus explains what these seven stars are:

✠ **Rev 1:20** *The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.*

The word angel could also be interpreted as Messenger:

† **Hag 1:13** *Then Haggai, the LORD s messenger, spoke the LORD s message to the people, saying, "I am with you, says the LORD."*

Which would represent a human messenger and not an angelic one.

Therefore, these seven stars could be the actual pastors of the churches.

✠ *out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword,*

† **Heb 4:12** *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

To the church in Pergamos Jesus says:

† **Rev 2:16** *Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.*

People for thousands of years have tried to refute or argue against God's word. But in the end they find that they were wrong and were fighting a losing battle. Because when you try to argue against truth you will always lose.

† **Psalms 33:4** *For the word of the LORD is right, And all His work is done in truth.*

The lies will always die away.

✠ *and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.*

We have all seen pictures of saints with halos around their heads, but this isn't a little halo around the head of Jesus, but rather Jesus is shining like the sun. Remember way back in the book of Exodus, when Moses wanted to see God?

✠ **Ex 33:17-23** *So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." And he said, "Please, show me Your glory." Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."*

✠ **Ex 34:29-30** *Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.*

If they feared just the face of Moses who shone from only seeing the afterglow or back of God, how much more will the people fear once they see God face to face! All the things the unbelievers thought they would say to God, once they see Him **"You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."** They will die the second death in their sins.

✠ **Rev 20:13-15** *The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

✠ **Rev 21:8** *"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

How blessed was John to be able to see the face of Jesus and live to write about it. How blessed are we to read about it, so that we can tell others about Jesus!

✠ **Rev 1:17-20** *And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.*

John saw Jesus and the awesomeness of Jesus, and knowing that he was a sinful man, caused John to pass out as if he were dead.

But just one touch from Jesus, and John was comforted knowing that even though he was a sinner, that he was forgiven and that Jesus had touched his life many years before this, as John spent three years with Jesus, saw Jesus die, and saw Jesus after He rose from the dead.

If you are a believer, Jesus has touched you as well, and you should always know that even though you are still a sinner that He will accept you in heaven because of what He did on the cross and not because of your own goodness.

✠ ***Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.***

He who lives means has always been alive from the beginning just as Jesus said ***I am the First and the Last***. But even though Jesus always was, He choose to die for us all, but death could not hold Jesus down, nor could the grave hold Him

✠ ***And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.***

Jesus has the keys because He will determine who goes there (Hades) and who will be allowed into heaven. He earned the right to hold the keys by His obedience to the Father by going to the cross.

✠ **1 Cor 15:55-58** ***"O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory?"***
The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Our boast is not in our own works, but rather in what Jesus did for us!

✠ ***Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.***

John saw a little by this time in heaven. But John also walked with Jesus and wrote about that time with Jesus here on the earth. *Write the things which you have seen.*

The next two chapters Jesus will be addressing the seven churches, which currently are still here on the earth and the things Jesus speaks about are happening right now, even as you read this. *and the things which are.*

The things which will take place after this start in chapter four after the church is raptured. When this happens (Starting in chapter four) we as believers won't be here. We will be enjoying our time with Jesus in heaven while the world will be experiencing the wrath of God. No matter who you like or dislike, do you really want them to go through what we will read in these chapters?

If your answer is no, then what are you going to do about it?

That's it for this week. Next week we will start in chapter two with the letters to the seven churches.

May the Lord richly bless you in His love, grace and mercy and may you warn others of the wrath of God to come, and may they heed that warning!