

Gaining a Vision of Christ: Through His Revelation (continued)

Revelation 1:17-20

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Introduction: We ended last Sunday morning's message with the first phrase of 1:17, where John, in response to the vision of Christ says, "*I fell at His feet as dead.*" I asked the question, "What is your response when confronted with the glory & majesty of Christ?" Will you & I fall at His feet spiritually & proclaim with Paul, "*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*" The theme of this chapter that I see is our need to gain a vision of Christ through His Word (1:1-3), His love (1:4-8), & His revelation (1:9-20). The goal is that we might **love** Him *more*, **serve** Him *better*, & **praise** Him *always*.

Last week we saw John's identification (who he is, verse 9a); his location (where he is, verse 9b); & his situation (what he is doing, verse 10, "*on the Lord's day*"). We see here in chapter 1 the command to write (1:11), the churches to whom to write (:11); & the Christ about Whom to write (:10-20). We considered Christ's sovereignty over the churches (:12-13), His sovereignty over all (:14-15); & His sovereignty over individuals (:16-17a). We come this morning to verses 17-18 where we see Christ's sovereignty over the life to come. And we will close the chapter by looking at Christ's authority (or Lordship) in verses 19-20.

Let's review: Note what John heard (:9-11); what John saw (:12-16); & what John did (:17-18).

I. Christ's Sovereignty (He is **King**)

A. Christ's Sovereignty over individuals (:16-17)

1. The relationship to Christ (:16) - seven stars in His right hand (cf. :12). [place of authority & control – "All church authority & spiritual rule is in Christ. The Church is not the work of man. The Church is an absolute monarchy & Christ is the absolute Head. An understanding of this truth would eliminate many of the human dictators that have usurped divine authority in many churches" (Barrett).]
 - a. Angels - messenger (or pastor) of the church.
 - b. What is true of these angels is true of every believer (in His hand - John 10:28).
 - c. Speaks of possession, protection, & purpose.
2. The response (of John) to Christ (:17).
 - a. John fell at His feet as if dead.
 - b. Compare the response of others who saw God [Abraham (Gen 17:1-3); Moses (Ex. 3:5), Moses & Aaron (Num. 16:20-22), Joshua in 5:13-15; Job in 42:1-6; Isaiah in 6:1-5; Ezekiel in 1:28; Daniel in 8:17; & Paul (Acts 9:4).]

Application: "A vision of the exalted Christ can only produce awe & fear (Dan. 10:7-9). We need this attitude of respect today when so many believers speak & act with undue familiarity toward God" (Wiersbe).

B. Christ's Sovereignty over the life to come (:17b-18) > [*"Fear not."* – first found in Gen. 15:1.]

Note > " 'Fear not' is a great encouragement for any child of God. We need not fear life, because He is 'The Living One.' We need not fear death, because He died & is alive, having conquered death. And we need not fear eternity because He holds the keys of hades (the world of the dead) & of death. The One with the keys is the One who has authority" (Wiersbe).

1. He is the first & the last (cf. 1:8).
2. He is the resurrected One - "*alive for evermore*"

[Note: "was dead" is literally "became a dead one." This reminds us of John 10:17-18, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of myself, & I have power to lay it down, & I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father."]

3. He has the "keys of hell & of death" - Sovereign over life, death, & hell (Rev. 20:14-15)
"As Christ possesses the key or authority over death, no man can die apart from divine permission, even though afflicted by Satan & in trial & trouble. As the One Who is in authority over Hades, Christ is sovereign over the life to come" (Walvoord).

[Application: There are no "accidents" with God.]

Summary: As Christ holds us in His hand & as He holds the keys of hell & death in His hand, our life is in His control!

II. Christ's **Authority** (He is **Lord** – His Lordship) [Do you demonstrate it?] (:19-20)

A. In position to command (:19) >

Note the outline of the Book of Revelation:

[The only Book of the Bible that contains an inspired outline of the contents?]

1. "The things which thou hast seen" (Chapter 1).
2. "The things which are" (Chapters 2-3).
3. "The things which shall be hereafter" (Chapters 4-22).

B. In position to control (:20) >

1. Seven stars in His hand (cf. :16) [speaks of possession, protection, & purpose].
2. Standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks (cf. :13).

Conclusion: What again is your response when confronted with the glory & majesty of Christ?

"There is a dangerous absence of awe & worship in our assemblies today [see Ps. 89:7, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, & to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him."]

We are boasting about standing on our own feet, instead of breaking & falling at His feet. For years, Evan Roberts prayed, 'Bend me! Bend me!' & when God answered, the great Welsh Revival resulted" (Wiersbe).

Will you fall at His feet spiritually & proclaim with Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Can you defend His Deity? Will you declare His Sovereignty? Are you demonstrating His Lordship? May we gain this proper vision of Christ, through His Word, through His love, & through His revelation, that we might **love** Him *more*, **serve** Him *better*, & **praise** Him *always*!