

One Like a Son of Man
Series: Between a Rock and a Hard Place
January 17, 2021

I. Introduction

A. Previous studies

1. Written to churches (and to The Church)
 - a. Small
 - b. Struggling
 - c. Persecuted
 - d. Midst of declining, anti-God culture
2. In general, what such a church needed
 - a. **Revelation 1:19** (NASB95) — 19 “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.”
 - b. **What John had seen**
 - (1) Vision of Jesus
 - c. **What is**
 - (1) Current state of the church
 - d. **What will take place after these things**
 - (1) Future of the church
3. This message – explore the vision of Jesus

B. Text

1. **Revelation 1:9–18** (NASB95) —
 - a. 9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
 - b. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, 11 saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”
 - c. 12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.
 - d. 14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.
 - e. 15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.
 - f. 16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

- g. 17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

C. **Observations about visions**

1. **Uses symbols**

- a. Symbols represent things
 - (1) In this case, spiritual things
- b. If you were to see Jesus, probably wouldn't see red eyes, glowing bronze feet, tongue that looked like a sword
 - (1) Rather grotesque sight
 - (2) If it were a character in a movie, would probably have forbid our children to see it (horror genre)
 - (3) Trying to visualize the images here is not really all that helpful
 - (a) Aspects of that would be impossible; incongruous images
 - (b) Try to imagine a face like the sun shining in its strength; wouldn't be able to see eyes or anything coming out of mouth
 - (c) How can a lion look like a lamb?

2. Need to go beyond the symbols themselves and try to understand what they represent

- a. In some cases, angel or Christ will tell you what they mean
- b. In other cases, we need to figure out what they would have meant to John as a Jewish Christian, living in the latter portion of the first century, knowing the OT

3. This particular vision uses symbols to teach about the person of Jesus Christ

- a. **Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ** (Jesus Christ is the subject)
 - (1) Jesus is the source for the Revelation
 - (2) God gave it to Jesus
 - (3) Jesus to angel
 - (4) Angel to John
 - (5) John to the churches
- b. But also the revelation *of* Jesus Christ in that Jesus is the object, focus, central feature in the revelation
 - (1) Revelation 19:10 (NASB95) — 10 “... For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”
 - (2) Jesus is the source, subject, object of prophecy; same with this revelation
- c. What this vision teaches us about Him is not what He looks like
 - (1) Not designed so you could recognize Him on the street
 - (2) Not designed so you could pick Him out of a line up

- d. We need to see the spiritual truths behind the symbolic images to really learn about Christ
- 4. This particular vision is meant to communicate spiritual truths about Christ to the church
 - a. Not meant for academic reasons
 - b. John is commanded to communicate this to the church
 - (1) Not to present a paper at the next theological society meeting
 - c. Already seen what the general state of the church is
 - (1) Will understand that much more clearly as we study each of the church epistles
 - (2) Small, struggling, persecuted, in midst of declining culture
 - d. The church needs to know Jesus
 - (1) Whatever these symbols mean, they are designed to mean something to the church
 - e. This will not be the last time we run into elements of this description
 - (1) Nearly every letter to the churches includes an element of this vision

II. **Jesus is Imminent (Location)**

- A. **Revelation 1:12–13** (NASB95) — 12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man...
 - 1. Jesus (like a son of man) standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands
- B. One of those cases where it would be easy to jump to conclusions
 - 1. Jewish temple worship included a lampstand (Exodus 25)
 - a. Golden
 - b. One candelabra, with 7 lamps
 - 2. Zechariah vision (Zechariah 4.2ff) had a golden lampstand with 7 lamps; possibly representing Israel
- C. But Jesus explains what these mean
 - 1. **Revelation 1:20** (NASB95) — 20 “As for 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 are the seven churches.”
 - a. Lampstands are the 7 churches
- D. Observations
 - 1. **Lampstands** are a wonderful **symbol for the church**
 - a. Cf Israel – had only one location for worship
 - (1) Centralized in Jerusalem; Zion
 - (2) Samaritan woman asked Jesus where it was appropriate to worship – on this mountain or in Jerusalem
 - (a) Jesus said a time is coming, now is, when you will worship in neither place, but in spirit and in truth
 - (b) Very nature of worship would not be confined to a

- geographical location
- (3) That's what you see in the difference between Israel and the church
 - (a) The church is spread all over different locations
 - (b) Local church is the center of worship
 - (c) Candelabra has been split, able to cover the globe
 - b. Lampstand wonderfully represents the relation of Christ and the church
 - (1) Jesus: I am the light of the world
 - (2) **John 9:5** (NASB95) — 5 “While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.”
 - (3) When Jesus leaves
 - (a) **Matthew 5:14** (NASB95) — 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden..”
 - (4) Church becomes the lampstand through which the world sees the light of Christ
 - c. Even a small, struggling, persecuted church needs to know that it is still the light of the world, showing Jesus to a declining, anti-God culture
2. Most important – **Jesus is in the midst of the church**
- a. There is a great deal in this vision about Jesus' transcendence, His otherness, His heavenliness
 - (1) But the vision opens with His imminence
 - (2) He is right there
 - (3) He is right here!
 - b. Remember, this small, struggling church has been waiting for the return of Christ
 - (1) Weary of waiting
 - (2) Where is He???
 - c. Jesus has never really left
 - (1) Can't visibly see Him, but He's there
 - (2) That, in itself, ought to be enough to sustain you
 - d. **Matthew 18:20** (NASB95) — 20 “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”
 - e. **Revelation 1:16** (NASB95) — 16 In His right hand He held seven stars...
 - (1) 1.20 – stars are the angels of the churches
 - (2) Each church has its angel
 - (3) Not easy to understand what this means
 - (4) Angel – supernatural beings everywhere else in Revelation
 - (5) Angel = messenger
 - (6) John told to write the angel of each church
 - (a) Human being? Pastor?
 - (b) Who would John write to if he were writing to an angel?

- f. Not only is Jesus in the midst of the church, He holds the pastors in the palm of His hand
 - (1) That's encouraging to me!
- 3. Jesus is present
 - a. Caring for the church
 - b. Caring for her leaders
 - c. Available
 - d. Just what the church needs to hear

III. Jesus is Holy (Character)

- A. **Revelation 1:13** (NASB95) — 13 and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.
 - 1. Clothing sometimes has to do with one's office
 - a. Priests wore robes
 - b. Prophets also wore robes
 - 2. More often, clothing is symbolic for one's character
 - a. **Isaiah 64:6** (NASB95) — 6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
 - b. **Psalms 104:1-2** (NASB95) — 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, 2 Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, Stretching out heaven like a tent curtain.
 - c. **Revelation 19:13** (NASB95) — 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.
 - 3. Our own character is said to be changed by identification with Christ; expressed as clothing
 - a. **Galatians 3:27** (NASB95) — 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
 - b. **Colossians 3:9-14** (NASB95) — 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— 11 a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. 12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.
 - 4. Most well-known display of clothing representing character
 - a. **Isaiah 6:1-3** (NASB95) — 1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of

His robe filling the temple. 2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.”

- B. The robe that represents the holiness of God is applied to Christ: He is holy
 - 1. We live in an age of informality; we speak of Jesus as our best buddy
 - a. Certainly, He is our friend
 - (1) He told us that Himself
 - b. But that truth should never make us play fast and loose with Christ, or to presume on His approachability
 - c. That ought to have an effect on us
 - (1) Like Isaiah
 - (2) Like Peter, when Jesus caught the boat load of fish that Peter couldn't catch all night
 - (a) “Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinful man”
 - d. When we come to worship Christ, the very first thing we should think of would be His holiness
 - (1) Let that put us in the proper frame of mind

- C. The church needs to hear that
 - 1. **1 Peter 1:14–16** (NASB95) — 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”
 - 2. Small, struggling, persecuted church can still be a holy church

IV. **Jesus is God Almighty (Person)**

- A. **Revelation 1:14** (NASB95) — 14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow...
 - 1. Allusion to Daniel
 - a. **Daniel 7:9** (NASB95) — 9 “I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool...”
 - 2. Applies to the Ancient of Days
 - a. God Almighty
 - b. Speaks of His deity
 - (1) Certainly has to do with a number of other attributes; eternity, wisdom, etc.

- B. What applies to the Ancient of Days applies to Jesus
 - 1. Jesus is God
 - a. Not just a prophet
 - b. Not just a wise man
 - c. Not just a good person
 - d. But God incarnate
 - 2. That is an understanding that can only come by God's Spirit

- a. **Matthew 16:15–17** (NASB95) — 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”
 - 3. Story of UCC pastor being ordained in PCUSA
 - a. “Is Jesus Christ God?”
 - C. Important to the church
 - 1. Is this Jesus, who is in the midst of the church, and who is coming again...
 - a. Worth following?
 - b. Worthy obeying?
 - c. Worth waiting for?
 - 2. Absolutely!
 - 3. If the Ancient of Days showed up and told you what you ought to do, who among us would resist?
 - a. No difference with Christ
 - b. He is Deity incarnate
 - (1) Worth following
 - (2) Worth obeying
 - (3) Worth waiting for
- V. **Jesus is the Judge (Function)**
 - A. **Revelation 1:14–16** (NASB95) — 14 ... His eyes were like a flame of fire. 15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword...
 - 1. All images of judgment
 - a. **Habakkuk 1:13** (NASB95) — 13 Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor On those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they?
 - b. **Hebrews 4:12** (NASB95) — 12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
 - c. **Hebrews 4:13** (NASB95) — 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.
 - d. **Malachi 3:2** (NASB95) — 2 “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap.”
 - e. **Ezekiel 43:1–3** (NASB95) — 1 Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing toward the east; 2 and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. 3

And it was like the appearance of the vision which I saw, like the vision which I saw when He came to destroy the city. And the visions were like the vision which I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell on my face.

B. Son of Man is a title of judgment

1. **Daniel 7:9–10** (NASB95) — 9 “I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. 10 “A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened.
2. **Daniel 7:11–12** (NASB95) — 11 “Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. 12 “As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.
3. **Daniel 7:13–14** (NASB95) — 13 “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.
4. **Matthew 26:63–64** (NASB95) — 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, “I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.” 64 Jesus said to him, “You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.”

C. Church needs to know that judgment begins with the house of God

1. **1 Peter 4:17** (NASB95) — 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
2. **2 Corinthians 5:10** (NASB95) — 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
3. Should lead the church into a sober-mindedness, a seriousness with respect to holiness and sin

VI. **Jesus is the Source of All Power (Resource)**

- A. **Revelation 1:16** (NASB95) — 16 ... and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.
- B. We know the sun to be the source of energy for our own world
 1. Light

2. Heat
 - C. God made the sun to rule the day
 1. **Colossians 1:15–17** (NASB95) — 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
 2. Christ made the sun
 3. Whatever energy there is in the universe derives its very existence from Christ who spoke the world into existence
 - D. We lived through an energy crisis in the 70's
 1. The greatest energy crisis in the universe is to not know Jesus Christ
 - a. The resource on whom every other resource depends
 - E. And to think that the church functions as if He is not the greatest resource!
 1. This is the very image the church needs to see
 - a. Small, struggling, persecuted
 2. But Christ is the source of all power
 - a. Even if the church seems powerless in a destructive, anti-God age
- VII. **Jesus is the Victor (Accomplishment)**
- A. **Revelation 1:17–18** (NASB95) — 17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.
 1. Calls attention to what Jesus did
 - a. Died on the cross
 - b. Rose from the dead
 - c. Gained victory over death
 - d. Received authority over death and Hades
 2. **Hebrews 2:14–16** (NASB95) — 14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. 16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.
 - B. Small, struggling, persecuted church needs to hear that
 1. Final enemy is death
 - a. Fear of death is what paralyzes the church
 - b. Fear of death is what makes persecution effective
 2. Jesus is the victory; He has conquered death
 - a. He is the living One
 3. He has authority over death and Hades
 - C. He has the keys
 1. I have keys
 2. I don’t have those keys

3. Jesus does
- D. The church needs to know that
- VIII. Is that the Christ you know?
- A. Jesus is **Imminent**
 - B. Jesus is **Holy**
 - C. Jesus is **God Almighty**
 - D. Jesus is the **Judge**
 - E. Jesus is the **Source of all Power**
 - F. Jesus is the **Victory**