



Sermon Title: The Exalted Christ (Revelation 1:9-20)

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. When you were a child, what was your image of Jesus?
2. Tell of a time when something was 'unveiled' to you. Perhaps it was something someone said to you; perhaps a special word from God; perhaps one of your own thoughts.

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. Explore further information about the Apostle John. What other books in the New Testament did he write? What was the timeline of his life? What are some stories surrounding the end of his life?
2. Read background on the Book of Revelation (look at study Bibles). Study a map that shows where Patmos is, and where the seven churches were located. What was the political situation at that time? How did it impact the Christians?
3. List and explore the symbols describing Jesus in Rev. 1:12-16. What did each represent? Use Ex 37:17-23; 39:2-7; Daniel 7:9, 13-14; Matthew 17:1-8 to consider these. What other Old Testament and New Testament verses give additional understanding? How do each of these reflect the Divinity of Jesus?
4. Compare and contrast Jesus as represented in the Revelation passage to Jesus in John's Gospel.
(ex. John 1:1-5; 2:11; 3:19; 3:36; 4:14; 5:30; 6:35; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1; 21:25)
Why is it important to understand both perspectives of Jesus?
5. How did John's vision in Revelation affect his response to Jesus? What was Jesus' response to John? Why is this significant?
6. Pastor Ashwin said, 'The Church is not in any form of crisis as some analysts of our time think – because when the flame starts flickering Jesus stirs it up and revives the fire. He will not allow the influence of His Church to fade nor let our flames be extinguished.' What is your response to his statement?

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. Which of the 'symbols' of Jesus is most encouraging for you? Why?
2. What situation are you facing right now where you need to feel Jesus' touch and hear his words in Rev 1:17, 18?
3. To whom in your circle of acquaintances can you give this hope?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

Resources: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2051418/Ohio-reserve-owner-Terry-Thompson-released-exotic-animals-killed-himself.html>
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/19150396-yawning-at-tigers>

(This week's writers: Marg Andrusky, Sandi Somers, Georgia Harrison.)

THE WORD (NIV)

Revelation 1:9-20

⁹I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

¹²I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lamp stands, ¹³and among the lamp stands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

¹⁹"Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. ²⁰The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lamp stands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches.



The book of *Revelation* is not only a revelation of end time prophesies but a revelation of a Person - Jesus Christ. In *Revelation*, we come face to face with His greatness and majesty. The opening words of the book are - 'The Revelation of Jesus.' The word revelation in Greek is 'apokalupsis' which originally means 'unveiling.' It is the disclosure of something previously hidden.

Revelation offers a breathtaking view of Jesus that challenges our mental conceptions. Drew Dyck in *Yawning at Tigers* cautions that in a therapeutic culture we tend to major on those aspects of God that are most comforting to us while conveniently leaving out other aspects. We are also sometimes guilty of creating a safe, predictable view of Jesus. *Revelation* unveils an exalted cosmic Jesus whose presence is awe inspiring and worthy of our worship. Interestingly, it was John, the disciple Jesus loved and who was most acquainted with Jesus who is startled by the vision of Jesus that he writes about in the *Revelation* (c.96AD.) Persecuted for his commitment to Christ and unwillingness to worship the emperor, John has been exiled to the island of Patmos. The church has faced persecution under Nero and Christ followers have been martyred and the persecution intensifies under the next emperor. Emperor worship is instated and followers of Christ face confusion, discouragement and fear. They saw no future for their little movement and it looked like the flame was going to slowly extinguish.

On the island of Patmos, John receives an incredible vision that will once again fuel the fire and revive the church. He is commanded by God to write down this vision and share it with the Seven Churches of his time.(Rev. 1:11) It was the power and impact of the *Revelation* that renews the struggling early church and carries them through the darkest phase of history as they hold on to the Lordship of Christ and defy Caesar. Since then, there has been no turning back. This is the kind of impact that reading Revelation should have on us today. John's message is a Revelation of Jesus, and of His glory and divinity; His full identity. Rev.1:12,13 - **I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lamp stands (symbolizes the 7 churches), and among the lamp stands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet with a golden sash around his chest.** Jesus is in the midst of the lamp stands, tending the lamps like the priest in the Old Testament. The church can be reassured by his presence and the lamps will never go out because Jesus is attending them. We have the same reassurance today. Jesus is in the midst of the church and He keeps the flame burning and the body of believers safe and effective.

We are presented with more images of Jesus in the grand vision presented by John. These images are not new and can be found in the Old Testament book of Daniel. In John's vision Jesus is presented as the Son of Man. Jesus often referred to himself in this way. The Son of Man in Daniel 7:13,14 is the central figure in history and all the kingdoms and people of this world come under the dominion of His Everlasting Kingdom. Jesus is wearing a long robe which is symbolic of a high priest and a golden sash across His chest, signifying royalty. Rev. 1:14 says His hair was white like wool and as white a snow. White hair is symbolic of wisdom and refers back the 'the Ancient of Days' in Daniel. His eyes are like blazing fire. He sees everything and knows his church inside and out. He has power to refine us and purge us from all impurities. His feet are as bronze; assuring that His kingdom will thrive and march forth in victory. His voice is like rushing waters meaning that Jesus' voice stands distinct and clear, drowning out all other noise. Rev. 1:16 says that He holds 7 stars in His right hand. The seven stars refer to the angels of the seven churches. Angel refers to messenger so this could refer to the leaders of the seven churches. They are under the authority of Jesus and receive assurance by being held in His right hand. Out of His mouth is a two edged sword which represents judgment. He will overthrow every opposition and all evil will be purged. God's judgment is good news and believers have nothing to fear. In

In response to the glorious vision (Rev 1:17, 18) John, the apostle who was closest to Jesus, falls prostrate at the feet of Jesus. And Jesus reaches down to place His right hand on John. This is the hand that upholds the whole universe; that holds all of history; that controls the entire angelic realm. The great cosmic Jesus had time for an old man who was being plagued with doubts, languishing in isolation and feeling forsaken, wondering what was going on. Only in Christianity can one find the concept of God who is both transcendent and imminent. He is transcendent - above and beyond His creation and far more glorious than we can possibly imagine. Christ is imminent - nearer to us than our hands and feet and not some distant deity indifferent to our needs. Jesus tells John that He has conquered death and Hades (Rev.1:18) and that John has nothing to fear.

Revelation offers us an alternate interpretation of reality; that things are not as they appear to be. Believers need to base their faith on the unseen reality - that our risen conquering Savior has the whole world in His hands. Believers can rely on the exalted vision of Jesus that John has recorded in *Revelation*. For the early church this exalted vision of Jesus rivaled everything else: the Roman Empire, fierce persecution and threats. We too, can rely on this vision of Jesus to take away our fears and give us new perspective.