

Christ as He Appears Today

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon explores the significance of Christ's appearance in the book of Revelation, emphasizing the importance of understanding the phrase 'in the Spirit' and the character of the one who receives visions.

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Scripture: Revelation 1:13

Topics: "Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a terrifying experience that happened to his family and many others when they were young. He emphasizes the importance of constantly pushing forward and claiming the present day as a gift from God. The speaker encourages the audience to live life to the fullest and not constantly wait for a better tomorrow. He also references the story of John in exile and how he longs for the 'good old days,' but the speaker reminds the audience that the present is the good old days for future generations. The sermon concludes with an invitation for those who are unsaved to accept Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Christ, as he appears today, Revelation, the first chapter, will give this testimony of an eyewitness. The Apostle John describes to us exactly what he saw, and we are prepared to accept his testimony. I would like to ask you what would have happened if you had been with John on the island of Patmos on this particular Lord's Day? What would have been your response? Would it have been that you too were in the Spirit, and in the Spirit you would have seen and understood what was said? Or perhaps it would have been in your case as it was with those that accompanied Paul, all they did was suppose or surmise that it had thundered.

And thus it is in my mind this evening to ask you, what does it mean when you hear the words, in the Spirit? I was in the Spirit. This we hope to find out. This we will see as we proceed with our study.

Now what John saw and what we are about to consider was not a transient thing, not just something that happened and ceased. It was a transient revelation, however, of a permanent reality. He saw the Lord Jesus Christ as he is.

That is why I have dared to say the Lord Jesus Christ as he appears today. He is the unchanging, the unchangeable Christ. And what John saw then, he is now.

Now remember this. First we will get acquainted with the one who had this vision. Verses 9 and 10 of the first chapter of the book of Revelation.

I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I, John, such a frank, such a specific designation ought to speak to you and must settle always forever the author of the book and the testimony of the one we have here. This is the very same man who was with James mending the nets the day Jesus Christ called him.

The one that leaned on Jesus' bosom the night that he had instituted the Lord's Supper. The one who beheld him after his resurrection. I, John, this one who had walked with the Lord Jesus Christ for three years of earthly ministry, now brings the authority of a personal witness.

This is what he has seen, this is what he has experienced, and he is putting his whole life and reputation on the line for the truthfulness of what he states. I, John, who also am your brother. He isn't separating himself by some vast gulf saying, I'm here and you're there.

Your brother, brother in sin, for he too was in need of salvation. Nothing could meet the need of John's heart but the cleansing blood of an all-sufficient Savior. I, John, your brother, under the sentence of death, condemned, with you.

But I met Jesus Christ, I saw him, I beheld him. It was on that day that I heard John the Baptist say, Behold the Lamb of God. And I am your brother now through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Born into the same family, partaker of the same grace, washed in the same precious blood, whatever age, whatever period, down across the centuries this ever will be read and every one in which it has been read, John has identified himself with us as one of the heirs of salvation and one who is dedicated to seek to his serving the Lord Jesus and thereby to glorifying him. Your brother. And then notice he doesn't stop there, but your companion in tribulation.

Your companion in tribulation. John had been tested. He'd been persecuted.

The record tells us how many of you have Foxe's Book of Martyrs? Perhaps I'd better ask how many of you read it, if you have it. So many books, you know, grace our shells and disgrace our minds because we fail to appropriate them. Have you read Foxe's Book of Martyrs? Oh, I'd urge you to do it real soon and let something of this testimony of these who hazard love, not their lives unto death, lay hold upon you.

I, John, your brother and your companion in tribulation. I've mentioned it several times recently, how John had been sentenced to die and spared and delivered. And then he said, I was for the testimony of Christ exiled to the island of Patmos.

Reading of this just this week, I have been reminded that Patmos had mines, lead mines, and the exiles often were forced to work as slave laborers, mining lead. We have no evidence that John was engaged in such servitude, but by the same token, we have no proof that he wasn't. And so if you wish, you can imagine John, the elderly one that worked with the Lord, toiled at drawing fish from the Sea of Galilee.

Now is there taking his place in the morning with the other slaves exiled to the island of Patmos. These were noble men, often tribunes, senators, wealthy men that have been put in this place, thus confined and protected, sort of a devil's island to the Roman Empire. And John is there, and he says, your companion in

tribulation.

I know what it is to suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ, your companion in the kingdom. You see, when Jesus Christ takes us, he not only receives us in terms of forgiveness for a world, but also in his own kingdom. The kingdom of God is in you.

In this sense, that when Jesus Christ owns you and possesses you, you are the extraterritorial rights of the sovereign Son of God. And in you he has a place where his banner flies and where he rules. So the kingdom of God is in you.

The kingdom of God is not in meat and drink, but it's in righteousness and in peace and in the joy of the Holy Ghost. He says, your companion in the kingdom. Then your companion in the patience of Jesus Christ.

Generally speaking, when the word patience is linked with the name of Christ, it is that patient waiting for him to return. John was with that company on the Mount of Olives the day when our Lord was caught up by a cloud. John heard the angel say, this same Jesus shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go.

And so he says, I am a companion in the upward look, a companion in the anticipation that the Son of God is going to come, cleaving the clouds to gather to him his own. I am a companion in the patience of Jesus Christ. So this gives us some little insight as to the man himself.

But then we ought to consider the source of his certainty about the vision. I've mentioned in the past John of Roysbrook, this dear man. And if you want a book that will really bless your heart, get his Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage.

I'm sure the bookstore will do it for you. It's hard to read, but oh, it's so lovely if you can take the time to do it. But John is telling us now that he's had a vision.

Do you believe in visions? Well, it depends on who it is that has it. There are some people, they came to me and said they had a vision. All I'd say is, well, mm-hmm.

For somebody else, it's another matter. It depends on the man. It depends on the person.

It depends on how they live and walk. Old Uncle Bud Robinson said, I don't care how high you jump when you're happy, just so you walk straight when you come down. And the vision, this is important.

Don't make indifference. Sure, I believe in visions. I believe in them.

I believe the same Jesus is able the same way to speak as he has in the past. But I tell you, I want to know the character and the conduct and the attitude of the person that has it. I, John, he's walked steadfastly for all these decades.

Nine, 90 A.D., 95 A.D., possibly 98 A.D. the last time the Lord Jesus left, went back to heaven, 30 A.D. That means that John has been walking with alone for 65, 68 years. Now, when this man has a vision, you better pay attention. Better pay attention.

When he speaks, it's a different matter. Not just some enthusiast, but this is someone that knows the Lord. And so in the tenth verse, he describes how it came about.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, waiting, worshiping in the Spirit. What does this mean, in the Spirit? Well, it does, it means not necessarily that he was in a state of ecstasy, but he was walking in the conscious fullness of the Spirit. He was aware of the Spirit's presence, and he was withdrawn, recollected.

I love the way the Quaker writers in other days have spoken of recollection, recollecting. You know, we get so scattered. Our minds, our attitudes, our enthusiasms, our zeals all get outside.

And the ancients talk about being recollected, calling in, calling in your thoughts and calling in your emotions and calling in your fears and collecting them. And then in the inner sanctuary, the Spirit, the secret of the Lord is in the sanctuary. And you are the temple of God, and the place that God speaks is here.

Now, in the heart, in the inner man, when he says, I was in the Spirit, I believe that he was just quietly there, not in some ecstasy in which he was physically gyrated. That isn't it. Withdrawn and quiet, just happily and humbly and sweetly in fellowship with the Lord.

And he said, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. He remembered this, the Lord's day, the first day of the week, waiting. Perhaps it could have been he was in chains.

Perhaps it could have been he was mining, for there'd certainly be no regard for the Lord's day in a Roman mine. But isn't it true that chains do not a prison make? And John could be in the Spirit on the Lord's day. He said, I heard a voice as of a great trumpet.

I heard a voice. You know, he wasn't a stranger to this voice. He'd heard that same voice before.

For he could recall the day that he'd seen one standing on the shore of Galilee. The boat was in against the shore and tied to the little wharf. He's out there sitting, weaving and mending the nets.

And he hears a voice, John, come, follow me. And he heard a voice, but he recognized the voice. For he tells us who spoke.

He tells us that it was the voice of the one who said, I am the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega. This is the voice of Christ, a voice that John would recognize. But notice something.

He says, the voice was behind me. This gives us a little insight into John's character. The voice was behind me.

I think we're to see this in the manner in which I'm about to present it and have presented it. First, it was called to my attention, to our attention, by our brother Bach Sing when he was here two years ago this month. Perhaps this very same night.

Do you recall how it was when he told us that John was looking backward to the good old days? In the spirit, meditating on the days as he'd walked with Christ and the days of the early church and when he'd been with the other apostles? Oh my, how prone we are to this. How often all of us do. To make a distinction between the sweetness of the memories of yesterday and the blue glorious privileges of today and the victories of tomorrow requires wisdom indeed.

How is it that we can take all the value and the meaning and the sweetness from the past and yet turn that all to good account for the present and use the past and the present as the resources for the future? Unfortunately, too often people sit in the present, lose all interest in it, in a sense, and oh, this is an

endemic disease in America. I think you could almost call it Americanitis, this inflammation of the human spirit that loses the meaning of the present. The child goes to high school and he works so hard to graduate with honor so that he can go into college, so that he can work so hard to graduate with honor, so that he can go into graduate school, so that he can graduate with honor, so that he can get a job and get a promotion.

In all of his life he's like someone running uphill inside of a squirrel cage. He's just going and nothing gives any pleasure. The high school diploma didn't give any pleasure because the college diploma loomed ahead.

And the college diploma didn't give any real pleasure because there had to be graduate work before he could go on, perhaps. And that didn't give any real pleasure because now he had to put his training to work and secure a standing in his field. And so it's a constant climbing, and then, of course, the whole of life is wished away in this anticipation.

I've suffered from it from my earliest day. I think we that were the children of the Depression, who saw everything around us disintegrate and weren't old enough to meet it as adults and just were young enough to feel the terror of it, have particularly strong emotional problems in this regard. Because we remember how jobs disappeared and poverty and seeing strong men stand in line to get a box full of grapefruit and some butter and carry it home.

It was a terrifying experience. And to have it happen to your own family as it did to many my age, and you look back on it as youngsters then. And so constantly pushing, constantly climbing to keep ahead of this thing.

This is a tragic thing because this is the day the Lord has made. We are to rejoice in it. Now, this is life, right now.

We're always getting ready to live. Always. We're going to be supremely and sublimely happy in some beautiful tomorrow.

Of course, when tomorrow gets here, this isn't quite the day. It's got to be pushed further ahead. And all our lives we're pushing this day when we're going to take time to be friends and take time to pray and take time to live life to the full.

Always pushing it ahead. Oh, it's a disease. But there's another disease almost as bad.

And that's the disease of looking back to some yesterday. Time has made all the unpleasant parts of it disappear. And you were so happy to get out of it when you were there.

And now that you're out of it, it looks so beautiful. And you just think, oh, this was it. Now, this is what John is suffering from.

He's an old man. It often comes with age. I'm beginning to find out that we sort of lived our life.

And what can these youngsters do coming on? How are they going to be able to handle the problems? We've failed. Things are just going to get worse and worse, you know. And John is sitting there in exile thinking of those churches and those boys that he had to spank and had to discipline.

And now they're the pastors of the churches in Asia Minor. And they're the ones carrying responsibility and leadership. And he's looking backward.

And he hears a voice behind him. He's looking back toward the good old days. Oh, I'm mad at the good old days.

They weren't good enough for the people that were in them. They were still looking at the good old days. They didn't even know they were good.

Did you know that these are the good old days for our great-grandchildren? Honestly, these are the good old days for them. And they weren't good enough for them. And now we look back and say, oh, wasn't it wonderful, wasn't it? This is what John is doing.

I believe, in spite of all that he has and all, he's looking backward. And he hears a voice, but he hears a voice behind him. You know, you may find that the beauty is in the past, but the Lord has a more wonderful future than the past has ever been.

I absolutely refuse to believe that for the child of God that walks in obedience to his heavenly Father, that the best is behind us. I can't believe it. Now, if you go into sin and disobedience and rebellion against God, believe me, the best is behind you, because there's going to be severe chastening in the future.

But if you love God and your heart is abandoned to him and your purpose is to please him, the blessedness is in the head. It's in the future. The future is just as glorious as God is great.

It's just as bright as he is able. Now, when I say future, I'm saying the future not in terms as material terms. It may mean that all of us go into concentration camps or persecution.

I'm not talking about sensual comfort when I'm talking about blessedness. I'm talking about the only thing that counts to a Christian, and that is the glory of Jesus Christ. I refuse to believe that Jesus Christ got all the glory he wants yesterday.

I think that he's waiting for you and for me today to meet him on his terms and bow before him and surrender to him, and that he will do something for us and our children that will bring that glory to him that he yearns for. And John heard a voice behind him, but we find in verse 12 that he said, I turned to see the voice that spake with me. He heard the voice, and he's overwhelmed by it, and he listens.

Well, what is it that we hear him say? What is this does John hear? I heard a voice behind me saying, I am Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. Who is this one? He's the one who says, before me there was nothing. After me there will be nothing.

All things are by me. All things consist in my power. I am the creator and the sustainer of the universe.

I am the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega. God is speaking. This is how he chooses to identify himself.

And God says to John, I am using you as the vehicle of blessing to the churches for which you're concerned. I believe that every one of us that are in the will of God and filled with the Spirit of God and walk in obedience to the word of God will be to the blessing of the church. The church is God's instrumentality.

The church is God's method. The church is God's program. And now John is on the island of Patmos alone with the Lord, and the Lord says to him, John, I am using you to bless the church.

And everything that God does through us will be for the edification, the exhortation, and the comfort of the church. I love thy church, O Lord. Do you love the church so much that you can't harm it, you can't hurt it, you can't, but you can only minister in longing prayer for it? Do you love the church, the body of Jesus Christ? If you do, it's going to make you exceedingly sensitive.

John loved the church. And if you read over here in his little letters in the second epistle, the elder unto the elect lady and her children whom I love in the truth. The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius whom I love in the truth.

How great is his concern for the church. How deeply does this apostle of love minister to the church. And now he finds the Lord saying to him, what thou seest, write in a book.

And send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia. I want you to be the vehicle of blessing. I want you to receive this message from me and pass it on to them.

And thus they are to receive it as from me through you and find it binding upon them. The message is from Christ. This one who is the first and the last.

This one who has supreme authority. He's the one that's speaking, but he's speaking through the apostle. And he is speaking in such a way as to bring blessing.

Now we've considered the one who saw the vision and the ones for whom the vision was intended. Now just let us give ourselves to the one that is seen in the vision. Verses 12 to 19.

I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. The first thing John saw was a representation of the church under the emblem of the seven candlesticks.

The church, I say, the church is represented by the candlesticks because the light of the candlestick is not from the candlestick. It's from another source. It's simply sustained by the candlestick and revealed by the candlestick.

And the church has no power in itself. All of the light that comes through the church is from the presence of Christ. And thus the candlestick becomes a very effective and appropriate representation of the church.

The church is represented as holding forth that light which is found in the person of the Son of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is represented as confining the revelation of himself to his church. I want you to get this point.

There are people who talk against the church and who criticize it. They should criticize everything that hurts it and injures it, but they should always do it in love. You know, maybe when your child has a mosquito on his forehead, you want to brush it off, but friend, don't take a hammer to do it.

Don't kill a mosquito with a baseball bat. You'll succeed in killing the mosquito, but your baby may be pointed-headed all his life and injured and twisted and warped. And this is what I think so often happens when people come and they criticize the church and they bruise it and they hurt it and they injure it.

No, no. No, no. You can't do that and not get into trouble with Jesus Christ.

He loves his church. He loves his church. There may be the necessity from time to time to take a stand against that which is wrong.

We're to stand for the truth. We're not to be swept about by every wind of doctrine, by cunning craftiness. We're by the line, wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love.

Always to speak the truth in love. And this is where the Lord Jesus shows himself. He shows himself through the church.

Now, the candlesticks are made of gold. This reveals to us the purity of the church. It is to be pure.

If we're to show forth his light and we're to be the revealers of his character, there must be purity. And I submit to you that in a sense, the church is no more pure than you are if you're part of it, because you're part of the candlestick. And it's therefore imperative that everyone that has been banded together by the Spirit of God at any church, and you are here tonight, though you may never have been here before, but if you are here in Christ for this gathering, this time, you constitute part of a unique group.

We'll never be together again the same way we are now. We're here as a company of people, and I would believe supernaturally, sovereignly banded together. Let it be understood that this church of which we're a part now is no more pure than you are.

If you have unconfessed, unforsaken, unforgiven sin in your life, then the gold is filled with dross to the degree to which you are filled with sin. Therefore, we are to have consciences void of offense toward God and toward man, because we're part of the church, the candlestick that reveals the glory of Christ. The gold had to be put on the fire, and it had to be melted, and then the dross would rise to the surface and be scraped and drawn away, and then it was pounded, shaped, and molded in order for it to be a candlestick.

The gold, of course, also speaks to the fact that the church is without price. He purchased it with his precious blood. And again, I come back to you and say that all of God's method is the church.

All of God's program is the church. Now, how do I use it? Do I use it in the sense of a society, such as the Christian Missionary Alliance? No. Do I use it in the sense of the Methodist church, a great denomination? No.

What do I use? How am I thinking when I use the word church, so we understand each other? I'm thinking of that local company of believers that ought to be banded together by the Holy Ghost. One mind, one heart, one spirit. This local group of believers is the church of which we speak.

There's a church at Ephesus in Smyrna and Progamos. Didn't say the church is in Ephesus, because you know this, and if you wish to speak of New York City, every member of the body of Christ in New York City is a member of every other member of the body of Christ. Do you understand that? Now, let me repeat it.

Every one in central midtown Manhattan that's a member of the body of Christ is a member of every other member of the body of Christ in the same geographical area. Now, unfortunately, the body of Christ has been divided into a myriad of fragments, and in a sense the Lord does not have a church in New York. If we could see what God sees, we would have to view that in any geographical area, every member of the body of Christ is a member of every other member.

And in a sense, our fellowship ought to be on that level, on the geographical level. I am not on that optimistic enough to believe that it will come by any engineering or programming or machinations of men. I don't expect it to come that way, but I refuse to change my thinking because it's scriptural that in any geographical area, every Christian is a member of every other Christian.

Now, we're split four ways from Sunday, 312 Protestant denominations and probably all of them have their representation here in Manhattan. But at Ephesus, there was a church. At Pergamos, there was a church, the church at Thyatira, not churches, the church.

Now, there may have been many groups, but they met on a geographical area on the basis of their proximity to each other. One day, perhaps the Lord will bring it back that way. I hope so.

I trust so. But in the meanwhile, if we can't deal with the ideal, if we can't have that which is absolute in its scriptural perfection, then let's understand this, that wherever you meet a Christian, whether he wears your brand name or not, if he's in Christ, he's part of you. You're members of the same body.

And for this reason, I caution you against speaking ill of bodies, of any groups where God may have some of his children. I hate to find people speaking ill of the society of which I'm a part, the Christian Missionary Alliance. Occasionally, I find people speak in great derision and great contempt of us.

I don't think we deserve it. I don't think it's fair. I don't think it's honoring to the Lord.

I think it grieves the Holy Spirit. But you know something? I think he's equally grieved when we speak in derogatory manner of other groups as such. I don't think we should do that.

I think we ought to recognize that God's poor, poor sheep have been gathered in a myriad of places and scattered, but they're still his sheep. His body isn't as he wants it. Someday, let's believe and trust he'll bring it together.

But right now, let us, joined one to another by the Holy Ghost, so live in abandonment to Jesus Christ, so walk in the fullness of the Spirit, so live manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, that Jesus Christ can have in us a vehicle to manifest himself as he wishes here. This is what we find his saying now. Christ was in the midst of the candlestick.

He is revealed through the church. That's why the satanic effort has always been directed toward the church. The enemy has bruised it.

Satan has tried to infiltrate it, to corrupt it, to hurt it, to injure it, and has found every possible means that he could to do it. But nevertheless we know that he said, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And when we stand on the victory of Calvary and lock the gates to the enemy, then at least for the working out of his purpose locally here, he can do that.

It's in the church that Jesus Christ is manifesting. I'd rather be speaking to a company of people here or in any other city, in one sense, one final sense, than to speak to five thousand people if they didn't represent a church. That's why I'm never troubled about the size of the congregation if that congregation consists of responsible people that are joined to each other in a testimony.

Now let me explain why. You get ten thousand curious, ten thousand seeking entertainment, ten thousand that represent every kind of group, and you communicate to them they're not capable of taking that truth

and implementing it and putting it into a testimony, bringing it to life. But if we can get a group of elders and deacons, a church, and get that church to lay hold of truth and get that church to walk in truth, then through that church, Jesus Christ can have custodians of truth that he can bless with it.

And I would rather get a group of ten people that are a church, part of it, leaders of it, and talk to them than a hundred people that are from ten churches and have no particular interest in the custody of truth. Now, of course, this involves something else. You get a church, and if they don't take the responsibility to truth, then you might as well be speaking to the fenceposts.

But if you can have a church of men and women that love Jesus Christ, that are joined together by the Spirit of God and give to them the revelation of God, this is what John is doing. Send the message to the church. Send it to the church.

I'm going to use them. I'm going to bless them. Everything that he does, he does for the church.

Everything he does, he does through the church. It's his unit of operation. When the church becomes unbleisable, when it comes to the place that the Lord has to wash his hands of it, he casts it out like salt that's lost its savor to be trodden underfoot of men, and then he just starts over again.

But you can absolutely predict what Jesus Christ is going to do until he comes again. The unit he's going to work with is the church. Should it be that this church that has such a remarkable history and has been so blessed of God should in some unthinkable, impossible day come to the place where they close their heart to the will of God, the only thing it means is that Jesus Christ is going to do it over again somewhere else.

That's all. But he's set the church as the unit. That's why I don't like men that, for instance, take the message of healing and make and exploit it around their ministry.

Now, I believe that Jesus Christ is healer and that he heals. But I believe the place for this truth is in the church, not in some man using it to exploit and develop and build his own personal ministry. I believe it's in the church.

I believe the unit of evangelism is the church. I believe the place of comfort--I actually would go so far as to say that I believe that the unit of relief of the poor is the church and care for the young is the church. I think all of these other agencies that have been raised up of necessity--the Gideons and the Christian Businessmen and the YMCA and all the long list of auxiliary agencies--exist because of the failure of the church.

That the unit God's ordained and the unity employs is the church. I'm church-centered in thinking because it's the unit that God has established. There are only two agencies, two units, two organizations that God's ever has started and that he has blessed.

The first is the home. He started that. And the second is the church.

And we've started a myriad of other agencies and groups and societies and organizations. And they all represent the failure of the home to be what he intended it to be and the failure of the church to be what he intended it to be. Well, let's keep this here.

This is what he's showing. Now, whatever the vision is, it's going to have its purpose for blessing the church. Take this message to them.

Carry this word to them. Write it, put it in a book, and send it to them. What was it that he was to write? Write what you see.

And what did he see? He saw one in the midst of another of the candlesticks like unto the Son of Man. Jesus Christ was seen. And he wants the churches to know that the place of his revelation is there in the church.

And he wants the churches to know the kind of a person he is. And so the first thing John saw was that the Son of Man was clothed with garment down to the foot. Here was the robes of a prince.

And he here were the robes of majesty, the robes of splendor, the robes of authority. And he stands before John now with this insignia of all of the authority in heaven and earth that's been committed unto him. I saw him with a robe down to his feet.

This speaks also of the robe that he wore as our high priest, for he is there with the priestly garment. Righteousness and honor, mercy and truth robe him. And he is to be seen now as this one that is there robed down to the feet.

Remember how they stripped him of his garments and left him in shameful nakedness and buffeted him and beat him and bruised him. And in humility they scourged him and then took him to the cross, that most ignominious and shameful of deaths. And John said, you tell the church that you saw me in a robe.

A robe. Not one of Pilate's cast off robes. Not something that's been patched together.

But that you see me in the robe of majesty. Then he said, you tell them that you saw me girt about with a golden breastplate. A golden girdle.

This belonged to the high priest. It speaks to us of Aaron who had the breastplate on which were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes. And it tells us that Jesus Christ is there with a golden girdle, a golden breastplate.

And he is ready for his work as redeemer and mediator. You tell them at Thyatira and at Pergamos in Philadelphia that when you saw me, I not only had on a robe of majesty, but I had on the golden breastplate and I have their names over my heart. Remember the song we sing, my name is written on his hands.

Your name is written on the golden breastplate. He's there as your redeemer, presenting his blood, as your mediator, as your advocate. And so said Christ to John, tell them that I am still continuing as their high priest representing them.

That I have an unchangeable priesthood and their names are over my heart. Then notice his head and his hairs were white like wool. White like wool.

White hair speaks of age, not of senility, not of decay of power in this case. But he's the ancient of the everlasting days, the eternal son. Remember what his name shall be called.

His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. And here he is, the Alpha, the Beginning, the Ancient of Days, the Eternal Son, without beginning, without end. Tell him that you saw me thus with my hair white.

And tell him also, tell that church, those churches also, that the white hair was the crown of my glory. For remember that he'd loved his people with an everlasting love. In the fullness of time he'd become flesh and dwelt among them, he'd died for them.

His beard had been plucked from his face, his hair had been pulled, he had been bruised, indescribably bruised, but now with a robe of majesty and the breastplate of redemption and the crown of glory, he is to be seen. And his eyes were as a flame of fire, piercing, penetrating into the very hearts of men. What is he saying? Tell the church at Philadelphia that they aren't deceiving me.

I know them. I know all about them. In a little while, those eyes that are as the flame of fire are going to describe just what he saw in Ephesus, just what he saw in Thyatira.

Tell them how my eyes were, that nothing was holed and nothing was hidden, nothing was covered, nothing was shielded. I saw into the deepest intents of their heart. I saw everything that they did and why they did it.

Eyes as a flame of fire. So he'll tell them that those eyes are going to scatter terror among the adversaries. Everyone that opposes me, everyone that hinders me will find that these eyes pierce through to the deepest, secret hiding places of the human spirit.

His feet were like unto burning brass, strong, steadfast, unyielding, unyielding breast, supporting his eternal purpose. No vacillating, no wavering feet of brass. The foundation of God stand assure having this seal.

The Lord knoweth them that are his. Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. You can bring in the unsaved into a local church, but the feet of the Son of God are the feet of brass.

Can'ters disturb it. Oh, this particular group will go into oblivion, go into death, will have Ichabod written over them, but his purpose stands sure. Tell them this.

Tell them that they needn't fear. Tell them that my feet were like burning brass, polished, firm. Nothing was going to move.

Tell them also that these are the very feet that are going to subdue my enemies, that are going to tread them to powder, tread out the winepress, and bring the judgment that so justly deserved. Then John said, I saw, heard that his voice is as the sound of many waters. Here said Jesus Christ, I want you to write and tell them that my word is going to go forth.

And Nero isn't going to stop it. And Marcus Aurelius won't stop it. And my word is like the flow of waters.

It's going to be heard over all the dim of men. It's going to go. And I rejoice tonight to realize that his voice is as the voice of many waters.

And someone has said, well, of course we know that in China the testimony of Jesus Christ has been extinguished. I don't believe it for a moment, not a moment, not until you can change Jesus Christ. Can you stop the going forth of his voice? The church as it was known before the bamboo curtain closed

certainly has disappeared.

But I do not for one moment dare to believe that the voice of the son of God, which is as the voice of many waters, has ceased flowing in China. I don't know how it flows. I don't know where it flows.

But I believe that that flow can not be stopped. For he said, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. They tried to stop it in Russia.

But they have failed, signally failed. For the history of Russia for these years since the conquest by the Communists has been the history of the triumph of the church in the spite of the most severe persecution. I think of those young people there in Russia that had come to them smuggled in a Bible in the Russian language and tenderly took the threads away.

And lest anything should be happened, gave to each one a page, a double page. Not as you would expect four in a row. No, it would be from one book and from another book, just as it came apart.

And then they would gently put it away and carefully keep it so that it wouldn't be crushed in the paint or the print obliterated. And they'd memorize it and feed on it. And then they'd exchange, try to get as near as they could to where theirs had been.

But fed on the word. No, no, you can't stop him whose voice is as the voice of many waters. There's a river flowing that nothing can dam, nothing can stop.

The message of his word is as a great stream of salvation and it's going to flow. And I believe it's flowing and he's making the wrath of man to praise him. We don't see it.

That's all right. I'm sure it's flowing. Then he had in his right hand seven stars.

I believe that these seven stars speak of faithful servants, one for each church. Stars that were there, men that would speak as John would speak and others. How strange it is that Elijah should have said, I, only I remain.

I'm the only one left. God has faithful men tonight. Wherever you turn, wherever you go, you'll find those that are standing on the testimony of Jesus Christ.

And I believe that when he writes to this church and says, you tell them that you saw seven stars in my hand, he is saying that I have witnesses that have stood for me in the spite of all the inducements and all of the blandishments and the siren voice that would woo them away, they still are standing for me. And I believe this is true today as it was then. Out of his mouth went a two-edged sword, again the picture of the word.

First the word that woos, that brings conviction, that causes us to see our sin. Then having slain, it brings life and heals. It strikes at sin and condemns the sinner.

And then to the pardoned, repentant sinner it brings the message of forgiveness and eternal life. The two-edged sword. His countenance was as the shining of the sun, too bright, too pure, too strong for mortal eyes.

Here is the Son of God in his glory. And what did John do? And what did Elijah do? What must you do at seeing this vision? Verse 17 describes it. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.

This is not the first time this has happened. If you will go back to Joshua, you discover that the day that Joshua saw the captain of the host of the Lord, he fell at his feet as dead. You come again and you will find that Daniel saw the revelation of Jesus Christ and he fell at his feet as dead.

Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and fell at his feet as dead. This is what men do when they see Jesus Christ. This is what you have done if you have seen him thus.

Dying to yourself in your own will, in your own plans, in your own program, in your own whims, in your own fancy. You have come to him this way. Have you? Oh, I trust you have.

Have you come seeing yourself under the sentence of death, getting some glimpse of his holiness and in the light of what he is seeing yourself, overpowered by the revelation of Christ's glory so that you are overpowered by the revelation of your own unworthiness? I was talking just the other day with the group about the dealings of God through John Wesley. John Wesley preached on Bristol Common to twenty thousand people. Such anointing of the Spirit of God was upon him, such power in the service as he spoke for three hours that day concerning the majesty of Christ, that when the crowd had departed there were said to be over eighteen hundred people that were lying on the ground unconscious.

The revelation of the majesty of Jesus Christ had caused them to fall on their faces as though they were dead. The same phenomena accompanied the preaching of John Wesley Redfield in New Haven, Connecticut, in the Yale Bowl. There, the bowl then holding about thirty thousand people speaking to it and to its capacity crowd.

When the crowd had dispersed and had left, there were several hundred, someone said as many as nine hundred people lying there on the tiers of the bowl of the stadium unconscious because of the overwhelming revelation of the glory of Jesus Christ. Have you ever seen him in his glory? Have you ever seen him in his splendor? Have you seen him in his majesty? Have you seen him so that you've fallen on your face before him? I believe a lot of problems and a lot of lies would be solved by a revelation of Jesus Christ in his glory. Have you seen him thus? Have you seen him like Peter did depart from me for I am a wicked man, a sinful man? John saw him and fell on his face as dead.

This man who had leaned on his bosom, this man who I believe was the one who fled leaving his coat in the hands of the soldier on the night Christ was taken, this man that saw him after the resurrection, when he sees him today falls on his face as dead. I think John remembered Jesus Christ in his humility, Jesus Christ in his work, his walk. I believe, my dear friend, that you and I make the mistake of seeing the Son of God, the meek and lowly traveler of Galilee.

And we get too pally and too familiar with him as he's presented in his humiliation. And we fail to see the medium as he is high and lifted up. I believe there is a high call of the Spirit of God to you to see Jesus Christ not as he was, but as he is, and to fall on your face before him.

He's no longer the meek and lowly Jesus. He is King of kings, Lord of lords. There's only one place that anyone who professes to love Christ can ever properly stay, and that is on his face at his feet.

This is Jesus now. This is how he is today, his countenance as the sun shining. Too bright, too pure, too strong for mortal eyes to see.

And when that day he's seated upon the throne and men are forced to come before him, they'll call for the rocks and the mountains to cover them and hide them from the face of the wrath of the Lamb. This is the

Jesus of today. This is how he is today.

Then Christ touched him. I don't believe that Jesus Christ has a touch for anybody until they're on their face before him. You want a touch from God? There's one place to be sure to get it.

You'll get on your face before him. He'll touch you. You break before him.

He'll touch you. You bend before him. He'll touch you.

This is where he has the touch, no other place. And he touched him, and he gently spake for him, and the hand that touched him was a nail-pierced hand. And he said to John, Fear not, but you know the only one that should not fear the Son of God is the one who fears him.

To the place where he falls on his face before him, abandoning all sin, all uncleanness, acknowledging what he is. That one who fears him is the only one who need not fear him. It sounds like a contradiction.

But the one who has no fear of the exalted Son of God is the one who ought to fear him. And the one who fears him because of who he is and all of his worthiness is the one who will hear him say, Fear not. For those hands were nailed to the cross, and that sword was pierced by a spear.

I was dead, said he. I was dead, and am alive forevermore. I was dead speaks of his suffering for our salvation, the redemption that he purchased with his precious blood.

I was dead, but I am alive, his resurrection and his power. And I have the keys of death and hell. The only one in this universe that can open the door to heaven and lock the door to hell is Jesus Christ.

Here he is, the Son of God, as he appears today. Oh, if somehow these words could serve by his anointing and his power to bring you to his feet, broken, bowed, and bent, then together we would hear him say, Fear not. I am the first and the last.

I was dead, but I am alive forevermore. There's cleansing, there's pardon, there's forgiveness, there's life. Have you seen the Son of God as he is today? Not as he was on the cross, but as he is on the throne.

Let us bow before him in a moment of disciplined silence, trying to remember what you heard and read, and asking God to open the eyes of your heart to see him, and telling him that you're prepared to fall at his feet, that you want to see him as he is and see yourself as you are, and learn to fear sin and love holiness and righteousness, that you want to feel his touch, his forgiveness, his cleansing, his pardon. Oh, thou Son of God, thou who art alive forevermore, open the eyes of our hearts, so blinded by the world that still holds thy name and derision. Grant, Lord, that we as a people shall see thee high and lifted up.

We shall see thee as thou art. Lord, our eyes have too long beheld thee on the crucifix. Thou art not there.

Behold thee walking, teaching in the paths, plains of Galilee. Thou art not there. Grant that we may see thee as thou art now, exalted, enthroned, glorified, and that like John of old, we shall bow before thee, hating sin and uncleanness, and offer to thee the only thing that can ever be a token of our love, our ransomed personalities, as a living sacrifice.

With our heads bowed and our eyes closed, this invitation. You're here tonight unsaved. You've come in for some reason.

Do you know that you're without Christ, without hope, without God? And you want Jesus Christ. You've heard that he died for sinners and rose again. He was dead, but he's alive forevermore.

And you want this same Jesus to wash away your sin and make you every withhold. And tonight you're opening your heart to him and inviting him to become your Savior and your Lord. And you'd like to seal it and be remembered in prayer.

Would you raise your hand right now wherever you are, saying, Pray for me, I'm taking Jesus Christ as my Lord and my Savior tonight. Would you put your hand up? Take it down again. Anyone? Perhaps there's someone who would say, Pray for me.

I know I ought to. I'm not to the place yet where I'm willing, but I want prayer. Pray for me.

I need prayer. God bless you. Yes, I see it.

Anyone else? We pray our Father for the one whose hand has been lifted and for the heart behind it. We ask that the Holy Spirit will not cease in loving labor until this one has come to bow at the feet of Jesus Christ. Might it be that even tonight, while we wait solemn before thee, the revelation of thy Son, that there shall be in this heart a glad willingness to say, Yes, I do now give over.

I do take Jesus Christ to be Lord and Savior. I renounce my right to rule and declare that henceforth he shall be my Redeemer and my Lord. I do open my heart's door to thee, Lord Jesus Christ.

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