

I. John's Commissioning to Record the Vision (Rev. 1:9-11)

- A. John, the “disciple whom Jesus loved”, received his calling to prophesy about the end-times in approximately 90 A.D. John's commissioning is said to have occurred in a cave on the Isle of Patmos about sixty years after Jesus' resurrection from the dead in 30 A.D. (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2)
- B. Tradition holds that John was boiled in oil in Rome for preaching the Gospel in Ephesus and suffered nothing from it. It is said that the entire coliseum audience were converted to Christianity upon witnessing this miracle. John the head of the church in Ephesus at the time, was then banished to the Isle of Patmos. Two years after John's exile, the emperor Domitian died, and John returned to the church in Ephesus.
 - 1. John tells us that He was “In the Spirit” on the Lord's day. It is unclear biblically what exactly happened to John because of the multiple ways that phrase is used in the New Testament scriptures. My opinion is that it was an experience similar to Paul's. (2 Cor. 12:1-4)
- C. John hears the voice of our risen Lord ring through his ears like the sound of a trumpet (*shofar*) telling him to write in a book what he sees and send it to seven churches in Asia.

II. Jesus reveals His Glory to John (Rev. 1:12-20)

- A. Jesus reveals specific symbolic insights that point to real truths about who He is. These facets He reveals to John are the primary and necessary understandings of His identity to equip the Church to overcome. He will equip us through intimacy with Him to overcome compromise, endure persecution, and engage in partnership with Him in the great end-time drama of humanity.
- B. Why Symbols - First, you can say more in less language. For example, Jesus holding seven stars (His messengers) says much more than listing every individual truth related to Him tenderly upholding, directing, and protecting His messengers. Second, Jesus used symbols and parables to hide truth from the proud and unbelieving, while giving deep insight to the humble and the hungry who always search it out (Mt. 13:10-13; Lk. 1:52-53).

A note to teachers, songwriters, and prophetic people... Its generally not fruitful to speak or sing in symbolism. I want to encourage you to bring out the truths in the symbolism so the body is edified through understanding.

1. ***Walking among the Lampstands*** – Jesus wants John to see Him walking in the midst of seven menorahs. These menorahs are symbolic of the seven churches in which John was commissioned to communicate the vision. Jesus is directly and intimately involved with His people. Through all seasons (positive and negative), He fully understands our situation and shepherds us in nearness. (Ex. 25:31-40, Is. 41:10, Mat. 28:20)
2. ***Son of Man*** - This was Jesus’ favorite title for Himself in the Gospel accounts (85 references) and reveals Himself first as the “Son of Man”. This phrase explicitly alludes to the vision of Daniel in which the human Davidic Messiah is the One who would inherit the kingdoms of the earth from His Father and fully deliver Israel. He was proclaiming the two most important truths about Himself, that He was both fully God and fully human. (Dan. 7:13-14, Mat. 24:29:30, 26:64-68)
3. ***Great High Priest*** – He reveals Himself in a robe that extends down to His feet and a girdle about His chest. This robe is the same one used for the attire of the High Priest (Ex. 28:4; 29:5; Lev. 16:4). Josephus describes this attire they wore as “a long robe reaching to the feet that would fit loosely to the body and sleeves that are tied fast to the arms” and around the breast, “higher than the elbows,” they wore a girdle which was loosely wound around the body. The girdle was embroidered with colors and flowers, with a mixture of gold interwoven. The description of the robe and the girdle of the glorified Christ is Jesus reveling Himself as the great intercessing High Priest. (Heb. 7:20-8:6)
4. ***White Head and Hair*** - This also alludes to the apocalyptic vision of Daniel and the sharing of traits with Ancient of Days. His head and hair was white as wool and snow, indicates the Father’s glory. White biblically speaks of eternal existence, purity, and wisdom. (Is. 1:18, Dan. 7:9, Mark 9:2-3)
5. ***Eyes of Fire*** – He looks at John with “eyes like fire” revealing of His burning desire of love, His intensity, and His knowledge that penetrates all things as fire penetrates metal. They speak of His ability to *see* everything, to *feel* love for us, to *impart* love to us, and to *destroy* all that hinders love. His penetrating eyes look to the core humanity and sees all that is in the heart of man and fiercely yearns with jealousy for the fullness of love. (Ex. 24:17, Deut 4:23-24, Heb. 12:25-29)

6. ***Feet of refined Brass*** - Below the robe of the God-man John sees these feet gleaming as if they were brass castings that had been just removed from the fire. It is said that the glow of brass at the highest temperature is almost intolerable to look at by the human eye. Brass speaks of strength and endurance, and feet speak of direction and leadership. He will stride through human history unfaltering with power, might, and precision. The gates of Hades, which is and will assault His Bride, but will not prevail against her because of the strength of His leadership. (Deut. 32:4, Ezk. 1:27, Is. 42:16)

7. ***Voice like Many Waters*** – “Many waters,” biblically represent the peoples and nations of the earth. When Jesus speaks His voice thunders to all humanity. His authority to speak truth, direction, and judgment is over all peoples and nations on the earth. It also again is a reference to His divinity based upon Daniel and Ezekiel’s visions of God. (Eze. 43:2, Dan. 10:6, Ps. 29)

8. ***Holds the Seven Stars in His Right Hand*** - Jesus reveals in (Rev. 1:20) these stars are the messengers of the churches. He holds them in His right hand, which means that He is administrating and caring for the churches in part through His leadership over His messengers. The right hand speaks of His visible, tangible, forthright leadership - the right hand of God is the part that lovingly and discernably embraces us. We are in the safest place we can be – even in the light of His discipline. The right hand in scripture is often used to signify authority and reveals to us the privileged position and manner in which we are empowered to function. (Ps. 139:5-10, Eph. 1:20, Heb. 1:3)

9. ***His Mouth a Sharp Two Edged Sword*** – Biblically, this imagery clearly speaks of the Word of God. The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword and is invincible in the achievements of its purpose. His words will accomplish what they are sent out to do. The choice weapon of warfare used by the Jesus in His return is the Words proceeding out of His mouth. He is the Word and the One that is returning to bring the Word of Truth into its promised fulfillment. (Jer. 23:9, Is. 55:10-12, Eph. 6:17, Heb. 4:12)

10. ***His Countenance like the Sun*** – His countenance or face shines with such a fierce brightness that John cannot gaze upon it. Once before, on the Mount of Transfiguration, John had seen the face of Jesus shine like the sun. Once again His face shown forth with His true majesty. His countenance gives brilliant life giving light like the Sun that overcomes the darkness of night. The face Symbolically speaks of inward emotions, and attention. (Num. 6:22-27, Ps. 80)

11. ***The First and the Last*** – Jesus speaks to John of His total supremacy over the destiny of humanity wholly and individually. He is the source of creation and controls the unfolding drama of our history and future. He destines our future and has full authority of our eternal existence. (Deut. 32:39, Is. 44:5-8, 45:21-22)

12. ***The One who Defeated Death and Hades*** - He has the eternal credentials of the resurrection, and lives to never die again. The victory that Jesus won over sin and death was a permanent victory. He holds the authority (keys) over the power the state of death and the place of the dead. Most fears that grip and cripple humanity can be traced to the fear of death. The power of “fear of death” has been cast down forever and has no hold upon those who place their trust in Jesus. (Jhn. 14:9, Rom 6:8-9, 1 Cor. 15:53-55)

Personal Growth in Revelation (*A-R-K* Prayer)

- A. The acronym A-R-K represents three different prayer focuses as you seek to encounter more of who Jesus is. The Ark of the covenant was associated with the presence and glory of God. Noah’s Ark was a place of safety in the storm. In that day, the name of the Lord will be the ark of safety and the ark of His presence. I’m using the word ark in both ways, as the ark of His glory, and stability or safety.
1. ***Agreement***: Make declarations of agreement with the identity of Jesus you’re focused on.

 2. ***Revelation***: Ask the Holy Spirit to show you more detail into the specific identity of Jesus that you’re focused on.

 3. ***Keep the Revelation***: Respond in faith and obedience to this specific truth of Jesus. Intercede for yourself that you would have more of this particular nature or character of God formed in you.

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