***The Vision of Jesus Christ

RV06-01***

It's important that, first of all, we remember that what we're going to learn in this book is what immediately, at the beginning of the church's history in the first century, the Lord observed to be true concerning his local churches. He has selected seven of them, which he has named for us. They're in the Roman province of Asia, in the territory which we now call Asia Minor in the Aegean Sea. It is in the part of the world that we call Turkey today. These seven churches were representative of all of the churches which were to be found in the world at that time. We're going to learn a great deal about local church problems and operations from them. So this vision, first of all, is going to deal with how things were in 96 A.D., and where the believers had come to up to that point in time.

Then it's going to suddenly change gears, and we're going to find that the church has been swept up, and it's in heaven. Then a new period of revelation begins, and that has to do with that seven-year tribulation time here on the earth when the church has been removed. Most of this book deals with that tribulation period.

The book that John wrote in response to the direction of the voice behind him is this book which we call Revelation in the Bible. It's the last book of the Bible, and the last book of the New Testament. So this book is very definitely a product of divine inspiration. It is, therefore, an infallible book about the future of humanity.

We're going to begin at verse 12 now. John is in that condition and that situation. He has heard the voice speaking. It startled him. It's obviously a voice of authority. He has heard the words such that whatever he sees, he is now to write. He doesn't know exactly what he's going to see, but he knows that he is about to be given a vision, and he has been given specific churches to whom this is to be addressed.

**The Voice**

Verse 12: "And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden lamp stands." The word "and" picks up the narrative, and continues throughout repeating this word "and," indicating the next thing in order. John "turned." This is the Greek word "epistrepho." "Epistrepho" simply means "to twist the body around." John turned his body around 180 degrees so that he could look in the direction of the voice which was speaking from behind him. This is in the aorist tense, meaning that point when John heard the voice; was startled; and, then proceeded to turn around. It's active, which indicates his body was under full control. He was getting a message from God. He was not writhing in convulsions on the floor, as so often the charismatics are today while they're supposedly getting a message from God, or receiving a blessing from God. This is active voice. This word means that John turned under full capacity of his muscle power. It's indicative mood. It is simply a statement of fact.

He turned, "To see." The word "to see" is important. It is the word "blepo." The word "blepo" is the Greek word for seeing, which means "to look in terms of focusing on details." That is, he's taking a close look at specifics. This is not an overall general view. He turned to see something very specific. It's active voice, which again tells us that John is able to use his eyes. He's not dreaming. He's in full control just as much as you are now. He is in as much control as you would be if you heard this thunderous voice behind you giving the same commandment that was given to John. He had full control of his muscles to turn his body around, which he did, and he had full control of his eyes to be able to direct them upon a specific interest. And that is this voice. This "blepo" is in the infinitive mood, which indicates to us that that this was his purpose. His purpose in turning was to answer the question in his own mind, "Who is this speaking to me?"

And what he was turning to see, the Bible says, was a voice. It's the Greek word "phone." This actually means sound. What it stands for here, when he says he turned to see the sound, is, of course, a literary way of saying he turned to see who was speaking. He was looking for the source of this intelligible communication which was being spoken to him. That's what he means when he says, "And I turned to focus specifically on the person that (or whoever it was) spoke to me.

The word "spoke" is the Greek word "laleo." This is the word for speaking which stresses speaking as such, rather than the meaning of the words. At this point, John just wanted to look around, and his question was, "Whose voice is that?" Very naturally, we would wonder the same thing in a similar situation. So at this point, John, the Bible says, turned, and his focus of his attention was to see where that voice was coming from. Was it coming from up in the clouds? Was it coming from behind a rock? Was it coming from out in the field? Was it coming from across the island? Was it just coming out of outer space? Where was it coming from? And that's what he was focusing on – this voice specifically. He wasn't really trying to think at that moment as to what the voice was saying to him. He was interested in the words, at this point, rather than what the words were saying.

This is in the imperfect tense, which is the Greek way of indicating that something was done repeatedly. This suggests to us, of course, that this voice sounded this command several times. It kept speaking to John repeatedly. It's active. It is Jesus Christ Himself who is doing the speaking here at this point.

"And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me." That is, John – he is clearly the object of this message. Then "being turned" is the same word that we began with: "epistrepho." Again, having turned his body 180 degrees, John now is facing in the direction of the voice. This is aorist tense, meaning at the point when he had completely twisted himself around. Perhaps he was sitting on a rock. It is active again. John has done this. He is in full control of his body. He's not in some kind of a convulsion or fit. And we have a principle here stated, so it's in the participle.

**Seven Golden Lamp Stands**

He says, "Being turned (having made the complete turn), I saw." Now we have the other Greek word for "see." This is the Greek word "horao." "Horao is the word that is used in reference to seeing in general. This is what we call a panoramic view. John now turned, and he saw a very impressive scene before him. It's aorist tense. It was at that point when he turned and looked, and probably gasped because of what he saw. It is active. John's own eyes were taking this in. And what did he see? He saw, "Seven golden lamp stands." These seven golden lamp stands stood there, each of them with a flame of fire on it. And when John turned, suddenly he sees these seven golden lamp stands.

The word "seven," as you know, is a number in the Bible, which connotes a perfect condition – something that's complete. The idea of completion is many times expressed by the number seven. These lamp stands were all gold. The Greek word for "gold" is "cruseos." This is an adjective here. These were gold, and they were lamp stands. They were "luchnia." These were not just candlestick holders. These were actually lamps such as used in the ancient world which were fed by oil. They had a wick, and that would cause them to burn. And John sees seven distinct lamp stands.

I want you to notice that they are distinct – all separated. They are not in the form that you have perhaps sometimes seen the lamp stand, which was in the temple of the Jews, which had a central lamp which also burned with oil, and then was accompanied by cross arms that gave you the number seven across on that. But this was characteristic of Israel in that it was a united nation. So it was a perfect nation. It was a united people. It was the theocracy of God. Now we're talking about something that's true in 96 A.D., past the resurrection, into the church age. When John turns around this time, he doesn't see one lamp stand with these oil wicks burning, as in Israel's temple in Exodus 25:31-40. But he sees actually seven distinct lamp stands. Now what were they?

**Seven Churches**

Well, let's get ahead of ourselves for a moment. If you drop down to verse 20, you'll have the first of the kinds of interpretation we get in the Revelation where a symbol pops up, and then the Holy Spirit tells John what the symbol means. He tells him very specifically that these lamp stands represent seven specific individual local churches. So here is Ephesus; here is Smyrna; here is Pergamos; here is Thyatira; here is Sardis; here is Philadelphia; and, here is Laodicea. Each of these individual lamp stands represented one of these local churches to whom he was writing.

You will notice that the separate standing position of each of these lamp stands indicates that they're independent of each other. They are not united in any way. There was no such thing as ... a denomination. There was no such thing as any kind of ecclesiastical organization. Each church stood by itself. Each church was separate from every other church. Each church had a direct responsibility to God. As a matter of fact, as we shall see in a moment here, one of the things that John observed was that the Lord Jesus Christ was standing right there in the midst of these churches, which were responsible directly to Him. He is the Lord of the church.

**Gold**

These churches are not the source of the light which they give out. They are simply the bearers of it. Jesus Christ who stood in their midst – He is the source of the light. The gold is significant, because it speaks in Scripture of the divine glory of God. It is the divine glory of God that local churches are supposed to be maintaining. Local churches have a lot of trouble doing that today. They always have, because we have a lot of glory hounds within the church. We are forever having people who want recognition, and who want to be celebrities. When people become effective in the Lord's work, it is kind of hard not to be tempted by the desire for more recognition and more rewards and more respect and so on. The gold is specifically mentioned to remind us that every church is a golden lamp stand because it represents the glory of Jesus Christ. That's all that gold stands for. Gold stands for the deity of God. It stands for the glory that that deity reflects. Furthermore, these lamps could not burn without the oil that was placed in them.

**Oil**

Immediately we come across another symbol in Scripture. If you research the use of oil, you discover is that oil stands for God the Holy Spirit. So the source of light in each of these local churches is the person of God the Holy Spirit. It is God the Holy Spirit who is the revealer of divine viewpoint. When we talk about these churches giving light, please remember, that's what we're talking about – divine viewpoint. Any local church which is not putting out divine viewpoint to people is not performing its mission at all. It is not maintaining the glory of Jesus Christ. Local churches are designed to be lighthouses by giving out the divine viewpoint of Bible doctrine.

Immediately you can see this condition that is supposed to be the normative condition for local churches is far from the case today. It is really hard to find a church which actually is putting out divine viewpoint information in any kind of substance. I don't mean just here and there. But I mean this is the main thrust of the word – divine viewpoint substance, which is being used in such a way that God's work is being accomplished. The Lord is representing this here to John. Immediately John sees this scene of seven individual lamp stands empowered by the illuminating light of God the Holy Spirit, and the light that they give is the light of divine viewpoint. Each of them is individually responsible to Jesus Christ.

**Jesus Christ**

Then standing in the midst of them (that is, right there among them), in the middle of these lamp stands is, "One who is like." Here we have the word "homoios." "Homoios" means "resembling." This is not a photographic reproduction of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's who it is who is standing here in the midst of the lamp stands, but it is not a photographic picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. When John looked, he did not look at this person and say, "Here's the master. Here's my friend, Jesus." It was Jesus Christ portrayed in a symbolical way in order to convey to us certain attributes which were going to be prominent now in dealing with the churches during the church age, and which later were going to be prominent in His dealing with the human race, with the society of the tribulation world.

So this is Jesus Christ in a glory that is manifest in which John did not know Him. It is manifesting some open powers and attributes that were not evidence to John when he knew Jesus. So John says, "The appearance is like one who resembles the Jesus he knew. Perhaps it took him a little while to be sure that the person he was looking at was the Lord. But he does describe Him as One who is like (similar to) the Son of Man. "Son of Man" is one of the titles that you know of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "Son" is the Greek word "huios," and "man" is "anthropos." This is the word for man that refers to mankind, to humanity in general, the generic word. When this title "huios anthropos" is put together for Jesus Christ, it is stressing the humanity of Jesus Christ. At this point, John is again reminded that when he looks at Jesus, he is not seeing Jesus the, glorified one, that he knew was in heaven. But he is seeing Jesus, the human one. That is, Jesus, the man who was in heaven, and who was now standing here before John on the island of Patmos. It is speaking of Christ in the characteristics of His manhood. It's always important that we remember that Jesus Christ, in His relationship to heaven, is there related as a man, because what He has experienced, therefore, we can experience.

This title for the Lord Jesus, "Son of Man," is used mostly in the gospels. It is used once in Acts 7:56. It is used twice in the book of the Revelation (Revelation 1:13, Revelation 14:14), and that's all. Every place else it's in the gospels. But it is the title that stresses the incarnation of Jesus Christ – the fact that God the Son, who always was, came and took upon Himself a human body, which came into existence at a certain point in time. So what John sees standing in the midst of the lamp stands is Jesus Christ, the God-man, stressing particularly His humanity.

**Clothed with a Garment**

Then, beginning in the middle of verse 13, John begins to outline for us the attributes of judgments that are reflected by what he sees in Jesus Christ. First, he says that he is "Clothed with a garment." The words "Clothed with a garment" are one Greek word. It's the Greek word "enduo." "Enduo" literally means "something that one gets into." So it has come to mean putting on clothes – something you get into. This is in the perfect tense. This garment, we're going to see, marks an office on authority that Jesus exercises toward the churches and in the tribulation. It is perfect, indicating that this is an office which has been given to Him in the past, and that He has now continued in and will continue in forever. It is passive because what we are going to see Him as, He has been given. This is how He, in His humanity, has been honored. It is participle – it's a statement of fact.

He is clothed with a certain kind of garment, and this garment is described as "Down to the foot." This is the Greek word "poderes." "Poderes" means "reaching to the feet." Today, you and I would use the term that the ladies use, and we call it a maxi. He is dressed in a robe that goes all the way down to the feet. Such a long robe immediately tells us something about the character in which this man, Jesus, is standing in the midst of His lamp stands representing His local churches, and that is the long robe was the mark of the priest and the mark of a judge. Jesus Christ, as the high priest of the church, acts as a judge of each of the local churches ministries.

In the Old Testament, the high priest had the duty of keeping the seven-branched lamp stand, that was in the holy place, lit, and keeping it operational. In fact, it was his job to see that it was guarded all night long so that it never went out. It was the high priest whose job it was to keep that illumination going. So he had to come in there; see that the oil was supplied; see that the wicks were properly trimmed; and, see that everything was in shape for the night's burning. You can read about this in Leviticus 24:3-4. The same thing is being reflected here by Jesus Christ. It is His job to see that His local churches are performing the job of illuminating society with divine viewpoint. Christians themselves do not do that. It is Bible doctrine that does that illumination. It is under the working ministry of God the Holy Spirit who is the oil in the lamp stand that accomplishes that.

So those who reject this role for the local church are ultimately rejected by Jesus Christ. Today, you can go back to this part of the world in which these churches once existed, and you'll find not one of them. You will find, as we get some letters directly to each of them specifically, that they were given warnings about a condition that was existing within their churches. For some of them, the condition was just beginning to go bad. Some of them, like in Laodicea, it had gone very bad. The warning was, "Shape up, or I'm going to come, and I'm going to snuff out your lamp stand," which meant that God was going to close down that local church. All over the world during the centuries, Jesus Christ has been moving among His local churches, and He has closed down local church after local church after local church.

When I say closed down, that does not mean that he took the congregation and dispersed it. It does not mean that he put the properties up for sale. It doesn't mean that there is no more a church there and the building is used for a warehouse. Sometimes that does happen. But sometimes God closes down the local church simply by Himself departing from it. It is not upholding His glory, as the gold and the lamp stand indicate they should. They are no longer functioning on the oil of the Spirit of God giving the illumination of doctrine. So Jesus Christ simply walks off and He leaves them. Generally, the congregation goes right on. As a matter of fact, after He leaves them, they become even more successful by earthly terms. Their buildings get better; their money improves; their congregation is enlarged; and, their influence is greatly enhanced in society. They are much more respected by the old sin natures of the people that make up our society. Those people, because they have not been reflecting the glory of God, and because they have been resisting what they should be doing as illuminators of truth in a local church, are actually happier.

Please remember that if you are unhappy, it may be the fact that your old sin nature is what is being indulged by you. One of the ways to get yourself at peace, and to be able to say, "Man, I'm happier now than I've ever been" is just to indulge your old sin nature. You'll have some prices later on down the line to pay for that. There'll be some discipline, and maybe some long-range consequences: emotionally; physically; and, mentally, but you will be happier if you get to where your old sin nature is getting what it wants. A lot of people make the mistake of thinking that they have come into a walk with God because now they're happier than they have been, and they didn't realize they were uncomfortable in the presence of the truth. And what they are comfortable with now is that the truth is now absent.

That's what actually happens to many of these local churches. They become very comfortable without Jesus Christ, and they end up as the Laodicean church. The congregation as a whole was characterized by the fact that Jesus Christ was outside the door, knocking and pleading with them – calling upon them to make confession of sin so He could reestablish temporal fellowship. He's not out there because they weren't saved. He's not trying to knock on their door to come in so He can save them. He's trying to come in so he can maintain and continue the fellowship with them.

But when they will not open, finally Christ leaves. And He left every one of these seven churches in time. So this is a very significant picture that John sees – every church on its own. This church here in Ephesus does not have the same mission to perform as the church in Laodicea. The church here in Thyatira was given certain people within it. The church over here at Sardis did not have that certain type of person. Certain gifts were given to every church in order to perform the work of that particular church ministry. Every local church does not have the same job to perform. Every local church has the basic principles upon which to operate, but God brings together people in a local church to pursue and to achieve a certain mission. In time, He may change that team, because He changes the direction of the mission, or because the people change and wanted some other mission than what the Lord intended for that lamp stand.

**Girded**

But the point is that each local church is responsible directly to Jesus Christ, and each local church is under His judgment because He stands there in the robes of a priest, and in the roles of a judge. His role as a judging priest of His local churches is further enhanced by this word "girded:" "And girded about the breast with a golden girdle." The word "girded" is the Greek word "perizonnumi." "Perizonnumi" means "to wrap around" or "to gird across." The word "about" is this little Greek word "pros," which here should be translated as "at". The word "breast" is the word "mastos." "Mastos" means in the vicinity of the chest.

The position of this belt (or girdle) which was worn by the priest would be one of two places. Sometimes the priest was going to perform service. He could not perform it with these long robes flowing around his feet. Therefore, he would do what the Bible describes as "girding up his loins." He would take up those long robes. He would gather them up, and he would put the belt down at the waist to hold the robe up so that his legs had freedom of motion for the activity that he was going to engage in. But when he was engaged in service as a judging priest, then that belt was not down in the service position, but it came up here across his chest, and it signified that he was now acting in his full priestly capacity.

So when John looks at Jesus Christ, he immediately notices that the belt isn't down here for service like he had once seen the Lord put it on one occasion, at least, when Jesus came around and knelt down and washed their feet. That's what Jesus did with his robes on that occasion. Here he sees Him with the belt up in the position that he has often seen on the high priest as the priest went about performing ministries in the temple. So this is the position of judgment rather than the position of service.

What he refers to here is "a golden girdle." This word "golden" is again the same word we had before: "cruseos." The word "girdle" is the Greek word "zone." You can see that we get an English word from that: "zone." A girdle is designed to do some work in a certain zone where it needs to perform a certain service. That feature is still true of girdles today. But this is more than a girdle. A girdle would be kind of a misconception as we think of a girdle. This word "zone" should be translated "belt." That was really the idea that you have here.

Here's another mark then of Jesus Christ in the position of the high priest judging role of His local churches. Everything about Christ now is very, very serious. This is not a moment of joy. This is a moment of the majesty of God now being faced by the trivial indifference of men, His own people, and His own local churches.

**White Hair**

Then John's eyes go up from the girdle, and very naturally rise up to the head. He takes a look at what the Bible calls the "kephale" of Jesus. This refers to the head. On the head he observes the hair. The word for "hair" in Greek is "thrix." He notices that the hair of Jesus Christ is "leukos." The hair of Jesus Christ is pure snowy white. Is it like that today? I don't think it is. Whatever color hair the Lord had, John sees him in a symbolic expression. In this case, the hair on the head of Jesus Christ was white. It was so white that the Bible says His head *and* His hair were white. When you looked at Him, you just saw a white glowing object there on top of the neck of Jesus Christ. It stood outstandingly so brilliantly white. It says that he compares it in whiteness to "wool," which is "erion." That stands for the role of a sheep. Or he says it was like "chion," which is the Greek word for "snow." It was white as snow.

You can compare this to Daniel 7:9 which connects this kind of appearance with the eternal God. The eternal God has the appearance of this kind of whiteness. White is the color of eternity. White is the color of "deathlessness." I don't know how in our society we developed the custom of wearing black at funerals, but in many societies of the world, when funerals come, the color is white. This is very fitting in a scriptural context, because in the Bible, white is the color of "deathlessness." White is the color of victory over death – not black. Black actually is the color of being doomed by death. Black is the color of being defeated by death. It is no commendation, when you die, to find all your friends coming out in black, because they may be saying something about you. They would far more honor you if they all came out in white, and reflected something totally different about you.

So here when John sees Jesus Christ, he sees His hair in this color of white, which Daniel 7:9 connects with the fact that God is deathless, and that God is eternal. It, of course, also connotes a certain quality of personal purity.

**The Judge**

So here is the Judge of the churches, and the Judge of the human race in the tribulation. It is the eternal God himself. He is the God who is out there that society doesn't think is there. He is the God who has spoken to our side from His side, but society doesn't think He has spoken at all. Suddenly, they're going to find Jesus Christ in this quality of being the eternal One who has always been there, and thus they will see Him in the majesty of the white mane of hair on top of His head. This tells John that it is not just Jesus the man who is going to perform this kind of judging, but it is Jesus the God-man, the One who always has been from eternity past.

**Eyes of Fire**

From the top of the head of Jesus, John's eyes pass down, and they're captivated by the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word for "eyes" is the Greek word "ophthalmos." "Ophthalmos" here refers, of course, to the physical organs – the eyes. Again, he says, "They were like," and he uses the word "hos," which means they resembled something. And that is first a "flame," which is "phalox," and he says "a flame of fire" ("pur"). The flame of fire signifies penetrating righteousness which Jesus Christ will use to judge the world. That is, God, who is a God of wrath against sin, is going to express that wrath with a penetrating judgment that is going to search out evil, and like fire will spread through dry timber, so the judgment of Jesus Christ will penetrate anywhere. As fire will penetrate the uttermost recesses, so the piercing judging eyes of Jesus Christ are so presented.

We may compare this to the military weapon called the flame thrower. This is God's holiness flame thrower. A flame thrower is a weapon that has a penetrating effect. It comes out as a stream. When properly directed and properly aimed, it can strike in a small area, and enter a small opening. Once it goes through, it is devastating to anybody who is inside. The burst of flame within, say, a bunker, will immediately consume all the oxygen, and the people within it will immediately find themselves gasping for breath. The heat that will immediately follow will then sear the lungs, and literally burn them within their chests, and they will be dead in short order.

That is almost the kind of judgment that is being portrayed here by Jesus Christ: His churches who overlook evil about themselves; and, the individual members of these churches who are indifferent to the evil that they see in themselves, and the evil that they may see in others without stretching a hand of warning; of caution; and, of admonition: "Here comes Jesus Christ." He says, "I'm going to do the job. My eyes are going to be like two flame throwers. No matter where the evil resides, I'm going to search it out, and I'm going to bring judgment to bear upon it.

The Bible is full of verses that tell us that God is a God of wrath: Mark 3:5, Luke 21:23, Matthew 3:7, Luke 3:7, John 3:36, Romans 9:22, Ephesians 5:6, Colossians 3:6, Revelations 6:16, Revelation 11:18, Revelation 14:10, Revelation 16:19, and Revelation 19:15. On and on and on, verse after verse after verse of the Bible definitively says that God is a God of wrath. When John sees the eyes of Jesus Christ like flames of fire, it is stressing this particular quality in the character of Christ.

**Feet like Bronze**

From the eyes of Jesus Christ, John passes his gaze downward across the body to the feet, which now catch his attention. The word for "feet" in Greek is "pous," referring to the physical limbs. Again he says, "They are like." He's trying to reach for words to describe these things. He actually sees Jesus Christ, but he sees Him in a different way than He had ever seen before. So he says, "Now I look at the feet of Jesus Christ, and His feet are like fine bronze. This is a long Greek word. It's "chalkolibanon."

The scholars have a terrible time with this word. Some translators just throw up their hands and say, "Just transliterate it." So you'll read in some Bibles that the feet of Jesus Christ look like a "chalkolibanon," and you'll say, "What's a "chalkolibanon?" Well, the best we can say is that it's an alloy of metals. "Fine bronze" or "polished bronze" is perhaps the best translation. Actually, it's some kind of an alloy of copper. It's a metal that, when mixed in this alloy form, ends up being very brilliant in appearance. He says that it is, "As if it were fine bronze as if burned in a furnace." The word "burned" is the Greek word "puroo," which means to set on fire. This is in the participle form. Whenever this word is in the participle form, it should be translated "glowing." So this word says that the feet of Jesus Christ had a brilliance – a brilliance such as the glowing of metal which was being burned or melted in a furnace. The word "furnace" is the Greek word "kaminos." A "kaminos" is a kiln which was used for smelting – for melting down metals.

So Jesus Christ stands with His feet in the appearance of melted shining bronze brass, or something of that nature, which we tie together very easily with the fact that the sacrifice of judgment in the Old Testament system was the brazen altar in Exodus 38:30. You have the frame of reference here of the Bible's picture of bronze connected with judgment. Here it is glowing bronze, which means that, again, it's a judgment which is devastating. So here you have Jesus Christ walking in the midst of His individual churches, and His very feet are the feet that walk a path of judgment. All the way through here, this whole picture of Jesus Christ is one that causes any local church that's got any sense at all to stop and think about itself with some seriousness as to what it's doing with its opportunity, and with its ministry, and whether it is in the danger of prostituting what God is opening to it, as well as individual members who may prostitute their own opportunity to be part of something that the Lord has led them into that is going to mean fantastic eternal rewards to them someday. His feet are like fine bronze, as if they were burned in the furnace.

**The Sound of Many Waters**

Then John comes back to describing the voice once more (the "phone"). He says the "phone" was "like many." Again "many" is the Greek word "polus," which means "a great volume of" waters. The Greek word for "waters" is "hudor." You can see we get our prefix "hydro" in English from "hudor." John says that the voice of Jesus Christ impressed him like a huge volume of water pouring out. That's the kind of thing that John is talking about. He said when he listened to Jesus speak, it was like a huge volume of rushing water, and the noise that that makes. Again, it speaks of the irresistible force of what God has to say. It speaks of the irresistible authority that God has. The thundering voice of Jesus Christ reveals the majesty and the power before which all of us must bow.

So there are a lot of local churches that are listening to other drummers than the thundering voice of Jesus Christ, but the voice of Christ, and what He has to say, is irresistible. This is a very impressive comparison of the fact that God's authority is irresistible.

**A Sword**

Then it says, "He had in His right hand;" that is, He held in His hand, and the Greek word for "held" is "echo." Jesus Christ is holding "In His right hand," and the Greek word for "right hand" is "dexios." He's holding "seven stars" – seven "aster." These are seven heavenly bodies. Jesus Christ here with His right hand has seven stars, and he's actually standing there holding these seven stars in His right hand.

Then John sees one thing more that he wants to tell us about Christ. That is something about the appearance of the mouth of Jesus Christ. That is that out of His mouth there came a sword. There went out a certain kind of sword. This is a sword which is different from that sword "machaira," as it was called. Interestingly enough, this is not that sword here. This is that other kind of sword that was used in the Greek world called a "hromphaia." The "hromphaia" was that long sword, like we're more used to seeing and thinking about as a sword. It was a sword, John says, that was a sharp two-edged sword. That is, the Greek says that it was a double-mouthed sword. That is, the Greek says that it was a "distomos." That is, it was sharpened on both edges, and it was indeed a sword that was to be used in a striking and slashing way. Out of the mouth of Jesus Christ, there comes this kind of sword that does have a fantastic cutting edge. It did cut. And that is, of course, what the Word of God does. The Word of God cuts and divides, even to dividing asunder of the soul and spirit.

**As the Sun Shines**

Then the final thing that John observes about Jesus Christ, after he sees this sword coming out of His mouth, is that the whole face (the countenance of Jesus Christ) had the appearance of a person looking straight into the sun. This is the "helios," referring, of course, to the heavenly body, the sun. His face was shining ("phaino") in His strength (His "dunamis"). The word "dunamis" means inherent power. It doesn't mean power that's working. It was just the fact that you looked at this, and there was great power.

People are looking at the sun like that today. The next thing that's going to come on the energy scene in the next ten years is going to be "helios" power (sun power). All of the capacity and the force of the sun is now being examined. There are patents every day being put into the American patent office, one way or another, to take the power of the sun. There is fantastic power in the sun. It is tremendous, inherent power. If it can be harnessed, great things can be done with it.

This is a very apt example here. John looks upon Jesus, and he says that the whole thing about Him was that he was shining with the power of the sun. What he means there, of course, is that he just ends up this whole picture with, "Here was glory." This was the Glorified One. This is no longer Jesus, the humble carpenter, walking the streets of his hometown. This was not Jesus who was spat upon and finally put upon the cross and beaten and bruised in behalf of our sins. This is not Jesus who, in His wounded body, was put into that tomb. But this was the Jesus who is now glorified. He is no longer walking around with his deity shielded, but now full out in the open.

So this is a fitting note upon which to end this description of Christ, because this is what we, as churches, are going to be matched up to. We're not going to be matched up to our own glory. But there is a glory that only divine viewpoint doctrine can lead us to. That's the basis upon which God is going to judge what any of us, in any local church, do.

"I turned to see the voice which spoke with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden lamp stands. And in the midst of the lamp stands, One like the Son of Man clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girded about the breast with a golden girdle. His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And His eyes were like a flame of fire. And His feet were like fine bronze, as if they burned in the furnace. And His voice was like the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars, and out of His mouth went a sharp, two-edged sword. And His countenance was as the sun shines in His strength."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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