

Lesson # 2 -- A Heavenly Picture of Jesus Christ. (2)

Introduction

- A. As we read this book of Revelation we are immediately aware of an unusual truth. While it is the "revelation of Jesus Christ" we never find Him isolated from His people.
- B. This truth -- the living relationship which all believers have with the Lord Jesus -- is based upon His work of redemption.
- C. The Lord Jesus came into the world as our Representative, He died in that capacity (our Substitute), and has brought every believer into a spiritual union with Himself. He has assumed an eternal responsibility for us. That is the reason He is never described as separated from His people.
- D. The Scripture passage: Revelation 1:9-20.

I. The Position of the Lord Jesus: In the midst of the churches.

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man Rev. 1:13

A. The explanation of the passage.

The seven candlesticks are symbolic of the seven churches as stated in V20. The Lord Jesus, described as the Son of man, is seen by John as "in the midst" of these churches. The truths concerning the churches will be taken up in the next lesson.

B. The instruction found in this passage.

It is important to recognize that the messages given by the Lord Jesus, found in chapters 2 and 3, are spoken from his position "in the midst" of the churches. In the light of these seven letters we understand His relationship to the churches (believers) to be summarized in the following three points.

1. The redemptive grace of the Lord Jesus for His people.

Every spiritual benefit shared by these believers is to be traced to the redeeming work of Jesus Christ as seen in His death and resurrection. The evidence of such grace is found in almost every line of the next two chapters. Their faith, obedience, understanding, witness, discernment, love, and responsibility testify to this truth. With these saints we must say, "We owe everything to Jesus Christ."

2. The loving concern of the Lord Jesus for His people.

The evidence of this truth stands out in each of the seven letters. It is found in the commendations, promises, evaluations, criticisms, and exhortations. The relationship of love and action is also on the surface of these letters.

3. The sovereign headship of the Lord Jesus for His people.

We cannot miss this message as we read these chapters. All believers belong to the Lord Jesus by right of creation and redemption. As the sovereign head of the Church He holds the position of authority over all believers as well as over all history and all that exists.

II. The Description of the Lord Jesus: A divine priest.

A. His office.

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. Rev. 1:13

1. The Old Testament reference regarding His name.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:13,14

This passage is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled. It is a description of the time when God the Father (the Ancient of days) will give to the Son of man (the Lord Jesus) all the kingdoms of the world (Psalm 2:6-9). The title "Son of man" found in Rev. 1:13, and used by the Lord Jesus for Himself in the Gospels (more than 80 times), emphasizes both the deity (Daniel 7) and the humanity (Gospels) of the Savior.

2. The Old Testament reference regarding his dress.

And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod. Exodus 29:5 (See also Exodus 28:4ff and Lev. 16:4)

It is interesting that Josephus, in his book The Antiquities of the Jews stated that the priestly clothing was as follows: "A long robe reaching to the feet and around the chest, higher than the elbows, they wore a girdle." (3.4.2, 4)

3. The instruction for the believer.

a. We have a divine-human priest in the person of Jesus Christ.

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor (sympathetically help) them that are tempted. Heb. 2:17,18

b. The work of the Lord Jesus, our priest, summarized.

1). As the priest He is our Representative.

Mark 10:45; Gal. 4:4,5; Eph. 2:4-6; Heb. 9:11-28

2). As the priest He offered the sacrifice.

Heb. 7:22-28; 8:1-6; 9:11-28

3). As the priest He offered Himself as the sacrifice.

John 1:29; Heb. 9:11-28; I Peter 2:24; I John 4:10

4). As the priest He applied the benefit of the sacrifice.

John 10:28; Heb. 7:27; 9:11-15; James 1:18;

5). As the priest He makes intercession.

John 17:4-26; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24;

Summary: The Lord Jesus, as our Priest, has the right, and the ability, and the desire to redeem us.

B. His Character.

Introduction

a. It is interesting to see how John takes five Old Testament titles which are applied there to God -- and applies them to the Lord Jesus.

a. His head and hair -- Daniel 7:9

b. His voice -- Ezekiel 43:2

c. The seven stars in His hand -- Job 38:31

d. I am the first and the last -- Isaiah 44:6

e. I am the living one -- Joshua 3:10

- b. It is also helpful to see how each of the following letters to the churches is introduced by a description of the Lord Jesus which is given in this first chapter.

To Ephesus (2:1 with 1:13,16)
To Smyrna (2:8 with 1:18)
To Pergamos (2:12 with 1:16)
To Thyatira (2:18 with 1:14,15)
To Sardis (3:1 with 1:4,16)
To Philadelphia (3:7 with 1:18)
To Laodicea (3:14 with 1:5,18)

1. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow. Rev. 1:14

His eternal existence and His infinite holiness.

2. His eyes were as a flame of fire. Rev. 1:14

His knowledge of all things and infinite righteousness.

3. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. Rev. 1:15

Infinite strength in the service of justice.

4. And his voice as the sound of many waters. Rev. 1:15

The fullness of truth in infinite wisdom.

5. And he had in his right hand seven stars. Rev. 1:16

Infinite power, grace, and authority.

6. And out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword. Rev. 1:16

Infinite wisdom in the exercise of divine judgment.

7. And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. Rev. 1:16

The infinite fullness of the glory and majesty of deity.

Summary: The Lord Jesus, as our priest, has all the resources of infinity.

He is worthy of our trust and love.

III. The Message of the Lord Jesus.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and death. Rev. 1:17,18

A. The exhortation: "Fear not."

1. John was afraid because He understood that Jesus Christ was God and he was overwhelmed with a new realization of His greatness and majesty. His fear was also intuitive -- he was a human, a sinful human, in the presence of the true and living God!
2. The Lord Jesus told John not to be afraid because of the love and grace manifested in the vision. The Savior was the priest that John needed. This is the message we need. The Lord Jesus is infinitely perfect in His person and has made a provision in His death and resurrection that is also infinitely perfect.

B. The basis of the exhortation:

1. "I am the first and the last."

This declaration, taken from the Old Testament (Isaiah 44:6 and 48:12), was well-known to John. It could mean only one thing. Jesus Christ was God!

We should be as overwhelmed by this as John -- God has become our priest! It is God Who has assumed responsibility to meet our great need.

2. "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen."

These words affirm the truth of the historical death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. These deeds, in which the Savior gave Himself as our substitute, are the very foundation stones of the gospel.

By this declaration the Lord Jesus assured John that his sin has been atoned for, his guilt had been forgiven, his death had been vanquished, his condemnation had been cancelled, and his enemy had been conquered. He no longer had to be afraid.

C. The explanation of the exhortation: "And have the keys of hell and death."

1. The possession of "keys" indicates one who has authority, access, dominion, and responsibility.
2. The Lord Jesus is in charge of hell and death. He dealt with the sin that gave them authority. All who believe upon Him are forever set free from the punishment of death and hell.