

The Real Jesus Will Terrify You: Revelation 1:9-20 Explained Scriptures for Today

Revelation 1:9-20

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. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 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. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 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: 18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. 19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Tribulation, Kingdom, and Patience Defined

Revelation 1:9

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” identifies the writer as the apostle John. This anchors the book in apostolic authority.

“who also am your brother” shows equality among believers. He is not claiming superiority in position here. He is your brother IN Christ. He is my brother IN Christ.

“and companion in tribulation” shows shared suffering. Tribulation is tied to standing with truth.

“and in the kingdom” shows present authority of Christ. The kingdom exists now under His rule.

“and patience of Jesus Christ” shows endurance under delay. Christ’s rule is real but not yet fully enforced.

“was in the isle that is called Patmos” identifies location. This is a real place, not symbolic. Please keep in mind that the Bible doesn’t say John was sent there, exiled there, or punished there. But the Bible does say he is our companion in tribulation, and he was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

“for the word of God” gives the cause. He is there because of Scripture.

“and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” adds the specific reason. The testimony about Christ brings opposition almost all the time.

Revelation Given by Divine Authority

Revelation 1:10-11

I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

“I was in the Spirit” means John was placed into a state where God revealed things to him directly. This is not John’s imagination or a dream. John is still physically on Patmos but spiritually shown things beyond normal physical sight. This is controlled by God and not John. God places John into a condition to see and hear revelation.

This is very important because the rapture is about being physically relocated or caught up physically. John is still on Patmos. Verse 9 told us that directly. Again, John remains on earth, remains in his body, but is given spiritual sight and hearing. He’s going to see Jesus Christ in glory and future events that will happen. But his body doesn’t go anywhere.

“on the Lord’s day” marks a very important point. I believe John is seeing that actual day in the future. I believe he is being given a perfect, real revelation of that future day. He is seeing it as God presents it with full accuracy.

“heard behind me” shows the source was external. The voice is not internal thought. It is someone else. “a great voice” shows power and authority. “as of a trumpet” shows clarity, volume, and command. Trumpets signal action and demand attention.

“I am Alpha and Omega” identifies Christ as the beginning and ending. He is claiming that He is God. “the first and the last” reinforces that nothing exists before or after Him. Nothing at all.

“What thou seest” shows this is visual revelation. He is allowing John to see these things. And what John sees here, Jesus wants him to write it all down in a book. “write in a book” establishes

written Scripture. This is preserved, not temporary. This is what we are reading and studying right now. God is going to preserve these words that John writes down.

“send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia” shows the recipients. He is sending this letter to the seven churches. Each named church establishes literal congregations that are accountable to God's words. We are accountable to God's word. 1) Ephesus. 2) Smyrna. 3) Pergamos. 4) Thyatira. 5) Sardis. 6) Philadelphia. 7) Laodicea.

Christ's Position Among the Churches

Revelation 1:12-13

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 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.

“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me” shows the voice belongs to a real person. What John hears is directly connected to what he is about to see.

“I saw seven golden candlesticks” identifies the churches. Seven shows completeness, gold shows value, and candlesticks show function as holders of light, not the source of it.

“In the midst of the seven candlesticks” shows Christ's position. He is present among the churches, observing and exercising authority over all of them equally.

“one like unto the Son of man” identifies Jesus Christ with the title from Daniel 7, showing He is the one given dominion, authority, and judgment.

“clothed with a garment down to the foot” shows an official robe of authority. This connects to priestly and kingly roles, not casual appearance.

“girt about the paps with a golden girdle” shows authority and righteousness. Paps is chest. The placement high on the body shows position. Gold shows divine purity.

This presents Christ as present, authoritative, and ruling among the churches. He's close and not distant or passive. He's active in the churches.

Eyes of Fire and Feet of Judgment

Revelation 1:14-15

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

White hair represents eternal nature and complete wisdom. This is not age but timelessness.

“Eyes as a flame of fire” shows penetrating judgment. Nothing is hidden. This includes motives, not just actions. Jesus knows the motive behind your actions. Why are you doing something? He knows why. Flaming eyes like fire.

“Feet like unto fine brass” connects to judgment. Brass in Scripture is tied to judgment executed.

“Voice as the sound of many waters” shows overwhelming authority. His voice dominates all other voices. This is THE voice of Jesus Christ. His voice is stronger than any other voice.

The Word as Weapon and Glory Revealed

Revelation 1:16

And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

What does Jesus have in His right hand? “Seven stars” are later defined as angels or messengers of the churches. Being in His hand shows control and authority over leadership. And His control, authority, and leadership is perfect. His seven stars or seven angels obey Jesus because they love Him.

“Sharp twoedged sword” from His mouth shows judgment through His Word. This is not symbolic teaching only. This is execution. His Word actually carries out judgment. It's active. The sword is the Word of God. It is spoken out of His mouth, the mouth of God. Judgment happens because of what Jesus says!

Hebrews 4:12 says: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword."

“Countenance as the sun shining in his strength” shows the full, unrestrained glory of Jesus Christ, overwhelming all else and leaving no ability for man to stand in his own strength.

The Correct Response to Glory

Revelation 1:17

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:

“And when I saw him” shows this is the direct result of seeing Christ as He is revealed. Nothing else is added. The sight alone produces the response.

John collapses physically. This is not emotional reaction. It's exactly what will happen when Jesus is seen. When you see Jesus, you won't run to Him to hug Him. You will do exactly what John did. "I fell at His feet as dead." This is the effect of encountering the divine glory of Jesus Christ. It's something you've never seen or experienced.

“I fell at his feet as dead” shows total loss of strength. This is not weakness or fear alone. This is the body shutting down under the weight of His glory. John does not steady himself, speak, or react—he collapses.

“At his feet” shows position. Even in collapse, John is placed below Him. This establishes Christ’s authority and John’s submission without words.

“And he laid his right hand upon me” shows controlled power. The same Christ whose presence dropped John now restores him with a touch. The right hand shows authority, not gentleness alone. “saying unto me, Fear not” comes after the fall. The fear is not corrected—it is addressed. The command does not remove who Christ is, it allows John to stand in His presence.

“I am the first and the last” explains why both things are true. He is the source of the fear and the authority to remove it. His eternal nature gives Him full control over life, death, and judgment.

Death, Resurrection, and Absolute Authority

Revelation 1:18

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

“I am he that liveth” shows present, continuous life. Christ is not returning to life temporarily. He exists as the living one.

“and was dead” confirms literal death. This is not symbolic. Jesus Christ truly died.

“and, behold” draws attention. This is something to focus on because it changes everything that came before.

“I am alive for evermore” shows permanent resurrection. Death will never touch Him again. This is eternal, unending life.

“Amen” confirms certainty. This is established truth, not future possibility.

“and have the keys” shows possession and authority. Keys represent control and access.

“of hell” shows authority over the place of the dead. Hell is not independent. It is under His control.

“and of death” shows authority over the event itself. When death happens and who it affects is under His authority.

Prophetic Structure Given

Revelation 1:19

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

“Write” is a direct command. John is commanded to record exactly what is revealed, which establishes this as authoritative Scripture. The Bible comes from God. John writes it down.

“the things which thou hast seen” refers to what John has already seen in chapter 1. This includes the full vision of Jesus Christ in His glory. The book begins with Christ revealed before anything else.

“and the things which are” refers to present conditions at the time of writing. This points directly to the churches in chapters 2 and 3. Christ is addressing real, current situations.

“and the things which shall be hereafter” refers to future events. This includes everything from chapter 4 onward, where prophecy unfolds about judgment, tribulation, and the return of Christ.

Defined Meaning of Symbols

Revelation 1:20

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Jesus is revealing things to us here. Revelation is a book that reveals mysteries. The candlesticks are defined as churches. This removes symbolic guessing. We don't have to guess any more.

The stars are defined as angels or messengers. "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." Christ holding them shows direct authority over those delivering truth. He has them in His hands. That's why it's so important for you to deliver the correct message when you preach the word of God.

This establishes accountability. Churches and their leaders are under Christ's authority.

Jesus Christ, in this entire passage of Scripture, is revealed as: 1) Eternal, 2) Omniscient, 3) Judge, 4) Ruler over death, 5) Authority over churches. The pastor is not THE authority of a church of Jesus Christ. Though, many think themselves to be and follow after traditions of men and make those things more important.

Summary of This Passage

John is on the isle of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and while there he is in the Spirit and hears a powerful voice declaring eternal authority.

When he turns, he sees Jesus Christ standing in the midst of the churches, revealed in full glory with eyes of fire, feet of judgment, and a voice of overwhelming authority, holding the messengers of the churches and speaking with a Word that judges.

The sight causes John to fall as dead, and Christ identifies Himself as the eternal one who died and is alive forever, holding authority over death and hell. He then commands John to write what he has seen, what is present, and what will happen, defining the churches and their leaders as being directly under His authority.

Practical Applications

1. Stop treating prophecy like mystery when Christ already explained its structure.
2. Start with Christ's authority before trying to understand future events.
3. Do not separate the Jesus of the churches from the Jesus of judgment—they are the same.
4. Understand that Christ already rules, and Revelation shows how that rule will be enforced.
5. What is written will happen exactly as revealed.

Conclusion

John saw Jesus Christ and collapsed under the reality of who He is. This is the risen, glorified, judging Christ Jesus, the Savior of the world. The question is direct.

Does your understanding of Jesus Christ match what is revealed in Scripture? Remember, Jesus is revealing things in this chapter.

Let's pray.