

LESSON 12



JESUS APPEARS TO JOHN

Scripture Text: Revelation 1:9-18

The Apostle John, toward the end of his distinguished ministry, suffered persecution at the hands of the Roman emperor, Domitian, about A.D. 95. He had long been pastor of the church in Ephesus and the man of God to whom the churches in Asia looked as their leader. It was to be expected that a man of his standing, the last surviving Apostle of the original twelve, should have felt upon himself the heavy hand of Roman cruelty. He was sent to the Isle of Patmos, a small island in the Aegean Sea, a short distance from Ephesus. He speaks of himself as a brother and partaker with the other disciples in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus.

Evidences multiply of Christ's resurrection and His continued life in Heaven. Now we look at His appearance to John.

MEMORY VERSE: *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen.*

Revelation 1:18

Our Brother and Companion

Revelation 1:9 I John—the Apostle—**brother . . . companion in tribulation**—he was just like us, human, suffered the same trials and limitations as we, also was persecuted. We may tend to feel that Bible characters were so far above us that God could do for them things He will not do for us. This is not true. They all had the same limitations and temptations, the same danger of falling as we. And we have the same promises, the same spiritual provisions, the same access to God as they. **In the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ**—had the same place in Christ's kingdom, the same hope in Him that all Christians have.

Let us examine these three things. *Tribulation* means suffering of a variety which cleanses the soul and makes it better. The *tribulum*, from which this word is derived, was the flail that separated the wheat from the chaff. Suffering makes many people bitter; when rightly endured—especially when endured in Christian faith—it makes men better. The *kingdom* or the rule of God was something which John shared with his brethren. They had that joyful hold on living reality which enabled them to live in peace and confidence even amid heavy persecutions. The *patience* which is in Jesus is a thing which we need to have—patience with ourselves, patience with others, patience with God, and patience with what appears to us to be His strange providences (Luke 21:19). **In the isle . . . Patmos**—where he had been placed in exile—**for the word of God . . . testimony of Jesus Christ**—his banishment was persecution for his faith in and preaching of Christ and the Gospel. After the death of Domitian, John was returned to Ephesus.

John Hears Jesus

Revelation 1:10-11 In the Spirit—alone, banished, separated from the work and the people he loved, suffering hardship, still John had a place to go to reach Jesus. He retired into the chamber of his heart where the Holy Spirit lived. There he could worship, talk with the Lord, sup with Jesus on heavenly food, and feel the Spirit sweetly fill his heart to overflowing. If we have the Holy Spirit, we, like John, can be **in the Spirit** and

find fellowship, joy, strength, courage, and spiritual food, regardless of circumstances. **On the Lord's day**—first day of the week. John could not meet with the saints, so he worshiped where he was. **Heard . . . a great voice**—a voice spoke to John on that day, and it had in it the triumph of a trumpet blast. John was given divine assurance that the destiny of the Christian and the church is triumph. **I am Alpha and Omega . . . first . . . last**—eternal. This was Jesus talking. **Write**—the Book of Revelation—**send it unto the seven churches**—real places and real people.

John Saw Jesus

Revelation 1:12-16 I turned . . . saw seven golden candlesticks . . . are the seven churches (verse 20). **One like unto the Son of man**—even in His changed appearance, John recognized Jesus, the One he had known in the flesh. **Head and . . . hairs . . . white as snow . . . eyes . . . as a flame of fire . . . feet . . . as if they burned in a furnace**—purity, richness, strength, omniscience, light and glory. **Voice . . . many waters**—power and majesty. All the attributes of God. Here Jesus is dressed in attire to put heat on the church. **In his right hand seven stars**—the pastors—**of the seven churches**. Christ held and guarded them in His hand. **Out of his mouth . . . a sharp twoedged sword**—judgment, **the word of God** (Hebrews 4:12). **Countenance . . . as the sun shineth in his strength**. All about Him proclaimed Him King, the Almighty in power. (Compare Matthew 17:2.)

John's Response

Revelation 1:17 I fell at his feet as dead—all strength gone, overwhelmed, a mere man before the great God. Submission and worship were so complete that there was an emptying out of all of John's being. **He laid his right hand upon me**—the same hand which held the ministers of the churches. **Fear not**—the same **Fear not** He so often used. It is no wonder John was fearful! This was a large responsibility being put on him. **I am the first and the last**—trust Me, John. I am the beginning, the ending, and everything in between. I fill all time and am eternal.

Jesus Alive Forevermore

Revelation 1:18 I am he that liveth—He IS life (John 14:6). He has life in Himself (John 5:26)—**and was dead**—He is the One John saw die on the Cross. While Jesus speaks of His life in the present and future tense, He speaks of His death only in the past. He is no longer on the Cross or in the grave. The crucifix (Christ fixed on the Cross) has no place in Christianity. **Behold, I am alive for evermore**—He can never be sacrificed again (Romans 6:9). He was offered **once for all** (Hebrews 10:10-14). We have a living Savior who cannot die again. **Amen**—it is sure, certain, true. So be it—the seal of certainty. **Have the keys of hell and of death**—Jesus has power over these. He will finally cast them both **into the lake of fire** (Revelation 20:14). This can be no other than Jesus! Oh, the love, the mercy, the gentle compassion of Jesus!

JUST A THOUGHT

A church that has to be supported by tea parties, ice cream socials, and fried chicken dinners is as weak as the tea, as cold as the ice cream, and as dead as the chicken.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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