

# John's Vision on Patmos

## Part 1

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*Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.*

[00:00:01] Let us, then, open our Bible to Revelation, chapter 1.

We'll read from verse 9. Revelation, chapter 1, verse 9.

I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the hour that is called Passion for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as on 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 Pergamon, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. [00:01:09] And I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands, one like unto the Son of Man.

Clothed with a garment down to the foot, and coated about the caps with a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire. And his feet, like to the fine grass, as if they flowed in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters.

And he bent his right hand, stepped aside, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shined in his strength.

[00:02:06] And when I saw him, I fell at his feet, and dead. He laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth whilst dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.

And have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

The mystery of the seven stars, which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden lanterns. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lanterns, which thou sawest, are the seven churches. I have particularly before me, from the passage that we read, the words that

the Lord Jesus spoke to the Apostle John, verses 17 and 18. He said, Fear not, Fear not, I am the first and the last.

[00:03:15] Fear not, I am he that liveth whilst dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore. Be amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.

Others have rendered the same passage. I am the living one, and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore. Be amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.

I am particularly impressed by this word of the Lord, that they like this, when on the one hand I see so many whose occupation is with the dead, and whose remembrance is of the dead.

[00:04:13] I don't wish to find fault in any sense with them for remembering those that are dead, because many of them have lost their loved ones, and many of them look back on men and women whose lives were given in a kind of a sacrificial way, although in no sense can they be compared with the ones who gave themselves. I was also impressed by a verse like this, at the time when one hears, mostly from here today, that the fact that certain people have used the gathering together to remember the dead, in order to let off a bomb.

One of the memorial places, and so the number of the dead has been added to by man's intense cruelty and hatred.

[00:05:12] I was also impressed by this verse, when today one has received the news that two of our sisters in the meeting, in Brighton, involved in a motor accident, the one killed outright, and the other one with both legs broken. So we say, well the Lord Jesus is the one, and he has received the dead, and life, and in his hand, he is the one who is supreme in his authority.

I remember the last time I was in the General Hospital for an operation, and I was in a reception where there were four beds, and the word that I had in that hospital at that time was the 91st Psalm, [00:06:09] which spoke about the thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come in idee, when it goes only, only with thine eyes shalt thou see the ways of iniquity. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Well, I witnessed on that time the way in which one dies and another one is spared.

And this week I had the news of a man who had the same operation that I went through. He came home after the operation to recover, and he had a blood clot which reached his heart. He was gone.

[00:07:03] As far as I know, not a believer. And the desperate seriousness of life and death is brought home to us.

When the Lord Jesus speaks presently in chapter 2 of the Church of Smyrna, which is the Suffering Church, he introduces himself by those words, these things sent the first of the last, which one dead and is alive.

And for those of us, in fact I trust all of us here this evening, to whom the Lord Jesus is the focus of our attention and the very center of our lives. It's such a powerful thing in our faith that he is the one who has been interlith, the living one, who has been interlith and who is alive forevermore and who

has the keys of Hades and the gates.

[00:08:15] There's no other passage from this theme in whatever circumstances, whether by violence, whether by accident, whether by sickness, natural means, but that the Lord Jesus, the Sovereign One, has the keys of Hades, who opens the doors of Hades and who ushers in to the eternal theme, the one who reaches that point in his experience.

It's a very solemn subject for us to consider together, but it's not. But then how should we be other than solemn when we consider the issues of eternity? Well, having talked a little about that bit, I would like to talk about the passage and talk about the one who spoke. [00:09:04] First of all, I would like to talk about John, the man who had known what it was to lie in the Lord's bosom.

The man who, at the Last Supper, was able to whisper the question in Medea about the betrayer, Lord Julius.

The man who, when the Lord Jesus was in the High Priest's palace, was there not like Simon Peter, lurking in the porch, but who went in and was known to the High Priest. There he stood. The one who at the cross was standing by with the Mother of the Lord, and who was given a particular commission to take Mary home and to care for her.

And the one who stood by the cross afterwards, at the end of those three hours of darkness, and witnessed the scene when the soldier with the spear had thrust it into his side and forthwith there came out blood and water. [00:10:13] As far as we know, he's the only one who has recorded that last scene. Nobody else writes that the soldier's spear thrust except the Apostle John, but he emphasizes his witness by the word, and he that saw it has been a record, and his record is true, and he knows that he says true, as you might believe. And so all those who try to make up that the Lord Jesus was taken down from the cross and he was really dead, and he was laid in a tomb in a kind of trough, and he came back to life by some natural phenomenon. Well, what rubbish. I was grateful to speak in those terms when the Lord Jesus was witness of having had the spear thrust into his side, and that precious stream of blood and water which flowed forth, which is the subject of hymns, which is the subject of worship, which is the subject of the days of the Apostles as they looked upon him. [00:11:14] And John writes, and he shows them his hand and his side, and he says to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hand, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless. And he was not faithless, but believing in the Lord Jesus, the living one, who became dead. John, the witness, who saw the very act of the spear thrust into his side, but mind you, the Lord was already dead, but surely the spear thrust proved to us that he was dead, and the fact that the blood and water flowed forth gave God that sight, and the precious blood that was shed helped with God, the blood which answered the sprinkling of the blood upon the birthday feast, so that his very eye could rest upon it, and he could be justified, and the justifier of sin. [00:12:13] Thank you, Jesus. So here's John, he's in the Isle of Tamar, on the Lord's Day, and he's in the Spirit. Lots of people have speculated about being in the Spirit, and they say, what does this mean?

Well, I think we want an explanation of what it means to be in the Spirit, we want to read the early chapters of Ezekiel. In there, Ezekiel, the Spirit, he says, carried me away, and set me down in such and such a place. I don't think he was carried away physically, I think he was carried away spiritually. He was enabled to see, in the form of a very clear vision, the circumstances of others that were far away from him, and what God was doing, and something of the glory of God, something of the wonder of those chariots and the wheels, and the way they moved, and the way they went straight

before them, and so on. [00:13:13] That's a wonderful revelation that he gives in his prophecy of the divine glory of a good person. It seems that it's possible to be in that state of occupation with God, with the Lord Jesus, that the Holy Spirit can take us right out of our circumstances.

And I believe this kind of experience is shared with others who pass through the same suffering that John passed through. John clearly was in the Isle of Patmos, in very much the same circumstances that we're familiar with in our time, in some of the labor camps of the world, where Christians are confined, and where they're given half to do, and they're fed on very short comets, and their physical form goes down almost to a mere skeleton. [00:14:04] And where their survival seems to be, as we say, on a thread. And I believe that the Lord is able to carry them away from their circumstances, and He's able to reveal certain aspects of the divine glory to them, which you and I have had so much in the way of natural christianity, and never realized, and we have to wait until we cross over onto the other side, before we see. Well, here was John, suffering to the very start, suffering to the testimony of Jesus, and here he has this wonderful sight of the Lord.

First of all, it's the voice, the voice by the trumpet, and it's the declaration of who He is, this Jesus.

When it was the revelation of Paul, the divine Jesus, who is now persecuted, it's not that He was revealing Himself to Paul in grace, but here, He's revealing Himself in glory to one who has been exceedingly close to Him in His incarnation here in this world.

[00:15:23] He's revealing Himself in divine glory. He's revealing Himself as the glorified Son. And He says, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

And we have the eternal character of the Lord Jesus walking forward. The one who said, before Abraham was, I am. And the I am is in that same sense as God reveals Himself to Moses when He sent Him to the people of Israel when He said, the I am has sent me.

Before Abraham was, I am. And the Lord Jesus says, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

[00:16:10] Just as He was there, as we use the word, as part of the Godhead, because He was God. He was the eternal Word. He was the eternal Son. He was there with the Father.

However far we may go back in our imagination, He was there. We can't imagine eternity. We can't imagine eternity in any direction. However far we can go towards imagining eternity, we know He was there. He was there. And so the long thing continues. So long you and I may go on in eternal life. Well, we know we can't go on in eternal life without Him. Because in our life, He comes out to sing. He is alive. He is alive. He is the eternal abuser. There is harm against harm. And so He is there. He has revealed Himself to the people. He is not a man that was born in a stable. He is not a man who died on a cross.

[00:17:15] He is not even a man who was put on earth, terminated. He was being raised in glory. And He has the eternal God with Him. In His person, as the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then verse 12, He sets out to see Him. It was a great voice, He said. It was a voice like a trumpet. It wasn't a still, small voice that sounded like a trumpet. It was a most impressive voice.

And His voice commanded His attention, and He came and received the voice. He said then He

returned from privilege to the place of contribution. And you know, I feel He turned round to the new realisation of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The new realisation of His glory, of the eternal Son. [00:18:09] And then He saw paradise. He didn't see a cemetery. But He saw something that was quite detached, making Him on earth. He had a vision of the churches, and of the angels of the churches. He saw there that was not to buy the attention of the Lord Jesus in glory.

Was it not to buy the attention of the Lord Jesus in glory? Is it His world? Is it the world of the world? Is it the family of the world? Is it the children of the world? No, it's the church. It's the church, and the angels of the churches. It's those who are responsible for Him, for the condition of the church on earth. It's the church that's not to buy His attention. It's the church that He's going to call to His presence. It's the church that's going to be made for Him as His heavenly bride. And His occupation today is this. [00:19:05] And here, I'm sitting here, and I'm sitting with John Sawyer. He's the boy of Jesus. He's the boy of the church. But first of all, make it the church. And then walking amongst the lampstands is the representative of the church, of the seven churches. The seven churches is surely the representative of the whole church, the whole body of Christ. And walking amongst the seven lampstands is the testament. And amongst the testaments of the church is Jesus' name, for He is the One, He is the Lord, He is the Holy Spirit. And He's the single Lord. He's the head of the church. He's the King here. And John is listening out for us.

And you notice, as we read this description, if we're familiar with prophecy at all, our minds immediately go back into the book of Daniel, and we're struck by two things. First of all, we see the characteristics of the ancients of days. In Daniel 7, we get a description of the ancients of days. [00:20:11] He says that his garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head was like steel wool, and his bone was like a fiery flame, and he reeled the burning fire, and fire and steam issued in him forth from his organs, and thousands and thousands of men stood under him, and 10,000 times 10,000 stood before him. And then we also are struck by the likeness of one of his photographs in Daniel. There's one with the appearance of a man.

And in chapter 10, he says, and I like it, I lift up my eyes and look to heaven, and heaven is in me. His joints were red, his spine golden, he says. His body was also like a beryl. His face was the appearance of lightning, and he died like a matchless fire, and his arms and his feet were like the fire of a polished flower, and his voice was like the voice of an anointed sheep. [00:21:19] And Daniel saw that, and as Daniel arose full of visions, he says, and by the grace of praise he fell upon these people that were with him, so that they could never hide themselves, because I was left alone, and I saw this great thing, and there was no strength in me, for my tongue had been turned in me unto corruption, and I attained no rest. And so he sees the glory of salvation. Daniel sees the person of the Lord Jesus Christ in almost the same form and the same glory as John saw him after his incarnation, after his return to glory. And so he sees the Lord Jesus there, and that means there glorified by the Father is the glory which he had with him before Christ was. [00:22:09] And this is what it happens here. There he is, in the same glory, and John sees him there as the one, not the man of sorrow, not the humble Jesus of Nazareth, but the one who is there with the atonement of the man, the one who is praised in the living.

And he sees there the person of the Lord Jesus, and he sees him there. And he is set first with the garments, Daniel saw him.

[00:23:19] And what he is going to do, certainly, is reveal in this book, which is not known to all men, this is John's secret, this is John's secrecy. He is learning this book with his words, with his ability to

understand, and that is known to himself, and known to God. And then he goes on to talk to the golden girl. What is that girl? Well, the girl is a symbol of love, the secret of love in Christianity. And the golden girl is that which confines, it is not. And gold is a symbol of divine righteousness and glory.

[00:24:02] And I think we learn from this that the Lord Jesus' love is constrained by the requirement of divine righteousness. We know that the Lord Jesus has God, the Lord Jesus is love. He knows his love, and that attribute of his, perhaps, is greater more than anything else.

And just there, divine righteousness is constrained, he says, is the first principle, which is going to be done in all his actions, his actions in dealing with the church, and his actions in dealing with the world.

We couldn't compare what's not good. Well, I'm sure many of the Christians out there, most of our heads, perhaps, say, then what? Well, we like to think that we're trying to know what's good, and what's not good. But certainly, it's true about him. His vision and his experience of what's not good.

[00:25:13] And he died, like a saint before the fire.

They're on their way through you. Nothing will stand in the field of your confidence, if you certainly gaze upon them, you will see everything, nothing to do with you, but very hardly. He's not trying to drop, or trying to draw, as they say, he knows it.

So he never associates with copper, he says, copper is that which he can be.

And the Lord Jesus is the one who has spoken.

[00:26:03] And I say, he's the one who has covered the deepest of God's questions.

It's time for him to get himself to the cross, where our sins will lay upon him, and where God's love will be shed upon him.

And now he's speaking.

I'm going to carry him forward, to execute the judgment which has engulfed everything, our wicked world, and upon the forces of evil.

And he's going, he's going, as the son of many waters.

Now I've never been to Niagara Falls, or Victoria Falls, or any of the great waterfalls that this world contains. But they tell me that when you're sat in front of these waterfalls, and you speak to one another, you can't make yourself heard. [00:27:10] Because the noise of the waterfall is such a sort of consuming noise, it covers all other noises.

And when you think of his voice being like the sound of many waters, well, no one is going to contradict him. Nobody is going to raise their voice in front of him. It's like the man that was at the wedding feast, and hasn't gone on to the wedding garment. And the king said to his friend, how can you stand here, not having on a wedding garment? And he is speechless.

Surely all those that stand before him when he takes his judgment seat, they will be reporting a big thing. Because there's no answer in the king's house. In court of law, they're asked to appear, and they're only to say it. And if they're asked that at the great white throne, there won't be a voice. [00:28:03] There shouldn't be heard in response to the voice, which is the son of many waters. And for the words which he utters to the churches in the next two chapters, there's no response. There's no interdiction.

Well, now all these up to verse 15, they're all just terrible attributes.

But then, in verse 16, which is nothing else, we have seen his right hand with the seven stars.

He holds the churches in the hollow of his hand.

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

The responsible elements of the understanding of the King. The responsible elements of the seven churches are in the hands of the Lord. He cares for them. He directs them. He sends them. He instructs them. He teaches them. [00:29:03] And I'll give you now a shot of the two-edged sword. Well, the two-edged sword is that which which is the titination, isn't it? The two-edged sword is the word of God in the force of Hebrew. The word is quick and powerful, sharp as any two-edged sword, and fierce as the divining thunder of a stone spirit. So, and his countenance, his countenance is like the sun shining on his face.

Whether we've read that before, we don't know the Mount of Transfiguration, do we? His face is shining as the sun in the Mount of Transfiguration. On the Mount of Transfiguration, there was the Lord Jesus during his pathway of service here in the community. And there the veil was taken back, just for that little moment on the mountain, and the true nature, the true appearance of the Lord Jesus was revealed to those children. [00:30:02] His countenance is like the sun shining on his face. And it's probably the sun which is usually the symbol of absolute authority. And this is surely where the Lord Jesus was found. Not what John saw, but who John saw.

And he was called, he was called to his feet. Just like Samuel. He was called to his feet. Like a dead man, he was sent to his docks. Nothing about himself is present in the account book. Nothing about his natural strength, nothing about his ancestry, nothing about his service, nothing about his relationship to the Lord Jesus is in his mind. He spoke it, he read it, he repeated it, he recited it. He's at the feet of the Lord Jesus. I wonder if you and I have ever looked upon the Lord Jesus, even in our minds, in our spiritual perception, like that. [00:31:09] We love to think of him in his pathway here. We love to think of him in his grace, in his compassion, in his tenderness, in his consideration for the needs of those who love him. And I wonder how often we view him like that, in our experience of the Lord. And if we feel the thought that we have no strength, we will feel the thought that we are nothing. And we did everything. But the Lord Jesus had no thoughts for John. So he raised his right hand upon him. And he said that he's going to be working. He's going to be working. He's going to be working. He's going to be working. He said the same thing to the disciples of the boat on the lake, hasn't he? When he had to leave, when he received. You see, the Lord Jesus is wishing to reveal himself to us in this complete revelation of himself. [00:32:05] And he doesn't want to strike fear into our hearts. He wants to instruct us.

He wants to open our understanding. He wants to send us. He wants to make known the Father's

intentions to us. And he wants to direct us into his thoughts. And then he goes on with his wonderful words, I am the living one. And I was there. I was in here. I am alive for a moment. Now then, if we have him on our side. If we can stand before him and not be afraid. If we can be, and know that we belong to the one who was living and was dead and is alive forevermore.

It is living, shall we say. It is living and was dead and is alive forevermore. Why does one step into us? What does death mean to us? What is death? [00:33:01] As we approach the time when we are expecting the Lord Jesus Christ to call us into his presence. Either through death or by the translation of the living. There is something for us to fear. Why? The unbeliever is dead.

It's a terrible thing. The Hebrews, the second chapter, is to those who fear death for all their lifetime service and office.

And it speaks of patience as the one who holds us in that position. The unbeliever, the Lord Jesus, is the one who has beaten the dead and he is alive forevermore.

And he controls Hades' ancestors. Hades, not the lake of fire, I don't think is right here. But Hades, which is spoken of as that position of the dead, before the lady's bodily endorphins have left him, Hades is the one who has received the whole matter of life and death. [00:34:05] He is the one who opens. He is the one who shuts. And when he opens, no man shuts. And when he shuts, no man opens. He is.

He is.

So in a sense, there is something else there. And one of the methods he did to be venerable, he could do it, there are three things that he had to do. He had to, he had to write down the things that he had seen. And he had to write down the things that are. And he had to write down the things that shall be thereafter.

Three things. First of all, what he sees, which is the condition of the church, with the Lord Jesus walking amongst the last stand. And then the things which are, the condition of the churches, as the Lord walks amongst them, and the things that he sees, [00:35:02] and the thoughts that he finds, and the instructions that he gives, and then the things that shall be thereafter, for the purposes of God's enjoyment. And it will lead us to the wonderful day when it is told to you, that you will come down, and God will tell you, to repent, and to trust, that you are born again. What a marvellous thing to do. What a marvellous revelation God has given. It's not the revelation so much of a future event, it's the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the 19th chapter, we read the testimony of Jesus, and Jesus is the church of prophecy.

When we read prophecy, we must look to find out what's going to happen to this person, or that man, or that group of people, what's going to happen in this time, or that time, or the other time. We look in prophecy to find out what Lord Jesus is going to do, what the future is for him, how God is going to set up all things in Christ, [00:36:04] as it says in Ephesians 1. The testimony of Jesus is the church of prophecy, and it is called the testimony of Jesus, that God is going to set us up. You and I, we've had this wonderful testimony before us, we've read this revelation, we never understand it all until we get to know it, but we understand more and more of it every time we read it. And if we compare it with the Old Testament prophecies, we see how the whole of the Word of God stands together, how complete it is, and how absolutely it stands as one Word, the Word of God revealed to man, and the



Enlightenment, the life after the Living, it says it's in the Lord, in the Lord, in the Lord. But for a young man like me, what a terrible thing to do, what a dreadful thing. You know, what's Christ going to give you through the revelation, is that the Word of God will start, [00:37:01] and the testimony of judgment will do. The worst that human reaction is, judgment doesn't bring about redemption. Judgment doesn't bring desire to meet the God of what we need. Judgment, the Lord has said, the way that's being judged, judgment, the way that's being faced with God, judgment, the way that's being said before the wickedness, that there's no man but a man who loves God. And the more they suffer, the more they've got to deal with pain. It's a particular here of the, of the unbeliever and the investor in me, the unbeliever, you and I have had a glorious, God-filled strife, a glorious, God-filled, and the one who came from heaven and went down to death for us and who rose victorious and who succeeded in majesty, I want to respond to those of you who have. And so what do we do towards this judgment? As you say, if you love, as you say you love, it is time to judge this judgment. May we read, I want to read a few, a few short moments about the strong delusions [00:38:02] that are going to come upon those who believe not the gospel and who have faced death and unrighteousness. And those days are upon us, are we not?

Day two now, the Holy Spirit will take the church away, the Holy Spirit will give back to heaven the church, Satan will be cast out of heaven and alive.

Alive as the firstborn man and alive as he will be pronounced when I take no sin. Alive as the Lord Jesus Christ has taken us to follow him. Alive as he is going to be promulgated universally. May everybody be alive. Reveal my demands to the Jewish community to take place and unrighteousness. Reveal the great church as God has revealed the great church. And as God has revealed the great church and the great church is glorified and glorified in the name of Jesus Christ. [00:39:02] Amen.