



September 10th, 2025

Week 2

⁹ I, John, your brother and partner in the affliction, kingdom, and endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard a loud voice behind me like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

¹² Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and among the lampstands was one like the Son of Man, dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest. ¹⁴ The hair of his head was white as wool—white as snow—and his eyes like a fiery flame. ¹⁵ His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of cascading waters. ¹⁶ He had seven stars in his right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from his mouth, and his face was shining like the sun at full strength.

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last, ¹⁸ and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades. ¹⁹ Therefore write what you have seen, what is, and what will take place after this. ²⁰ The mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven

"Apocalyptic literature, which is what we are dealing with in the last book of the Bible, has a number of unique features. Its most powerful feature, and what draws me to this kind of literature, is what it seeks to do.

First, it seeks to set the present moment in light of the unseen realities of the future: "He is coming." "Jesus is gonna win."

Second, and more importantly, it seeks to set the present moment in light of the unseen realities of the present. The fundamental conviction of apocalyptic literature is that "things are not as they seem. There is more to reality than meets the

unaided senses. There is more to the reality of the present moment than we can know with our eyes and ears."

Remember: as you read Revelation, the question is not, "What happens next?" but, **"What did John see next?"**

How does Jesus respond to the threats and suffering of His people? He pulls back the curtain.

"Jesus responds to John's prayers with a revelation; with an apocalypse; with an unveiling of the unseen reality of the present. God responds by giving John a powerful vision of who Jesus is.

I am sure that as John sat on the rock piles he was able to bring to mind all kinds of mental pictures of Jesus. So can we. There is the picture of Jesus at Cana of Galilee turning 120 gallons of water into vintage wine. There is the picture of Jesus in Jerusalem driving the money-changers out of the temple.

There is the picture of Jesus feeding 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. There is the picture of Jesus calming the raging storm simply by speaking—"Who then is this that even wind and waves obey?" There is the picture of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. There is the picture of Jesus himself outside the empty tomb. And every picture would help John.

But in the new situation, one of great fear, John needed more. And so do we. He needed to see Jesus Christ _____."

1. What two words does John use to describe his relationship with his audience? (1:9)

2. What does John say is the reason he is on the Island of Patmos? (1:9)

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," says John, "and I heard behind me a voice like a sound of a _____" (1:10). (Exodus 19:16-19; Isaiah 58:1; Joel 2:1-17)

3. What did John see? (1:12-13)

John is using a technical term, a term that comes from the Old Testament. John is referring to that towering figure in the great vision God gave the prophet Daniel hundreds of years before. The vision is recorded in Daniel 7:13-14.

**I saw in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
There came one like a *Son of Man*,
And he came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before him.
And to him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages
Should serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And his kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.**

In light of this vision, the phrase "one like a son of man" refers to the central figure in history, to the one to whom all the kingdoms of this world are given, to the one to whom all peoples of every age owe allegiance. "One like a son of man" refers to the pre-existent, heavenly being who comes to establish the kingdom that cannot be destroyed.

4. Where is the Son of Man? (1:13)

"Not above, looking down. Not outside, looking in. But in the middle. Right there in the middle of the churches! Which is why, in each of the messages that Jesus then dictates to the seven churches, Jesus can say, "I know." I know what is happening in and among you. I know your hard work. I know your struggles. I know your fears. I know your pain. I know your emptiness.

The risen and living Jesus lives and moves among his churches! He is moving among us right now."

You might remember, that in the temple the Golden Lampstands were designed to look like a tree. A flowering almond tree to be exact. How many lamps did it hold? **Seven.**

Jesus says in John 15:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

The first thing that catches John's attention is the way Jesus is dressed. More often than not, a person's clothing is the first thing we notice. That's because, more often than not, clothing is intended to make a statement.

"I saw ... one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to his feet, and girded across his breast with a golden girdle" (1:13).

What statement is Jesus making in clothing himself that way? The robe is a priest's robe, the robe of the High Priest, like the one Aaron wore. The glorified Son of Man is the great **High Priest!**

Before anything else is revealed, John needed to be reminded of this fact. Jesus Christ is a priest, a mediator. Priest, in Latin, is pontifex; it is an engineering term that means "bridge-builder."

A priest is one who builds a bridge between two sides of the canyon. To be effective you need to know both sides of the canyon well. John is being reminded that Jesus is the greatest bridge-builder of all. He is the one who bridges the infinite chasm between us and God.

He does so because he knows both sides of the canyon: he knows the human side because he is fully human; he knows the God side because he is fully God. "Clothed with a robe." He is the great High Priest."

Girded across his breast with a golden girdle."

What statement is Jesus making in clothing himself this way?

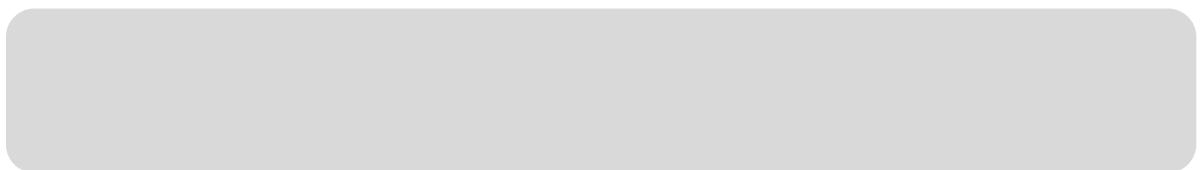
When a belt was worn around the waist the person was preparing for work. When a belt was worn across the chest the person was resting in the accomplishment of a task. John is being reminded that the high priestly work of Jesus Christ is _____!

The one, final sacrifice has been offered on the altar. He has done everything that needs to be done in order for us to have life—now and beyond the grave.

The robe is also a King's robe, like the one Jonathan wore (1 Sam 18:4). John is being reminded that the High Priest is King, enthroned above all authorities! He is the one to whom all other kings and queens must give account.

Oh, to see as John sees! Through all the ups and downs, through all the upheaval of history, Jesus the High Priest is King!

5. What is John's response to what he turns to see? (1:17)



*Written portions are taken from "Discipleship on the Edge" by Darrell W. Johnson.