

## Seeing Jesus More Clearly Revelation 1:9-11

Have you ever wished to see the Lord more clearly and with a fuller revelation of Who He really is? The current verses tell us that is exactly what John is going to experience. Jesus will reveal Himself to John in a way He has never before, and it is simply because John was in a place where this was possible. It is not specifically a physical place, although that will play a role. More importantly, the condition of John's heart is allowing this to happen.

The Lord desires to reveal Himself to each of us in greater and greater ways, but we often restrict Him because of where our hearts are. He is **not** limited, but we often limit what He can impart to us by our lack of devotion or sin. All Christians are granted the ability to see Jesus for who He is to a certain degree. Those who fully and completely devote themselves to Him only can see greater revelation as John did. It does not necessarily follow, though, that if we do give ourselves fully and completely to the Lord, that we will have a vision like John's. But if we do fully commit in this manner, we will see things that others do not.

Jesus said, *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled.* He did not say those who seek Him casually or when it is convenient. The question becomes, how passionately do we really want to see Jesus? Scripture notes, *if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us.* We will see Him in proportion to how we seek Him. First Corinthians 13:12 says, *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then, face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am also known.* Even though we will not look upon the Lord in full glory until heaven, we will learn things to do that will help us see what we can until we get there! I want to see as much of Jesus as I can, don't you?

As we read in verse eight, John stated that while he was the one writing, the revelation was from the Lord. Now John is going to share where he was when this all happened.

Verse nine goes on to say that John associates with his fellow believers in their experiences. He says of himself, *your brother and companion in the tribulation, the Kingdom, and the patience of Jesus Christ.* This is a true mark of any Christian leader who has been touched by God, no matter how great the revelation. He realizes he is no greater than they and lets them know that he is just like them - going through the same trials they are. Why is this important? Sometimes we feel we are the only ones going through a hard time, but this is not the case.

Not only are most Christians going through something difficult right now in their lives, but so too, is your pastor. God shows no favoritism, and we all walk similar paths in some form or fashion. It is encouraging to know that we are not alone in our suffering and that God has not abandoned us. Everyone needs to be reminded that there is a reason for it and God is doing a work through it. Sometimes we can think, *Why is God doing this to me?* If you are a Christian, the Bible says God is not doing anything *to* you, but rather, He is doing it *for* you. He has sent whatever you are going through into your life for a pre-determined and designed purpose.

John's suffering and tribulation in this prison camp was no different. God had allowed this to give him so great a vision and revelation at the right time and at the right place. Although John didn't understand it then, we are all still benefitting from it today!

Notice he calls himself a brother in tribulation. The word here is *thlipsis* and means to press or squash and also to oppress and harass. Ever feel pressed, squashed, oppressed, or harassed? So did John. The hard truth is that we sometimes experience this as Christians – pressing, squashing, oppressing, and harassing! But in the midst of this, God has a purpose. John says we experience the patience of Jesus Christ in tribulation. Hard times help us learn to share in the patience of Christ.

Jesus said a servant is not above his master. If He had to endure suffering patiently, so must we. No one likes tribulation, but one of the by-products is patience. It is in suffering with Him that we see Him more clearly. That is what John is going to learn.

His internment was on an island called Patmos. Interestingly, the word Patmos means *my killing*. How perfectly that describes the next thing necessary to see Jesus in greater revelation. We must come to a place where we totally and completely die to ourselves and live for Him. We must find ourselves on our island of Patmos.

Jesus said, *If you are going to find your life, you must lose it*. He added, *If you are going to be My disciple you must die to yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Me*. God will often send us to the island of Patmos, or the island of *my killing*, so that we can learn to die to self, then we can see the Lord more clearly.

Self is one of the biggest enemies of the Christian, and if you are like me, self dies hard. Even though I am supposed to die to myself in order to live for Christ, it doesn't always come easily. God has put me on the island of Patmos so that I have no choice but to die, because there is no other option. John could not exactly walk off this island and say, *I quit*; he had to wait on God to remove him.

As the flesh repeatedly died, the spirit came to life more and more. John found himself in a place where his vision, or view, of Jesus was greater than it had ever been.

Do you feel like you are on an island of death? If you are a believer, the Lord Himself has put you there. If you will simply be patient through this tribulation, you will see Jesus in a greater revelation.

John now states why he was on this island - *for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ*. He was going through all of this simply because he was standing on God's Word and defending the testimony of Jesus. Is that not why we suffer as well?

The word testimony means to be a witness to the facts. When we stand on God's Word and witness to the facts of Jesus Christ, there are many who do not like it and will come against us. We are going to suffer for it in some form or fashion. But it's all worth it! Why? It is for the testimony of Jesus. That is why we live.

John says in verse ten that he was in the Spirit. Quite obviously, as opposed to in the flesh, he was in prayer and worship before the Lord.

This brings us to the next condition necessary for seeing the Lord more clearly - living in the Spirit instead of living in the flesh. The former means being so in tune with the Holy Spirit that He is able to lead our lives rather than us leading ourselves. Only when we deny ourself and our desires and spend time in God's Word and prayer every day, will we hear and follow the leading of God's voice. This is a conscious choice we all have to make because it does not come naturally.

The language implies this was an abnormal spiritual experience and is speaking of a vision that took total control of John. It was as real to him as what is happening to us right now. That is what a true spiritual vision is like. There are different kinds of visions. One is an impression God puts in your heart and mind; the other is an overwhelming spiritual experience like John is experiencing.

John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. We cannot be 100% sure what he meant by this, but most scholars believe he was talking about Sunday. Although John grew up Jewish and thus worshipped on Saturday, according to history, the church had begun to worship on Sunday to honor the Lord's Resurrection. One other theory is that this really means *the Day of the Lord* which speaks prophetically of the last days and the Lord's return. I believe the former is more likely, that this is speaking of the normal day of worship on Sunday.

Herein lies another way that we can be in the Spirit rather than in the flesh. We can make sure we are worshipping on the Lord's Day. God has ordained His people to come together on a regular basis in order to seek Him corporately. We know that the Lord moved the church to gather together each week to seek the Lord as one, and Paul pushed this issue as well. He said in Hebrews 10:24-25, *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching*.

As John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, he heard the voice of the Lord. Not only did he hear it, he heard it as loud as a trumpet! Ever felt like no matter how hard you tried, you just couldn't hear the voice of the Lord?

Following John's lead, we will not only hear Him, but we will hear Him loudly! The secret to hearing God speak loudly and clearly is dying to ourself and living in the Spirit. If we do that, His voice will always be heard.

It is interesting that more than once when the Lord spoke corporately to His people it came with the sound of a trumpet. We see this at Mt. Sinai, when He spoke to the children of Israel, and in 1 Thessalonians 4, when the Lord calls us up in the Rapture. This doesn't mean that every time the Lord speaks it will sound like a trumpet. But we see that if we are in the Spirit, even His still quiet voice will pierce our hearts loudly and clearly.

The Lord further identifies Himself in the next verse and tells John to write down everything he sees and send it to the seven churches of Asia, which He then lists. I like this because I am a visual person and understand things better this way, and I believe that is one of the reasons the Lord used this form of writing to bring this revelation.

Each of us needs to ask ourselves, do I want to see and hear Jesus more clearly than I ever have? Then we must do as John did. First, we must realize that our suffering and tribulation has a purpose that will produce the patience of Christ. Then, we must allow the Lord to send us to the island of Patmos, or *my killing*, to die to self. Next, we must stand for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus, and finally, we must live in the Spirit. We will not only see the Lord more clearly, but we will also hear His voice loud and clear! This is conditional though. All it takes for salvation is repenting of your sin and receiving Jesus as your Savior. If you want to see and hear Him more intimately after that, you will have to give your all to Him.

**Group Study and Personal Application Questions:**

1. We know God is not limited because we can often limit what He can impart to us. What condition can have an effect on how much of Jesus we “see”?
2. Though we may never have a vision as John, we certainly can expect to “see” more of Jesus. What can we do or have in our daily walk that would remove the limitations of Jesus showing Himself more to us?
3. According to Scripture who is it that the Lord will draw near to?
4. V9 – According to Pastor Mark what is a true mark of a Christian leader who has been touched by God? How did John describe himself to his audience?
5. Having trials seems to be the norm in the life of a Christian and during those times we need encouragement. With that in mind, why is it important to develop friendships within a fellowship?
6. When we are in the midst of a painful trial, we can often wonder why God is causing it to happen. What must we remember in those moments?
7. What does the Greek word *thlipsis* mean? What can we learn and experience during times of *thlipsis*?
8. What does the word *Patmos* mean? What is one of the biggest enemies of the Christian? How do these relate personally to seeing the Lord more clearly?
9. What does John state as the reason for his imprisonment on Patmos? What can we expect if we hold to the same things John did?
10. V10 – It is pointed out that John was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day. What does that mean/
11. What must we make a conscious choice to do each day that will allow us to see the Lord more clearly?
12. The Lord’s Day spoken of by John most likely refers to the normal day of worship on Sunday. What is another way we can be in the Spirit rather than the flesh when it comes to this day? How does Hebrews 10:24-25 connect to this?
13. What is the key to hearing God speak loudly and clearly?

Victorious Christian living does not come by us leading our own way but in yielding ourselves to the Lord. Dying to self is often a hard thing to do. When self dies, the Spirit life is more evident.

- Each of us must ask ourselves, “Do I want to see and hear Jesus more clearly than I ever have?” If the answer is “yes” then we must do as John did. In recap, what are those things?