

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **“A Glimpse of Our Glorified Lord: Part 2” Revelation 1:12-16**

Hopefully most of you are enjoying this weekend. Since it is officially Fourth of July Weekend. We are having a busy weekend, but not nearly as hectic as it was last year. Exactly one year ago we received a phone call that our little baby son was coming home. Most of you know that we have adopted both of our boys from South Korea. You go through a particular process, where you apply for the adoption; then you go through a home study with a social worker and then you wait and you wait and you wait. Then you get an assignment call, where you are assigned a child. This is a thrilling time. With both of our boys we couldn't wait to get a picture of them. We couldn't wait to see them in person. We wanted to hold them. We wondered what they looked like.

I think as believers in Christ, we look forward to the time when we stand face to face before our glorified Lord. I think most of us look forward to seeing Him and probably wonder what He looks like. Have you ever thought about what Jesus looks like? We all probably have a picture in our minds. I remember pictures of Christ that my Grandmother or parents had hanging in the house. A number of years ago, Time magazine printed on its cover a composite of artists' impressions of Jesus, they ranged from surrealistic angular drawings to bland, expressionless tapestries. The reason for this is because Jesus has been the subject of more painters than any other person in history.

We can probably imagine Jesus as the rugged man who walked the hills of Judea and spoke to thousands without a microphone, but our minds are incapable of seeing Christ as He really is in all of His glory. Our minds are incapable of seeing the glorified Christ as John saw Him in Revelation 1:12-16. Turn with me and let's read Revelation 1:12-16. Remember in verses 9-11 John communicated the circumstances of this vision.

- Remember that John has been imprisoned on the Island of Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:9).
- Remember that John heard a loud voice that told him to write what he sees in a book and send it to the seven churches of Asia Minor (Revelation 1:10-11).

Now, beginning in verse 12, John turns to see the voice that is speaking to him. So who does John see? John got a glimpse of our glorified Lord and communicates this vision to us so that we would be able to see Christ as He really is.

HERE IN REVELATION 1:12-16, JOHN COMMUNICATES THE CONTENT OF THIS VISION.

So what is the content of this vision as John sees it?

**Valley Bible Church  
3347 West Avenue J  
Lancaster, California 93536  
[www.valleybible.net](http://www.valleybible.net)**

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1-John identifies what he saw!

What did John see? He says in Revelation 1:12, “And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lamp stands...” Having turned to see the voice, the first thing that captures John’s attention is seven golden lamp stands. Now, these were probably like the common portable oil lamps, which would be placed on lamp stands and were used to light rooms at night. According to Exodus 25:31-40, in the Tabernacle one of the items of equipment was a seven-branched lamp stand, a single-stand with three lamps on each side and one lamp in the center forming the center shaft. These seven lamp stands here in Revelation 1 are reminiscent of Zechariah's one lamp stand with seven lamps, each of which was fed by a pipe from a common reservoir according to Zechariah 4:2.

It is unclear, whether these are seven lamp-stands each with seven lamps or seven lamp-stands with one lamp each.

What is the significance of these seven lamp-stands here in John’s vision?

- These seven lamp stands are significant because they represent churches.

These golden lamp stands are identified as the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 1:20, “and the seven lamp stands are the seven churches.” If you remember, these seven churches are identified for us in verse 11 as: the churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Since these lamp-stands represent churches then they are significant for an additional reason:

- These seven lamp stands are also significant because they radiate light.

As lamp stands give forth light, so the function of these churches is to embody and give forth the light of God throughout the earth. John likely remembers the discourse of Jesus recorded for us in John 8:12, where Christ refers to Himself as the light of the World. John also refers to God as light in 1 John 1:5. If God is light and Christ is the light of the world and the church is identified as a lamp stand, then what are we as believers in the church supposed to be and do? We are to shine forth light!

1-Jesus spoke of this function of the believer in Matthew 5:14-16. We as believers in Christ are to be the light of the world. We are to let our light shine before men so they might glorify God.

2-Paul also mentions this function of the believer in at least two places. Look with me in Philippians 2:14-15. We are to do all things with out complaining so that we prove ourselves blameless and innocent children of God why because we appear as lights in the world. In Ephesians 5:8, Paul says, “you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.”

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How are we to function as light to the world? How are we to walk as children of light?

- In the context of Matthew 5:14-16, we are to function as a testimony to the world. Doing good works so that the world will take notice and give God glory. If we are busy doing good works for Christ, do you think people will notice? YES!
- In the context of Philippians 2:14-15, we are not to grumble or complain about our circumstances so that we prove ourselves as blameless, innocent children of God. In fact the command in 2:14 is “Do all things without grumbling and complaining!” How many things? ALL things! What does all mean? ALL! If we did all things without grumbling and complaining, do you think anyone would notice? YES!!! I think people would stand up take notice and wonder, why are they so different; why are they so content. We would be functioning as lights in the world.
- In the context of Ephesians 5:8, we are not to be partakers in the deeds of the ungodly, but rather bearing the spiritual fruit of goodness, and righteousness, and truth.

So, what’s the bottom line? Stop acting like the world and start acting like Christ! Be imitators of Christ! Don’t just talk the talk, but walk the walk! Be in the World but not of the World so that you are a living testimony to the World. Is this easy to do? NO!!! If you said yes, you’re lying! It’s not easy to do, but it is what we are to be doing. We are to be lamp-stands for Christ. We are to shine forth light in a dark world. Certainly this vision of these seven golden lamp-stands caught John’s attention. But that is not all that he saw.

2-John next identifies whom he saw!

Who did John see? He says in verse 13, “and in the middle of the lamp stands I saw one like a son of man...” There are two questions that we must answer here.

Question #1—Who is it that John sees here?

He sees none other than the glorified Christ! John got a glimpse of our glorified Lord. How does he refer to the Lord? He identifies Christ as “A Son of Man.” He says that he saw “one like a son of man.” Whether your translation refers to Him as “one like a son of man” or “one like the son of man” John is speaking of the same person. Clearly John is speaking of Christ. Son of Man is a significant title for Christ. What is significant about this title, “son of man?”

- This title emphasizes first of all the character of Christ.

1-It identifies His human nature. He is not just 100% God, but He is also 100% man. He is not just God, but He is also a son of man. He possesses full and complete deity and full and complete humanity. This title emphasizes his human nature.

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2-It also identifies His Messianic character. The terminology, “one like a son of man” likely has its source from Daniel’s vision in Daniel 7:13, where the Messiah is referred to as “one like a Son of Man.” Christ, applies this title to Himself in Mark 13:26. In fact, the title Son of Man is used of Christ some 81 times in the Gospels and was His favorite designation for Himself. This title does not just emphasize the character of Christ but it also:

- This title emphasizes second of all the capacity of Christ.

According to John 5:22 & 27, this title is related to Jesus’ capacity as judge. Jesus says, “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,... and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.” Christ as the Son of Man has been given authority to function as a judge, and certainly we see Christ function as judge in the book of Revelation. (Before the seven churches in Revelation 2-3; at His second coming in Revelation 19 and at the Great White Throne Judgment in Revelation 20)

Question #2—Where is it that John sees Him?

John beheld the glorified Christ “in the middle of the lamp stands.” In other words, Christ was in the midst of His churches. Just as He had promised in Matthew 28:19-20, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Just as He had promised according to Hebrews 13:5, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you...” Jesus had promised His continual presence and now John is seeing evidence of this promise. What comfort this must have brought John as he had been suffering persecution on the island of Patmos. What comfort this can bring us to remember that Christ is continually present in the midst of His church. Whether we are facing difficult times, or suffering persecution, we can take comfort in knowing that Christ is here and in control!

It is at this point, in which John moves on to give a detailed description of our glorified Lord.

Here in this description of the glorified Christ, John uses symbolic language. In fact every commentator that I have read on the book of Revelation sees some form of symbolism taking place here because of the use of words “like” and “as.” This becomes even more evident in Revelation 1:20, when Christ clears up some of the more confusing imagery in this vision. It seems as though that as John gives us a literal glimpse of the glorified Lord that He is highlighting the nature and character of Christ.

Here John offers an eight-fold Description of the Son of Man. How does John Picture Christ?

#1—John Describes Christ’s Clothing:

He says in verse 13 that He is, “clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.” Two items are mentioned here:

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First, Christ is clothed in a long robe. According to the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) this word for robe is used in three different contexts.

- It is a robe worn by prophets (cf. 1 Samuel 28:14). [Samuel]
- It is a robe worn by priests (cf. Exodus 28:4). [in particular the High Priest]
- It is a robe worn by kings (cf. 1 Kings 22:10). [The kings of Israel & Judah]

Some have suggested that one or all three of these functions are in mind here. Truly Christ is a prophet, priest and king and certainly we see all three functions of Christ in the book of Revelation. But let's look at the second article of clothing.

Second, Christ is girded with a golden sash. The closest resemblance of this golden sash is to the dress of the high priest who wore a priestly sash on his chest. We see this in Exodus 28:4; 29:5; 39:29. There is also a close resemblance to the Daniel's vision of a messenger in Daniel 10:5. Daniel records, "I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold..." Most believe this messenger to be a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

Taking the two items of clothing together (a long robe and golden sash) leads one to view Christ in His priestly role as our great High Priest, who is in the midst of His church. As our High Priest, Christ once offered the perfect and complete sacrifice for our sins and permanently intercedes for us (Cf. Romans 8:33-34). The knowledge that their High Priest was moving sympathetically in their midst to care for and protect His own provided great comfort and hope to the persecuted churches (Cf. Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-15). Likewise we should have comfort and hope because Christ is our sympathetic High Priest. John now moves from a description of Christ's clothing to a description of Christ's person.

### #2—John Describes Christ's Head & Hair:

John says in verse 14, "And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow." As John describes the head and hair of Christ, he is making an obvious reference to Daniel's description of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9. Daniel says, "And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow, And the hair of His head like pure wool." The parallel descriptions obviously affirm Christ's deity. He possesses the same attribute of holy knowledge and wisdom as God the Father. It is interesting that the term white [LEUKOS] literally means, "bright, blazing or brilliant" and likely symbolizes the eternal glory and holiness of our Lord. Truly Jesus Christ is holy and full of glory!

### #3—John Describes Christ's Eyes:

John says in verse 14, "and His eyes were like a flame of fire." The Old Testament source of this expression is Daniel 10:6. In this passage the messenger clothed in linen had eyes as lamps of fire (LXX) or as torches of fire (Hebrew text). It is interesting that this description of Christ is

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repeated in two more places: in Revelation 2:18 in the message to the church in Thyatira and in Revelation 19:12 at the Second Coming of Christ to the earth. Eyes in Scripture often represent knowledge and God's eyes, are representing His omniscience (knowing all things). There are several verses that highlight this:

- In 2 Chronicles 16:9 it says, “For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth.”
- While Proverbs 15:3 says, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.”
- In Jeremiah 16:17 the Lord says, “For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity concealed from My eyes.”
- And Hebrews 4:13 says, “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

John MacArthur says of John’s description here that, “His eyes as a flame of fire speak of the searching righteousness and divine judgment upon all that is impure. His searching, revealing, infallible gaze penetrates to the very depths of His church, revealing to Him with piercing clarity the reality of everything there is to know.” Truly our Lord is omniscient and nothing is hidden from His eyes!

### #4—John Describes Christ’s Feet:

John moves from Christ’s head down to His feet. He says in verse 15, “and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace.” Once again this picture is repeated in Revelation 2:18, but it is not found elsewhere in Scripture. A similar concept is given in Daniel 10:6 however the wording is different. It is stated as, "gleaming brass" (cf. Ezekiel 1:7). The description here not only involves the process of refinement or smelting in which the metal is purified and made to shine, but it pictures the point in that process where the metal is still at a glow. While there does exist some emphasis upon purity here, the greater emphasis is on the red-hot glow conveying the idea of judgment. Kings in ancient times sat on elevated thrones, so those being judged would always be beneath the king's feet. The feet of a king thus came to symbolize his judicial authority. The red-hot glowing feet of the Lord Jesus Christ picture Him moving through the church to exercise His chastening authority. With uncorrupted purity Christ is strong enough to conquer sin in the church and pure enough to judge it. Christ is truly a righteous judge, holy and pure!

### #5—John Describes Christ’s Voice:

John indicates in verse 15 that, “His voice was like the sound of many waters.” The wording suggests a powerful force. The Psalmist in Psalm 93:4 uses the term in the context of great might. He says, “More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea,

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The LORD on high is mighty.” John uses this terminology again in Revelation 14:2, where he says, “And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.” Again in Revelation 19:2 John writes, “And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.” Obviously John was indicating the intensity of the voice. Earlier it was described as a loud trumpet in verse 10. Now John recalls the intensity of the sound of many waters, like the familiar mighty roar of the surf crashing on the rocky shores of Patmos in a storm. This is the voice of sovereign power, the voice of supreme authority. The voice as described likely emphasizes the sovereign authority behind the command to write the book of Revelation. Truly, Christ is all-powerful and in sovereign control over the earth!

### #6—John Describes Christ’s Hands:

John goes on to say in verse 16, “And in His right hand He held seven stars.” Actually, John does not describe the actual hands of Christ. He simply describes what Christ is holding in His right hand. What is Christ holding in His hand? Seven stars! Are these literal stars? NO! Revelation 1:20 identifies these seven stars for us. John records, “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand... the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” Evidently, the symbolism regarding the stars and the lamp-stands was not that clear to John thus it is regarded as a mystery. But it wasn’t a mystery for long. Very clearly, the stars are identified for us in Revelation 1:20 as the angels of the seven churches. Does this mean these seven churches had angels or could we go so far as to say that every church has its own angel? Does Valley Bible Church have its own angel? The answer is NO!!!!

The Greek term [ANGELOI] literally means “messenger” and is better rendered messengers as in Luke 7:24 or James 2:25. These are best interpreted as the teaching elder of each of these seven churches. Each church as does Valley Bible had a plurality of elders. The messengers as described here would be the elders of each church who performed the primary role of Messenger; of Pastor/Teacher. They would be the Dale Whitehead's or John MacArthur's of the seven churches in Asia Minor. The emphasis here is the idea of Christ's absolute authority and complete control over these seven messengers. They are in His hand! They are under His authority! They are controlled by Him! Truly Christ has built His church and is the head of His church and certainly in control of all things!

### #7—John Describes Christ’s Mouth:

John moves on to say in verse 16, “and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.” The Old Testament source of the words is Isaiah 11:4, “He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth.” Several New Testament passages are relevant because they either liken the Word of God to a sword (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12) or predict that the returning Christ will destroy the man of lawlessness, with the breath of His mouth (2 Thessalonians 2:8). The Greek word [RHOMPHAIA] was a large blade of Thracian origin. The description as coming out of the mouth is not surprising because this sword was short and shaped like a tongue.

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The resultant focus of this part of the description is upon the judicial authority of Christ. It combines the force of a warrior defeating his enemies in battle and the pronouncement of his sentence of judgment upon them. Some believe that it speaks primarily of Christ's protection over His church.

#8—John Describes Christ's Face:

John concludes his description of Christ in verse 16 saying, “and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.” John's vision of the glorified Lord of the church culminated in this description of the radiant glory evident on the Christ's face, which John could only describe as like the sun shining in its strength. John borrowed this phrase from Judges 5:31, where it describes those who love the Lord. The faces of the righteous are also said to shine like the sun in Matthew 13:43 as is the face of an angel in Revelation 10:1. There is likely some significance in the words John used here as he remembered his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration when he had witnessed an anticipatory glimpse of the glory of Christ. And now he is the only one to be given a second glimpse of that glory. The description is simply that of the radiant glory on the face of the Lord Jesus. That glory described as the sun shining in its strength is the strongest possible illustration of the illumination of God's glory. Certainly, Christ is full of glory!

What a description of the glorified Christ! John has indicated that Christ is our great High Priest; full of knowledge, wisdom and glory; omniscient; righteous, holy and pure; all-powerful offering complete control, authority and protection over His church! Are these things true? YES! This is a glimpse of our glorified Lord!

How are we to respond to such a vision of Christ? What should our response be? Perhaps it should be the same as John's as he moves on to communicate the consequence of this vision in verses 17-20. John says, “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man.”

- What is John's reaction to Christ? WORSHIP!

John had a healthy fear of the Lord. All he could do in response to the glory of the Lord was fall on his face like a dead man.

In fact, this is the same response he had before the glorified Christ at the Mount of Transfiguration. Matthew says in Matthew 17:6, “And when the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were much afraid.”

This is not an uncommon response to the glory of the God:

- In Daniel 10:8-9, Daniel says, “So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.”

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- In Isaiah 6:5, Isaiah responds by saying, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”
- Ezekiel records at least 5 times in which his response was, “I fell on my face.” (cf. Ezekiel 1:28; 3:23; 9:8; 43:3; 44:4)

So what should our response be to this glimpse of the glorified Lord? **WORSHIP! WORSHIP! WORSHIP!**

When you ponder the excellencies of Christ? When you think upon the majesty of Christ? When you see the glory of Christ in the Scriptures? Do you have a healthy fear of the Lord? Are you driven to worship? So, how do you picture Christ? Do you see Him as He really is? Do you see Christ as John saw Christ? Holy, Righteous, All-Knowing; All-Powerful; Completely Sovereign; Eternal; Self-Existent and Full of Glory! How should we respond to this glimpse of our glorified Lord?

May God give us the grace to see Christ as He really is and come before Him in worship.