



January 30, 2022 ~ “A Vision For Adventure ~ Revelation 1:9-20

OPEN

Earlier this month, Simone Engles was taking photos from Nanoose Bay, BC and snapped a photo of what looks like an iceberg in the Strait of Georgia. However, what she saw is in fact called a “superior mirage”.

The image her camera captured was the Cheam Mountain Range, near Chilliwack. What Simone’s photo reveals is an incredible optical illusion of mountains that are some 180 kilometres away! [READ MORE](#)

When it comes to the book of Revelation, there are objects that appear vivid and clear. Then there are the fuzzy, future events – “*what is now and what will take place later*” (1:19). Could we say that aspects of Revelation feel like an “optical illusion” of sorts? Yet this pastoral/prophetic letter does give us reliable resources for living the adventure of Jesus. We need to pay close attention to the vision of our Guide.

Today our theme is “**A Vision for Adventure**” from the balance of Revelation 1. Looking at the chapter it appears to have a “double introduction”. We saw the **prologue** (vv.1-8) last week. This week, the **introduction** is in verses 9-20. Both convey “*this is Jesus speaking...to the churches...this is who I am and what I have accomplished...John, write this vision down*”. Revelation can be divided into four visions:

- [1] vision of Jesus among seven churches
- [2] vision of seven-sealed scroll, trumpets, signs, bowls
- [3] vision of Christ’s return, end of the age
- [4] vision of the new heaven and new earth

Henry B. Swete (*The Apocalypse of St. John*, Macmillan, 1906) writes that in **form** Revelation is an epistle; in **content** it is apocalyptic prophecy (“the messy bits”); in **spirit** Revelation is pastoral care.

Today, let’s think about the way in which Jesus has set out a three-fold **vision for adventure** with Him.

DIG

ONE: Vision of Constasy – vv. 9-11

What does it take to remain constant and steadfast in our adventure with Jesus? John wrestled with this as he identified himself as “*brother and companion*” (“together sharing”) in three ways relative to the Jesus adventure – “that are ours in Jesus”. Consider this intriguing trio of qualities.

- [1] “suffering” [2] “kingdom” [3] “patient endurance”

Verse 9 also tells us that John was exiled to the island of Patmos because of “*the word of God and the testimony of Jesus*” (v.9, see also v.2). This phrase is found in **Revelation 6:9** and **20:4** to refer to those who are the “*slain in the Lord*” – martyrs. Revelation wrestles with final justice for such saints. John was not slain, yet suffering as a prisoner for God. Patmos is a small island (34 KM²) just west of the Turkish coast (see map). Barren, rocky with volcanic hills, Patmos was used by Romans to keep prisoners.



In verse 10 we read that John was “*in the Spirit*” and that he heard a “*voice like a trumpet*”. He was told to write what he witnessed to seven churches in Asia Minor (v.11): **Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea**. Revelation was circulated among these towns which were on a Roman postal circuit. Jesus’ vision for them and us today, is to live constant and steadfast in the face of trial. John demonstrated God’s ability to create constancy in our lives, even when we are faced with rocky, barren places.

TWO: Vision of Confidence – vv. 12-16

How do we grow in confidence? Next in the passage turned to see who the speaker (v.12). His attention was arrested by “*the voice that was speaking with [him]*.” From verse 1 we know that the message John was to deliver came from Jesus Christ, ultimately, but likely conveyed by the angel. What did John see?

- **Seven golden lampstands** – seven churches (v.20); Tabernacle stand was one with seven lamps
- **Someone like a son of man** – Jesus is the source of the message to the churches (v.1)
- **Robe reaching to his feet; golden sash** – Jesus is our High Priestly (Exodus 28:4)
- **White hair; eyes blazing** – Jesus’ wisdom, deity, authority; “Ancient of Days” (Daniel 7:9; 10:6)
- **Glowing feet; voice like rushing waters** – Jesus’ power, glory (Ezek 1:13,27;8:2); “trampling”
- **In his right hand he held seven stars** – points to the angelic “covering” over each church
- **From his mouth a sharp, double-edged sword** – Jesus’ divine, final justice (Isaiah 11:4)
- **Face like the sun shining** – Jesus’ divine glory, pre-eminence, victory (Revelation 10:1)

What does this mean for us? Confidence does not come from within, but from Christ. Paul wrote in Philippians 3:3,10 “...*put no confidence in the flesh...I want to know Christ and the power of this resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings.*” We must have a full, clear vision of Jesus!

THREE: Vision of Courage – vv. 17-20

What happened when John saw this vision? How would you react? John “*fell at his feet as though dead*” but Jesus told him “*do not be afraid*” (v.17). This reveals the source of our courage. Jesus says, “I am...”

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| [1] The First and Last | [2] The Living One |
| [3] Alive for ever and ever | [4] Hold keys of death and Hades |

Carey Nieuwhof is the author of [Didn't See It Coming](#) (WaterBrook, 2018). In his book he argues that there are seven crippling challenges that very few expect but we will all experience at some point: **cynicism, compromise, disconnectedness, irrelevance, pride, burnout, emptiness**. What is the answer? Ultimately, it is the Gospel – “hope is anchored in resurrection.”

This is exactly what was revealed to John – and what he was to share among the seven churches (vv.19-20). And this vision of courage is for the Church today also. Jesus declared, “I’m alive, that is your source of courage and reason to keep going!” What was Jesus first word to His disciples? “Peace”! (John 20:19)

Need courage? You can be **encouraged** in Christ if you **encounter** Him deliberately, deeply, and dependently.

REFLECT

How should we approach Revelation? With fearful caution because it is too messy and mysterious? Well, we must take care in reading Revelation, but not so the technical overshadows the transformational!

Jesus is alive forever and ever (note garden tomb)! Let us be **constant, confident, and courageous!** As we read this revelation (*apocalypsis*) of Jesus let us be ready to see what we could not know on our own. Let us be humble, reverent, and in awe as we confess to the perplexity of this prophecy.

The imagery and symbolism necessary to communicate Revelation’s truth can be overwhelming. But when we put our focus on the Savior rather than the symbols, we will receive a blessing.

The same is true of communion...we are not celebrating symbols, but the Savior! Here are some Scriptures for you to read and consider as you worship Jesus, who has given his life for your salvation.

- **Titus 2:11-14**
- **Revelation 5:11-13**