

Are you ready to meet Jesus?

The experience of meeting a famous person is sometimes disconcerting. He or she may be less impressive than we had imagined. But when John sees Jesus face to face, he is overwhelmed with his magnificence. John's experience challenges us to ask whether we have ever met the real Jesus, or whether we follow a mild or even distorted copy of the real Lord!

Warm Up Question(s) – choose one

- What images or pictures do you have or have you seen of Jesus?¹ Which was/is most helpful? Least?
- Of the “famous” people that you have met, which seemed more or less impressive than you imagined him/her to be?

Discovering the Word

- 1) **Read Revelation 1:9-20.** How does John describe himself? his situation? What is the setting for the vision he receives?
- 2) John “saw seven golden lampstands”(v.12; cf. Exodus 25³¹⁻⁴⁰)? What do they symbolize (v. 20) and how does the symbol work (John 8¹²; Matthew 5¹⁴⁻¹⁶)?
- 3) How would you describe to others something you saw for the first time ever & which they had never seen before (thingamajig)? What initial impressions do you get from John’s description?
- 4) John's vision of Jesus is rich with biblical symbolism. Use a cross-reference bible to help to find and explore other scriptures where these images are also used. What added impressions or understandings do you now have? Which image(s) impresses you most with the magnificence of Jesus, and why (vv. 13-16)?
- 5) How would Jesus' relationship to these churches (v. 13) encourage them to fulfill their function during hard times?
- 6) Why do you think John was so overcome by Jesus (v. 17)?
- 7) How would Jesus' words encourage John not to be fearful in his presence (vv. 17-18)?

Applying the Word

- Revelation was written to churches persecuted under a totalitarian regime. Our society seems friendlier, yet how is it hostile to us both morally and spiritually?
- How has this passage enlarged your vision of who Jesus is?
- How can this vision of Jesus encourage us to resist the seductions of our society?

¹ E.g. Philip Yancey said, “I first got acquainted with Jesus when I was a child, singing “Jesus Loves Me” in Sunday school, addressing bedtime prayers to “Dear Lord Jesus,” watching Bible Club teachers move cut out figures across a flannel graph board. I associated Jesus with Kool-Aid and sugar cookies and gold stars for good attendance. I remember especially one image from Sunday school...Jesus cradled a small sleeping lamb. I imagined myself as that lamb, blessed beyond all telling.” The Jesus I Never Knew, p. 13.

1:9 ^a ver 1
^b S Ac 14:22; 2Co 1:7;
 Php 4:14 ^c ver 6
^d 2Ti 2:12 ^e ver 2;
 S Heb 4:12 ^f S ver 2
 1:10 ^g Ac 20:7
^h Rev 4:2; 17:3; 21:10
ⁱ Ex 20:18; Rev 4:1
 1:11 ^j ver 19

1:11 ^k ver 4, 20
^l S Ac 18:19 ^m Rev 2:8
ⁿ Rev 2:12 ^o Ac 16:14;
 Rev 2:18, 24 ^p Rev 3:1
^q Rev 3:7 ^r S Col 2:1;
 Rev 3:14

1:12 ^s ver 20;
 Ex 25:31-40; Zec 4:2;
 Rev 2:1

1:13 ^t Rev 2:1
^u Eze 1:26; Da 7:13;
 10:16; Rev 14:14
^v Isa 6:1 ^w Da 10:5;
 Rev 15:6

1:14 ^x Da 7:9; 10:6;
 Rev 2:18; 19:12

1:15 ^y Eze 1:7;
 Da 10:6; Rev 2:18
^z Eze 43:2; Rev 14:2;
 19:6

1:16 ^a ver 20;
 Rev 2:1; 3:1 ^b Isa 1:20;
 49:2; Heb 4:12;
 Rev 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21
^c Jdg 5:31; Mt 17:2
 1:17 ^d Eze 1:28;
 Da 8:17, 18 ^e Da 8:18
^f S Mt 14:27

^g Isa 41:4; 44:6;
 48:12; Rev 2:8; 22:13

1:18 ^h Ro 6:9;
 Rev 2:8 ⁱ Dt 32:40;
 Da 4:34; 12:7;
 Rev 4:9, 10; 10:6; 15:7
^j Rev 9:1; 20:1

1:19 ^k ver 11; Hab 2:2

1:20 ^l S ver 16
^m S ver 12 ⁿ ver 4, 11
^o Mt 5:14, 15

2:1 ^p S Ac 18:19

^q Rev 1:16 ^r Rev 1:12, 13

2:2 ^s ver 19; Rev 3:1,
 8, 15 ^t 1Jn 4:1

^u 2Co 11:13

2:3 ^v S Jn 15:21

2:4 ^w Jer 2:2;
 Mt 24:12

2:5 ^x ver 16, 22;
 Rev 3:3, 19 ^y Rev 1:20

2:6 ^z ver 15

JOHN'S VISION OF CHRIST

⁹I, John, ^a your brother and companion in the suffering ^b and kingdom ^c and patient endurance ^d that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God ^e and the testimony of Jesus. ^f10 On the Lord's Day ^g I was in the Spirit, ^h and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ⁱ11 which said: "Write on a scroll what you see ^j and send

it to the seven churches: ^k to Ephesus, ^l Smyrna, ^m Pergamum, ⁿ Thyatira, ^o Sardis, ^p Philadelphia ^q and Laodicea." ^r

¹²I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ^s13 and among the lampstands ^t was someone like a son of man, ^a14 dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet ^v and with a golden sash around his chest. ^w14 The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ^x15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, ^y and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ^z16 In his right hand he held seven stars, ^a and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. ^b His face was like the sun ^c shining in all its brilliance.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet ^d as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me ^e and said: "Do not be afraid. ^f I am the First and the Last. ^g18 I am the Living One; I was dead, ^h and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! ⁱ And I hold the keys of death and Hades." ^j

¹⁹"Write, therefore, what you have seen: ^k both what is now and what will take place later. ²⁰The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand ^l and of the seven golden lampstands ^m is this: The seven stars are the angels ^b of the seven churches, ⁿ and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. ^o

TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS

2 "To the angel ^c of the church in Ephesus ^p write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand ^q and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ^r21 I know your deeds, ^s your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested ^t those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ^u23 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, ^v and have not grown weary.

⁴Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. ^w25 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent ^x and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand ^y from its place. ⁶But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, ^z which I also hate.

^a 13 See Daniel 7:13. ^b 20 Or messengers ^c 1 Or messenger; also in verses 8, 12 and 18