**Visions of the Exalted Christ** Rev. 1. 4-7, 12-18; 5. 1-10, 19. 6-16

Rev. 1. 7 **Behold he [Christ] comes**… even so Amen. In scripture Christ is frequently designated ‘the Coming One’, Mal. 3. 1: ‘*The Lord whom you seek will suddenly* ***come*** *to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold,* ***he is coming,*** *says the LORD of hosts’.*

The question of John the Baptist at a time of doubt was: *‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’,* Luke 7. 20.

With hindsight we now know that Messiah has **two distinct comings** – the first in lowly grace 2000 years ago, the second in majesty and power at a time of His Father’s appointment, cp. Ps. 110. 1.

We may be assured that ‘*yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay’,* Heb. 10. 37.

**Rev. 1: The Glorified Christ**

**Past:** His witness on earth: ‘*Faithful Witness’* (before Pontius Pilate He witnessed the good confession, so faithful before earthly kings and rulers, it cost Him His life.) What does Christianity cost you and me?

**Present**: *Firstborn of the dead* … ‘that in all things He might be first’. The Lord and Head of the church. His people need not fear death or even martyrdom.

**Future:** – His coming reign. *Ruler of the kings of the earth.* We distinguish between the general reign of God all through the centuries and the coming messianic millennial reign of our Lord Jesus. It would be confusion to think that is His present reign at God’s right hand is all there is. Luke 19. 12: the nobleman went to receive a kingdom (=rights of sovereignty) and to return.

1. *Loves us, and loosed us from our sins* (negative)
2. *Made us a kingdom and priests* (positive)

**The Judge in the midst of His churches, vv. 12-18.** Christ’s judgement of His church is a solemn matter. As regards the judgement of believers’ sins, John 5. 24 is clear *‘shall not come into judgement’*. Evangelical believers rightly emphasize this verse. In the cross of Christ, we have accepted an out-of-court settlement with God. *No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* Rom. 8. 1.

In the new covenant God is pledged to remember our sins against us no more, Heb. 10. 17.

But God does in fact judge His people, 1 Pet. 1. 18. Our Father is extremely critical of how we spend our sojourn in this world. Be careful how you spend your redeemed life! Don’t squander it on empty living. To the Laodiceans Christ says, ‘*As many as I love I reprove and chasten’*.

**Portrait of Christ the Judge.** Let us survey Him!

The Lord’s glory struck John down. John has to ransack creation to give us an idea of the glorified Christ. Roar of torrents of water, flames of fire join in Him. *Foot .. breast .. head, hair, eyes, feet, mouth , voice, right hand, mouth.* Symbolic presentation of*:*

1. our Lord’s purity
2. our Lord’s power

 [‘***Concretized metaphor’*** is common in Revelation. We take a metaphor from the literal world and apply it. Sometimes people take a metaphor and put it back into the physical world. **Cartoonists** do this. Some of it is real, some is metaphor. Visions and symbols are important, for they fire our imagination.]

**Garment** = official garment of the Judge = not a centimetre short.

**Breast** **(affections)** – the word used of a woman’s breast, infinitely tender but ‘girded’ i.e. principled, not indiscriminate. His tender affections are pure – uncompromised.

**Head/hair** – as pure as wool – symbols used by Daniel to describe almighty God. Now used of our blessed Lord, God incarnate.
= Purity of wisdom – wisdom from above first pure, then peaceable.

**Eyes ablaze with fire**. As Judge He sees through everything as it really is. Where the eyes see evil they consume it.

**Feet like unto copper** as though they **glowed**. What a furnace those feet trod at Calvary! – the wrath of God. His holy feet glow still. Evil must be trodden down as a winepress is trodden.

**His voice!** The volume and irresistibility of the sound of great waters.

**Seven stars** on His hand – not a sceptre.

**His mouth** is open – ‘out of his mouth proceeded a **sharp two-edged sword’**. No longer silent. His word divides the very thoughts and intents of the heart.

Once John leaned on Christ’s bosom. I fell at his feet as dead. Have we lost the sense of the wonder and holiness of the risen Lord? He is the Lord and Head of the church, and the inescapable Judge of His people.

We have here the public glory, purity, and power of the One who moves among the lampstands!!

**‘Fear not’**! Stand up unafraid in the full blaze of His holiness. His criticisms are not to destroy us! Instead He wants to release us from our faults and failings, in the consciousness of our unassailable standing before Him.

He holds the keys of **death and Hades** – not to put people in, rather to let the prisoners out! ‘You may rise to stand before Me without fear!’

**The Lamb in the midst of the Throne, 5. 1-10**

Ch.4 begins the second section of the Book. In chs. 4-7 I counted 24 refs to the **throne**. Throne = a symbol of God’s rule, government, and it is occupied.

Ch. 5 brings us to a problem, so serious that the John the Apostle is moved to serious distress / tears. A seven sealed book needs to be opened if the divine programme and purpose is to be advanced. It is clearly of vital import, but nobody is found worthy. What is the book (scroll)? Not the ‘title deeds of the earth’ as been popularly suggested recently. Rather it is the ***series of acts of judgment*** described in the book which together will consummate the purposes of God in history.

To John’s profound relief, One is found who is worthy to take the scroll and open its seals. Consider His description:

**Lion of the tribe of Judah** – Lion is the king of the beasts, and a symbol of kingship vested in the royal tribe of Judah, Gen. 49. 10.

**Root of David** – not simply the offspring of David, but the *Root* of David.

Has ‘**prevailed’** = overcome, conquered. Christ is **Conqueror** of sin and death and hell.

**The freshly slain Lamb**. Turned to see the Lion … saw a Lamb as it had been slain. **Seven horns** (=fulness of power, omnipotence) and **seven eyes** (= fulness of wisdom, omniscience) … our Lord Jesus! Listen to the Lion roar! Let our minds and imaginations be inspired by this symbolic language. How frequently we fail to grasp just who Jesus really is!

**Horns** = power over His subjects. But He subdued our rebellion as the *Lamb slain* for us. The *weakness* of the crucified Christ has become *the power* of God unto salvation: Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1. 24.

Rev. 5. 9 ESV  *And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,  and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.’*

**The Marriage Supper of the Lamb, 19. 6-10**

Four great Hallelujahs like the strains of some great wedding march signal the union of Christ and His church. [background = Ps. 45]

Way back in John’s Gospel we read the words of John the Baptist:- ‘*Behold! the Lamb of God’*, 1. 29, and 3. 29  *The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.*

It would seem that the Bride is already in heaven, cp. Rev. 19. 8. *It was* ***given*** *unto her (divine grace) that* ***she should array herself*** *in fine linen, bright and pure (human responsibility) --*  ‘for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints’.

Application: ***Here and now*** we are creating and embroidering the dazzling wedding garment which will enhance the glory of that great day of presentation. Of course, God is at work in us both to will and to do His good pleasure.

Embroidery is painstaking, slow, doesn’t seem much close-up but the ***finished*** *effect, the* ***completed*** *picture* is stunning.

 ‘*Blessed (how fortunate) are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb*.’

All heaven awaits that glorious day: What about you and me?
Paul was one who loved ‘His [Christ’s] appearing’ 2 Tim. 4. 8.

**The Word of God, Rev. 19. 11-18**

Overwhelming judgement on His enemies: Rev. 19. 15, 21. [cp. Ps. 2. 5; Isa. 11. 4; 30. 21; Joel 3. 16; 2 Thess. 2. 8]. Note that He has a name written where normally a sword would hang - it is ‘**King of kings‘,** Rev. 19. 16. He has only to speak and it is done! His spoken word will consume those who presume to war against His people and His city, Zech. 14. 12; Rev. 16. 18-21. Also, as so often in the past, the Lord will cause confusion and division among His foes, Zech. 14. 13. The devastation will be terrific, leaving untold millions of corpses and necessitating the cleansing of the land by vast numbers of carrion-fed birds, Rev. 19. 17-18, 21.

The Messiah will have the glory, dominion and kingdom, Dan. 7. 27. His kingdom will be universal, Dan. 2. 35, and everlasting; unconditionally His as long as the heavens endure, Ps. 89. 3-4, 28-37; cp. Isa. 9. 6-7; Luke 1. 30-33. The Lord shall be King in that day, Ps. 2. 6; Jer. 23. 5; Zech. 14. 9, and the kingdoms of the earth will all be His, Zech. 9. 10; Rev. 11. 15. His past humiliation and present rejection will then be more than recompensed by His glory and universal acclaim.