

# ***Eight Visions***

**unveiling the glories of the**

# ***Lord Jesus Christ***

**in the**

# ***Book of Revelation***

*“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* **2 Pet. 1:20, 21**

*“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”* **John 16:13, 14**

*“...worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”.* **Rev. 19:10b**

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# Meditation Outline:

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|---|---------------|
| 1. Glorious Revealer and Judge          | Rev. 1:12-16  |
| 2. Glorious Creator and Governor        | Rev. 4:2, 3   |
| 3. Glorious Worthy-One and Lamb slain   | Rev. 5:4-7    |
| 4. Glorious Sympathizer and High Priest | Rev. 8:3-5    |
| 5. Glorious Fulfiller of O.T. Prophecy  | Rev. 10:1-2   |
| 6. Glorious Provider and Protector      | Rev. 11:1-12  |
| 7. Glorious Leader and Avenger          | Rev. 19:11-16 |
| 8. Glorious Adjudicator and Judge       | Rev. 20:11-12 |

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The word Apocalypse in Greek means “to unveil” and indeed God, the Holy Spirit, unveils the glories of Christ Jesus our Lord as the Son of Man, in His varied glories, for us to prayerfully consider in the wonderful book of Revelation.

The verses on the previous cover page emphasize that the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man but rather *“by holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”* and as the will of man had no part in its communication at the first, so it also has no part in the apprehension of it now.

Also, no part can be understood apart from the entire scope of that which the Holy Ghost has revealed – the whole precious Word of God.

We are told as well that the Holy Ghost would not speak of Himself but rather of Christ, to glorify Him, and reveal these precious revelations to us.

We learn that these wonderful and glorious prophetic pronouncements are the testimony of Jesus and that in reading about them there is a blessing. **(Rev. 1:3)**

Beloved this should cause us to bow and worship Him who is alone worthy!

*“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.”*

There are three things in this description of the Son of Man to be noted:

- Christ’s glorious **CHARACTER** exercising divine righteousness.
- His glorious **ATTRIBUTES** as set forth by the various features of His appearance.
- His **OFFICIAL SUPREMACY** as betokened by His holding the seven stars (angels of the seven assemblies) in His right hand.

Earlier in this chapter Jesus Christ is Himself seen as Jehovah (**vv. 4, 5**) and here He is seen as the Son of man and the *"Ancient of days"* for here our Lord is in a judicial relationship to the assemblies. (**John 5: 27**)

We view the wide character in which He has been set over all the works of God's hands as Heir of all the promises and purposes of God to man, according to divine righteousness. Here as Son of Man He is robed with the girdle of divine righteousness actively engaged in surveying and judging the assemblies.

Next come the varied traits of His appearance: His **head** and His **hairs** were **white as wool** which plainly identifies Him with the *"Ancient of days"* previously seen in **Dan. 7: 9**; enabling us to understand how different the character He here takes from those relationships of grace to His people as set forth in the epistles.

All divine glory therefore is displayed in Him who was once the humbled Christ and in this glory He has the attributes of judgment with **eyes of fire**, signifying discriminating judgment. **His feet** as burning brass in a furnace signifies the firmness with which He always meets sin as Man; for brass signifies divine righteousness dealing with man in his responsibility. Thus the mercy-seat was gold but the altar and laver were brass dealing with the sin of man. A *sacrifice* of fire was there but here it is the burning furnace of *judgment*.

Lastly His **voice** signified power and majesty revealing His *official supremacy*.

The **seven stars** are the angels of the seven churches (**v. 20**) and are held by the Son of Man in His **right hand**. Stars commonly signify in the Scriptures subordinate authority and as such the angels of the churches represent those in responsibility being supported by the divine power of the Lord. How wonderful that it is so!

The **two-edged sword** represents the piercing and searching character of the Word in judgment (**Heb. 4: 12**) and we are thus recalled to the fact that Christ as Son of Man tests and judges everything in the midst of His people, as to their state and ways, by His own infallible word.

Then, last of all, His **countenance** was "*as the sun shineth in his strength*" — that is, He possesses *supreme authority* — for it is this the sun as a symbol indicates.

Seeing that He sees all and judges all perfectly, God would want us to know how important it is to give Him the preeminent place in our hearts and in the Assembly.

## **2. GLORIOUS CREATOR AND GOVERNOR Rev. 4:2, 3**

*"And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."*

The first thing that John saw, while in the Spirit, was a throne. It is not as stated in KJV that a throne was "*set*" for the occasion, as might be supposed, but rather that a throne "*stood*" in heaven.

Government is necessarily associated with a throne. Previously the government of the earth was executed upon the kingdom with the centre in Jerusalem and by the Gentiles (**Dan. 2**) but God never abdicated His rights or ceased to govern by His providence. (**Dan. 4 24-35**)

He had as it were retired from His throne in the midst of Israel, but His throne was fixed in heaven, and from that throne He rules in the kingdom of men, and gave it to whomsoever He would and He holds those to whom He had committed the government responsible to Himself.

**Israel** had failed and with greater privileges, greater light, and more power, the **Assembly** has failed as God's witness and light-bearer on the earth and the **Gentile** depositaries of power failed also.

In **Rev. 2 and Rev. 3** Christ was seen judging the assemblies and His final sentence was that He would utterly reject it as His vessel of testimony and in this chapter He unfolds the preparation for the judgment of the nations and hence the first thing noticed is God's stable and righteous throne with one sitting on the throne whose appearance was *"like a jasper and a sardine stone."*

In **Rev. 21**, New Jerusalem, is seen descending out of heaven from God having *"the glory of God,"* and her light was *"like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone."* (**vv. 10, 11**)

Also on the breastplate of the Jewish high priest the **sardius** (sardine) was the first and the **jasper** the last of the precious stones (**Exo. 28**).

These stones are divinely chosen then as emblems of *the glory of God* displaying *His righteous government*.

A **rainbow** is seen round about the throne in sight like an emerald. Perhaps this is graciously reminding His servant before he unfolds the long series of judgments upon the earth, of His everlasting covenant with His creation. (**Gen. 9**) In the midst of His wrath He will remember mercy.

This rainbow, too, is in appearance like unto an **emerald**, significant, it may be, of the fact that the issue of all God's dealings with the world are seen in view of the eternal freshness and beauty of the new earth which together with the new heavens John speaks of in **Rev. 21**.

### **3. GLORIOUS WORTHY-ONE AND LAMB SLAIN Rev. 5:4-7**

*"And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."*

The book, written within and on the back was like the ordinary rolls of those days, written on both sides; and being sealed with seven seals imports that it was perfectly sealed, its contents unknown, because it was shut up by divine power. It is undoubtedly the book of *God's counsels respecting the earth*, not His eternal counsels, but His purposes, not yet unfolded or made good, concerning the world.

A strong angel cries with a loud voice, challenging, as it were, the whole universe, *"Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"* There was no response to the challenge; for, in truth, there was not one, from Gabriel downwards, of all God's creatures who had the requisite qualification to undertake the task. John, on this account, wept much because no one was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. **(vv. 2-4)**

Then one of the **elders**, for it is these alone who possess the intelligence of God and of His ways **(Rev. 7: 13, 14)**, said unto him, *"Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."* **(v. 5)** The Messiah who had been rejected and slain was now, in consequence, exalted to the right hand of power.

Jacob had spoken: *"Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"* And the very next verse speaks of the coming of Shiloh, unto whom the gathering of the peoples should be." **(Gen. 49: 9, 10)**

The "*Lion of the tribe of Judah*", therefore, tells of the irresistible, all-conquering power of Messiah in conflict with His enemies **(compare Psa. 18: 37-44)** and the "*Root of David*" sets Him forth as David's Lord rather than as David's Son — the Root here, not the Offspring. We have thus the Messiah in the truth of *His divine Person* combined with *His victorious power* in conflict.

John "*beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."* **(v. 6.)** We see here a marked contrast between the thoughts of God and the thoughts of man for we see not a "*Lion, the Root of David*" displaying majesty, dignity, visible display of strength, energy, and all-commanding power but no; it was a Lamb, and "*a Lamb as it had been slain*"!

Herein is the divine secret of His exaltation and of His ability to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof.

The Lamb is here shown as the prominent object in heaven — God's object, and the object also of all those who surround the throne and we should therefore contemplate Him also as the all-absorbing object of heaven and He should be also the object of our hearts now while, in communion with the mind of God, we behold Him by faith. What a privilege is ours of delighting in Him; the One in whom God delights. The Lamb is also seen to be the central object of the throne as He is in the *midst* of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the *midst* of the elders.

Thus the rejected Messiah in the *midst* displays *divine providence* and *grace* as exemplified respectively by the *four living creatures* and the *elders*.

He has **seven horns**, the emblem of power, teaching us that He possesses all power over the earth. The **seven eyes** proclaim His perfect intelligence wielding the power of the Spirit for His government on the earth.

His having *been slain* connects the cross and the throne, the *ground* of His present supremacy and power, with His *authority* in government to fulfill the purposes of God. He is thus alike the *foundation* and *object* of all God's *ways* and *purposes*. He certainly is worthy of our song of praise now and throughout eternity.

#### **4. GLORIOUS SYMPATHIZER AND HIGH PRIEST Rev. 8:3-5**

*“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”*

This heavenly scene marked by the golden altar and the throne, presents in angelic form, Christ our great High Priest, the Mediator between God and His people. The prayers of all the saints on earth are seen ascending up to God upon the golden altar with Christ adding the incense that gives the efficacy to their prayers, for the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. This is a blessed and familiar truth to every believer who sees Christ in all the value of what He is to God, having glorified Him on the cross,

now giving efficacy to the prayers of His people and who will also hear attentively the prayers of His suffering earthly people during the time of *Jacobs trouble*.

It is this truth that is embodied in this symbolic scene and is an answer to the prayers of the saints, the angel takes the censer, fills it with the fire of the altar and casts it into the earth. God is pleased to associate His saints with Himself even in His ways of judgment responding to the cries of His people the suffering earthly saints, the remnant, which is so often seen in the Psalms, pleading for vengeance upon their adversaries. **(See also Luke 18: 7, 8)**

The voices, thunderings, etc., are but varied symbols of the different forms of divine power in judgment with which this poor world is about to be visited.

How touching it is to see Christ as the Sympathizer of His earthly people!

## **5. GLORIOUS FULFILLER OF O.T. PROPHECY Rev. 10:1-2**

*“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.”*

The description of this mighty angel points us to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself clothed with a cloud which is often connected with the divine presence.

On the mount of transfiguration a cloud overshadowed both Him and His disciples **(Matt. 17; Luke 9)**; and when He ascended up into heaven a cloud received Him out of the sight of His own. **(Acts 1)** Also when He returns to the earth, He will come in the clouds of heaven. **(Matt. 24: 30; Rev. 1. 7.)**

In **Rev. 4** the rainbow is round about the divine throne but here it is upon the angel's head a symbol of God's everlasting covenant with the earth. **(Gen. 9: 12, 13.)** None but a Divine Person could wear the rainbow on His head.

*"His face was as it were the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire,"* are almost exactly the same as those given in **Rev. 1: 15, 16** removing any doubt as to identifying this mighty angel as Christ Jesus and in His hand there was *a little book open* not a sealed book as in **Rev. 5** where the contents could not be known until the seals were broken.

Here the open book has contents which were already known, referring to the fact that the action of Christ in taking possession of the earth and the sea as symbolized by His right foot on the sea, and His left foot on the earth, had already been made known through prophetic writings. (See, for example, **Psa. 72; Isa. 11: 25: 60; Zech. 14**)

Having set one foot on the sea, and the other upon the earth, He "*cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when He had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.*" (**v. 3**)

The subject of this cry is concealed; for when John was about to write what the seven thunders had uttered, he was commanded to "*seal up the things he had heard, and not to write them.*" (**vv. 3, 4**) However from the imagery employed it is not difficult to discern that the cry of Christ and the voices of the seven thunders, were expressive of His wrath, indignation, and righteous judgment as He comes and deals with the man of the earth fulfilling O.T. prophecy. (**Cp. Isa. 2; 26: 20, 21; 42: 13; Joel 3: 16, etc.**)

## **6. GLORIOUS PROVIDER AND PROTECTOR Rev. 11:1-12**

*“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.”*

In this scene John is given a reed and the angel (Christ) bids him measure the temple of God and the altar and the worshippers but not the court which is without the temple for the gentiles are in possession of the holy city and trod it under foot for 42 months. The Jews precious privileges of worship have been taken away for a measured time by the Beast and Antichrist (**Dan. 7:25**) during this time but the Lord uses this restriction to bring about needed repentance (**Zech. 12:12-14**) for this angel is the One that they had crucified!

Two witnesses stand up at this awful time representative of the Godly remnant, who are given power and testify to the people, while protected by Christ. This scene reminds us of **Zech. 4:1-14** where the prophet also sees two witnesses who, like two olive trees, speak in the energy of the Holy Spirit to give a clear testimony.

These scriptures no doubt have a historical application (time of Zerubbabel) but reach forward to this scene before us.

The Lord's tender protection and preservation of His people is seen as the Beast takes the lives of these witnesses and, while the earthly people rejoice, a great voice is heard from heaven saying "*come up hither*" and He raises them up to heaven when their testimony is finished.

At this same hour a great earthquake takes place and a tenth of Jerusalem, seven thousand are slain.

## **7. GLORIOUS LEADER AND AVENGER Rev. 19:11-16**

*"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**"*

This is the fourth time the opened heavens are mentioned in the New Testament.

When the Lord had been baptized "*the heavens were opened unto Him,*" and, together with the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, there was "*a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" (**Matt. 3: 16, 17**) Here the heavens opened upon Him, as the object on earth of God's own heart. All heaven's delight centred in the One, the lowly Man, who had identified Himself with the remnant who responded to the preaching of the Baptist, and of whom He had said in the Psalms, "*In them is all my delight.*"

God's delight was in Him, and His delight was "*in the saints that are in the earth, and the excellent.*" (**Psa. 16**)

In **John 1** Christ speaks of the opened heavens and of angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man, the complete fulfilment of which will be in the thousand years.

Then in **Acts 7** Stephen saw the heavens opened and Jesus, as Son of Man, standing on the right hand of God. In this scene, He who had been God's object on earth, is now the believer's object in heaven.

In this Scripture the heavens open for Christ to come out again as the object of all heaven and as the object of all His glorified saints to have His enemies made His footstool. He is on a white horse symbolizing triumphant power in conflict. When Christ issues from heaven seated on the white horse He is seen in His victorious conflict with His foes spoken of in **Psa. 45:5**, "*His arrows will be sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people (peoples, it should be) fall under Him.*"

Next, follows a description of the glorious Rider who is called "*Faithful and True.*" In Isaiah, moreover, we read that "*faithfulness [shall be] the girdle of His reins.*" (**Isa. 11: 5**) These scriptures introduce us into His faithfulness to God, both inward and outward, which marked Him in all His earthly pathway. Here He comes forth to establish His kingdom and to make God's character shown in government against the power of evil, and the rebellion and usurpation of man. All He does is with a single eye to the requirements of the glory of God just as in His death on the cross. Faithfulness will be the girdle of His loins. Truth in the inward parts will distinguish Him in the perfect expression as a true witness, of all that God is as revealed in His righteous government of the earth is seen in Him. As "*Faithful and true*" thus reveals what He is both to God and for man when He comes forth to assume His rights in this world. What a Saviour Jesus is! Praise His glorious Name.

## **8. GLORIOUS ADJUDICATOR AND JUDGE Rev. 20:11-12**

*"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."*

This judgment forms the conclusion of all God's ways with man and the kingdom of Christ on earth has been brought to a close and all enemies have been put under His feet and the devil himself has received his final doom and there remain only the wicked and unrepentant dead to be dealt with before the introduction of the new heaven and the new earth. The character of the throne itself attracts the attention for it is said to be "*great*" — great, either as befitting the dignity of the Judge, or as

suiting to the magnitude of the judgment; and it is also given as "*white*" — the word really signifies clear or bright; that is, the "*whiteness of light*."

This is the expression of the dazzling purity of holiness, whether of the Judge Himself and of the standard on which His judgment would proceed. Everything connected with Him, the throne on which He sits, or the sentence He pronounces, must be in accordance with what He is in His own essential nature. We know from other scriptures that it is Christ, the once rejected Jesus, the Son of God, for it is He into whose hands all judgment has been committed. **(See John 5: 22-29; 2 Tim. 4: 1, etc.)**

Here in this scene at the Great White Throne those who have died in impenitence are judged. The awful nature of this judicial session is revealed by the statement that the earth and the heaven fled away from the face of the Judge. What a close to the history of this poor earth! And what a contrast to the record in **Gen. 1**, when God looked upon His new work day after day as it sprang forth from His creative hand and pronounced it very good!

This same One, by whom all things were created, judges now this poor defiled earth and the heaven that belongs to it are seen fleeing from His face!

What a solemn scene this is! The Lord Jesus Christ, who "*endured the cross*", is the only one worthy to judge and how final and severe is His decree.

*"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. 11:33*

*"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Tim. 1:17*

*"Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." 1 Tim. 6:15, 16*