

Revelation of Jesus Christ Study 7

Rev 1:15-17

His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

When we began to look at this vision we realized that it was revealing the Living Christ in the midst of the Churches of Asia Minor which was typical of His presence among the Churches of all ages.

We said that there were 7 aspects of His presence among the churches and we began to look at those in our last study.

The seven were as follows:

He is in the midst of the churches to:

To empower the Church

To intercede for the Church

To purify the Church

And we talked about each of these three in detail and now we look to the last 4 listed for us as:

To speak authoritatively to the Church

To control the Church

To protect the Church

To cause the Church to reflect His Glory while here on earth.

TO SPEAK AUTHORITATIVELY TO THE CHURCH

V-15b

“And His voice as the sound of many waters”

We note that when Christ spoke again it was no longer like the sound of a trumpet as of *v 10* but rather now as the sound of many waters.

His voice now was like that of the thundering waves of the surf crashing against the rocky shores of Patmos in a storm, Or like the thundering sound of a great waterfall as it rushes over the precipice of the mountain side to rush toward the sea.

Look at verse *14:2; 19:6*

“And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder”

“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings,”

The voice of God in Ezek is described in a similar manner

Ezek 43:2

“And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters”

Thus again by this parallel affirming Christ’s deity.

This is the voice of sovereign power, the voice of supreme authority, the very voice that will one day command the dead to come forth from the graves

John 5:28-29

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

When Christ speaks the church must listen.

At the transfiguration God said, *“This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!” Matt 17:5*

“God after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,” wrote the author of Hebrews, *“in these last days has spoken to us in His Son” Heb 1:1-2*

Christ speaks to His Church directly through the Holy Spirit-inspired Scriptures.

CHRIST CONTROLS HIS CHURCH

“In His right hand He held seven stars”, “the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches” Eph 1:16a, 20a

As the head of His Church, (*Eph 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18*), and the ruler of the *“kingdom of [God’s] beloved Son” (Col 1:13)*, Christ exercises authority in His church.

In John’s vision, Christ is holding in His right hand the seven stars (*chp 2:1; 3:1*) identified in verse **20** as the angels of the seven churches, which symbolized those authorities.

That He held them in His right hand does not picture safety and protection, but control.

Angeloi, (angels) is the common New Testament word for angels, leading some interpreters reasonably to conclude that angels are in view in this passage.

But the New Testament nowhere teaches that angels are involved in the leadership of the church.

Angels do not sin and thus have no need to repent, as the messengers, along with the congregations they represented are exhorted to do. *Chap 2:4-5 Read, 14, 20*

Robert L Thomas notes a further difficulty with this view: It presumes that Christ is sending a message to heavenly beings through John, and earthly agent, so that it may reach earthly churches through angelic representatives (Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary [Chicago:Moody, 1992], 117)

Therefore *angeloi* is better rendered “messengers” as in

Luke 7:24; 9:51-52 and James 2:25

When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"

Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him.

Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

Some suggest that these messengers were representatives from each of the seven churches who came to visit John on Patmos and take the book of Revelation back with them.

But since Christ is said to have held them in His right hand, they were more likely leading elders and pastors (though not the sole leader, since the New Testament teaches a plurality of elders), one from each of the seven churches.

These seven men demonstrate the function of spiritual leaders in the church. They are to be instruments through which Christ, the head of the church, mediates His rule.

That is why the standards for leadership in the New Testament are so high.

To be assigned as an intermediary through which the Lord Jesus controls His church is to be called to a sobering responsibility.

CHRIST PROTECTS HIS CHURCH

Rev 1:16b

“and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword;”

The Lord’s presence also provides protection for His church.

The sharp two-edged sword that came out of His mouth is used to defend the church against external threats;

Rev 19:15,21

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

But here it speaks of judgments against enemies from within the church: (*Rev 2:12, 16; Acts 20:30*)

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth

Paul called for the elders of Ephesus when on the way to Jerusalem and warned them.

"Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."

Those who attack Christ's church, those who sow lies, create discord, or otherwise harm His people, will be personally dealt with by the Lord of the church.

His word is potent: and will be used against the enemies of His people

Heb 4:12-13

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

2 Thess 2:8

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

His word is potent, so that all the power of the forces of darkness, including death itself will be unable to prevent the Lord Jesus Christ from building His church.

Matt 16:18

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

CHRIST REFLECTS HIS GLORY THROUGH HIS CHURCH

"and His face was like the sun shining in its strength," Eph 1:16c

John's vision of the glorified Lord of the church culminated in this description of the radiant glory evident on His face, which John could only describe as like the sun shining in its strength.

John borrowed that phrase from Judges where it describes those who love the Lord;

Judges 5:31

"Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD! But let those who love Him be like the sun When it comes out in full strength"

Matt 13:43

Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

The glory of God through the Lord Jesus Christ shines in and through His church, reflecting His glory to the world

2 Cor 4:6

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Eph 3:21

to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen