**IN THE MIDST OF THE LAMPSTANDS**

Revelation 1:9-20

Key Verse 1:13

*“and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.”*

1. **Read v. 9-11.**

*I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 11 saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”*

**What was John doing on the island of Patmos?**

* John was sent to Patmos as a prisoner. Patmos was a prisoner island, full of bad people. John was without personal freedom or human comforts. Rather, his daily life was the painful isolation and suffering of an exiled prisoner of Rome.

**How might John have been feeling after faithfully serving Jesus’ church?**

* John had faithfully endured suffering for the “word of God and the testimony of Jesus.” John had taken to heart the great responsibility to be a faithful witness to Jesus and lived out his witness in both words and life. After serving so much, John found himself in the most challenging time of his life.

**What did John do to combat his personal suffering?**

* John was earnestly seeking God during this time of great difficulty. He was wise not to turn away from God in his trouble but to cling fervently to the Lord. John knew fully that Jesus was his aid in times of suffering—soon his faith would be blessed!

**How did God help John in this time?**

* John was “in the Spirit” and was fellowshipping with God personally. He poured out his concerns, heartache and troubles. The Lord blessed John for his faithfulness to endure hardships on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus by sending Jesus to John directly in a wonderful revelation.

**Who else did God want to help?**

* Jesus said, ‘Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches…” The aid to John’s suffering was going to be Jesus himself. However, John wasn’t the only one who was weary and ragged. The seven churches (Ephesus,Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and to Laodicea) also needed “revelation of Jesus Christ” so that they might continue in their endurance and witness to the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ.

1. **Read v. 12-16.**

*12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.*

**What did John see when he turned around (12-13)?**

* First, John saw seven golden lampstands
* Second, in the midsts of the lampstand, he saw “one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest”

**What was Jesus doing among seven golden lampstands (Lev 24:1-4)?**

* *Leviticus 24:1-4 “The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil from beaten olives for the lamp, that a light may be kept burning regularly. 3 Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall arrange it from evening to morning before the Lord regularly. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. 4 He shall arrange the lamps on the lampstand of pure gold before the Lord regularly.”*
* The priests, the descendants of Aaron, were required to maintain the seven lamps of the golden lampstand in the tabernacle.
* Likewise, Jesus, the true high priest, is seen by John amidst the seven lampstands. Jesus has a direct connection and intense focus on these lampstands. They are shown in this vision as his chief concern, he has undivided focus on serving and maintaining them.
* Jesus, being a faithful priest, didn’t want the lights of these lampstands to burnout or degrade. Therefore, he attended them carefully.
* Jesus is actively ministering to the seven lampstands, keeping watch, engaging with them by carefully considering each one’s unique state.
* We will see, in chapters 2 and 3, how detailed and precise Jesus’ knowledge is of the seven churches (lampstands).

**What is the significance that the seven lampstands are made of gold?**

* These lampstands are made of gold, which is material symbolic of heaven and God’s holiness. Gold also points to the great value of these lampstands to Jesus who is seen in their midst.

**What is the job of the seven golden lampstands (see Num 8:1-2)?**

* *Numbers 8:1-4 “Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Speak to Aaron and say to him, When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand.”* The lamps needed to keep giving off light by continually burning day and night. The lamps were not to ever go out but give light unceasingly.
* The seven lampstands needed constant attention and adjustment so that light would continue to be emitted. This required careful attention because several times a day the light would fade, flicker and eventually go out unless attended.
* We can see from this picture (vision) that Jesus gives faithful attention to his churches (lampstands). He works on them so that they might not be snuffed out but burn bright and strong.

**What other details of Jesus did John witness (14-15)?**

* *“The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow.”*
  + Jesus is full of wisdom, knowledge and truth
* *“His eyes were like a flame of fire,”*
  + Jesus sees all things and burns through deception and falsehood
* *“his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace,”*
  + Jesus walks in judgment on wickedness and will trample underfoot every evildoer
* *“his voice was like the roar of many waters.”*
  + Jesus' voice is in the voices of all his people; Jesus voice compiles into a roar of many waters
* *“In his right hand he held seven stars,”*
  + *These are the seven angels which he has total control over*
* *“from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword,”*
  + *The sword is the word of God and the testimony of Jesus*
* *“his face was like the sun shining in full strength”*
  + *Full of glory, light and life*

1. **Read v. 17-20.**

*17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.19 Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. 20 As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.*

**How did John respond to the glory of Jesus?**

* John fell at Jesus' feet as though dead. Like so many in the Bible, John could not stand in the presence of the glory of Christ. He felt dead, unable to move and completely weak.

**What did Jesus do to help John?**

* Jesus “laid his right hand on [John]” to help him and give him strength. Jesus’ touch of kindness showed John that he was not condemned but dearly loved.
* John felt dead at this moment but Jesus gave a revelation of himself to strengthen John.
  + *“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”*
* A revelation of Jesus Christ is always the best medicine for God’s people, especially when they’re overcome by sorrow and suffering.
* For this reason, to strengthen the churches, Jesus said, *“Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.”* For, the revelation of Jesus would bring strength and life into not only John but all who read, hear and keep the words of the prophecy.

**What should we learn from the “seven stars in [Jesus’] right hand” and the “seven lampstands”?**

* The seven angels of the seven churches are Jesus’ tool (in his hand) to maintain, fix, encourage and correct the seven churches (lampstands)
* Jesus is not remote. Jesus is not far. Jesus is fully attentive and thoughtful to the strengths, weaknesses, needs and deeds of his churches.

**How are lampstands a perfect picture of the seven churches?**

* Jesus’ church needs Jesus. Without him we are destined to burnout, fade away and die. However, because of his faithful service to us, even using his angels as his instrument, Jesus brings life giving revelation to his people, just like he did for John.
* In the next two chapters, Jesus will share to each of the seven churches some aspect of himself, taken from chapter 1.
  + Ephesus: “him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.”
  + Smyrna: “The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.”
  + Pergamum: “The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.”
  + Thyatira: The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire,and whose feet are like burnished bronze
  + Sardis: And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.
  + Philadelphia: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.
  + Laodicea: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.
* The specific aspect Jesus shares of himself directly correlates with the problem, correction or encouragement that each church needs.
* Jesus has a close relationship with each lampstand (church) and for each lampstand, he reveals himself to maintain and support the fire and flame of that lampstand. Jesus is what every individual and church needs to thrive and conquer.