

Apocalypse Now: Session Eight

The Son of Man and Yahweh: What Does Revelation Teach Us About Jesus?

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.

- Rev 1:12-16

“Oh, children,” said the Lion, “I feel my strength coming back to me. Oh, children catch me if you can!”...It was such a romp as no one has ever had except in Narnia; and whether it was more like playing with a thunderstorm or playing with a kitten Lucy could never make up her mind...“And now,” said Aslan presently, “to business. I feel I am going to roar. You had better put your fingers in your ears.” And they did. And Aslan stood up and when he opened his mouth to roar his face became so terrible that they did not dare to look at it. And they saw all the trees in front of him bend before the blast of his roaring as grass bends in a meadow before the wind.” – The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe, “From Before the Dawn of Time”

The Son of Man (1:12-16)

- *The Seven Golden Lampstands*
 - o We are later told that these represent the churches (Rev 1:20)—churches are to be light, yet Jesus—the source of all light—stands in their midst.
 - o Jesus is with His people, not ashamed to call them brothers (Heb 2:11).
- *The Son of Man*
 - o A reference to the figure in Daniel 7:13-14 who receives an eternal kingdom from the Ancient of Days.
- *The Long Robe and Golden Sash*
 - o This robe (*podēre*) is the priestly “ephod” worn by Aaron (Ex 29:5) and the golden cords of a priest (Ex 28:14). Before the description of the person, we are given a description of his uniform. Jesus is a priest, a “bridge” between us and the Father.
- *Hair, White Like Wool, Like Snow*
 - o This is likely taken from the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9 who has “clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool.” Here, the Son of Man and Ancient of Days are folded together into the figure of Jesus Christ.
 - o The “white as snow” implies purity, holiness.
 - “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool,” (Isa 1:18).

- “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow,” (Ps 51:7)
 - “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” – Rev 7:14
 - Jesus’ purity can be given to impure sinners
- *Eyes Like Fire*
 - Jesus sees and knows (see Rev 2:18; 19:12).
 - “I know...” is repeated 7x in the letters to the churches (2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15).
 - “The seven occurrences of “I know” are not accidental; they signify the perfect and infinite knowledge of the Son of Man, showing that he knows all reality exhaustively, just as God knows all things completely.” – Tom Schreiner, *The Joy of Hearing*, p. 105.
 - “And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” – Heb 4:13
 - “A host of biblical images accumulate in the fire-flaming eyes of the Son of Man: pillar of fire, burning bush, altar fires, fiery furnace, fiery chariots. Fire penetrates and transforms. Holiness gets inside us and when it gets inside us it changes us. Christ’s gaze penetrates and purifies. He doesn’t look at us, he looks *into* us. We are not a spectacle to Christ, we are invaded by him.” – Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder*, p. 34.
- *Feet Like Bronze*
 - The inverse of the statue in Daniel 2:31-45 whose weak feet crumble.
 - In Daniel 10, Daniel is strengthened by an angel whose “arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze,” (Dan 10:6)
 - Bronze is a mixture of iron and copper—iron is strong but rusts; copper won’t rust but is malleable. Bronze takes the best of both and is thus a symbol of strength and endurance. “Burnished” bronze is bronze that has been purified with fire.
 - This is the foundation of Jesus. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.
- *Voice Like Many Waters*
 - The thunderous power of Jesus’ voice, like the sound of many cataracts crashing.
 - Jesus’ voice at first is described like a “loud voice like a trumpet” (Rev 1:10).
 - “There is more to the meaning of these words than can be found in a dictionary. Dimensions of meaning resonate through one’s manner of speaking and tone of voice...So much is conveyed by tone and timbre: we know at once whether the speaker is timid and hesitant, bored and frivolous, impulsive and angry, matter-of-fact and detached. We interpret all words through a screen of sound...Christ’s voice is commensurate with his appearance, awesome and commanding.” – Peterson, *Reversed Thunder*, p. 36.
- *Seven Stars in His Right Hand*
 - What you hold in your “right hand” is what you are capable of doing.

- We are later told that the seven stars are the “angels of the seven churches” (Rev 1:20).
- One interpretation: the seven stars could be the seven planets known in the 1st century. This could be a demonstration that the popular means of telling the future (astrology) is actually controlled by Christ who holds the seven stars (planets) in His right hand.
 - “The planets do not control us; Christ controls the planets. Later in the vision (Rev 1:20), the stars will be identified as “the angels of the seven churches.” What pagans thought were gods and goddesses, impersonal, remote, and controlling, are ministering angels, God’s messengers bringing his word and glory into the midst of the Christians as they worship and sing and play.” – Peterson, *Reversed Thunder*, p. 37
- *A Double-Edged Sword Mouth*
 - “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” – Heb 4:12
 - The Servant of the Lord: “He made my mouth like a sharp sword.” – Isa 49:2
 - “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” – Eph 6:17
 - “Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.” – Rev 2:16
 - “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth.” – 2 Thess 2:8
 - “From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.” – Rev 19:15
- *Face Like the Sun*
 - At the Transfiguration Jesus’ face “shone like the sun” (Matt 17:2)
 - Angels’ faces can shine like the sun (Rev 10:1; Dan 10:6)
 - But this is likely meant to hearken back to the Aaronic blessing: “The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace,” (Num 6:24-26).
- A possible chiasm here:
 - Hair/Head (Purity, Forgiveness)
 - Eyes (Holiness, Exposure)
 - Feet (Stability, Enduring Kingdom)
 - Voice (Power, Awe, Majesty)
 - Right hand (Power Over the Church/Destiny)
 - Mouth (Piercing Word)
 - Face (Blessing, Peace)

Jesus Is Yahweh

- The book of Revelation possesses the highest Christology out of the entire New Testament. **In no other place is Jesus equated more clearly with God.**

- Jesus is given the same titles as Yahweh
 - *God the Father*: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” – Rev 1:8
 - *God the Father*: “And he who was seated on the throne said..., “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” – Rev 21:5-6
 - *Yahweh*: “I, the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.” – Isa 41:4
 - *Yahweh*: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.” – Isa 44:6.
 - *Yahweh*: “I am he; I am the first, and I am the last.” - Isa 48:12
 - *Jesus*: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” – Rev 22:13
 - *Jesus*: “Fear not, I am the first and the last.” – Rev 1:17
 - *Jesus*: “The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.” – Rev 2:8

- Jesus is “worthy”
 - The four living creatures and the 24 elders worship to the Father who sits on the throne (Rev 4:8-11), because God is “worthy” (Rev 4:11).
 - “Who is *worthy* to open the scroll and break its seals?” And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found *worthy* to open the scroll or to look into it,” (Rev 5:2-4)
 - Jesus is worthy (Rev 5:5-6)
 - The four living creatures and the 24 elders fall down before the Lamb in worship because He is “worthy” (Rev 5:9-11).
 - “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped. (Rev 5:13-14).
 - “This is certainly one of the most astonishing texts in the New Testament from the hand of one who was raised and nurtured in strict monotheism.” – Tom Schreiner, *The Joy of Hearing*, p. 108-09.
 - Remember, God does not share His glory with others: “I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other,” (Isa 42:8).
 - “Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” – Rev 19:10
 - “John does not wish to represent Jesus as an alternative object of worship alongside God, but as one who shares in the glory due to God. He is worthy of divine worship because his worship can be included in the worship of the one God.” – Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Revelation*, p. 60.

- Jesus dispenses the wrath of God in the last judgment (Rev 6:16-17).
- Salvation belongs to God the Father and the Lamb (Rev 7:9-10)
- God and Christ reign equally for all eternity (Rev 11:15-17).
- The Lamb's and Father's name is inscribed on the head of the 144,000 (Rev 14:1-4)
- The "song of the Lamb" is the song of "the Lord God the Almighty" (Rev 15:3)
- Jesus is the "Lord of Lords" (Rev 17:14; 19:16), but Yahweh is the Lord of Lords (Deut 10:17; Ps 136:3).
- Those who triumph over the second death and reign for a thousand years are "priests of God and of Christ" (Rev 20:6).
- In the New Creation the "temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb," (Rev 21:22)
- The glory of God and the Lamb give light to the New Creation (Rev 21:23)
- The river of the New Jerusalem flows from the throne of God and the Lamb (Rev 22:1)