Easter 2 Revelation 1:4-18
April 24, 2022 150-167-159-154

You Gotta See This!

I. See Jesus alive and successful in His mission!

II. See Jesus alive ever with and protecting His Church!

Dear Christian friends,

Today's gospel reading brought us the FAMILIAR story of **"Doubting Thomas"** and Jesus' familiar words, ***"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*** Thomas refused to believe DESPITE ALL the **evidence** – all the EYEWITNESSES. Thomas himself may NOT AT FIRST have actually seen and **touched** the living Lord Jesus but plenty of others had. There was NO GOOD REASON for Thomas not to believe but he still insisted, ***"Unless I see the nail marks in His hands, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe."***

None of us have PERSONALLY SEEN our risen Savior but we're sure Jesus PHYSICALLY ROSE from the dead because so many others DID SEE the **risen** Jesus. We can't wait for the **day when** our FAITH TURNS to **sight in heaven** but until then we're CONTENT to ***"walk by faith and not by sight."***

God had some things for JOHN TO SEE in **this book** of Revelation but God didn't want JUST JOHN to see this. Jesus ordered John, ***"Write what you see on a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."*** As John saw these OFTEN STRANGE and bizarre visions I can easily picture him **exclaiming**, "YOU GOTTA SEE THIS!" I realize that's not the **"best"** English but when you're excited about something you DON'T WORRY about **using proper grammar**.

Just look at what **John saw** in these verses. "YOU GOTTA SEE THIS!" 1)**See** Jesus alive and successful in **His mission**! 2)**See** Jesus alive ever with and protecting His Church!

I. See Jesus alive and successful in His mission!

Revelation is A LETTER Jesus sent to **seven churches** in the ROMAN ***"province of Asia"*** – what we today call **western Turkey**. Revelation was written BY JOHN but it came FROM GOD Himself.

You GOTTA SEE how God describes Himself here! ***"Grace to you and peace from him who is, who was, and who is coming."*** Do you see what that NAME MEANS – how comforting that is for us? God is both ETERNAL and UNCHANGING. Kingdoms and **powers** – people and **things** – all COME AND GO. What's new **grows old**. What's strong and healthy **becomes weak** and sick. That's TRUE for people and **animals** – machinery, **buildings**, etc. TIME takes its toll on **everything** but NOT on God! God is above and beyond time. He has no beginning or end. God is the great ***"I am*** – ***"the same yesterday, today and forever."*** God was there BEFORE **the beginning** of this world and He will be there AT THE END of this world – the SAME God UNCHANGED.

John focuses our attention on Jesus and YOU GOTTA SEE this! ***"Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." "Faithful witness"*** – Jesus always tells us the TRUTH – He never misleads us. ***"The firstborn from the dead."*** Jesus HAD BEEN "dead and buried." Jesus had died on the cross as ***"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*** But JUST AS He had often promised His disciples ***"three days after"*** He had died Jesus ***"rose"*** from the dead. Jesus bodily came out of His grave ALIVE and TRIUMPHANT. **Jesus' resurrection** is God's promise and guarantee of OUR OWN resurrections on the Last Day. Death could NOT DEFEAT Jesus and it won't defeat us either. **Death** couldn't stop Jesus FROM KEEPING His **promise of Easter** and nothing will stop Jesus **from keeping** ALL His other promises.

Seeing that SAVOR the words, ***"grace and peace to you."*** John isn't wishing us God's grace and peace he's stating a FACT. **In Jesus** we have God's ***"grace and peace."***

"Grace" is God's undeserved love for us. **Grace** is the only explanation for our having GOD'S OWN eternal Son as our perfect Savior. **Grace** is Jesus taking the place of **all people** under God's law and living for us that life of PERFECT LOVE and obedience that we owed God but never could live. **Grace** is the sinless Son of God WILLINGLY taking the sin of the **whole world** on Himself and being punished in our place. **Grace** is Jesus personally paying for **all** our sins IN FULL with **His own innocent death** on the cross.

WITH that **grace** comes ***"peace"*** – peace with God – the **peace** of sins forgiven – of a **whole** new relationship with our Creator – the **peace** of knowing for sure that God LOVES us – is ALWAYS with us and taking care of us – the **peace** of knowing that we are going straight to heaven when we die. HAVING that ***"grace and peace"*** how can we NOT JOIN John in exclaiming, ***"To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His own blood and made us a kingdom and priests to God His Father — to Him be the glory and the power forever."***

Isn't this a SIGHT TO SEE – Jesus alive and successful in His mission! But there's more! You GOTTA SEE…

II. Jesus alive ever with and protecting His Church.

Many Christians consider Revelation to be a CONFUSING book – hard to understand with its **strange** and **bizarre** visions. It's not your typical book of the Bible but it is like some of the visions **Daniel** and **Ezekiel** saw. These visions are meant to CATCH our **attention** and MAKE an **impression**. God doesn't want us FORGETTING these sights and the truths they **picture**. God doesn't show us these things to SCARE or CONFUSE us but to comfort and encourage us. Revelation makes clear that life in these **last days** will be TOUGH and SCARY but Revelation also assures us – shows! – us that the VICTORY has already been won by Jesus. NOW we live under the **cross** – THEN we shall wear the **crown**.

John wrote Revelation is the **mid-90s** AD. John was then in his 90s – the last living apostle – the only one **not martyred** for his Christian faith. John had been an EYEWITNESS of Jesus' **public ministry**. He had been a part of that INNER CIRCLE of three – along with his **brother James** and **Peter**. Those three had been SPECIAL WITNESSES of Jesus raising **Jairus'** daughter – of Jesus' transfiguration – His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. John had been at the cross on Good Friday. He had seen Jesus RISEN from the dead – he had watched Jesus **ascend** into heaven. All that had been a GOOD 60 or more years ago. John was now an **old man** exiled to the ***"island of Patmos"*** off the **western coast** of Turkey.

It was ***"the Lord's day"*** – Sunday. John was ***"in spirit"*** – God enabling John to SEE and HEAR these visions. ***"I heard a loud voice behind me, like a trumpet, saying, 'Write what you see on a scroll and send it to the seven churches.'"*** A ***"voice like a trumpet'*** pictures a BOOMING, COMMANDING voice not some weak, whimpering **whisper**. John was curious about WHO was talking to him so he turned around. You GOTTA SEE this! ***"I saw … one like a son of man. He was clothed with a robe that reached to His feet, and around His chest He wore a gold sash. His head and His hair were white, like white wool or like snow. His eyes were like blazing flames. His feet were like polished bronze being refined in a furnace. His voice was like the roar of many waters. He held seven stars in His right hand. A sharp two-edged sword was coming out of His mouth. His face was shining as the sun shines in all its brightness."***

First note the OVERALL IMPRESSION and it is just that – IMPRESSIVE! What John sees is SO GLORIOUS – so majestic – so **awesome**. John sees Jesus IN ALL HIS GLORY.

Now note some of the DETAILS. The ***"white hair"*** pictures Jesus' **holiness**. Jesus' face shining ***"as the sun"*** recalls His transfiguration. Jesus' eyes like ***"blazing flames"*** – Jesus sees everything – ***"nothing in all creation is hidden from His sight."*** The ***"sharp two-edged sword coming out"*** of

Jesus' mouth pictures His Word – ***"living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates to dividing soul and spirit, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."*** So we read in Hebrews 4.

John saw Jesus standing ***"among the seven gold lampstands and holding seven stars in His right hand."*** Jesus later explains that ***"the seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches." "Lampstands"*** hold and elevate the **lamps** so their LIGHT CAN SHINE in the room. The church as ***"lampstands"*** pictures us HOLDING HIGH Jesus so the light of the gospel can shine in our **sin-darkened** world. But ESPECIALLY NOTE two details – Jesus ***"among the lampstands"*** and the messengers ***"in Jesus' right hand."*** That pictures Jesus' promise, ***"Lo, I am with you always."*** This pictures Jesus ALIVE and EVER WITH and protecting His Church on earth.

You GOTTA SEE this – it's so comforting! **John** was in exile. The **church** was being severely persecuted. John calls himself, ***"Your brother and companion in the suffering and kingship and patient endurance in Jesus."***

Revelation forces us to DEAL WITH REALITY and **reality right now** is not very pretty. Our world is becoming **more and more** ANTI-Christian – more and more openly defiant of God's **Word** and **will**. We live in a country guaranteeing us RELIGIOUS FREEDOM but our country's becoming **more and more** INTOLERANT of our **Christian faith** and **values**. Just about anything is ACCEPTABLE as long as it's **not** what God says. It's becoming harder and harder to LIVE and STAY a Christian. The world is taking its TOLL on Christians. Look how many **Christians** FALL FROM their **Savior** and FOR the world's perversions and **priorities**. That's the world we live in. We can't hide from it. Jesus sends us OUT INTO the world **to share** His Word.

HOW are we to stay strong – to ***"let our lights shine"*** – to ***"patiently endure"*** and not give up? There's ANOTHER REALITY Revelation shows us – Jesus ALIVE – Jesus EVER WITH us – Jesus protecting us – Jesus promising us the **ultimate victory**. Revelation doesn't promise that it will BE EASY to **be a Christian** but it does promise us that it will definitely BE WORTH it. We'll see just that in the **coming visions**.

Jesus wants us to LOOK CLOSELY at these visions – to learn from them – to find comfort in them. **So** He showed them to John. He ordered John to ***"write"*** them down so others could see them too. **Looking at** these visions you can just hear John saying, "You GOTTA SEE this!" Amen.

Hymn #159