

Refuge Bible Fellowship
1600 Chicago Avenue, Suite R7
Riverside, CA 92507
refugefellowship.org

Series: For the Time is Near
Raul Montano, Sr. Pastor
September 27, 2015

Then I Turned and Saw Him
Revelation 1:9-20

This morning we are in Revelation 1. We've been in Revelation 1 for three weeks now! I always tell you for that we can go really slow in Revelation and get so much out of it. But I've decided to break it down into three parts. We are going to go through verses 9-20 this morning. It's exciting to really set-up our time in Revelation with this first chapter.

One of the things that we need to understand is that John was given a command. He said in verse 19: ***"Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this..."***

So there are two things that he is to write. I know that many commentators will break it down into three parts, but really what's happening here with John, is that there are two portions: that which is being revealed to him presently; and that which is to come. I like the thought of this...we are given those things to come; prophecy, in order for us to be more prepared in the present. Keep that in mind.

"Why do we study Revelation? Those are some odd, weird things, aren't they? Why do we concern ourselves with the things that are going to come?" Well, because we see God's faithfulness and we see how it all ends. We see how it is that God works it all out. He has demonstrated to us what He desires, as far as a relationship with you and I. He's not just Lord God Almighty, who is distant. He is personal; up close and personal. He wants us to know just as a friend knows, and we'll learn about that, as well.

So, let's start out by reading verses 9-20 and see how it is that the Lord speaks to us personally:

⁹ 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."

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

Then I Turned and Saw Him

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.

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."

[Prayer] *Father, we come to You this morning, Lord, thanking You for this revelation that you gave to John. It is there for our blessing and for our benefit. Lord, You didn't have to do this. It could've all just come about without You commenting, without You articulating Your heart to us, Your thoughts. And yet, who is man that You are mindful of him. Oh, it's Your beloved poema, Your masterpiece. The canvas upon which You are drawing out and painting a beautiful picture of redemption. And so, Father, I pray that You would help us to have our eyes opened to Your beauty. May we have our eyes opened to Your magnificence, Your glory. I pray, Father, that we would have our ears opened to Your voice, to Your one great voice, that all other voices; all other sounds; everything else would be drowned out by the roar of Your voice this morning. I pray Lord, that You would help us to see what John saw. As he turned around and saw, may we at this point turn around and see You in all of Your glory. We praise You, we love You, we commit this time into Your hands. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

The title of this morning's message is: *Then I Turned Around and Saw*. We can actually have a whole message just on that one verse..."then I turned around and saw and beheld His glory." But, there's so much here. Let me ask you this...how would you describe yourself seeing you for the first time. If you just popped your face in front of a mirror, how would you describe yourself to other people. I believe that we would describe ourselves different than what others see. Many people, for example, on social media describe themselves not as how they are seen, but how they would like to be seen. Some funny ways describe themselves on Instagram bio's are pretty funny. The list can go on and on, but I thought these were pretty funny. How about this one:

- A caffeine dependent life form (that might be pretty accurate, right?).
- A man of mystery and power; whose power is exceeded only by his mystery.
- (I think this one was pretty honest) Bald, often unreliable, easily distracte...(he didn't finished it)
- A Good Samaritan.
- Washed up athlete.
- Especially gifted napper.
- (This one's good) I put the hot in psychotic. (Whoa! Don't touch that one, right?!)
- I used to be addicted to hokey pokey, but then I turned myself around.
- (This one's good too) My life is about as organized as a \$5 DVD bin at Wal-Mart. (Have you ever picked through those? Those are actually fun to go through. It's like, "Hey! What's at the bottom? Sometimes you don't want to know what's at the bottom.)

Then I Turned and Saw Him

This is just some of the ways people describe themselves. I know we think of ourselves in a certain way and it's not always the way that we are seen. There is an infinite difference between how we would describe ourselves, or even how other's would describe us, and how it is that John describes our Lord; the Son of Man, here in Revelation chapter one.

John as we learned last week had just heard the voice of the Lord. He heard him speak to him to write in a book and send to the seven churches that are in Asia. He described that voice as the voice of a trumpet. We learned last week that a trumpet was normally associated with the sound of a command. It was a command that was given to the soldiers who were submitted to the authority of the commander; whoever was commanding that group. This voice was the voice of the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Commander of the Lord's Army. This is the voice that spoke to John, commanding him. He said, **"Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches."**

Oftentimes, we're given commands by the Lord as we go through this book, through the Good Book, through Scripture, the very Word that's breathed out by God, we're given certain commands. I asked you last week, "How do you hear God's voice? Is it like a trumpet? Are you surrendered to Him?" Sometimes, to be honest with you, I think we can all fall short, right? To where we hear, not like a trumpet, but it's more like a suggestion. So, we see what happened here, and we are to learn how we are to hear His voice, and treat it exactly how John treated God's voice, like that of a command, of the Commander of the Lord's Army. If we're part of the Lord's Army, then we fall under His submission, surrender to His authority, and whatever we hear, we act accordingly.

And then, John said after that in verse 12: ***Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw...*** What John saw and what he was told by the Lord is of great importance. We can't miss this because it give us an understanding of God's character and how He relates and interacts, and what He wants us to know. He's revealing Himself to us! Sometimes we go through this, and we're like, "Yeah, those are great and interesting facts" about something that is unimaginable. And yet, just as He was in the midst of the lampstands, He's in the midst of His church today revealing Himself to us, and we miss it. I don't understand how it is that someone can read through the Bible and find it to have interesting geographical, and historical facts, and miss the God of history! Completely! I don't understand it.

Jesus said in John 15:15: **"No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."** So, yes He's our Lord, He's our Savior, He's our God, He's the Creator of the universe, and yet Jesus is telling His disciples that "I'm letting you know what normally a friend would allow others to know around him."

Now, the Lord is a friend, but to be honest with you, I really don't like how we can make light of the relationship between a person and the Lord, because sometimes we call Him our "Homie"; we call Him our "Friend"; "the Man upstairs"...I could go on and on, but you guys know what I'm talking about, right? We can say all those things and, quite frankly, I think that is an inappropriate way of referring to our Lord.

He calls *us* a "friend". It's like a general; a commander; a lieutenant; someone who is...and I'm familiar with military terms so I understand rank and file...but let's say for instance, there was an admiral that would come to me, and he would treat me with respect. He would tell me, "Listen I want to give you the details of all of our plans, of everything that's going on. I want to lay it out to you because I want you to know. It's important for

Then I Turned and Saw Him

you to know." He lays it all out, and I thought, "Wow! That is awesome, Dude! You're my friend! Hey! Up high, down low...too slow!" If I treated him like that I'd be disrespectful. That would be missing the point. He's extending his hand of friendship perhaps toward me, but yet I need to still revere him in his position, his authority, call him "Sir", and give him that place that is due him.

That's where *I'm* at, that's *my* conviction. I know some people are much looser in that. I think even our style of worship kind of goes in that direction to where we're really casual in how we dress and come in, and sometimes that translates into our worship. I tell you it shouldn't be. We're not coming in to stained glass windows, or anything like that, but we should still have respect and honor because we're here to worship the Creator of the universe, and also our Savior and our Lord, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Think about those things. Let's put things in proper perspective.

God is revealing Himself to John here. So, we need to take a look at how it is that the Lord lets John look at Him, and how it leaves John in awe. That's what it does. This is the same disciple who leaned his head on the chest of our Lord; the Beloved Disciple of Jesus Christ. But what happens after that and what the Lord says to John, and really what the Lord *desires* for John to do and what God desires for us to know, is that just as John we ourselves would be prepared for Jesus. That's what He wants. He wants to reveal Himself so that we would be prepared.

The Magnificent Description of the Almighty (vv. 12-16)

So, let's look at the first portion here. Verses 12-16 gives us a magnificent description of the Almighty. He describes Him as "***one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.***", which tells us this: this is all symbolic. It's a symbol of function and character.

Let's take a look at the long robe. He's clothed with a long flowing garment that reaches the ground. Some of you are familiar with that picture and what it's describing, but here's what it refers to.

1. His dignity.
2. His judicial authority.
3. His kingly presence.

Isaiah...I love this chapter, I love the verses that are taught around this chapter...but, Isaiah 6:1: ***In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.*** The Lord in His robe filling the temple, high and lifted up, sitting...not standing...sitting. This is the *dignified, judicial, kingly presence* of God. He was clothed with a long flowing garment that reached to His feet. It was the priestly dress of a priest that was being described by John. The regal robes of a king, and the judicial covering of a judge. This attire represents the Lord's celestial majesty; His judicial authority; and His kingly and priestly presence. That is Who is before John. That is Who is here *now*.

The "***golden sash around his chest***" is what's described as going around his long flowing robe. Now, when a man was to work, or run, what he would do is gather his flowing garment under the sash, or girdle, above his knees, and that would allow him the freedom to move or run without hindrance. So he'd put it around and "gird" his flowing garment. But when it's kept long...do you remember the "coat of many colors" of Joseph, made by his dad? We would equate that with maybe a suit of today; something that is made for, and worn by

Then I Turned and Saw Him

management; someone who is not necessarily doing any kind of manual labor. In those times, the length of it and just that covering would speak of dignity for an older man, or a father. That's why when the Prodigal Son came back to the father, he made himself undignified as he pulled up his flowing garment and ran to his son. He was willing to do that.

Our Lord and Savior was willing to be, you could say, undignified, as He went to the cross and allowed the sins of mankind to be poured out upon Him. Yet, He was without blemish. It's a wonderful picture of how it is that the Lord is not only a King, not only a Priest, not just mighty; but he's also affectionate, understanding, sympathetic, and has love for His people. The Lord is indeed exalted and He is glorified, and He is eternal, but He is the same Lord who healed the sick, made the blind to see, and carried children in His arms.

The golden sash is around his chest. Do you know what the wedding finger signifies? The fourth finger on the left hand has these nerves, veins, and arteries that run all the way to the heart. Because we can't bind our hearts, or put a ring around our hearts, the next best thing is to put a ring on that fourth finger of the left hand to symbolize our love, our never-ending love toward each other. As long as we have life, we will love one another. That's what marriage is. It's, by the way, an illustration of the relationship between Jesus Christ and His church. That's why it's under attack right now. That's why it's so important for us to exercise that agape love toward each other. But this sash around the chest of the Lord, also symbolizes that affection, and that love that God has toward His children.

His head is described "**white like wool, like snow**". Remember I told you "like, like, like..." means that it's *like*, but it is not. We can try to draw a picture of this and it won't do it any justice, whatsoever. But John said, it was white like wool, like snow, which refers to the Lord's purity, His elevation, the nobility of His thoughts, and His eternal character. Basically, as it says in Daniel, He is described as and referred to as "The Ancient of Days". So He has eternal dignity; perfect and pure eternal dignity.

"His eyes were like a flame of fire...", by the way, this didn't mean that the Lord was indignant about something that He saw. He does not just respond, or react to what He sees around Him. He is perfect in all His ways. It refers to the Lord's ability to see all, His omniscience. He knows everything. Hebrews 4:13 says: **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.** It's a purifying look as He peers into the heart of man. It should serve to purify us, to bring us to a place of repentance as we are convicted. That's what His eyes should do.

When you look at someone and you're guilty, and I'll give an example of a guilty child. We say, "You have a guilty look on your face." And what happens? They come around the corner and see mom and dad and they're like [in a whiny voice], "Don't look at me! Don't look at my face! I just did something horrible!" We tend to do that naturally. That's ok because the look, the presence of the Lord, His eyes peering into our soul and knowing the deepest and the darkest, the best and the worst things that are in our hearts, really should bring us to a place of understanding His grace, His mercy, and then changing so that we can glorify Him. Just surrendering to Him and so, we are exposed. This is that fire.

"...his feet like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace..." All of the instruments that were used in the outer court of the tabernacle were made out of bronze or brass. Depending on your translation it'll say either "bronze" or "brass" because they all had to do with the judgment of God upon sin. And so this we see

Then I Turned and Saw Him

represents the judgment of God upon humanity. Now, why His feet? Why not something else? Well, at some point, the Lord is pictured as treading the winepress of the wrath of the Almighty God, and it is the judgment of Christ upon human sin. We'll see that in Revelation as we continue to study this book.

"...his voice was like the roar of many waters." Now previously, His voice had been described as sounding like a trumpet, and now he's describing it differently; "...his voice was like that of a roar of many waters." Anyone ever been to Niagara Falls? No? Ok, me neither, so I feel good. Well, you've been to a waterfall, right? It's just coming down and it's roaring. The power of water is amazing! Like when you go to the beach and you hear the pounding of the surf hitting the beach with such power!

Some commentators will say that this symbolizes the many messages, messengers, and prophets. And although there are many rivers, there is but one Source, One great eternal Voice. We know the power of God's voice, we understand it's source is in eternity, and even though it "was like the roar of many waters"....you know when you try and talk at the bottom of a waterfall, it's kind of hard to hear someone talking over the roar of the water coming down, isn't it? You're yelling at each other and you're like, "I can't hear you! I don't understand what you're saying!" But John, in this roar in which he heard the voice of the Lord, hears it clearly, it was perfect. You could say there was nothing else that he was hearing at that time. It was just the voice of the Lord.

Sometimes God whispers to us. To whisper to one another is something that requires us to draw close to each other. When you whisper to someone from across the room, it's like, "Really? You're whispering! I can't hear you! I can try and read your lips, but I can't hear you!" You have to draw close to one another and you whisper in someone's ear, and normally no one else can hear. But this is the roar of God's voice and you can't hear anything else! You can't hear anyone else, just that roar! I pray that we get to a point that we don't hear anything else, nothing else! When someone tells us that to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is dangerous, we don't hear it! "That's nonsense and unbiblical because I know scripture! All I hear is the roar of God's voice in my ear and in my heart, and THAT is what I act on! Not on anything else." So even though it "was like the roar of many waters", John had no problem discerning the Lord's words to him, each and every one. There was clarity in the words of the Lord. It's not confusing, it's very clear.

"...from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword..." This is the power of the delivered message of Jesus Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ which is, by the way, from beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation, is a story of redemption. The writer of Hebrews 4:12, in speaking about the word of God, says: ***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.*** Not just what we speak, not just what we do, but even the thoughts and intentions of the heart. That's why we constantly have to come before the Lord. Just the thoughts can be judged. The intentions can be judged. You can do something and think, "Well, I didn't really mean that", and you're judged for that!

Have you ever been in a church service and you're hearing the pastor teach and then you think, "Did my wife, or husband, call the pastor and tell him exactly what's going on with me? Because it seems like he's just talking to me!" It's because God knows the thoughts and intents and He speaks directly to you. That's what I always pray for you. This message, by the way, is not for the person sitting next to you, it's not for your neighbor, not your co-worker. It's not for anyone else, it's for you. And it pierces, and it divides, it's a two-edged sword because there's actually judicial process in the preaching of the Son of God that is unavoidable. It cuts both ways. To

Then I Turned and Saw Him

those that believe it is the Word of Life. To those who do not believe, to those who reject Jesus as Lord, it is the word of death. It cuts both ways. It is both a certain judgment of the Almighty upon the world, and a certain promise of grace and eternal forgiveness of the Almighty upon the repentant children of God. Both! It cuts both ways.

And then he says, "**His face was the sun shining in full strength.**" I know I skipped over "in his right hand he held seven stars." I didn't forget. We'll come back to that because the final portion of this chapter points to that. Let's go over this. Now, the mount of transfiguration: **And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.** Matthew 17:2 describes Jesus in this manner. It is the glory of the Lord's presence. It is the very same glory that will deem any other source of light as unnecessary in the New Jerusalem. Because in the New Jerusalem there are no stars, no shining moon, no sun. They're not needed! There's no other source of light because the light of the city will be the *glory* of the Son of God. We shall walk in His presence for eternity, and by the way, we'll learn about that in detail as we continue in our study in Revelation. It's there, in this book. But, that's how He's described, in that matter, symbolically. This is who John was seeing. This is the best that he could describe Him.

Seven Golden Lampstands and Seven Stars (vv. 16; 20)

Now, we have the seven golden lampstands and the seven stars. Verse 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.** So, in His right hand, He had the seven stars. Go down to verse 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.**

There's our interpretation. The best interpretation for the Bible, is the Bible itself. It's clear by the Lord's explanation of what John saw. The seven golden lampstands are the seven churches that He referred to in verse 11. So it's self-explanatory. That's who they are. We're going to learn about the letters that He commanded John to write to these seven churches, in the coming weeks.

But the Lord is also referring to the seven angels of the seven churches. Ok, so the seven angels. There's much talk about the angels, heavenly angels, to be over each and every church...or do these refer to pastors? What exactly are they? Now, the word in the original language is *aggeloi*, and it's translated *stars*, and it's translated *angels*, which means this: *messengers*. Messengers.

You can say for the sake of the church that there are those who are teachers, those who are preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ that are ordained by God to bring about His message; the gospel of Jesus Christ. For our sake, I want to say these were the pastors, the ones who were there that were leading those various churches.

Now, remember the seven churches and how the Lord addresses them. It isn't that we are to pick apart and select that which best fits us, and ignore and neglect the other messages. It's something that the church should receive as a whole. All seven messages, to all seven churches, belong to us.

Now, we also need to realize that angels are ministering agents that God has assigned to minister to the saints. We know that scripture tells us that. But is it one in particular? Is it a pastor, or is it an angel? Let's just say it's a *messenger*. I'll work this out a little bit more here because John was at one time the pastor of the church in

Then I Turned and Saw Him

Ephesus. Not the church *of* Ephesus, the church *in* Ephesus. John was simply a messenger of God's eternal Word that flows from the source upon whom He was gazing upon at that time. His voice was like the roar of many waters. From that voice, we need to all hear in order to teach properly, rightly before the Lord, to His glory.

It is not one specific messenger/pastor that the Lord will be addressing within the seven churches, but the messengers that He has ordained as His mouthpieces within His church. Because angels only brought about what they were told to give. At this point, this is the chapter in which there is an angel who is assigned to John to reveal to him, to basically be his host and take him around eternity, and show him all these things. And I say that vaguely for this reason, we're not told specifically.

But, come with me to John chapter 21. Peter was also assigned as a messenger: ¹⁵ ***When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" This is after Jesus had been crucified, He was buried, rose from the grave, from the dead, and is now appearing to His disciples. So He asks Peter this question, and Peter replied to him: He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."*** ¹⁶ ***He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."*** ¹⁷ ***He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."*** ¹⁸ ***Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."*** ¹⁹ ***(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."***

I give you everything so that we understand the whole scene there, but this is what I want to point out to you...two times the Lord Jesus Christ said to Peter, "Feed my lambs"; "feed my sheep"; and once He says, "tend my sheep". So, there's an emphasis in feeding the sheep.

Now, what does He say? Does He say "Feed and tend *your* sheep. They're *your* sheep."? No, He says, "Feed and tend *my* sheep. They're still *my* sheep. You're still part of that flock." So just as Peter was to feed and tend to Jesus' sheep, as a servant of the Most High, by teaching and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, so are the pastors, and teachers, and preachers of today's church. You're a messenger. That's all you are. You're a vessel. You're a mouthpiece. The pastor is nothing; the teacher is nothing; the preacher is nothing, if he is not in the hand of authority, command of might and skill, and strength and power that belongs to the Lord. If we're not in His right hand, then we are absolutely nothing. It doesn't matter what we say.

This is the vision of the ministry of the servant of Jesus Christ today. There stands the minister, regarded by God as a star in the hand of the Almighty, upheld by Him, and ordained to guide the Lord's sheep through the darkness to show and proclaim the light of God. To just put it in simple terms, you're a messenger to bring about God's glory of His redeeming love of grace. Such are you who teach little children, whether it be as parents, or as teachers here; young men, young women teaching; those of you who counsel with scripture (not formally, I'm saying informally), someone comes to you and you counsel them with scripture, such are you. Those of you who encourage others with the Word of God, such are you.

Then I Turned and Saw Him

You need to abide and stay in the right hand of God, to be a star shining His glory, not yours. You're stars that reflect His glory. A minister does not create the light. The minister of God's Word reflects the light, no matter how remote and obscure the servant is, he is held up by the right hand of God and is seared to the heart of the Almighty, he is brought close.

In His Presence (vv. 17-19)

Let's go back to Revelation 1: ***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.***

There are feelings and experiences that someone goes through in the presence of certain people, whether it be people of authority, or...you fill in the blank. But there is not one who would cause you to fall to your feet as if dead, except God Himself. Now, what John did was predictable. It's what is expected as we learn and come to know who God is. It's not so much who we stand before, but Who we fall before. We are at His feet and we are fallen before Him.

So, I know that in worship sometimes we stand, we lift up our hands, but really in those times when you spend time with the Lord, in those quiet, intimate moments are you falling face first before Him. It doesn't have to be in posture, but it has to be in the posture of the heart. But, I tell you physical posture helps out too. Do you know how uncomfortable it is to be facedown on the ground? It's kind of uncomfortable, but that is a symbol of surrender to the King. It was predictable. This is the reverence and awe that we need more of in today's church. It's not about the person coming into to church as much as it is about the Person who's waiting for you at church to be worshipped and praised, and to be looked upon, and to be learned from. Again, with our casual way of worship, I'm afraid sometimes we take things of God too lightly, without reverence, without fear, without a proper awe and respect for God and the things of God.

Now, notice the Lord didn't leave John facedown on the ground before Him. The Lord reassured John by laying His right hand on him, and spoke comforting words to him starting with these words...we hear them often as we come into His presence..."Fear not". This is the very thing we experience and look for in God, don't we? We want to hear those words because we're in awe of Him. We want to hear, "Fear not". We hope that He would do the same thing for us as we fall before Him, that He would reassure us, and speak comforting words to us like a father, the Father.

The Lord is telling John not to fear because He is the living One. He explains this to him, "I'm the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I have the keys of Death and Hades. I have all things under control. I am sovereign God, fear not. You don't have to fear Me." The Lord is telling John that, again, He is faithful over every moment....one more time, *over every moment of his life*. He has ordained this time, this moment. So He is in our lives too. We need to trust Him.

Notice the Lord did not stop in His reassurance of John either. He's down on the ground and He reassures him, "Fear not". By the way, God is the lifter of our heads. He doesn't leave *us* there either. "Stand up. Stand up, you're My child. Fear not. I'm the Victor over the grave and sin. I stand as the Living One." He doesn't just

Then I Turned and Saw Him

leave us there. But then He gave him a task to serve in the purpose of fulfilling God's plan. He told him to write what he saw, **"those that are and those that are to take place after this."** This is what John's supposed to write; everything that he sees.

And, we too, *after* we're reassured by the Lord of His love toward us, His children, He lifts us up to serve Him in those things that God has ordained for us to work out in our own lives. There's some specific things that we should always be aware of, that we are to serve Him in. When John turned and saw the Lord it was this that he experienced. But the question is: What have you seen? That's the important thing. Not what John saw. John saw this, he's revealing the Lord to us. But what have you seen as you turn to see the voice that is speaking to you? And as I asked earlier, do you recognize it as a trumpet, initially? And then, as a voice like that of a roaring of many waters? Where you can't hear anything else, but just that roar, that voice of the Lord. Is it as One speaking to *you*, is He drawing you unto Himself? I pray that it's all of the above! That when you hear that voice, it's like a trumpet. It's a call and you would be like, "Ok, I understand that voice." It's like the roar of many waters so that everything else is drowned out and you hear Him perfectly. How do you see Him? What do you hear? And, what is your response? That's what is important.

What about this morning? This is the King-Priest who extends His right hand to you and desires to reassure you, and reign in your heart as Lord and Savior and tell you therefore, you as His child, **"Fear not. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One! I died and behold I am alive forevermore and I have the keys of Death and Hades."** Is that the voice that you're hearing? I pray it is. If it's not, I pray that this moment would be the moment of repentance to where you come back to the Lord and you ask Him for forgiveness and you tell Him, "I want to hear Your voice above all others. I want to know that I am in the right place before You. That You not only speak to me reassuring words that would lift my head to see my Father, but would also commission me to serve You. Why? Because I want to respond in a way that reflects the grace that You have poured out upon my life. I want to do that."

If you're here and you don't know salvation. You don't know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, He's calling out and offering Himself to you. He desires to be not only the "Man Upstairs", He wants to be Lord and He wants to be your Savior. He wants to have that intimate relationship that we see going on here between John and the Lord. He wants that with you too. He desires that. He also desires that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance, that all should know salvation. I pray that that would be this church and all those that walk through those doors would know salvation. Let's pray.

[Prayer] *Father, we thank You that we can look to you, we thank you for the relationship that You desire to have with us. I pray that we would look to You as the Kingly Priest, the Judge of sin, that we would understand that we are saved in Your Son Jesus Christ. That you desire a relationship with us to tell us all. I pray that by this description and this interaction that John had with you, that we too would realize that You are extending Your right hand to us. A forgiveness which comes by Your right hand, of strength and power, of grace and mercy, of continued help. I pray Lord that we would exalt You, that we would revere You, that we would honor You, and that we would bless You. We close this morning out with our voices high and lifted up to the Maker, the Creator of the universe, and the Savior of those who would call You Lord. We praise You, Lord. We love You. In Jesus' name, amen.*