

The Radiance of the King!

In the Altes Museum in Berlin there is a tremendous work of sculpture, a 20 inch tall limestone bust of Queen Nefertiti that is 3,400 years old. Nefertiti was the most important queen of Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, who ruled Egypt from 1353 to 1335 B.C. Their rule in Egypt came about 90 years after Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, and about 50 years after Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Some scholars believe Nefertiti was the force behind Amenhotep IV giving up Egyptian idols and embracing a monotheistic, or one god religion that emphasized ethics. It's interesting to think that they may have been influenced to some extent by the one God worshipping Israelites! This was so offensive to the idol worshipping priests of Egypt that after their deaths, nearly all traces of Amenhotep IV and Nefertiti were wiped out! The Bust of Nefertiti was discovered by a German archaeologist in 1912. By the way, do you know what Nefertiti's name means? "The beautiful one is come!"

Well, that's about all I know about Nefertiti, but...

Today we'll see that the truly beautiful one has come, and as we behold His radiance, His power, and His presence among us, we can persevere in whatever we are facing because the Radiant One is with us!

But first let me ask you a question:

Have you ever said, "I just can't do this, God?"

"Are you even there, God? Do you really care, God?"

Have you ever said: "Why are you letting these troubles come upon me, God?"

I feel so alone! I need you, God, without you I just can't do it!

Let me assure you that you are not alone. I feel that way all the time!

Even the apostle Paul had hard times. In 2 Cor. 2:16, he was going over the difficulties he faced as he tried to help people, and he cried out, "who is competent for these things?" "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Today we are going to find out that even though it doesn't feel like it to us sometimes, for the Christian, God is with us as we live in these troubled times.

And what we could never face in our own strength we can face when we remember He walks among us and holds us in His hand!

Read Revelation 1:9-20 PRAY!

Remember where Mike Huff starts!

Last week I told you that when reading Revelation we must remember it is first the Revelation ABOUT Jesus and only then is it about events to come.

There are 16 different names for God in verses 1-20! That's the most of any opening chapter in any of the 27 New Testament books! That means an average of 80% of the verses in Revelation chapter one have a name of God! The average in the opening chapters of the other N.T. books is 26%.

John just could not get over the beauty of God! It was all about Jesus for him!

V. 9-11 Welcome to the P.I.T. Club!

I love how John identifies himself in verse 9!

In Second and Third John he opened the letters calling himself "the Elder," which he may have just meant as, "the Old Guy!" Here he wants his fellow Christians to know he's just brother John!

It took high church people years later to come up with the idea to call their leaders, Reverend, or Pontificate, or Monsignor or Senior Pastor.

No mere human alive when this was written deserved more respect than this man, the last living apostle. But he identifies himself as John, our brother!

He also spoke of being our partners! Now Paul wrote to the Philippians thanking them for being partners in God's grace and partners with him in sharing the gospel.

John states here that he and us are partners in trouble! That's the P.I.T. Club!

P.I.T. = Partners in Trouble! Tribulation simply means trouble!

Is there anyone here who feels like you have troubles all the time?

The apostle John must have felt like the President of the club!
His own brother and all of his friends had died for their faith.

He's nearing a hundred years old, and his earthly reward for serving God and testifying for Jesus has been arrest and banishment to a rocky prison island.

You know, so many of us are so vain we think we're the only ones that have ever had troubles! Shoot, the troubles John was experiencing make my troubles look small in comparison!

A lot of people have believed the lie that if they love Jesus, they are not supposed to have troubles in this life. So when troubles come, they get mad at God!

Write this down: in this life we will have troubles!

Now in John 16:33 John had recorded Jesus saying, “in this world you will have trouble; but take courage, I have overcome the world!”

You and I are going to have Patmos moments in this life!
Life involves pain! Christian leadership involves mega-pain!

But that’s not all John says-

John hastens to add that we are also partners in advancing Christ’s kingdom despite trouble, partners in persevering together!

It’s good to know we are all in this together, isn’t it?!

Now undoubtedly John was discouraged!

Verse 10 lets us know that he was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day there on Patmos.

Four times the phrase “in the Spirit” occurs in Revelation, and there are some who use as an outline the book. Those times are- 1:10 4:2 17:3 21:10

Now folks, if a hundred year old man can get out of bed on Sunday morning before the guards made him work the rocks, and climb up to a cave and get a message from God to share with God’s people, I think you can get yourself here on Sunday morning and worship the Lord! And you can find time each day to seek Jesus!

**Because John took the time to draw near to God, God drew near to Him!
“In the Spirit” is to be contrasted with “in the flesh.”**

The Bible says, “don’t get drunk with wine but filled with the Spirit.” You and I are to fill ourselves up with the Spirit, who is already in us at salvation, by saying yes to God and no to sin in our lives. When you sin, you grieve the Spirit, when you do things that help you grow in Christ you become filled with the Spirit!

Try this some time, take a glass full of coffee, with the coffee representing sin in your life. Put it under the water faucet in your house. Watch as you fill it up with water, it will drive the coffee out. As you are filled with the Spirit, there’s not room for the sin. By the way, that has to be done over and over again!

As John was “in the Spirit” he heard the voice telling him to write what he saw and send it to seven churches he was very familiar with!

What was the next thing he saw in the midst of his time of trouble?
He saw and felt the radiance, power, and presence of Jesus!

V. 12-16 The Radiance and Power of the King!

Now I want you to think about the portrait of Christ presented here.

John sees One like the Son of Man standing among seven gold lampstands!

Notice first how He is dressed: in a long robe with a gold sash around his chest. That is how an important priest would have dressed. Jesus is the most important priest there ever was! He is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

Notice that His head and hair were white like wool- white as snow. That identifies Him with the Ancient of Days that Daniel saw in Daniel 7:9-10.

“As I kept watching, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His clothing was white like snow, and the hair of His head like whitest wool. His throne was a flaming fire...A river of fire was flowing, coming out from His presence. Thousands upon thousands served Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.”
-Daniel 7:9-10

WOW! Note His AWESOMENESS as Daniel and John describe Him!

Ancient of Days means he is older than time itself!
You “Doctor Who” fans should recognize that Jesus is the only true Time Lord!

Notice that His eyes were like a fiery flame! That underscores His omniscience – that He knows all!

Notice that His feet are like fine bronze fired in a furnace! That underscores His omnipotence- that He is all powerful!

The fact that He walks among the lampstands, which we find out are the seven churches of Asia underscores His omnipresence- that He is everywhere present!

Notice that His voice is like Niagara Falls! And from His mouth comes a two edged sword! Powerful enough to speak Creation into being! Powerful enough to defeat His enemies without a physical blow!

This emphasis on His powerful voice lets us know He is also the great Prophet!

Jesus is seen here to be the All-knowing, All-powerful, Everywhere-present Prophet, Priest, and King!

But don't miss His face! It is shining like the sun at midday!
Oh, His radiance! His splendor! His glory!

I hope your image of Jesus is more than the baby in the manger!
I hope you see Him as more than the guy in the Jesus film on the cross!

Jesus is AWESOME!

John knew it- look at his reaction in verse 17 – he fell at Jesus' feet like a dead man! Sometimes we wonder what we would do if we saw Jesus here – you'd drop and give him 20!!! Oh, how radiant Jesus Christ is!

But that's why what happens next is such a surprise!

V. 17-20 The Presence of the King!

This radiant and powerful King has come looking for discouraged John!
And He approaches John and puts His hand on him and says "don't be afraid!"

According to Rick Warren, there are 365 occurrences of "don't be afraid" in the Bible, one for each day of the year!

This awesome and totally transcendent God comes to us and encourages us as we face our Patmos moments!

John, don't be afraid! I'm the First and the Last! Patmos won't have the last word in your life – I will! John, look: I was dead, but look, I am alive forevermore!
John, look, I hold the keys of death and Hades!

Keys stand for authority, possession, and privilege. The one who has the keys is the one who is in control. What do keys do? They open things. They lock and unlock things. They liberate and imprison. What are these keys to? Death and Hades – the two great enemies of man...When a person dies, death gets the body but Hades gets the spirit and the soul. -Adrian Rogers Unveiling the End Times in Our Times, page 45

Jesus is the radiant one! Jesus has all power and authority!
And yet Jesus walks among us, and holds the stars in His hand!

V. 20 The Radiant Lord reveals two secrets about His presence

Secret # 1: Jesus walks among the church's people!

A local church is a lampstand! Jesus is the light, we merely lift Him up!
Lampstands project the light, but lampstands are not the light!

Do you know what the problem with too many churches are?
They draw attention to their manmade lampstands rather than letting Jesus shine!

What should we do in response to this truth?

We should cultivate a sense of His presence when we gather together!

Picture the radiant Christ singing beside you in worship, sitting next to you in Sunday School, with you as you give food out at the food pantry, teaching the children in one of our children and youth ministries. Giving us perspective as we are about to complain about things that don't really matter! You can't let the children come to Christ AND have a building without a few marks on the wall!

The greatest promise of the Bible is that Christ really is with us, even in our Patmos moments!

Our faith and witness will take leaps forward if we begin acknowledging Christ's presence in all we do!

Secret #2: Jesus holds in His hand the church's pastors!

The word in verse 20 the HCSB translates angels is messengers in the Greek. It could be translated angels or pastors. So the stars Jesus holds in His hand are either guardian angels of the seven churches or the pastors of the seven churches.

I think in the context it has to mean pastors. Why? As you read the Bible you see angels delivering messages to humans, not humans delivering messages to angels!

And since pastors are people too, and get very discouraged, how encouraging it must have been to John and the pastors to hear Jesus say this!

I have really enjoyed reading things by the Calvin Miller over the years. I recently read his autobiography, and I was astounded by one entry.

Calvin had been the pastor of a SBC church for 25 years. During that time they had grown from 10 people to 3,000. He had written many books and was celebrated by many in the evangelical world. But over those years at the church

he experienced three times of major struggle and constant nitpicking by some in the church. When he was offered a teaching position at Southwestern Seminary he took it.

Before he left the church they threw him a going away party. And they gave him a big basket filled with cards. He was so anxious to leave the church, which was in Nebraska, that he and his wife drove into Kansas before stopping at a hotel.

Inside, his wife asked if he wanted to look at the basket with cards in it. She said, there must be a thousand cards here! He didn't want to. But she convinced him to look at one of them. When she opened it, a \$50 bill fell out! They did what most of us would have done: they proceeded to stay up opening every card and cried as they read the entries. And the love offering was \$10,000.

Here's how that chapter ended:

"I guess they loved us more than we thought they did. Will somebody please tell me why God's people have so much trouble telling other people they are loved?" Barb wondered. "I don't know," I said. "All that time they loved us," she said, "I wonder why they never let on." "I guess I never gave them a reason to till I resigned." "I wonder how many preachers resign their churches 'cause nobody ever let on," she said. "I wondered too. I wondered all through the night. I wondered all the next day. These seventeen years later, I still wake up at midnight wondering."

Folks, that's not unusual! For most pastors who have experienced conflict, that's what they remember! A little encouragement from you can be like oxygen to them!

Now I am not saying this so you'll encourage me with cards filled with money. I feel your love! And you pay me well! It's not about me!

But maybe you need to express appreciation to a pastor you have known – if he is no longer living, write his widow or children a note!

**Verse 5 told us Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth!
But verse 20 tells us Jesus holds pastors in His hand!**

Now since we're preaching through The Book of Revelation, we need to note one more thing from this passage-

V. 19 God's Outline of Revelation

Now look at your chart!

The things seen:	The risen Christ!	Chapter 1!
The things which are:	The church age!	Chapters 2-3!
The things which will take place after this:	The future!	Chapters 4-22!

Let's Pray!