

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Part Four: Jesus the Speaking King, Pt. 2

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Introduction

In our last study we were encouraged that Jesus is the Speaking King who continues to speak to His people through His Word by His Spirit. We should thank God that He truly has always kept His Word to His people and never left them as orphans in this world. Rather, God has stooped down to us to give us His very Word. This Word strengthens and sustains His people until He returns. This Word of God, however is a double-edged sword. While it promises blessings to those who know the *Speaking King* and obey His Word, it promises curses to those who will not hear it.

Jesus ends each message to the congregations in Revelation chapters 2-3 with "He Who has ears to hear, let him hear". We must remember that those who do not hear, or who do not obey the Word of the Living God, those without "ears to hear" will be judged by this Word. The disobedient and the sinful who do not have the righteousness of Jesus Christ will stand naked and ashamed before the Living God on Judgment Day to be judged by the very Word of the *Speaking King* that has been so precious to those He loves! The very Word of Christ that brought life and encouragement to those who had ears to hear, will bring eternal death to those who do not have ears to hear. Today's study will be on *Jesus the Speaking King* and His Words of Judgment to the unbelieving.

Revelation 1:9-20

Revelation 1:9-20: ⁹I, 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. ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹saying, "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."

¹²Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and 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. ¹⁴The hairs of his head were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶In 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. ¹⁷When 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, ¹⁸and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

¹⁹Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. ²⁰As 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.

Lord's Day Worship

Notice first that John was worshipping God on the Lord's Day (v. 10). Since the time of the resurrection, God's people have worshipped Him on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, or the day of the resurrection. We rest and keep the New Covenant "Sabbath" or Lord's Day on the first day of the week rather than the last day of the week. The reason for this change was because Jesus was resurrected on that day, but also that a new creation has dawned in the coming of the Spirit of God (2 Cor. 5:17-21). Rather than awaiting the fullness of the times as in the Old Covenant, and so placing the day of worship on the last day of the week (Saturday), since the coming of Jesus the first day awaits the final day of salvation and judgment.

So a day of ultimate salvation and judgment is already in view for all of us who live on this side of the

The Spirit of God now works in us to make us more like Christ and we experience a "judgment of grace" by being allowed to participate in Christ's sufferings. We are identified with Christ with our own cross and one day our own crown (Matt. 16:24; 2 Tim. 4:8). This is why John writes in his letters to the churches earlier that perfect love casts out all of our fears! Fear has to do with judgment, and we will not be judged by God! (cf. 1 John 4:18-21). Has God's perfect love gripped you with this reality yet? While our present tense problems can be overwhelming in this world, we can be reminded of two important truths: (1) We are identified with Christ in His sufferings and judgment for our sins! (2) We have eternal life NOW, and await a Living Hope that will be revealed on the Last Day!

The Double-Edged Sword of Judgment

But what is the judgment to be like for those who do not have ears to hear what Christ has said? Notice in Revelation 1:16, after Jesus is described as the Glorified-Prophet-Priest-King of His people (1:12-16), John sees him with a sharp double-edged sword coming from his mouth. The Word of God is described as a sharp double-edged sword elsewhere in Scripture (Eph. 6:17-18; Heb. 4:12-13). Here John sees the vision of this Word coming straight out of the Speaking King's mouth. This is a sword of judgment for those who do not believe.

In the Prophet Isaiah's vision of the future, God makes clear to His people that those who have repented and turned to him for help, or "those who have ears to hear" (cf. Isaiah 6:8ff) will not enter into judgment, but peace. However, for those who do not hear or obey God's Word, they will be eternally punished (cf. Mark 9:47-48; Revelation 20:14-15). Isaiah teaches this in Isaiah 66:12-18, which is very helpful for us having a better understanding of John's vision in Revelation 1.

Isaiah 66:12-18: For thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip, and bounced upon her knees. ¹³ As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your bones shall flourish like the grass; and the hand of the LORD shall be known to his servants, and he shall show his indignation against his enemies.

¹⁵ "For behold, the LORD will come in fire, and his chariots like the whirlwind, to render his anger in fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. ¹⁶ For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the LORD shall be many. ¹⁷ "Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating pig's flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end together, declares the LORD. ¹⁸ "For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory...

In verses 12-14, God promises peace "like a river", and a relationship with God like a child cared for by a loving mother! God will comfort all those who have trusted in him! Yet in verses 15-18 we see a different picture. God will come in judgment with fire, anger and fury. However, those who sanctify and purify themselves (those spoken of above in 1 Peter 4) by God's grace, will see God's glory! In Revelation 1, John sees a vision of Jesus' glory, the One who will come in judgment to judge the world on the day he returns. Jesus will judge with His Word by the double-edged sword. Contrast the passage from Revelation 1, 1 Peter 4, and the Prophecy of Isaiah with the Scripture from Revelation 19 below.

Revelation 19:11-21: ¹¹ And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. ¹² And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. ¹³ And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. ¹⁵ And out of his mouth proceeded a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall smite them

2 Peter 3:1-14: This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. ⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

Jesus is the *Speaking King* may we truly hear what he says to the churches and avoid the wrath that is to come. Do you have peace today knowing that Jesus is surely your Savior from sin and knowing that you have an imperishable inheritance preserved in heaven for you by the Loving Lord Jesus? Do you know for sure you will avoid the wrath to come? Remember for us to daily repent and turn from our sins to the Living God as He gives us commands, by His Spirit convicts, corrects, and rebukes us, so that rather than facing the judgment of the One who has the double-edged sword proceeding from his mouth, we might through the blessing of the Word of God, become spotless and pure and more conformed to His image!

By God's grace, these studies on Revelation will help you to see Jesus as Lord over all of the book. If you will prayerfully ponder the first chapter carefully, it will help you foundationally to understand the remainder of the book. Don't give up, but be encouraged to read the Book of Revelation. It is indeed a blessing to read it! It gives us hope for the future and peace for TODAY! May God richly bless your study and may the loving-kindness and mercy of God be known to you today!

For Further Reading

Herman Bavinck- **The Last Things: Hope for this World and the Next.** Edited by John Bolt.

Translated by John Vriend. Published by Baker Books, 1996

G. K. Beale- **The Book of Revelation**, New International Greek Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, 1999

G. C. Berkhouwer- **The Return of Christ.** Studies in Dogmatics Series. Published by Eerdmans, 1972

Dennis Johnson- **Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation**, P&R, 2001

Vern S. Poythress- **The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation**, P&R, 2000

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