

# Fear Not

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Date: 23 September 2018

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[0:00] If you would open up your Bibles to Revelation chapter 1, I'm going to read for us chapter 1 verses 9 through 20.

A vision of the Son of Man. Hear the word of God. 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.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and I heard behind me a voice like a trumpet 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. Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me.

And on turning, I saw seven golden lampstands. 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.

[1:10] The hairs of his head were white like wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze refined in a furnace.

And his voice was like the roar of many waters. 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. 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 and the living one.

I died and behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and Hades. I heard, I saw him, I was like the spirit of God. And I said, I will say, the things that you have heard, that you have seen.

[2:10] Those that are and those that are to take place after this. 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. our culture is changing it's becoming more challenging to live out loud for Jesus Christ if you've been around for a while you would be aware of what I'm talking about there's been dramatic change in our culture over the last 5, 10, 15, 20 years there are growing pressures in our culture to keep our views on Jesus to ourself there's confusion of what we can and cannot say in public, in our workplace, governance, schools and when there's this kind of confusion it opens the door to fear and for those of us raising children and grandchildren to take the Lord Jesus seriously in every area of our lives what does our changing culture mean for us?

what does our changing culture mean for our children and the next generation of Christians in America? when you have questions like this about the future what does this mean?

things are changing the way they are things are getting harder what does this mean? when we're asking questions like that you become ripe to fear fear the loss of relationships you start living out loud for Jesus and you start fearing losing relationships of those who disagree with you it's real many of us in this room have already lost significant relationships because of our following Jesus we fear the loss of reputation that our standing in the world's eyes gets diminished when they realize we actually believe in the risen Jesus there's the fear of losing remuneration because of if I'm a follower at work and I stand for Jesus and I've got to say no to things there's the fear of loss not getting a promotion getting passed over fear of remuneration there's the fear of unrealized dreams because I am a follower of Jesus

I may not be able to live the American life it's real Isaac Newton in amazing grace there are dangers toils and snares for us to walk through on our way in Acts 14.22 the Apostle Paul speaking to early disciples tells them through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God Paul to Titus who is doing work in the church of Ephesus at the time he says to him all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted will suffer hardship and then of course there's the words of Jesus John 16.33 in the world you will have tribulation hardship on account of Jesus but then he says but take heart

[6:06] I have I have overcome the world and this morning that's what you need to hear take heart fear not no matter what happens in the next 5 10 15 20 years in our country no matter what happens we fear not and here's why because our Jesus is the risen radiant and reigning son of man right here right now he's with us this morning you need to hear these two words of encouragement from the lips of the risen Christ fear not fear not in order to help us fear not you need to hear what John heard in this passage in order to fear not you need to see what John saw in this passage in order to fear not you need to feel what John felt in this passage who he heard who he saw whose hand he felt when he was prostrate and when you hear and see and feel you will find courage in your heart because you've been reminded of the one who's risen radiant and reigning so let's look to our Bibles let's hear what John hears in chapter 1 verse 9 we learn that the apostle

John is on the island called Patmos it was about 30 plus miles southwest of the western coast of Turkey and he wasn't there on a vacation he wasn't hanging out on a condo he was in exile for what verse 9 on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus God's word revealed through the testimony of Jesus that's why he was on the island of Patmos you see John was proclaiming Jesus as the exclusive unrivaled universal Lord of all and it was a direct contradiction to the gospel according to Domitian who is the Roman emperor of the time and who called himself quote unquote Lord and God quote unquote the everlasting king who had commanded all citizens and subjects in the

Roman empire to dash a little incense on an altar and as they're doing it in this worship center unto Domitian they were to say Caesar is Lord and here is John exiled to Patmos on account of proclaiming the exclusive lordship of Jesus that's why John begins in I John your brother and fellow partner in the tribulation in the kingdom and the patient endurance that is in Jesus he himself is suffering tribulation for Jesus he's in exile on this rocky outcropping called Patmos no dairy queens there he's a citizen of the kingdom of Jesus he is seeking to endure the suffering that he is experiencing for

Jesus and so if you were one of these seven churches and you were in the precarious position that they were in some of your members are already being persecuted for Jesus do you know what this means this guy's got instant street cred he's writing as a fellow sufferer as a brother who's enduring the hardship himself you want to tune your ears to someone like that he's not a recent seminary grad he's been following Jesus for 60 plus years at this point he's the one called the beloved disciple he's the one that reclined on Jesus chest at the last supper he is the one Jesus himself entrusts his earthly mother to take care of that's this John and he's exiled he's writing to the seven churches and he's writing to them for a reason we learn in verse 10 he was in the spirit on the Lord's day that's a reference to Sunday the first day of the week the day that Jesus was raised from the dead Christians in the first century would gather on that day and he was in the spirit it's describing an awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit so on this particular Lord's day while on Patness exile the Holy Spirit impresses on John something profound the Holy Spirit was enabling John to hear something verse 10 and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet it would have been like that the 1030 a.m.

[12:13] Saturday kind of tornado siren sound that kind of pronouncement and what John hears right here you gotta understand it's not just in his head he really hears it and what does his voice say verse 11 it says two things write what you see in a book and this book is the book of revelation write it down and then he says send it send it to the seven churches and then he names them Ephesus Smyrna Pergamum Thyatira Sardis

Philadelphia not Pennsylvania Philadelphia Laodicea now that word seven is in the Jewish mind they would think very quickly of this sense of completeness and fullness and so these seven churches are a complete representative of the fullness of the entire church they represent us all of

Jesus blood bought now what you need to also know about these seven churches is that they were on a circuit all seven churches were on a road that connected them all about 30 35 miles from each one and what would happen is messages would be sent out and so the ordering of these churches are actually ordered according to where they are on the circuit and so John is said being told to write in a book what you see and send it to the churches here's what this means for us John was descended to the first century church in Ephesus and these other six churches and even back then our great God knew that this book would end up in this church in

Kenosha in the 21st century what he sees is for us whose voice is this whose trumpet like voice is this we've begun to hear what John hears now let's see what John sees verse 12 John turns to see the voice that was speaking to him all of us would have been done the same thing if we were on Pat and we heard this voice we'd be like what is that and John would never forget what he saw and we are to never forget what he saw it's this is designed to grab your imagination imagination this is designed what we're about to read is to capture you to press an image on your mind for you not to forget and the first thing that

John sees are seven golden lampstands seven golden lampstands this is interesting what are these seven golden lampstands well Jesus is about to tell us but what you need to understand is when a Jewish person would hear lampstand golden lampstand they're thinking temple they've gone they're imagining God's temple there was an elaborate menorah in the temple but these are seven individual lampstands and what Jesus says in verse 20 he explains that mystery to us in verse 20 did you pick up on that if you look to verse 20 and the seven lampstands are the seven churches so here's what's going on this voice tells John to write send it to the seven churches John turns to see the voice and then he sees seven lampstands the seven churches that he's going to be sending the letters to the book to now what we also read is someone is in the midst of these lampstands verse 13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man now

I know your elementary school grammar taught you that when you read see that word like one like a son of man you want to start thinking okay there's a comparison going on here that's not what John is doing this is not a comparison John's not saying this one I saw had the form of one like a son of man that's not what he's saying John is quoting Daniel 7 13 he is seeing the quote one like a son of man the one who would come to the ancient of days in the ancient of days God the father would give him dominion and glory and an everlasting kingdom without end that's the one like a son of man that's who John sees we're to be thinking

[17:53] Daniel 7 13 through 14 this is the son of man this is the risen Jesus and what we notice here is something very profound and we can cruise over it really quick it's important to see where he is this one like a son of man the risen Jesus is in the midst of the lamp stands he's among the churches the risen son of man who's been given dominion glory and everlasting kingdom and everlasting kingdom that's Daniel 7 13 he's in the middle of his churches it should make you think of Matthew 28 the great commission go make disciples and he closes with the promise and I am with you always even to the end of the age so here's the significance for us

Jesus the risen son of man the king of God's everlasting kingdom of grace he is with us right here and right now he was with those seven churches in the first century and he's with Christ the king church in the 21st century but there's more John's eyes focus on what the risen son of man is wearing verse 13 he's wearing he's clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest the long robe was most likely kind of a priestly vestment garb and so you're thinking okay he is a priestly representative and we all know that priests back in the day of the temple they maintained the temple and they mediated

God's presence the golden sash some commentators think that represents Christ high priestly role and it could but what I want to point out is something like this it's made of gold it's a gold sash it's not it's not like a sash around the waist that you see those guys in Spain running with the bulls it's

not one of those things it's it's a sash that draped over your shoulder came over your chest and was clasped at the waist it would you couldn't get it grabs your attention it grabbed John's attention the goldness of it when we get to the end of the book of Revelation and we start getting glimpses of the new Jerusalem that comes down do you know what it's made of it's made of gold in

Revelation 15 6 angels come to pour out the plagues and do you know what they're wearing white linens with a sash across their chest of gold it's it's making us think that this one he is he's he's from the new Jerusalem and he's in our midst as our high priest maintaining his temple us the new temple of God and mediating God's presence but there's more John moves from what he is wearing to what his body is radiating his sparkly hair the hairs of his head verse 14 were white like white wool that's white like snow it's a different kind of white the difference between wool white and snow white is when it snows and you walk out your front door and you see a fresh snow in the sunshine what happens it's like a field of diamonds they glitter sparkle there's a brilliance this white was a brilliant white and what you need to know is that this is actually a reference to something an attribute of the ancient of days from Daniel chapter 7 who had hair white as wool so is

John saying right here that the son of man is the ancient of days he's not saying that what John is seeing communicating is that this son of man amidst the lamp stands is sharing in one of the essential attributes of the ancient of days wisdom ageless wisdom it's a vivid way to communicate the deity of Jesus in our midst he's got sparkling hair brilliant and in his eyes verse 14 he's got fire eyes his eyes were like a flame of fire again it's behind this is a reference to Daniel chapter 10 verse 6 look it up later what you need to note is this his eyes were radiating light and the inference is his eyes see into darkness he knows all because he sees all here's where I want to take a step outside of our passage and help you anticipate something this vision of

[24:20] Jesus that we have in 9 through 20 it's going to show up again but in parts the 7 letters that he sends to the 7 churches that are chapter 2 and chapter 3 all point back to one of these attributes in this vision it's all connected and what we see in the 7 letters of the 7 churches follow with me now okay his flaming eyes chapter 2 verse 2 to Ephesus I know your works Jesus to Ephesus 2 9 to Smyrna I know your tribulation 2 13 to Pergamum I know where you dwell 2 19 let me find it Theotira I know your works your love and faith and service and patient endurance 3 1 Sardis I know your works you have a reputation of being alive but you're dead to Philadelphia and 3 8

I know your works behold I have set before you an open door the church of Laodicea 15 3 15 I know your works you're neither cold nor hot he sees all those flaming eyes flaming eyes he sees and knows every nook and cranny of every one of his people's lives in every nook and cranny of every church that he's purchased with his blood and what does fire do fire purifies I am the official splinter remover of splinters in my children's feet it's a fearful operation because I start by putting a needle over an open flame to purify it to heal my kid

Jesus is in our midst looking on us with eyes of fire seeking to purify his people now here's the connection revelation is a series of judgments but judgment begins with the house of God that's the seven letters of the seven churches he sees and knows and so brother and sister if you are in this room and you're secretly hoping nobody finds about about this secret lifestyle sinful lifestyle that you are living you are already seen he already sees all that you are you're fully exposed before his fire eyes that's making you feel a little undone or feel a little exposed or maybe a little fearful that's not bad

Jesus has a word for you moving on in verse 15 not only does he have fire eyes he has glowing feet his feet were like burnished bronze refined in a furnace bronze was a metal that used in that day was used for many weapons making of weapons and so there's this hint of warrior-ness about this son of man in the midst of the churches but we also know that that bronze feet depicts stability permanence resilience all things have been put under the feet of king Jesus he's ruling over all despite what it may look like and they are aglow that's what happens when you put bronze in a heated furnace it glows bronze feet aglow his radiating light of hair his fiery eyes it's all radiating light and he's in the midst of the churches he's in the midst he's right here right now with us this is our

Jesus John's pulling back the curtain so we can see him and then his Niagara voice in verse 15 like the roar of many waters now if you take a ride on the maid of the mist and you get up close and

personal to Niagara Falls you're going to quickly find out that if you're with somebody you're going to have a communication problem because that mighty cataracts produces a volume of sound that drowns out everything the Niagara voice of Jesus is to drown out every other voice back in the day it was the voice of the emperor Domitian in our day there's a lot of voices that his voice must drown out his voice demands our attention and

[30:10] John would have felt the thunder of his voice there's a loudness theme in revelation we saw it in the trumpet voice in verse 10 it is overwhelming in his right hand verse 16 seven stars he has star hand and you know what stars are they're brilliant you see them sparkling at night what are these stars well Jesus shows us that mystery in verse 20 as for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lamps the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches angels in right hand in our bibles is often used to refer to authority and power dominion and so the risen radiating son of man who's reigning right now has in his right hand the angels of the seven churches he's saying

I got him I'm ruling over him they do my bidding he commands his angels to obey and they obey now what it appears here is that Jesus has assigned specific angels to specific churches and so the implication is Christ the king church has an angel now I'm not sure when you hear that you start getting goosebumps what John is doing is he he's pulling back the curtain to how things really are he's helping us see the unseen the spiritual world with angels and demons and he's helping us to see yes there are angels of the churches doing the bidding of the Lord Jesus we're being given a glimpse of the unseen spiritual world and if you were in the precarious position of a church facing tribulation this is really good news

Jesus is in control and it also reminds us that our battle is not against flesh and blood it's against spiritual forces and powers in the heavenly places so what we see here is the risen son of man holding the angels in his right hand and it would have been brilliant out of his mouth verse 16 comes a sharp double edged sword his sword mouth this is a different sword than Ephesians chapter 6 it's not the sword of the spirit that was a Roman soldier sword it was short compact meant for close fighting this is a long sword broad and heavy and it was a symbol of power an irresistible judgment and it's coming from his mouth it's not in his right hand it's from his mouth declarative decisive powerful judgment coming from

Jesus lips he's reigning over all at the end of revelation in chapter 19 verse 21 all of those who oppose Jesus who are unrepentant and are resistant to him they come out to battle him one last time and what we read in 21 is that Jesus slays them by this sword of his mouth no more with a word of decisive judgment and then you read chapter 2 verse 16 to the church in Pergamum therefore repent if not I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth he's bringing the sword to a church the Nicolaitans had been influencing them with false teaching and

Jesus is saying get them out or I'm coming to get them out sober weighty profound doesn't make you feel a little uncomfortable knowing that the risen Christ would wage war on one of his own churches people in one of his own churches with the sword of his mouth he is our great high priest who's dwelling in our midst and he's maintaining his temple keeping it pure we are his dwelling place and this all all climaxes in his face his son face it's the last feature that John sees his face the face of the risen reigning and radiating son of man you know he could not have been seeing this without squinting he described his face like the sun shining in full strength that's that's the noonday sun it's the sun at its zenith at its greatest brightness you don't want to look into the sun because of its brightness but we also know number six twenty five may the

[36:10] Lord's face shine upon you bright pure holy brilliance that brings blessing on those who humble themselves below him what John witnesses here is more like a multi sensory experience brilliant hair fire eyes glowing feet Niagara voice star hands sword mouth sun face it is a Christological rainbow when you take it all together and it's meant to be awe inspiring we're to see what John saw it should remind you of Daniel chapter 10 Ezekiel chapter 1 even the transfiguration in Matthew 17 where we read his face shown like the sun it's his manifest glory who

is this one who

John has heard who is this one that he's turned to see he is the risen radiant and reigning son of man Jesus and he is right here and he is right now and so you are not to fear now I want you to feel what John felt in verse 17 we read when I saw him I fell at his feet as though dead it would have popped your circuits too he's so terrified so overwhelmed so undone he falls and it's very reminiscent of a lot of the parallel patches of a calling of a prophet Isaiah 6 what Kyle was talking about earlier Ezekiel chapter 1 Daniel and Daniel 10 these men see God in his glory and they fall before him and then

God meets him there fear not you don't have to be a prophet to feel what all these prophets felt overwhelming awe in the presence of the risen Christ it's the proper response the right response when you see him when you sense him for who he is the right response is to humble yourself before him we're going to see in chapter 4 and chapter 5 all the living creatures who are before the throne are regularly falling down and worshiping the one on the throne ancient of days and the lamb who was slain but now is alive falling down before him is a very appropriate response to who he truly is who he fully is when the curtain gets pulled back when was the last time you humbled yourself and fell down before the risen radiant and reigning son of man who is right here and right now oh lord give us eyes to see and heart to respond appropriately to you but that's not all John felt the same right hand that holds the seven stars the same right hand that had a nail pierced scar that hand of the risen radiant reigning Christ in all of its authority tenderly placed upon the prostrate John and he says I'm not sure if you said this with Niagara voice fear not fear not I fear not fear me John this is the same John that remember reclined on Jesus at the supper we all need to hear these two words every day from the risen radiant reigning king fear not

I am here we fear not this son of man because he's not against us he is for us if that hand that was nailed for us is the hand that holds the seven stars for us we fear him not he's with us for our good even in the face of hardship he's with us for our good no need to compromise and we fear not the tribulation we encounter for his namesake here's why he's the first and the last it's another way saying alpha and omega from chapter from 1 verse 8 he is the A to Z and everything in between he's eternal deity sovereign over all he's the living one as in the living

[42:03] God the one and only Isaiah 41 Isaiah 44 Isaiah 48 there is no other in verse 18 he elaborates with his hands still on John he says I died and behold I'm alive forevermore John John I was crucified you saw me crucified and I'm alive see I'm alive feel me I'm alive and his death and his resurrection are the basis for what he says next and I have the keys of death and Hades I've been given dominion over everything keys are a symbol of authority my principal at Roaring Brook Elementary School in Avon Connecticut man did he have a set of impressive keys and they were on a retractable wire attached to his belt and he could get into any room in my elementary school because he had been entrusted with the right to open any door at any time he'd been given a dominion and

Jesus has been given dominion he's been given keys to the things that we fear most death and Hades in the face of tribulation whether that's fierce persecution or faint persecution or a pressure to conform that means compromise to Jesus we do not fear because our risen king he's alive and he's right here and he's right now and jingle jingle he's got the keys Jesus comes full circle to John and still with his resurrected hand on John he says in verse 19 write therefore the things that you have seen and what are those the things that are chapter two and three and those things that are to take place after this the judgment cycles of seven which starts in chapter really six but we'll start in chapter four write them down

John send them out John send them to Christ the king church in the 21st century give them this for their good to steal them to strengthen them to put courage in their hearts in light of not knowing what's going to happen at this point how do you think John fell I mean he had just folded like a cheap suit by the end here we can anticipate a kindling of courage a strength to endure because the hand on him is the hand of the risen radiant and reigning Jesus we don't fear Jesus we don't fear the tribulation that is to come because our risen king is radiant right now reigning right now and with us right now so

Christ the King church hear the word of the Lord from Jesus fear not I am with you let's pray God in heaven strengthen us Lord give us courage to not be jerks but to be the lamp stand you've called us

to be in this city at this time help us to endure because we're part of your kingdom fought by your blood and we live now for the glory of your name amen