

AM Revelation 1:9-19 What does Jesus look like?

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[0 : 00] Today, and the first is from the prophet Daniel, the prophet Daniel in chapter 7, and I believe if you're using the pew Bibles, that will be on page 945, 945, but it's the prophet Daniel in chapter 7 and verse 9 and then we'll turn to the book of Revelation afterwards.

Daniel chapter 7 and verse 9. Let's hear the word of God together. As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool.

His throne was fiery flames, its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him. A thousand thousand served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. I looked then, because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking.

And as I looked, the beast was killed, and his body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

[1 : 38] I saw in this night visions.

And then we turn over to the book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible.

The book of Revelation chapter 1. Revelation chapter 1. And again, if you need the page number, it's page 1235.

Page 1235. And we are reading from Revelation chapter 1 and verse 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.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. And I heard behind me a loud 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.

[3 : 27] 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. The hairs of his head were white, like white 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.

[4 : 32] I died and behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and Hades. Write therefore the things that you have seen, 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.

Amen. We give thanks to God for these readings from his holy word. Before we give careful consideration to them, we're going to sing again together. Well, what did Jesus look like?

If any of you have got one of those children's Bibles, particularly the older ones, Jesus is pictured as a blue-eyed blonde, more Anglo-Saxon than Middle Eastern.

Well, friends, whatever Jesus did look like, it was not like that. We do not know how tall he was, how small he was, what he weighed, what his shoe size was, and we are not meant to know.

[5 : 58] We do not need to know. In fact, I would argue that the most detailed description of Jesus in the Bible is here in Revelation chapter 1.

And it is not a photographic description. It is a theological description. I suppose the best comparison I can make is with poetry.

Poems don't give us information. They give us experience. Now, here we are in Dumfries, the land of Burns.

My love is like a red, red rose that's newly sprung in June. My love is like the melody that's sweetly played in June. Burns is not telling us anything about his sweetheart and what she looks like.

He's telling us how he feels about her. Well, John realised that the church in his day needed more than just information about the Lord Jesus.

[7 : 16] They needed an experience. They needed to see him. They needed to see that the lamb who was slain was alive.

And that forevermore. they needed to see that the one who had been laid in a tomb held the keys to death and Hades.

And friends, what was true for the church at the end of the first century is also true for the church here in Scotland in the 21st century. Indeed, it's always been true.

because when the church loses sight of what her Lord Jesus is really like, she goes astray. And too often throughout history, the church has turned Jesus into a projection of her own day and age.

A Jesus who accommodates himself to the times. And that's why these old children's Bibles used to portray Jesus as a blonde European.

[8 : 31] We enlisted him in our imperialistic westernizing propaganda. And today, I'm afraid that the Lord Jesus is often treated like the genie in the lamp.

Whenever you need him, just rub your hands in prayer and he will appear and grant whatever wish you have. He is our beck and call. Well friends, the truth is this, that the real Jesus is far more wonderful, far more magnificent, far more awesome than anything we can imagine.

And this is the Jesus we need. The Jesus we need. So let's look at this text more carefully. Chapter 1 of Revelation verses 9 and 10.

I, John, your brother and partner in 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 loud voice like a trumpet. Do you notice how John identifies with those who are suffering for Jesus?

[9 : 51] He is not some ivory tower academic nor is he some cheerleader on the sidelines cheering them on. He is one with them, one in their suffering for the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is their brother and companion. And though he is in exile, though he is separated from everybody he loves, though there are no other believers with him to meet on the Lord's day, he says, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day.

Despite his loneliness, despite his suffering, he still worships. And friends, is it not the case that we are more likely to hear from God, experience God, when we are in a spirit of worship?

And he says in verse 10, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet. Now friends, we need to understand that the book of Revelation belongs to a literary style called apocalyptic.

And apocalyptic literature was common in the ancient world, especially among the Jews, and it is characterized by the use of symbolism and metaphor to convey its message rather than straightforward prose.

[11 : 19] If you try and interpret this book literally, you are going to get yourself tied up in knots. So let's not imagine that there is some booming voice like a trumpet in the Old Testament.

the trumpet was blown as a call to action, either for war or for worship. And John is told to write his message on a scroll, just like the prophets of old.

And he is to write to seven named churches. Now I guess you already know that the number seven is the number that symbolizes completeness.

So this is a message not just for those particular seven churches, it is a message for the whole church, the complete church of Jesus Christ.

And so John says that he turns to see the voice. And what does he see? Verse 12. Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands.

[12 : 37] And in the midst of the lampstands was one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. Now those seven golden lampstands are the menorah, the seven armed lampstands that gave light in the temple in Jerusalem and we'll come back to them later.

There are seven of these lampstands and walking among them is one like a son of man. And that is a quotation from Daniel chapter 7 verse 13 which we read earlier on.

And what does Daniel mean when he tells us about this son of man? Well Daniel tells us that he saw one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven and he approaches the ancient of days the Lord God Almighty who gives him and I quote authority glory and sovereign power all peoples nations and men of every language worshipped him his dominion is of everlasting dominion that will not pass away and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

So this one like a son of man is no less than the central figure of history the one to whom all peoples of all nations owe allegiance.

Now we tend to think do we not of that title son of man as emphasizing our Lord's humanity it's in opposition to him being called the son of God which points to his divinity son of man humanity son of God divinity but if you turn to Mark chapter 14 verse 61 there Mark tells us that when Jesus was in trial before the high priest he is asked are you the Christ the son of the blessed one and when Jesus answers I am and you will see the son of man sitting at the right hand of the mighty one and coming on the clouds of heaven the high priest tears his clothes why do we need any more witnesses says the high priest we have heard the blasphemy!

[15 : 14] The blasphemy! Calling himself the son of man was a claim to divinity it was one of the most audacious claims the Lord Jesus ever made for himself so when John here says I saw someone like a son of man this is not a long winded way of saying I saw a man he is saying I saw Jesus I saw Jesus as Daniel saw Jesus I saw the Jesus to whom has been given all authority in heaven and on earth and so what does Jesus look like verse 13 he is dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash round his chest he is dressed like the high priest now back in

Revelation chapter 1 verse 5 John speaks of Jesus as the one who has freed us from our sins by his blood Jesus the sacrifice but here now is Jesus the one who offers the sacrifice Jesus the high priest and we read in Hebrews chapter 7 verse 27 unlike other high priests he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people he sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself now the next thing that John notices is the head and the hair and the eyes verse 14 the hairs of his head were white like white wool like snow his eyes were like a flame of fire white is the colour of purity white hair also speaks to us of age doesn't it now where else have we come across someone with hair as white as wool!

Jesus not only look at us they see through us they penetrate the masks and the veils that we hide behind and then next in verse 15 his feet were like burnished bronze refined in a furnace and his voice was like the roar of many waters again where else have feet figured in a vision Takes us back to Daniel again, doesn't it?

Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a giant statue destroyed by a giant boulder. Remember, the head was made of gold, the torso of silver, the belly and thighs of bronze, and the feet a mixture of iron and clay.

Well, do we not still refer to someone having feet of clay? Meaning that our high hopes of them have been dashed and disappointed. Iron and clay do not mix well together.

[19 : 27] At its very base, at its foundations, Nebuchadnezzar's statue was flawed, and when struck by the boulder it toppled over.

A bronze base is firm. Bronze, as you may know, is a combination of iron and copper. Iron is strong, but it rusts easily.

Copper will not rust. It is pliable. Gold, combine the two in bronze, and the best qualities of both are preserved. What is John telling us? Jesus does not have feet of clay.

He will never disappoint you. His kingdom is built on a firm foundation and will never fall. Now friends, so far we've been looking.

Now let's listen. What kind of voice does Jesus have? Well, he's not one of these, you know, sometimes you get these great big fellas that have a wee squeaky voice.

[20 : 32] No, that's not Jesus. His voice matches his appearance. Verse 15. Like the sound of rushing waters. Have you ever been to Niagara Falls?

It's deafening. Deafening. Like the thunder of a mighty waterfall. Is the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ. His is the voice that commands the wind and the waves to be still.

His is the voice that calls Lazarus forth from the grave. And then John, in verse 16, notices his hand. In his right hand he held seven stars.

Now back in those days only seven planets had been discovered. And that's what they are referring to here as the stars. It's actually the planets. People of course in those days were incredibly superstitious.

They believed that their lives were controlled by the movements of the stars and the planets. But friends, who controls the stars and who controls the planets? Jesus does. It's a very powerful way of saying, the stars do not control your life.

[21 : 41] Jesus does. The Son of Man. The Lord of the Universe. At the very end of the chapter, in verse 20, we read, The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

You see, the pagans imagined that their lives were in the hands of gods and goddesses. The stars and the planets. But the truth is, our lives are in the hands of the Lord Jesus. And he sends his angels to minister to us.

What does the old song say? He's got the whole world in his hands. The writer to the Hebrews tells us, It's chapter 4, verse 12 of Hebrews.

The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit.

Joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. And John is using the same metaphor here. The sword that demonstrates what happens when Jesus speaks.

[22 : 43] Christ's words conquer. They cut through any resistance. They divide good from evil. They quell rebellion. They establish righteousness.

And the kind of, two words for sword in the New Testament. And the kind of sword that is referred to here, Is the kind of sword, It's not the sword you see in the Olympics, Where they're fencing.

That kind of long rapier. It's not that. It's the soldier's sword that they carried for hand-to-hand combat. So we might say, That when Jesus speaks, He invades your space.

He gets up close and personal. Last of all in verse 16, Is the Lord's face. And his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

This is the Jesus of the transfiguration, isn't it? Peter, James and John witnessed this. Matthew 17 verse 2.

[23 : 53] His face shone like the sun. And his clothes became as white as the light. Later on in the book of Revelation, John tells us about this city.

It's not really a city. It really represents the people of God. That city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it. For the glory of God gives it light.

And the Lamb is its lamp. God is light. And Jesus is the light of the world. That is what Jesus looks like.

And no wonder John says in verse 17, That when I saw him, I fell down at his feet as though dead. And how often has the experience of the living God terrified his servants?

Think of Isaiah in the temple. Or Ezekiel on the banks of the river Kebar. Or Paul on the road to Damascus. And it makes me ask.

[24 : 53] How often has the experience of the divine caused me, Caused you, To fall on your knees. To lie prostrate on your face on the floor.

And I think that answer, Whatever the answer is, Speaks volumes of our spiritual state. Well John continues here.

Here again, Jesus is claiming divine attributes.

Isaiah 44 verse 6. This is what the Lord says. Israel's King and Redeemer. The Lord Almighty. I am the first and the last.

Apart from me, There is no God. Friends, When we worship the Lord Jesus Christ, We are not robbing the true and living God of anything.

[26 : 16] Of the worship that he alone is due. When we worship Jesus, We are worshipping the true and the living God.

Now we're nearly finished. There's just one last thing we need to note. We need to go back to those seven golden lampstands. The seven menorah in verse 12.

The menorah which gave light in the temple in Jerusalem. And verse 20 tells us that the menorah symbolize the seven lampstands.

The seven lampstands. It says the seven lampstands are the seven churches. So no need for speculation. They represent the seven churches.

Why? Why do lampstands represent the churches? Because the role of the church is to give light. Jesus said himself, You are the light of the world.

[27 : 20] Let your light shine before men. Friends, It may be hard to shine for Jesus When all around you is darkness. It might be hard to shine for Jesus When the world is trying to snuff out your light.

But here is why you can always shine. Because Jesus is with us. Jesus is with us.

Among the lampstands Was someone like the Son of Man. Jesus is no absentee landlord. He is no king over the water.

He is here. He is among In his church. He is not Outside Looking in. He is not Above us Looking down.

He is right here In the midst of us. And so as poor And as weak And as beleaguered As we might feel Christ Jesus Is in the midst of us.

[28 : 34] As frightened And as puzzled As we might sometimes be Christ Is in the midst of us. As faithless And as compromising As the church sometimes might be.

Christ Is in The midst of us. That must have been An amazing comfort To those to whom John was writing.

And what a comfort That should be To us Today. And so I have one Last question to ask.

Do you know This Jesus? This Jesus? You might have a picture Of Jesus In your mind. And it might be From one of those Old children's Bibles That we used to have.

A Jesus With soft hands And soft eyes. They used to talk about The gentleman Jesus Who would never Raise his voice. Who would never Intrude to where He is not wanted.

[29 : 48] That is a false Jesus. And therefore A totally useless Jesus. John Has given us A description Of Jesus As he really is.

Jesus Of the blazing And burning eyes. Jesus With the bronze feet And the voice Like the sound Of mighty waters. Jesus Whose word Is a sharp Double edged sword And whose face Shines Like the noonday sun.

John Is saying To us today Behold Your God Let's pray together. We thank you Our Lord And our God We thank you For your word Infallible Inerrant We thank you For its truthfulness And we thank you For its power And that this Book of revelation Written 2000 years ago Has retained Its power To show us Jesus Your son In all His glory Forgive us Heavenly Father For entertaining Thoughts Of a weak And powerless Jesus Of an absent

Jesus A far away Jesus Lord help us To see With the eyes Of faith That your son Jesus Christ Is still In the midst Of his church Of this church Of this gathering Of your people Here in Dumfries Today And I pray For this congregation Oh Lord And I pray That they would Fulfill Their God Given Task Of being A light In this town Attracting People Not to A church But to Jesus The saviour The redeemer Grant to them Oh Lord The courage The faith The perseverance The endurance That we all Need in this Day and age

To keep On Keeping On For the Lord Jesus Christ Until that Glorious day Comes when He will Return And gather His own To himself And establish That kingdom That will Never Ever Fail We bless You We thank You We worship You In Jesus Holy name Amen