

# LESSON 3

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## ONE LIKE A SON OF MAN

### THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (1:1–3)

The similarities between the oppression of the Israelites under Pharaoh in Exodus and the plight of the Christians under the emperor Domitian in Revelation are striking. God's response to the desperate cries of the Israelites is also remarkably similar to His response to the fervent prayers of persecuted Christians. God had once brought a message of comfort to Moses in the desert; now He brought words of consolation to John on the island of Patmos.

1. What three meanings can the phrase "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1) have?
2. With what does the term "prophecy" primarily have to do?
3. Of what significance is the word "near" in verse 3?

### THE INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER (1:4–7)

Verses 4 through 7 follow the standard form for epistles in John's day. Letters began by identifying the sender and the recipients.

4. Why was the letter sent to these seven churches in Asia?
5. What does the phrase "the seven Spirits who are before His throne" (1:4) mean?
6. How did each term in verse 5 comfort John's readers?
7. What does the phrase "He has made us to be a kingdom" (1:6) mean?
8. What sort of mourning would take place over Jesus (1:7)?
9. How does the promise in verse 7 also point forward to the Second Coming?

### **THE LORD INTERRUPTS (1:8)**

The Lord interrupted John's discourse to say that He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

10. Why was this abrupt insertion from the Lord fitting?

### **WHAT JOHN HEARD (1:9–11)**

John did not remind his readers of his apostleship or authority; he identified himself simply as their brother. He also referred to himself as a fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus.

11. In what three ways was John a "fellow partaker" with his readers?

12. What does the phrase "I was in the Spirit" (1:10) mean?

13. In what way was the sequence of churches in verse 11 a systematic grouping?

### **WHAT JOHN SAW (1:12–16)**

When Daniel saw the "one like a Son of Man," he was distressed and alarmed (Dan. 7:15). Six hundred years later, on a tiny island in the Aegean Sea, another old man saw the "one like a son of man" (Rev. 1:13); and, when he did, he collapsed "at His feet like a dead man" (1:17).

In 1:12–16, John described his first vision: the vision of the "one like a son of man." That vision sets the stage for the rest of the book. If we would understand Revelation, we must know the One depicted by Daniel and John. If we would be blessed by the message of Revelation, we also must fall down before Him.

14. How do the details in verses 12 through 16 show that the One like a son of man is powerful?

15. Why does one need to give more attention to each part of this vision than is normally the case?

16. What interpretations have been suggested for the seven stars/angels, and what are the difficulties of each?

17. What is the significance of the word translated "sword" in verse 16?

18. What was the message of this vision to first-century Christians?

### **WHAT JOHN FELT (1:17–20)**

John had been one of Jesus' closest friends. When the disciples had reclined at mealtime, John had lain on the Master's right side (Jn. 13:23). He had been the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (Jn. 13:23)—yet when he saw Jesus in all His glory, like all others given a glimpse of the divine, he dropped as if he had been hit on the head by a club (Is. 6:5; Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; 43:3; Dan. 8:17, 27; 10:8–10; Mt. 17:6; Lk. 5:8; Acts 26:14).

19. What purpose did the words "the first and the last" (1:17) serve?

20. What is the significance of the phrase "Death and Hades" (1:18)?