

The Revelation to John – Week 2

The scripture passage this week is very appropriate for Ascension Day!

How well do you know your Bible? Here in a very few verses are references to old Testament themes and descriptions from the books of Exodus, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah. As well as New Testament themes from the Gospels and Epistles. e.g. there were seven golden lamps in the original tabernacle in Exodus 25, verse 37. The title “Son of man” was used of himself by the Lord Jesus, sometimes referring to his future status and role e.g. – Mark 8, verse 38 and sometimes emphasising his coming suffering and death e.g. Mark 8, verse 31. In the Book of Ezekiel the name “son of man” refers to Ezekiel himself as “a member of the human race”. However in the Book of Daniel chapter 7, verse 13 we have a vision of the glorification of a member of the human race as the ruler of an everlasting kingdom, given to him by the “Ancient of Days” - that is by God the Father himself.

All these thoughts and more are in the short passage we look at today.

A vision of the Risen, Glorified Lord Jesus Christ:- read Revelation chapter 1, verses 9 – 20.

Remember that the apostle John was in exile because he preached and taught that Jesus was Lord. He probably refused to swear an oath to the emperor of Rome as a divinity. Because of this he shared in the “tribulation” of his fellow believers, some of whom lost their lives in the persecution of the emperor Domitian.

He “was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” We don’t know if he had the fellowship of other believers or not, however, as he worshipped he had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The words of the Lord Jesus Christ about himself :-

He is “the first and the last” (verse 17). A description which has just been used in verse 8 to apply to the Lord God, the Almighty.

He is “the living one” (verse 18), who died and is alive for evermore. On the Lord’s Day, the day of resurrection, John has a vision of the crucified, risen, exalted Lord Jesus.

He has “the keys of Death and of Hades” (verse 18). The Lord Jesus has control of the destiny of all humanity. We say in the creed that “He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end”.

One like a son of man :- (verses 13 – 16)

Even in his glorified body the Lord Jesus carries his humanity. This is the glory of the ascension – that we have a great high priest, Jesus the Son of God, tempted as we are yet without sinning. He knows what it is like to live as we do; to face the problems we do; to face death as we do and who now is glorified in his Father’s presence.

But his appearance was awe inspiring! John “fell at his feet as though dead”. (verse 17). He appears in judgement! “His eyes were like a flame of fire,” “his voice was like the sound of many waters” (Psalm 29 verses 3 – 4). “From his mouth issued a sharp two edged sword” (Hebrews 4, verse 12) “and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.”

This is the One who stands in the midst of the churches, encouraging, strengthening and ultimately in judgement!

If you are fearful after reading the above, finish with reading Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 – 9. Because Christ died for our sins, because he was raised from the dead, because he ascended into heaven – the “heavenly places” are ours! Now and for all eternity!!!

The Book of Common Prayer Collect for Ascension Day:- Grant we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.