

# **John Saw the Voice – Revelation 1:10b-20**

Introduction: There is a play on words in verse 12 where we take the thought for our text this evening – “I turned to see the voice.” Of course, we can’t “see” words, but the use of this term is to emphasize the impact that was made on John when he heard the voice of God speak. He knew it wasn’t like any other voice he had ever heard and what he saw when he turned would have been too much for most of us today. And, according to verse 17, it was almost too much for John. When we truly get an understanding of who our Lord and Saviour is, we will be like John and fall at his feet “as dead” – we will see ourselves as wicked in His presence.

Described here is the initial vision of the Revelation. It sets the stage for what is about to be given. It’s a precursor to the message to the seven churches, and is given to John so he would understand that magnitude of the importance of the message to these churches. Although letters had been inspired by the Holy Spirit to be written to churches before (all the Church Epistles from the Apostle Paul), what John was about to be given would be seen as of great significance, considering how these were inspired. It doesn’t make them more important than the Church Epistles but it does make them important in regard to the future history of the church age, and what was to come. It shows the importance for the church to stay true to their Saviour.

There are only two points to this message – what he heard and what he saw:

## **I. WHAT JOHN HEARD – VS. 10B-11, 17-20**

## A. "A great voice, as of a trumpet" – vs. 10b

1. "A great voice" – "The unexpected, overpowering entrance of the divine voice" (Vincent)

**Eze 3:12** Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed *be* the glory of the LORD from his place.

2. "As of a trumpet"

- a) It didn't sound like a trumpet literally – this is a note of comparison
- b) The voice was heard as a distinct, clear, loud tone that would engender an attention to what was to follow
- c) The use of the word "trumpet" here is indicative of the war trumpet of the day – people paid attention to it – similar to the Emergency Broadcasting System that is in place to warn of impending trouble today

3. Who the voice was – vs. 11a, 17-18

- a) "I am Alpha and Omega" – vs. 11a – the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet – He is everything to everything
- b) I am "the first and the last" – vs. 11a, 17 – He is the beginning of all things and the end of all things

**Isa 41:4** Who hath wrought and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I *am* he.

**Isa 44:6** Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God.

**Isa 48:12** Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I *am* he; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last.

c) "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore"

*(1) This is God declaring that the Son and the Father are the same*

*(2) The fact that Jesus claimed to be the Great I Am and this declaration here show they are, were and ever shall be God*

**Exo 3:14** And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

**Joh 8:58** Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

d) "And have the keys of hell and of death"

*(1) Not only is He the one in control of all things living and all things of creation but He is in control of death and of the grave and beyond as well*

*(2) "Hell" here is hades, the place the unsaved go before the Great White Throne Judgment*

*(3) To hold the key of this, was to hold the power over the invisible world. It was*

*the more appropriate that the Saviour should represent himself as having this authority, as he had himself been raised from the dead by his own power (compare John 10:18), thus showing that the dominion over this dark world was entrusted to him. (Albert Barnes)*

**B. The message he received from the voice  
– vs. 11b-c, 19-20**

1. "What thou seest write in a book" – vs. 11b
  - a) As opposed to a letter – this would be long enough of a vision that it would be considered by those that read it as a book – and so it is today, compared to the other letters that were written to churches
  - b) This was to be a contemporaneous record of what John saw – he was to write it as it occurred, not later on after the fact
2. "And send it to the seven churches" – vs. 11c, vs. 20
3. The outline of the book of Revelation – vs. 19
  - a) "The things which thou hast seen" – chapter 1
  - b) "The things which are" – chapters 2-3
  - c) "The things which shall be hereafter" – chapters 4-22

**II. WHAT JOHN SAW – vs. 12-16**

## **A. He saw God the Son – in His glorified form**

1. Could be the same image Nebuchadnezzar saw when he looked in on the three Hebrew men and saw an image “like the Son of God”

**Dan 3:25** He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

2. Could be the same image of God the Son that the three Apostles saw on the Mount of Transfiguration

## **B. The vision described**

(Much of the material in this point comes from Walvoord’s book on Revelation)

1. “I saw seven golden candlesticks” – vs. 12  
– these are explained in verse 20

They represent the seven churches to which the book of Revelation was written

2. “In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of man”  
– vs. 13a

The phrase “Son of man” is not the norm in Revelation, but it is in the Gospels, and it represents His humanity and Messianic character

3. "Clothed with a garment down to his foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle" – vs. 13b
  - a) Represents priestly garments or that of a judge
  - b) "Girt about . . . with a golden girdle" corresponds to the girdle of the high priest which has golden thread in it, but here it is made entirely of gold – showing the majesty of Christ
  - c) This whole image shows the role of Christ as judge and priest in the midst of the churches
4. "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow" – vs. 14a
  - a) This point, and the following, point the Deity of Christ
  - b) Corresponds to the vision of God in Daniel 7:9

**Dan 7:9** I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire.
5. "His eyes were as a flame of fire" – vs. 14b
  - a) Corresponds to Daniel's vision as described in the previous verse
  - b) This points to the omniscience of Christ, His eyes piercing through all things and all time

**Dan 10:5-6** Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins *were* girded with fine gold of Uphaz: (6) His body also *was* like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

c) It is also speaking of the righteousness and divine judgment upon all that is impure

6. "His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace" – vs. 15a

Again, speaks of His judgment, standing in the midst of those seven churches during their times of trials and tribulations, and is judge over all things

7. "His voice as the sound of many waters" – vs. 15b

Again, the voice of God is heard, but this time as of rushing, thundering water, to show His power and authority

**Eze 43:1-2** Afterward he brought me to the gate, *even* the gate that looketh toward the east: (2) And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice *was* like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

8. "He had in his right hand seven stars" – vs. 16a

- a) These are described in verse 20 as the “angels of the seven churches”
  - b) This is not referring to angels as we know them, but the word simply means messenger and as that it is referring to the pastors of those seven churches, as the messengers that would have come to John on the Isle of Patmos to receive this book
9. “Out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword” – vs. 16b
- a) Speaks of the Word of God
    - Eph 6:17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
    - Heb 4:12** For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
  - b) As a “two-edged sword” it is speaking of the judgment of the Word of God, specifically that which is about to be declared in the vision

10. “His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” – vs. 16c

Conclusion: Have we heard His voice? Have we seen His image? It is still the same God that John saw that is interceding for us today. It is still the same voice that he heard that is speaking today. We may not hear it audibly as John did, but it is the same voice nonetheless.