

“I John” – Revelation 1:9-10a

Introduction: These verses are the Apostle John’s description of himself, of his place and of his vision. Not all of his vision is described here – that entails the entire scope of the remainder of the book. It is a description of the One from whom he received the vision and the overall scope of the vision that is seen.

But first, there are a few things given about the human author that are of importance:

I. JOHN DESCRIBES HIS PERSON – VS. 9A

A. This is the third time that John references himself in this chapter, but the first time he says anything about himself – and this is the only time he says anything about himself in this book

B. The words “I John” are used two more times in the book of Revelation – 21:2; 22:8

Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 22:8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

C. We get a brief glimpse of what was taking place in John’s life at the time of this writing, and how he viewed himself in regards to them. We find here another

look at the compassion that John had for others, and that he was concerned about those in the churches even though he himself was in exile.

1. He refers to himself first as their “brother” – this is a term of relationship that he uses for the believers in the seven churches to which this letter was written.
2. He then says that he is their “companion in tribulation”
 - a) This is the first reference he makes to his persecution under the Emperor (Domitian) and is also referring to the persecution that those in the seven churches were facing
 - b) The word “companion” means partaker with – he is telling them that he is a partner with them in their suffering, that he was enduring it right along with them
3. He says that he is their companion in “the kingdom” (of Christ or God) as well – just as they were partakers together in the persecution and affliction so were they companions in the glory of being part of the kingdom of God

“And as they go sharers in the troubles of this life, so they do, and shall in the kingdom; in the kingdom of grace now, being all of them made kings and priests unto God, and in the kingdom of Christ on earth, where they will all reign with him a thousand years, and in the kingdom of glory, where they shall reign together to

all eternity” – John Gill

4. And, they were companions in the “patience of Jesus Christ” – as they endured persecution and affliction together, and as they looked forward to the final kingdom-rest in glory, they lived this life with “patience,” with the knowledge that life here would soon be over and eternity awaited

Rom 5:3-5 And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; (4) And patience, experience; and experience, hope: (5) And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

2Th 1:4-5 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: (5) *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

II. JOHN DESCRIBES HIS PLACE – VS. 9B

A. *By this is meant the place where he was when he received the vision from the Holy Spirit*

B. *He says of himself that he “was in the isle that is called Patmos” –*

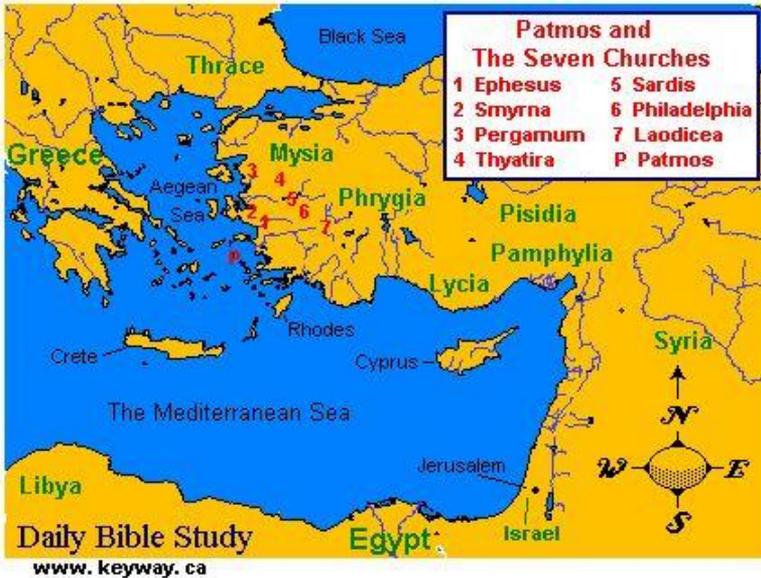
Patmos is one of the cluster of islands in the Aegean Sea anciently called the “Sporades.” It lies between the island of Icaria and the promontory of Miletus. It is merely mentioned

by the ancient geographers (Plin. Hist. Nat., iv., 23; Strabo, x., 488). It is now called Patino or Patmoso. It is some six or eight miles in length, and not more than a mile in breadth, being about fifteen miles in circumference. It has neither trees nor rivers, nor has it any land for cultivation, except some little nooks among the ledges of rocks. On approaching the island, the coast is high, and consists of a succession of capes, which form so many ports, some of which are excellent. The only one in use, however, is a deep bay, sheltered by High mountains on every side but one, where it is protected by a projecting cape. The town attached to this port is situated upon a high rocky mountain, rising immediately from the sea, and this, with the Scala below upon the shore, consisting of some ships and houses, forms the only inhabited site of the island.

Though Patmos is deficient in trees, it abounds in flowery plants and shrubs. Walnuts and other fruit trees are raised in the orchards, and the wine of Patmos is the strongest and the best flavored in the Greek islands. Maize and barley are cultivated, but not in a quantity sufficient for the use of the inhabitants and for a supply of their own vessels, and others which often put into their good harbor for provisions. The inhabitants now do not exceed four or five thousand; many of whom are emigrants from the neighboring continent. About halfway up the mountain there is shown a natural grotto in a rock, where John is said to have seen his visions and to have written this book. Near

this is a small church, connected with which is a school or college, where the Greek language is taught; and on the top of the hill, and in the center of the island, is a monastery, which, from its situation, has a very majestic appearance (Kitto's Cyclopoedia of Bib. Literally). The annexed engraving is supposed to give a good representation of the appearance of the island,

It is commonly supposed that John was banished to this island by Domitian, about 94 a.d. No place could have been selected for banishment which would accord better with such a design than this. Lonely, desolate, barren, uninhabited, seldom visited, it had all the requisites which could be desired for a place of punishment; and banishment to that place would accomplish all that a persecutor could wish in silencing an apostle, without putting him to death. It was no uncommon thing, in ancient times, to banish people from their country; either sending them forth at large, or specifying some particular place to which they were to go. The whole narrative leads us to suppose that this place was designated as that to which John was to be sent. Banishment to an island was a common mode of punishment; and there was a distinction made by this act in favor of those who were thus banished. The more base, low, and vile of criminals were commonly condemned to work in the mines; the more decent and respectable were banished to some lonely island. (Albert Barnes)



C. The reason he was banished here was "for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ"

1. One question to ask ourselves is, "How much have we suffered for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ?"
2. The word "for" in this verse is referring to "the isle that is called Patmos" and it he is there "for," or because of "the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ"
3. He was not there to preach or to receive the vision – he was sent there by the Emperor as punishment. They tried to kill him before (according to history and tradition) but since they couldn't they sent

him to Patmos as a means to silence him
– it didn't work.

4. He was sent there "for the word of God" – his exile was on account of his preaching the word of God and instructing others to follow it.
5. He was sent there "for the testimony of Jesus Christ" – this has a two-fold meaning:
 - a) First, for his preaching that Jesus was the Christ, the Chosen of God, and that He came to take away the sins of the world – for his "testifying" to who Jesus is
 - b) Second, for his great personal testimony of following Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and for doing his best to convert others to follow as well

Rev 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

Rev 12:10-11 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. **(11)** And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

III. JOHN DESCRIBES HIS POSITION – VS. 10A

A. The first part of verse 10 is a somewhat debated text – the question debated is what is meant by the phrase “the Lord’s day”

1. The first thing to note is this is the only time in our English Bible that these words appear like they are here – “the Lord’s day”
2. This is critical because of the two opposing views regarding this issue
 - a) One view is that this is just another way of saying “the day of the Lord” which is referring to the “time of Jacob’s trouble” or the Tribulation period, and, as such, John was just “in” that day in his vision – this is a very weak argument but one some believe
 - b) The true understanding of it is that it is referring to the first day of the week, Sunday, the Lord’s Day

Deissmann has proven (*Bible Studies*, p. 217f.; *Light*, etc., p. 357ff.) from inscriptions and papyri that the word *kuriakos* was in common use for the sense “imperial” as imperial finance and imperial treasury and from papyri and ostraca that *hēmera Sebastē* (Augustus Day) was the first day of each month, Emperor’s Day on which money payments were made (cf. 1Cor. 16:1.). It was easy, therefore, for the Christians to take this term, already in use, and apply it to the first day of the week in honour of the Lord Jesus Christ’s resurrection on that day (*Didache* 14,

Ignatius *Magn.* 9). In the N.T. the word occurs only here and 1Cor. 11:20 (*kuriakon deipnon the Lord's Supper*). It has no reference to *hēmera kuriou* (the day of judgment, 2Pet. 3:10). (Robertson's Word Pictures)

- c) The problem arises because this is not the normal way the NT refers to the first day of the week – which is how it is normally termed

Act 20:7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

1Co 16:2 Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

- d) What I believe John is saying is that he was recognizing Sunday for what it is supposed to be to all believers – the Lord's Day – a day that deserves our attention as it is His, not ours to do as we please.
- e) One more note – this is not the Sabbath Day – that was never referred to like this

B. The first words of this verse – "I was in the Spirit" are also not found elsewhere in our English Bibles and they refer, again, to a two-fold application

1. First, they are speaking to the state of mind of the Apostle John, in that he was where he was supposed to be on the Lord's

Day, and he was allowing the Holy Spirit to work in his mind and heart – the same that we all are supposed to do on Sunday

2. Second – and this is the more direct interpretation, as most believe – he was taken in a “trance” by the Holy Spirit in order to give him the vision, which is what is seen in the last part of verse 10 on through verse 20.
 - a) This shows how much the Holy Spirit was involved in all of the writing of the Scriptures, but it also shows how important this book is – so much so that John was taken out of himself, so to speak, and taken by the Spirit to see these things unfold for himself
 - b) No one since the Apostle John has had a vision of this magnitude, and with this book the canon of Scripture ended – there are no more visions to come, no more “I was in the Spirit” moments for the inspiration of Scripture
 - c) But, back to point number 1 here – we are to have an attitude of being “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day,” in that we are to be in His presence and His power while we are in church to here the Word of God preached and taught, and that the remainder of the Lord’s Day is to be devoted to Him, and to what was learned of Him in His house

Conclusion: Most of the time we skip these two verses, much like we skip the first three chapters of the book of Revelation, in order to get to the “good

stuff.” In doing so, we miss one of the most important references to Sunday being the Lord’s Day found in the Bible. It isn’t just said in passing here, but it is said to establish the principle of Sunday being His – not just another day of the week when we do all the work around the house that we couldn’t get done during the week – it’s His and He deserves it for what He did for us.