

# Revelation 1:9-18

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[ 0 : 00 ] Do you want to see Jesus? There's a song we sing that's very similar to the one that we've just sung, but not the same one, that begins with the words, open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus, to reach out and touch Him and say that we love Him.

I'm not sure exactly what is meant by reaching out and touching Him, but we certainly do want to see Jesus. And that song continues, open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus. And that line of the song certainly captures what we need to do. We need to listen to God speaking in His Word, and as we listen, so we see.

We see Jesus. Now, this is true of the Bible from beginning to end, but it is in a very particular and marked way true of our passage this morning, where John shares with us a glorious vision of the exalted Jesus.

And as we listen to John, we are enabled to see Jesus. The vision, as we've read, is of the exalted Jesus, the enthroned and reigning Jesus.

[ 1 : 27 ] It is a vision of King Jesus. We need to listen and see the King. But in the passage, we are also enabled to see and learn something of the kingdom.

And the sermon this morning is really a sermon about a kingdom and a king. Now, of the kingdom, we're given only a very passing glimpse or reference in the passage, while of the king, we are given a rich and an ample vision.

But I do want to try and look at both. And what we learn about the first, the kingdom, provides the setting or sets the scene for what we will then discover about the second, about the king of this kingdom.

So, let's more briefly begin by just thinking a little bit about what we discover about the kingdom in this passage, and very particularly as John introduces to his readers what he is about to share with them.

It is a passing reference that he makes to the kingdom, but I think a significant one. Notice there in verse 9, the very first verse of the passage we read, I, John, your brother and companion, in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus.

[ 2 : 52 ] John identifies himself and his readers as belonging to the same kingdom. He is a brother and companion of them in the kingdom that is ours in Jesus.

And even in these very brief words of John introducing himself to his readers, we discover some important truths concerning this kingdom that we form a part of.

And let's just notice two or three of them. First of all, this kingdom of which we form a part is a kingdom that is ours in Jesus. I, John, your brother and companion, in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus.

You know, the direct article there that begins, the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance, qualifies all three of these statements. And all of them are ours in Jesus.

So, this kingdom of which we form a part is ours in Jesus. We are citizens of the kingdom, even princes in the kingdom on the basis of our union with Christ the King, on the grounds of what He has done to secure our place in the kingdom.

[ 4 : 07 ] So, this is a kingdom that is ours in Jesus. But also, we discover in what John says that it is a kingdom of brothers and companions. I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom.

And he goes on. That it is, or that is what we are as believers. Brothers and companions in Jesus. Now, so far, so good.

We might say, well, that's good. I'm glad to be a member of this kingdom. I'm glad that I'm a member of the kingdom together with my brothers and companion in arms.

So far, so good. But listen to what comes next about this kingdom that we form part of. It is a kingdom of suffering brothers and companions.

I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus. To belong to the kingdom of Jesus is to belong to a people marked by suffering in and for Jesus.

[ 5 : 17 ] Now, that may be more extreme or less extreme depending on our circumstances, depending sometimes on our faithfulness. But nonetheless, it is a feature, an intrinsic element of our identity as members of these kingdoms that we are a suffering people.

Don't be surprised if that is your experience. You have no reason to be caught by surprise if your loyalty to Jesus results in suffering of one kind or another.

That is as it is. But then also we can say just from that introduction that this kingdom that we form a part of is a kingdom of suffering brothers and companions who patiently endure.

I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus. We suffer for Jesus and we are given grace to endure by Jesus.

And, of course, when John declares these things about the kingdom, he knows what he's talking about because even as he writes, he is suffering for Jesus and enduring patiently as he is strengthened by Jesus.

[ 6 : 32 ] He goes on to explain to us that he was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Although John doesn't speak for Jesus.

And then granted, of course, the vision that he shares with us. And John is not the only one suffering and enduring. As he makes very clear in the language that he uses, he is suffering with his brothers and companions.

Those who are going to read this letter are, in the language of John, brothers and companions in suffering. So he doesn't say, well, this is what I'm going through, but you guys are okay.

No, he says, I know that you're also suffering. That's what unites us. We're brothers in suffering. We're companions in suffering. I know that is your circumstance. I know all that you are suffering and all that many of you are patiently enduring.

Some more so than others. But nonetheless, he is suffering and he is writing to believers who are suffering.

[ 8 : 04 ] John is not writing to churches where all is well, marked by stability and prosperity and growth. Both the churches that he writes to, the ones that he mentions by name and all the others that these represent.

They're largely weak and struggling and scared. They are churches surrounded by the pomp and power of Rome. At one at the same time, intimidating and alluring.

And both, of course, with the dangers that accompany what it is to be intimidated and what it is to be allured or seduced. And while time doesn't allow us to develop how that applies to us today, it's really not so different for us today.

What we read and what we discover about the kingdom of Jesus remains true today. For many believers, being a Christian does indeed involve great suffering.

Loyalty to Jesus has consequences that can be dangerous and violent. Deprivation of liberty, of work. If we are spared these things, we thank God for that.

[ 9 : 17 ] We acknowledge that for many that is their reality. But in its own way, our society also intimidates and allures. When we think of how our society is changing and how there are new ways of thinking that are deemed to be much more modern and much more tolerant and much more progressive.

And you know what I'm talking about. It can be intimidating to say, well, I don't agree with that. God says different. But it can also be alluring to get on board and simply go with the flow.

And avoid the challenges and the hostility and the opposition. And so, in a way, it's not so different for us today. So, this is the kingdom of Jesus.

And it's not that impressive, certainly not by the usual measures by which we judge kingdoms. We judge kingdoms by the measure of how powerful they are, how wealthy they are, what prestige they enjoy, what security they are able to grant their citizens.

And on all those measures, the kingdom of Jesus seems to fall very far short. Next to Rome. If we think of the original recipients of the letter of the kingdom of Jesus, looks just a little pathetic.

[ 10 : 34 ] Well, that's the kingdom. Now, what about the king? Now, before we listen and see the king, let's notice the circumstances in which John is granted this vision. He is on Patmos.

And he tells us, on the Lord's Day, I was in the Spirit. Although John does not tell us this explicitly, the subsequent use of this expression by the early church, on the Lord's Day, indicates that this was a reference to the first day of the week, the day of Jesus' resurrection.

And there's more that we could say about that, but we want to move on to the vision itself. But here is John on the Lord's Day. We understand that to be on the first day of the week.

He describes himself as being in the Spirit. Again, an expression that he doesn't choose to expand or elaborate or explain, but we can take it as referring to a God-given receptivity to the Spirit speaking.

In this case, very especially through the vision that John is about to be granted. And then we come to the vision itself. And what do we discover about the king of this seemingly less than impressive kingdom?

[ 11 : 50 ] And really here what I want you to pick up on is the contrast between the kingdom as it appears. So unimpressive, so seemingly weak, so downtrodden, and the contrast between the kingdom and the one who reigns over it in the vision of the king.

And in verses 12 to 16, we find this vision that John has granted shared with us. But before we listen and see the king, a couple of general points about the vision.

The vision, and we've read it already, is not intended as a literal description of Jesus in heaven. It is rather a sequence of richly resonant images intended to convey the overwhelming glory of Jesus the Christ, to convey truths about his person and about his work to the citizens of the kingdom, to the princes in the kingdom.

And these images are carefully built together, drawing largely on images from the Old Testament. Maybe not exclusively, but largely on images from the Old Testament, some of which are very recognizable.

And we can detect the particular passage that is being drawn on, especially from the book of Daniel, as we've already noted, but also from Exodus and from Ezekiel, and depending on how you understand some of what is said from other parts of the Old Testament as well.

[ 13 : 29 ] But let's launch in to the vision itself. Now, even the manner in which John introduces the vision is intriguing. We read there in verse 12, I turned round to see the voice.

I turned round to see the voice. There in verse 12. Now, at one level, if you think about it, it doesn't make any sense. How can you see the voice? But at another, it captures the multi-sensory experience of the vision, where John sees and hears, and it's all of his senses are involved in this revelation that is being given to him.

He sees the voice. But what does John see? And really, all we're going to do is go through these verses and look at each part of it one by one and draw out truths that we discover about Jesus from the vision that John received.

Well, the first thing we're told is that he sees seven golden lampstands. In the second half of verse 12, we read, And when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands.

Now, in verse 20, we're told what these lampstands represent. So, we don't need to spend much time working it out because we're told. There in the second half of verse 20, we read, The seven stars are the angels of seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

[ 15 : 00 ] So, there it's as clear as it could be. These seven lampstands represent the seven churches that he is writing to. And as we've already indicated, these seven churches represent the totality of God's people at the time of writing and indeed subsequent to the time of writing.

So, that is what the seven lampstands represent. But the imagery that is used to portray the seven churches transports us to the tabernacle and subsequently to the temple that followed from the tabernacle, and very particularly to the furnishings that we find in the tabernacle.

And we can turn to Exodus chapter 25 and just notice the manner in which these seven lampstands reflects or echoes or parallels, whatever is the appropriate verb, what we find there in the tabernacle.

So, in Exodus chapter 25, for reasons of time, we're going to have to just read two verses, one at the beginning of this little section and one at the end, but I think that's sufficient to capture the idea. So, in this chapter, you have described the different furnishings that there were in the tabernacle, and we're focusing in on the lampstand.

And notice there in verse 31, the instruction given, make a lampstand of pure gold. And really, that's sufficient for our purposes, and then it goes on to explain different characteristics of the lampstand.

[ 16 : 29 ] But if we then jump to almost the end of that little section in verse 37, we read, so for the lampstand, then make its seven lamps, and set them up on it so that they light the space in front of it, and it goes on.

So, there the picture really is of one piece of furniture, what we know as the menorah, a lampstand, a gold lampstand, that adds seven lights. And the language that John uses here certainly transports us to the tabernacle, to the temple, and very particularly focus our attention on that particular piece of furniture.

Now, as I say, in the tabernacle, that was one piece of furniture, a seven-branched menorah. And it's possible, this is what John is describing when he speaks of the seven golden lampstands.

Or in any case, in the vision, he does see seven distinct lampstands. That's really what we maybe immediately imagine when we read the passage. But nonetheless, even seven separate or distinct lampstands parallel the lampstand in the temple and represent, of course, the one church of Jesus Christ.

And then he sees, as the passage goes on, that there is someone among the seven lampstands. What does the passage say? And when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man.

[ 17 : 59 ] And again, we need to think, well, what is it that John is seeing? What does that mean? Well, the language of someone like a son of man, it echoes language that Jesus used, his own favored self-description as the son of man, but perhaps more significantly, the title that is drawn from the messianic figure in Daniel's vision.

We've read already in Daniel chapter 7 and verses 13 and 14, where Daniel is given this vision of the coming Messiah, and he is described as one like a son of man.

And of course, last week, we already noticed how John had referenced this vision. In chapter 7, when he speaks, look, he is coming with the clouds. Again, this is language that comes from that very same passage, those same two verses, in Daniel 7, 13 and 14.

And so, this one like the son of man clearly is the one that Daniel was speaking of, the coming Messiah. And the son of man is dressed, picking up on the reading again, on the description, he's dressed in a robe, reaching down to the floor, and with a golden sash around his chest.

Now, when we think of that imagery of how this son of man is dressed, our understanding of it has to be influenced by what we've already noted concerning the tabernacle imagery of the lampstands.

[ 19 : 26 ] And in that context, the clothing identifies this one like a son of man as a priestly figure, perhaps intended to be...

our great high priest. He is a high priest who can sympathize with us in our weakness.

Jesus is the only mediator between man and God. He performed that spiritual function on our behalf. But then, in the midst of this description of this son of man, we have this very tender preposition, one like the son of man, among the golden lampstands.

Jesus is among his people, among the lampstands. Now, even if the lampstands are intended to convey the image of a menorah, where the preposition among doesn't visually quite work, we can still see him as alongside and with his church, which, of course, we know is how Jesus is described in the Bible.

He is Emmanuel, God with us. So, yes, he is the king of the universe. Yes, he is over the cosmos, but he is the one who is among the lampstands.

[ 20 : 44 ] He is among his people. He is alongside his suffering church. Jesus is the high priest of his kingdom of priests.

Just a few verses before, we've read of how Jesus has made us to be a kingdom and priest to serve his God and Father. Well, we are the priests, and he is the great high priest.

But what else does John see in his vision? Well, we read in what follows, he sees that the hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow. There in verse 14.

So, this character, one like the Son of Man, walking among the lampstands, his hair was white like wool, as white as snow. And the picture of white hair conveys the idea of one who enjoys great honor, dignity, and wisdom.

Possibly also, the idea of purity and righteousness may be present in this language of white as snow, though I think the principal sense is that of honor and wisdom.

[ 21 : 49 ] But what is most striking is that the image takes us back to Daniel 7. It's in Daniel 7 that we find the language of the Son of Man, but in Daniel 7, in these same two verses, we have the language of the Ancient of Days.

Now, why is this striking? Well, in Daniel's vision, the one like a Son of Man and the Ancient of Days are distinct personalities.

The Son of Man, the coming of Messiah, approaches the Ancient of Days, God Almighty, and he's granted by the Ancient of Days power and honor and authority in a kingdom that will never end.

So, you have the Son of Man, he is one personality, you have the Ancient of Days who is another, and one approaches the other. And so, they are separate and distinct in Daniel's vision.

But in John's vision, Jesus is both the Son of Man and the Ancient of Days, or certainly described in language that corresponds to the Ancient of Days, or to God Almighty.

[ 22 : 52 ] And what this, of course, tells us about Jesus is captured eloquently by the writer to the Hebrews. In Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 3, what do we read about Jesus?

We read there, the Son is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of His being. And it goes on. And that truth is captured in this vision, in the manner in which the one whom John witnesses in the vision is both the Son of Man, and also described in language that corresponds to the Ancient of Days.

But what else does John see? Well, we simply continue reading what we find in the passage. He sees that His eyes were like blazing fire.

There in the second half of verse 14. Now, if the image of the Ancient of Days with white hair might lead us to picture, envisage, a wise but weak grandfather figure, in the event that that were the case.

Well, this is quickly dispelled by the language used to describe His eyes like blazing fire. And the picture, I think we can detect it even without perhaps the benefit of knowing all the background to the language.

[ 24 : 19 ] The picture speaks of penetrating insight. We can maybe best capture the truth conveyed by these blazing eyes in two very simple words, and they are, He knows.

He knows. His blazing eyes allow Him to know everything. He knows. And of course, these are words that will recur time and time again in what follows.

In every letter to each of the churches, these are words that are found. I know. Let's just notice very quickly, in chapter 2, when we have the words for each of the seven churches, what is it that we find?

Verse 2 of chapter 2, I know your deeds. In verse 9 of chapter 2, the next church, I know your afflictions and your poverty.

In verse 13, I know where you live, where Satan has his throne. In verse 19, I know your deeds, your love and faith, and we could go on.

[ 25 : 21 ] You see, these blazing eyes grant to the one who possesses them this insight into the churches and into the very heart of men and women.

And just reflect on that for a moment this morning. Because these blazing eyes can see into the darkest recesses of your heart.

They can see beyond where even you can see. These are the eyes of King Jesus. These blazing eyes. And that's a truth that is both comforting, in the midst of pain and suffering, that perhaps others know nothing about.

But it is also, and ought to be, in a measure terrifying, to imagine that there is one who sees into the very depths of our being.

Just think about that and consider how you ought to respond to one with such eyes. But what else does John see? Well, we'd simply continue in reading what he shares with us.

[ 26 : 28 ] He sees that this one, like the Son of Man, his feet were like bronze glowing in the furnace. Now, the imagery of bronze speaks of strength and power.

And I think here serves as a deliberate contrast with the idol or statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. You remember at the beginning of the book of Daniel in chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream.

And he's distraught because he doesn't know what the dream means. And Daniel is brought to interpret the dream. And there is this marvelous or amazing picture of this statue.

We don't have time to go into all the elements of it, but one feature of this statue is that its feet were feet of clay or clay mixed with bronze. And so marvelous though it was, amazing and dramatic though it was, there was a weakness about it that would lead to its destruction.

And the idol in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, of course, represents Babylon and Rome and every human empire, all with feet of clay, to use an expression that we still use in everyday language.

[ 27 : 36 ] Every kingdom, every emperor, every king, however powerful, however tyrannical, however wealthy, ultimately has feet of clay. But of course the contrast here is with Jesus, the king of our kingdom, a kingdom that appears weak and pathetic and powerless, but the king of our kingdom has feet of glowing bronze, feet that speak of strength and power and might and permanence.

What else does John see and hear? Well, we simply go on and read what it says. John hears that his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. Now the image conveys the authority of the one who speaks and the power that the words spoken carry.

We were thinking about this passage at our neighborhood fellowship on Wednesday night, and this picture of rushing waters suggested some other complementary ideas.

The idea of the reach of rushing waters, reaching to the furthest point, but also the sense of this voice drowning out all competing voices.

And maybe this also is intended in the imagery that is being employed. But here again, to have a clearer or a more precise understanding of the imagery used, the Old Testament context is critical and revealing.

[ 29 : 05 ] And maybe particularly what is said by the prophet Ezekiel. The very first chapter of Ezekiel, where again Ezekiel is the recipient of a vision from God.

In verse 24 of that chapter, and I'll simply focus in on the words that are relevant for our purposes. In that verse, we read these words, describing a noise.

And the noise is described like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty. And so, as I say, without going into the context in which Ezekiel says that, the point is that the voice of the Almighty is identified with the roar of rushing waters.

And here in this vision, the one who is among the lampstands, the exalted Jesus is spoken of as one whose voice is like the roar of rushing waters.

The voice of God is like the roar of rushing waters. And in John's vision, it is the voice of Jesus that is described as like the roar of rushing waters.

[ 30 : 17 ] And I'll leave you to join the dots. Before we comment on what immediately follows in the passage, if you're following it, what immediately follows is a reference to His right hand.

We're going to come back to the right hand, but we're going to jump ahead to what follows in verse 16, because it also relates to the voice of Jesus. And so, it seems to make sense to consider them together. So, this one whose voice is like the sound of rushing waters, of him it is also said that coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword.

This clearly also speaks of his voice. It's coming out of his mouth, like a tongue, I suppose. Like the rushing waters, the sword describes the voice or words of Jesus.

And the sword speaks of judgment, but it's a double-edged sword that perhaps suggests that it cuts both ways, to judge and to save, to wound and to heal.

And the image that is used here, of course, reminds us not of something we need to go back to the Old Testament to find, but to what we find in the language that Paul uses as he writes to the Ephesians.

[ 31 : 31 ] And in chapter 6 and in verse 17, he speaks of the word of the Spirit, or the sword of the Spirit, rather, which is the word of God. God, in Jesus, created the world by His word.

He sustains it by His word, and He rules over it by the word of His mouth. But what else does John see in this vision?

Well, let's go back to the right hand reference there in verse 16. In His right hand, He held seven stars.

Now, in verse 20, just as verse 20 helpfully identified the seven lampstands as the seven churches, in verse 20, the seven stars are also identified.

Though here, there's a little bit more room for debate as to what exactly is being said. Well, what's said is clear enough, but rather what it means. It says the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

[ 32 : 36 ] So, the seven lampstands are the seven churches. Well, that's easy enough. The seven churches are identified, and we can get that. But the seven stars that are held in the right hand of the exalted Jesus are described here as the angels of the seven churches.

And, of course, the debate surrounds the identity of these angels that they are spoken of. Are they angelic beings assigned to the churches to care for them in some way or other?

Or are they human messengers? The word angels, of course, simply means literally messengers. Though in the book of Revelation, it's used almost exclusively of angelic beings.

Nonetheless, the word itself does mean messengers. Might they be human messengers exercising leadership in the churches? It's certainly the way it has often been understood.

And other possibilities are suggested. Now, for the moment, for this morning, we don't need to come to a definite conclusion. Suffice it to say that the angels, whoever they are, and however we understand their identity, represent the churches.

[ 33 : 52 ] That much is clear. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. So you see what I'm saying? I'm saying, even if we're not 100% sure who these angels are, what we can say with complete confidence is that in some way they represent the seven churches.

And, of course, this is the big truth. The stars are held in the hand of Jesus. The churches are held in the hand of Jesus. You are held in the hand of Jesus.

If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, if you are a brother and companion in the kingdom of Jesus, then you and the church that you are a part of is held in the right hand of Jesus.

This church, this congregation, is held in the right hand of Jesus. Now, today, we are held in His hand.

Now, this image of the stars, just the picture employed, it may come, again, from Daniel. In Daniel chapter 12 and verse 3, we read of those shining like stars in the universe.



[ 35 : 06 ] Let's just have a quick look at it. I should say that the connection with Daniel 12, 3, on this occasion, isn't nearly as clear-cut as the connections that we make with Daniel 7, just in all honesty.

But nonetheless, it's possible that what we find in Daniel 12 also is the background to this picture language being employed. In Daniel chapter 12 and verse 3, we read, And so there, believers are being described as stars, and so it's possible that that same picture is being employed here to speak of those who represent the churches.

It's also possible that pagan imagery is being borrowed for the purposes of communicating truth to the church.

That's also quite plausible, and there's no intrinsic reason why that would not be done. The source of the picture, the source of the image, is less important than the truth it conveys, that Jesus holds in His right hand the seven churches.

He holds in His right hand His own people. Now, it's also possible there may have been an element of polemic in using this image or this picture.

[ 36 : 34 ] I'm not going to repeat everything I said to the children, but I hope you remember what I said to the children about how on a coin, at the very time when this letter was written in the reign of Domitian, as it's generally understood the time that John wrote this letter, there was a coin, and in that coin there was this wee boy playing with the stars, the son of Domitian who had died as an infant.

And Domitian, in his folly, in his foolishness, in the lunacy that is the product of pride, he imagined his dead son reigning like Zeus over the universe.

That would have been a coin that would have been familiar to the readers of this letter. And yet here they listen, and they're amazed to discover that there is another king, and this king does hold in his right hand the seven stars, holds in his right hand his own people and cares for them, and protects them.

Who really reigns in the heavens and on the earth? Not Domitian or his son or any other, but King Jesus. What else does John see?

Well, we're coming to the end of the vision, and we read that he sees that his face, the face of the one he is being presented with, his face was like the sun in all its brilliance.

[ 38 : 00 ] What truth does this image convey about Jesus? Well, it's a picture of overwhelming and dazzling glory. It's an image that transports us to Mount Sinai, to God warning Moses that he cannot see God's face and live.

You remember when Moses had to return at Mount Sinai, after the construction of the graven image, and the initial tablets had been destroyed, and Moses returns, and he's given this warning by God.

You must not see my face. You cannot see my face and live, because the overwhelming splendor and glory of God's face was one that Moses could not withstand.

And surely we have echoes of that reality in the language that we find here. His face was like the sun, shining in all its brilliance. The word there is power, dunamis, shining in all its power, in all its brilliance, in all its dazzling capacity.

And this is the face of the exalted Jesus. The language, of course, here at the beginning of Revelation also anticipates what will be said towards the end of Revelation.

[ 39 : 21 ] In Revelation chapter 21 and verse 23, or if we read from verse 22, where there is this picture of this heavenly city, and we read there, I did not see a temple in this city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

And then particularly what follows, the 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 light.

Yes, the Lamb is its light, because the face of the Lamb is like the sun, shining in all its brilliance. And so this is the King of our kingdom.

Yes, the kingdom of Jesus is a kingdom marked by suffering. It is a kingdom where the citizens of the kingdom, yes, even the princes of the kingdom, have to endure patiently.

It is a kingdom that, by the measure of this world, is not very impressive. But the King of our kingdom is King Jesus. It is the one whose vision, John was granted, and the vision that he shares with us.

[ 40 : 30 ] We are brothers and companions in a kingdom, the kingdom of Jesus, a kingdom of suffering and patient endurance. But we lift our eyes to the King of our kingdom, King Jesus, a King who is with His people among the lampstands, a King of honor and wisdom and purity, a King who knows, who knows you, a King of all power and strength, a King who enjoys all authority, a King who judges and saves, a King who holds His people in His right hand, and a King who enables us to see something of His dazzling and magnificent glory.

And in the very words of John earlier in the chapter, to Him be glory and power forever and ever. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we do thank You for Your Word. We thank You that we can listen and see. Help us to listen and see. As we read and listen, that we might see Jesus, that we might see Him in something of His wonder and glory and beauty and magnificence, and that as we do and as we know Him better, so we would understand how the truths concerning Him are to serve as a challenge and as a comfort, as security in the midst of difficulty and suffering, that it might even give us the grace to endure patiently whatever suffering is our lot.

and we pray that You would help us to receive this vision and to respond to it as we ought. And we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.