

LESSON 15

Messages to churches from the Master

Objective: To behold the Lord Jesus Christ and be blessed by hearing His voice.

Bible references: Rev. chs.1,2,3

Memory verses: (NKJV) Rev. 3:2-3

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you

Introduction:

Do you know a few names of people mentioned in the Bible who received a revelation of God and heard His voice? Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Apostle Paul and others had visions from God and heard His voice and their ministries became very powerful after such experiences. Read Isa. 6:1-8; Eze. 1:1-3:4; Acts 9:3-5. We must also receive visions of the Lord and hear His voice so that we may be used mightily in our ministries. The first four chapters of Revelation record how John received the vision from the Master of the churches and what the Lord had to say to the churches.

Seven-fold glory of the Lord:

Look at the words describing Jesus Christ in Rev. 1:4-8,17,18. Christ is variously described as the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth, One who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father, One who is coming with the clouds, the Alpha and the Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come and the Almighty. Each of the above expressions is very meaningful and deserves study in detail. The seven-fold beauty and glory of the Lord as seen by John are described in vs. 12 to 16.

- i) Head and hair (1:14): His head and hair, white like wool, as white as snow, point to His ancientness (eternal existence) and His holiness.

- ii) Eyes (1:14): His eyes like blazing fire point to the fact that no creation is hidden from His sight. Everything is open and naked before His eyes (Heb. 4:12; Psa. 139:1-8).
- iii) Feet (1:15): His feet like bronze glowing in a furnace declare that He will judge Satan and the world and trample them under His feet (Rev. 19:15).
- iv) Voice (1:15): His voice like the sound of rushing waters declares His royalty and power.
- v) Hand (1:16): In His right hand, he holds seven stars which represent the 7 angels of the church. Church ministers are secure in His hands. (John 10:28-29).
- vi) Mouth (1:16): The sharp double-edged sword coming out of His mouth represents words of judgement that will proceed out of His mouth (Rev. 19:15).
- vii) Face (1:16): His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. The face of Jesus shone like this on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:2). He will appear as the Sun of Righteousness at His second coming (Mal. 4:2). All effects of darkness will disappear from the world.

John saw the Lord dressed in a robe reaching down to His feet with a golden sash around His chest and walking amidst seven golden lamp stands. The Lord is walking in the midst of the seven lamp stands which are His churches. He examines whether the lamps have oil in them, and the wicks are trimmed up. If we approach Him earnestly, He will fill us with His Spirit and trim our wicks so that we can shine forth in the world. (Compare the vision of John with the vision of Daniel in Dan. 10).

Messages to the seven churches:

Messages from the glorious Lord to seven churches are recorded in chs.2 and 3. They are addressed to seven churches which existed in the western part of Asia Minor in the first century. Although there were many more churches in the region, these seven churches represent them all. More than that, they also point to the conditions and experiences of all believers at all times. If we study the messages in conjunction with church history, we can identify them with various periods in the church age. The seven churches represent seven periods from the first century till the second coming of Jesus Christ. Below are the periods associated with the seven churches:

1. Ephesus: Loose church: AD 70-120 (Rev. 2:1-7)
2. Smyrna: Persecuted church: AD 120-312 (Rev. 2:8-11)

3. Pergamum: Lustful church: AD 312 - 606 (Rev. 2:12-17)
4. Thyatira: Ritualistic church: AD 606-1520 (Rev. 2:18-29)
5. Sardis: Reformed church: AD 1520-1750 (Rev. 3:1-6)
6. Philadelphia: Loving church (with brotherly love): AD 1750-1914 (Rev. 3:7-13)
7. Laodicea: Lukewarm church: AD 1914 onwards (Rev. 3: 14-22)

Every message begins with an introduction by the Master about His special attributes. Then appreciation, drawbacks, exhortation and promises to the church follow. No drawbacks are mentioned in the messages to Smyrna and Philadelphia churches. What does the Master see when He looks at us with His eyes like flaming fire? There are no words of appreciation to Sardis and Laodicea churches. How sad it is! Let us examine ourselves in the light of the messages to churches. Let us sanctify ourselves by finding our mistakes and rectifying them. Let us be ready for the Lord's coming. Awake and rejuvenate ourselves.

Questions:

1. Which are the names used in Rev. 1 to describe the greatness of Jesus Christ?
2. Describe the seven-fold glory of Christ as seen by John. What spiritual truth is indicated by each member of Christ's body?
3. Name the churches to which the Master gives messages in Revelation. Describe the condition of each church in one word.
4. What do the seven lamp stands and the seven stars signify?