**Revelation 1:9-20**

I. Introduction

A. "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” -- AW Tozer

B. When we think of Jesus we all have some mental image along with a sense of who he is, and that picture of him shapes how we interact with him and how we live our lives in general

II. The Passage

A. Introductory comments

1. Notice how awesome and overwhelming this encounter was for John

a. He keeps using the word “like” as if to say what he experienced was only “like” other experiences, but it can’t be fully put into words or explained

b. His reaction to this encounter is to fall down at Jesus’ feet as though dead (v. 17)

2. Notice how intentional this vision is

a. Jesus can appear to John in whatever form he wants

b. So, since he appears in this specific way, we should assume he is being intentional and wants to communicate specific things about himself, so we should be asking, “what do you want to communicate about yourself via this appearance?”

B. Jesus’ appearance

1. 7 golden lampstands (v. 12 and 20)

= the seven churches and their role as light (=faithful witnesses) in a dark world

2. One “like a son of man” (v. 13)

=Daniel 7:9-14: In contrast to four beastly kingdoms that have authority for a time, one like a son of man is the central figure in human history who receives from God a kingdom that will never end.

3. Clothes (v. 13)

= He is dressed like a priest

a. Like a priest, he has offered a sacrifice on behalf of the people (Hb 10:11-14)

b. Like a priest, he intercedes on behalf of the people (Ro 8:33-34)

4. Head and hair are white (v. 14)

= Purity

a. There is not a trace of sin (selfishness, greed, jealousy, lust, etc.)

b. There is only 100% pure goodness (love, joy, peace, courage, etc.)

5. Eyes of flaming fire (v. 14)

= Penetrating and purifying

a. He burns right through the clutter and sees into the heart of things

b. We have a phrase: “He looked right through me”

c. Rev 2:23: “I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.”

6. Feet of glowing bronze (v. 15)

= standing on a foundation that is strong and unbreakable

a. In Daniel 2: 31-35 kingdoms of the earth are represented as built of impressive metals but with feet that are partially iron and partially mixed clay and they collapse because of the shaky foundation. Every human institution, kingdom, company that is not built on the foundation of Christ will eventually go down.

b. Christ alone is built on a foundation that can never be shaken

7. Voice of rushing waters (v. 15)

= his voice is authoritative

a. when he speaks his voice drowns out all other voices

b. yet, his voice can also be calming and soothing

8. Hand holds the 7 stars (v. 16)

a. v. 20: 7 stars are the angels of the 7 churches

b. Apparently, each church had an angel responsible to it

c. This image probably conveys the idea that Jesus has these seven angels (and by implication these seven churches) firmly in his hand. His is in control of what’s going on and he has them firmly in his hand.

9. Sword coming out of his mouth (v. 16)

= his authority to pronounce decisive words of judgment (see also 2:16, 19:15). He is the coming ruler and judge whose decisions will determine every person’s destiny.

10. Face like the sun (v. 16)

= his appearance was so glorious, it was almost too intense to look at

B. Jesus’ words

1. Do not fear

John (and the churches) desperately needed to hear that

2. I am the first and the last

Jesus is claiming to be the eternal and all-sovereign God who has always been and who always gets the first and last word

3. I am the living one

He took on death and conquered it for all humanity

4. I hold the keys of death and Hades

He now has authority over the realm of death which means he can rescue us from death when we die and bring us to his presence in heaven

**Discussion Questions**

1. Consider the quote at the beginning of Sunday’s message: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” As you consider your general picture and understanding of who Jesus is, how does John’s vision square with your picture of him?

2. As you consider the various descriptions of Jesus’ appearance and their significance, which one spoke to you most powerfully and why?

3. As you consider the various descriptions of Jesus’ appearance, which one was the hardest or most challenging or most confusing for you?

4. Consider Jesus’ words spoken to John in v. 17: “Do not be afraid.” Where do you need to hear Jesus speak those words to you in your life at this time?