

# The Inaugural Vision

Revelation 1:9-20

**WELLSPRING** CHURCH

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

## Revelation 1:9–11 (ESV)

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. <sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet <sup>11</sup> saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

## Revelation 1:12–15 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

<sup>14</sup> The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup> his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

## Revelation 1:16–20 (ESV)

<sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. <sup>17</sup> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, <sup>18</sup> and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. <sup>19</sup> Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. <sup>20</sup> As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.



Mitylene

Pergamum

ASIA

Thyatira

Sardis

Aegean Sea

Smyrna

Philadelphia

SAMOS

Ephesus

Hierapolis

Laodicea

Colossae

Priene

Miletus

PATMOS

Halicarnassus



# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

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This expression refers to a state of spiritual exaltation best described as a trance. Berkeley translates, "I became Spirit-possessed." Peter at Joppa (Acts 10:10; 11:5) and Paul at Jerusalem (Acts 22:17; cf. 2 Cor 12:2–4) had similar ecstatic experiences.



# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was **in the Spirit** on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...

## Acts 10:10–11 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup> And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, **he fell into a trance** <sup>11</sup> and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was **in the Spirit** on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...

## Acts 22:17–18 (ESV)

“When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, **I fell into a trance** <sup>18</sup> and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was **in the Spirit** on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...

It does not seem as if John travelled to heaven in his body. He was caught up in the Spirit.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was **in the Spirit** on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...

## Revelation 4:2 (ESV)

**At once I was in the Spirit**, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was **in the Spirit** on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...

## Revelation 17:3 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> **And he carried me away in the Spirit** into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit *on the Lord's day*, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...

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Most likely this phrase refers to Sunday, chosen by the early church on the basis of the resurrection as the day of worship. Stott (73–74) argues that [the Greek] was originally associated with the resurrection and then with the eschatological triumph of the Lord of lords and thereby came to be used of the “Lord’s Day.”

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit *on the Lord's day*, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...

## Acts 20:7 (ESV)

**On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread,** Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.



# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a *trumpet*...

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Eschatological significance as a harbinger of the day of the Lord

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a *trumpet*...

## Matthew 24:30–31 (ESV)

Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And he will send out his angels *with a loud trumpet call*, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a **trumpet**...

## 1 Corinthians 15:52 (ESV)

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at **the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound**, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a *trumpet*...

the sound like a trumpet blast  
is also associated with  
*theophany*.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>10</sup> I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a **trumpet**...

## Exodus 19:16 (ESV)

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a **very loud trumpet blast**, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>11</sup> saying, “**Write what you see in a book** and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

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“writing it down”:

1. makes it accessible for readers everywhere (preserves it) and
2. makes it definite/accurate (no hearsay debate).



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Ramsay’s suggestion that the seven cities named by John were chosen because they were the distribution centers for the seven postal districts of west-central Asia Minor is attractive and quite plausible.

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The cities are about thirty miles apart along a circular road.

## Patmos and the Seven Churches

 Presumed route by which John's letter was circulated among the seven churches



0 25mi  
0 25km

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

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The entire scroll was to be read to all the churches.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>11</sup> saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it **to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.**”

“Seven churches” signifies the universal church. This message, while having a particular application to specific congregations, are for the edification of the entire church.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

## The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

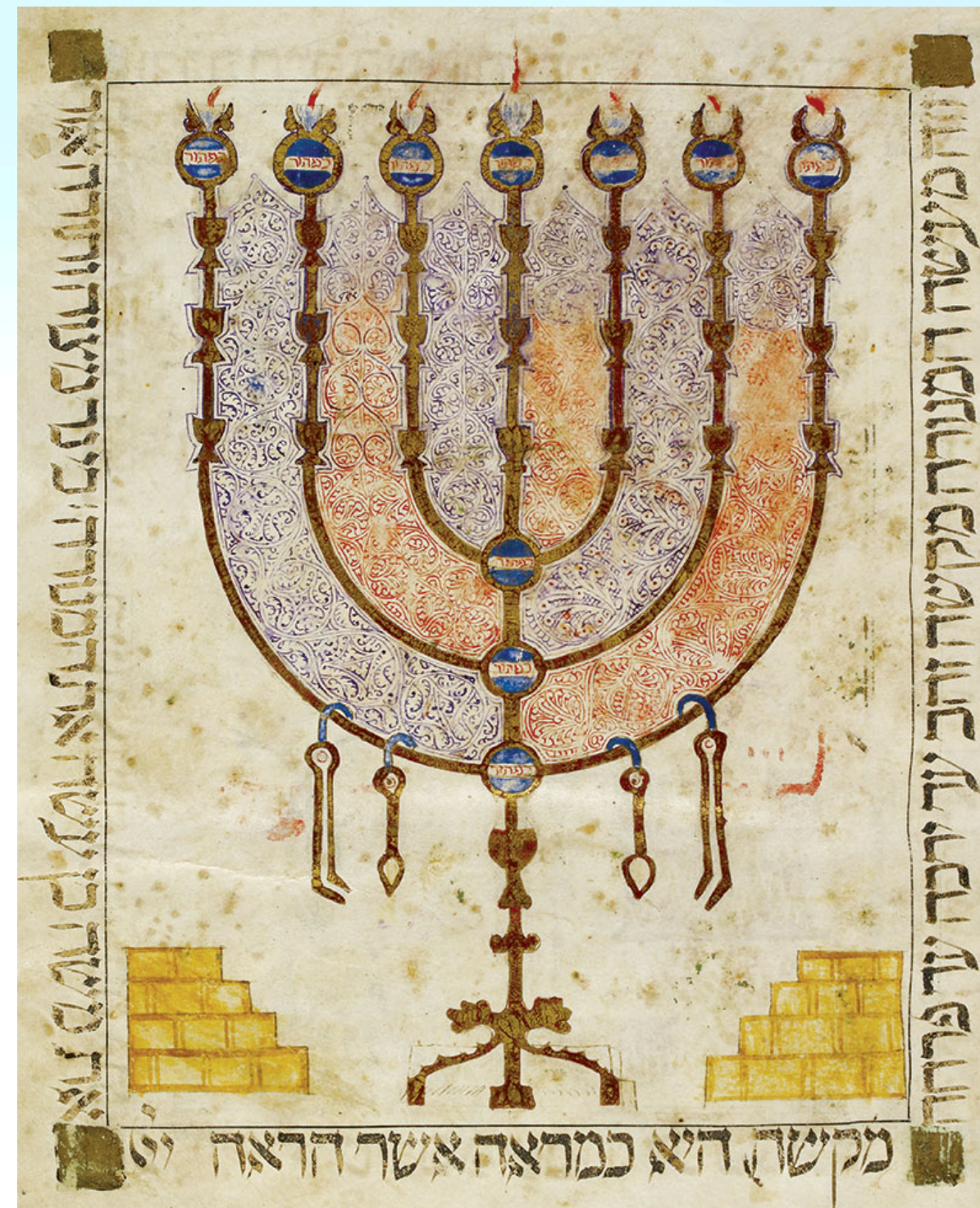
<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw **seven golden lampstands**, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

The seven-branched  
lampstand in the temple made  
of pure gold (Ex. 25:31–40)



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The lampstands are later identified as the church.

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## Revelation 1:20 (ESV)

As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and **the seven lampstands are the seven churches.**

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw **seven golden lampstands**, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

The lampstands in the temple are symbolic of the Garden of Eden. The temple is the microcosm of the New Creation marked by reconciled fellowship with God.

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While generally, “son of man” means “human being,” over time it became associated with a messianic figure

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## Ezekiel 2:1 (ESV)

And he [the Lord] said to me [Ezekiel], “**Son of man**, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.”



# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one **like a son of man**, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

## **Daniel 7:13–14 (ESV)**

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a **son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, **clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.**

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, **clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.**

The Greek word translated “a robe reaching down to his feet” (podērēs) occurs only here in the NT. It is found seven times in the LXX, and in every case but one it refers to the attire of the high priest. The sash of the priest was made of fine twined linen and embroidered with needlework (Exod 39:29), while the sash that gathered together the long robe of the exalted Christ (it probably came down diagonally from one shoulder to the waist) was of gold. Josephus speaks of the priest’s girdle as being interwoven with gold. This, plus the fact that high girding (“around his chest”) denotes the dignity of an important office, suggests that this part of the description is intended to set forth the high-priestly function of Christ.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>14</sup> The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup> his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

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<sup>14</sup> **The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow.** His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup> his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

White hair symbolizes  
wisdom and dignity.

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Penetrating and wise for  
judgment.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

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“feet like burnished bronze refined in a furnace” is drawn from Daniel 10:6

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## Daniel 10:6 (ESV)

His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and **legs like the gleam of burnished bronze**, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

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<sup>14</sup> The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup> **his feet were like burnished bronze**, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

This is set in contrast to other images with different kinds of temporal feet.

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## Daniel 2:32–34 (ESV)

<sup>32</sup> The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup> **its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay**. <sup>34</sup> As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, **and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.**

## The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>14</sup> The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup> **his feet were like burnished bronze**, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

“burnished bronze” denotes stability and strength. He and his kingdom are everlasting, unlike human kings and kingdoms.

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In Daniel 10:6, the voice of the son of man is likened to that of a crowd. Here, John compares it to rushing waters, which “may signal the approach of God.”

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<sup>14</sup> The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup> his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and **his voice was like the roar of many waters.**

## Ezekiel 1:24 (ESV)

<sup>24</sup> And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings **like the sound of many waters,** like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings.



# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>14</sup> The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup> his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and **his voice was like the roar of many waters.**

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<sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

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<sup>16</sup> In his **right hand** he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

The right hand connoted strength (Pss 89:13; 98:1) and favor (Matt 25:33–34; Ps 110:1), implying that the stars are under his authority and protection.

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# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held **seven stars**, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

That Christ has the full complement of stars in his right hand indicates his sovereign control over the churches.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held **seven stars**, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

That Christ (v. 16) holds in His hand the seven stars (identified in v. 20 as the angels of the churches) shows that His authority extends also to the heavenly realms. This may suggest that the stars, even if angelic, represent the church's heavenly existence and the lampstands its earthly existence.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

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The sharp two-edged sword coming out of Christ's mouth (see also 2:16 and 19:15) is based on the prophecies in Isa. 11:4 and 49:2, both speaking of Christ in His role as judge ("He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth," Isa. 11:4). With this sword, Christ will judge both disobedience in the church (2:16) and the world (19:15).



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The high point of the inaugural vision is the face of Jesus shining like the sun in all its brilliance.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, **and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.**

Like the transfiguration.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, **and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.**

## Matthew 17:2 (ESV)

And he was transfigured before them,  
and **his face shone like the sun**, and his  
clothes became white as light.

# The Inaugural Vision (1:9–20)

<sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, **and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.**

Christ's face being like the sun shining in its strength is an allusion to Judg. 5:31, where the same is said of the victorious Israelite warrior. Here the portrayal in Judges is viewed as pointing to Christ as the ideal end-time messianic warrior.