



Lent 2020: Coming back to Jesus

Ash Wednesday 26th February: A vision of Jesus

Introduction and Worship

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne,⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

A vision of Jesus in the Scriptures

“Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.” (Rev 1:3)

A vision of Jesus from the Spirit

On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,¹¹ which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis,

Philadelphia and Laodicea.”

John hears Jesus’s voice because he is “in the Spirit.” In this case, the fact that it is the Lord’s Day seems important: John has taken special time on a special day to be with Jesus. In Ezekiel, the idea of God speaking to us is closely connected with the Spirit being in us. So we can be in the Spirit, and the Spirit can be in us, but either way, God speaks to us.

A vision of Jesus in Suffering, Kingdom, and Patient Endurance

“I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus...”

Sometimes following Jesus feels a bit like doing the splits. On the one hand (or under the one foot!) there is all the joy of God’s kingdom coming, with people being saved, healed, finding new life and freedom in Christ. Pulling the other way is the suffering of this life, where the things we so long for do not seem to happen, or certainly not when we would like them to. And in the middle we stand, pulled in both directions, praying for patient endurance. What an encouragement that John, who knew the joys and sorrows of friendship with Jesus better than anyone, says that he is our brother and our companion in this.

A vision of Jesus, the same yesterday, today and forever

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is the one who was, and is, and is to come. Sometimes we can wonder at the world around us, and the way that it changes. In all of this whirl it can be easy to lose focus on Jesus and all that he has done, all that he is doing, and all that he will do until he comes again.

Closing Worship