The Book of Revelation

When Jesus Shows Up Chapter 1:9-20

Have you ever wondered what Jesus looked like when He walked on this earth? I'm not interested in some artistic guess of some Renaissance painter who conceives him as a blonde, blue-eyed European. Nor am I intrigued by modern fantasies that feminize our Lord and neuter Him. I do often wonder: what did the Lord really look like? The prophet Isaiah has an interesting perspective in Isaiah 53:2-3: "He has no form or splendor; And when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him ... He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." It is not a pretty picture and doesn't really provide much help. To be honest, we need to acknowledge that we really don't know what Jesus looked like when He walked on the earth. (Danny Akin)

Let me ask you a 2nd question: Would you like to know what Jesus looks like now, the Jesus of today, resurrected, ascended, glorified and majestic? Well, I've got good news. Three times in Revelation we are given magnification and breath taking portraits of our heavenly King. They appear in 1:9-20; 5:1-14 and 19:11-21. They are not identical, but they are complementary. They are not intended to be exhaustive and literal, but descriptive and pictorial as they provide a glimpse of the glorified Christ in His appearance, apparel and authority, who at any moment, any place, any time, any day or any situation is all we need.

John understood our need to catch a glimpse and to see anew the glorified Christ, especially when times are tough and particular crises overtake us. John found himself in just this kind of situation, exiled as a political prisoner to the rock quarry island of Patmos. Here in 1:9-20 John was privileged to see the Lord in all His splendor, and he gives us a vivid description of Jesus.

Revelation 1:9-11 (CSB)

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

Revelation 1:12-16 (CSB)

Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was one like the Son of Man, dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest. 14 The hair of his head was white as wool — white as snow — and his eyes like a fiery flame. 15 His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of cascading waters. 16 He had seven stars in his right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from his mouth, and his face was shining like the sun at full strength.

Revelation 1:17-20 (CSB)

When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last, 18 and the Living One. I was dead, but look — I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades. 19 Therefore write what you have seen, what is, and what will take place after this. 20 The mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Let's take a close look at John before Jesus shows up...

John had been faithful to preach the Word of God and proclaim the testimony of Jesus Christ (cf. 1:2). What was his reward? It got him thrown in jail and sent away to die alone. Patmos was a 10 x 6 mile mountainous island in the Aegean Sea about 70 miles W.S.W. from Ephesus off the coast of Asia Minor. It was in essence a penal colony for exiled criminals banished and sentenced to hard labor in the rock quarries.

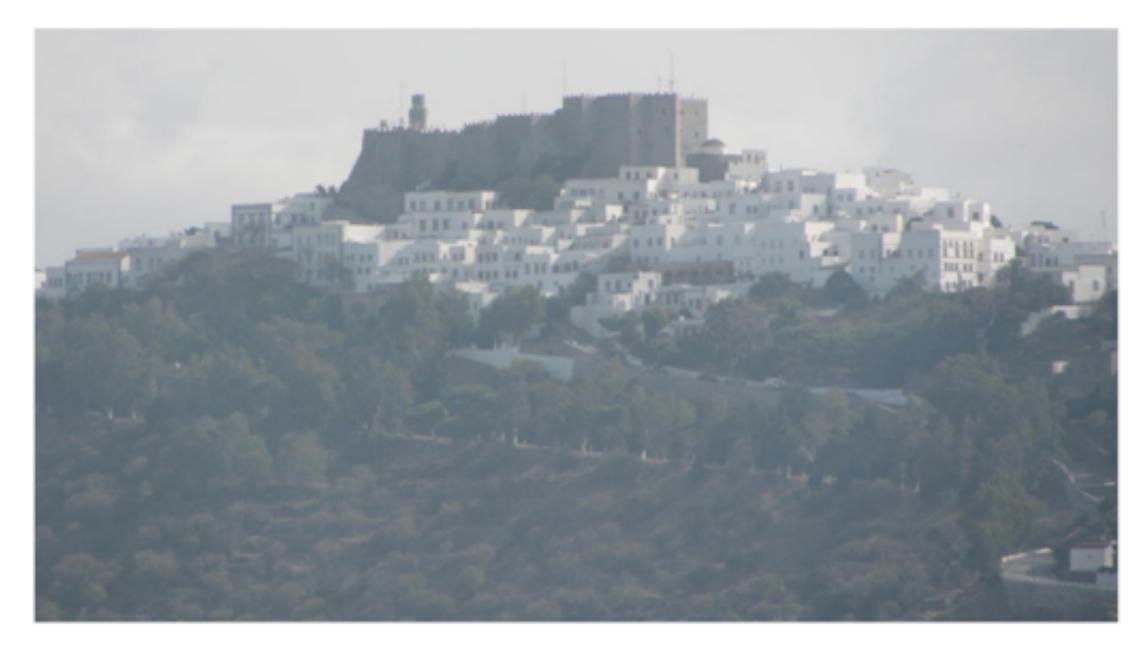


The island of Patmos is about seven miles from north to south. At its widest, it is about five miles; at its narrowest, a mere few hundred yards.



Prochorus sits inside the cave where John allegedly stayed during his season on Patmos. Such a scene comes to us not from Scripture, however, but from a fifthcentury AD legend, the "Acts of the holy apostle and evangelist John the theologian" written in the name of Prochorus.





The 12th-century Monastery of St. John now stands on the site that had once been occupied by this temple, which previously commanded the Patmos skyline as its Christian successor does now.

Let's take a close look at John before Jesus shows up...

Pliny the Elder says of such exiles, "They were thrown together into any ship that could be found, and such as escaped the dangers of the waves and storms and reached the place assigned for their habitation, found there nothing but bare rocks and an inhospitable rugged shore where they had to pass a life of hardship and misery." W.M. Ramsay says that many of the Christians suffered the harsh treatment described by Pliny. He says, "Many Christians were punished in that way. It was a penalty for humbler criminals, provincials, and slaves. It was in its worst form a terrible fate: like the death penalty it was preceded by scourging, and it was marked by perpetual fetters, scanty clothing, insufficient food, sleep on the bare ground in a dark prison, and work under the lash of military overseers. It is an unavoidable conclusion that this was St. John's punishment."

Let's take a close look at John before Jesus shows up...

A persecution of Christians broke out in the Roman Empire about AD 90. Originally it was directed against Jews who refused to pay tax to Jupiter Capitolinus. Being associated with Judaism in the minds of many, Christians also suffered during this persecution. Domitian, who ruled from AD 81-96, loved to be addressed as dominus et deus (Lord and God). He found eager support for emperor worship in the province of Asia. Participation in this worship became a mark of loyalty to the empire. Domitian generally enforced emperor worship. Upon refusal to participate, Christians were charged with treason. According to church tradition, when Domitian was put to death in AD 96, John returned to Ephesus and died around AD 100 a natural death. John had been faithful to Jesus and apparently it had not paid off. Look where it got him. But don't miss it; look what it got him. As he suffered for Jesus, John gained insight into the ways of God that he could have gotten in no other way.

1. Before Jesus showed up - John was Suffering.

John learned that:

A. There is partnership in suffering for Jesus

Revelation 1:9a "I, John, your brother and partner in the affliction,"

John has brothers and partners. He is not alone. He is no Lone Ranger. His Lord had suffered, his brother, James, martyred. Paul and Peter were dead. Antipas (2:13) had been killed. Many share in the partnership of suffering then and now.

John learned that:

B. There is pain in suffering for Jesus

Revelation 1:9a "I, John, your brother and partner in the affliction,"

Affliction – pressure, trouble, tribulation. Afflictions need not sidetrack our walk with Christ. John, like Peter, Paul and the Lord received his greatest revelation and climbed his highest spiritual mountain during a time of extreme suffering and persecution for Christ. "God's pain always brings gain." 2 Tim. 3:12 reminds us, "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."

John learned that:

C. There is praise in suffering for Jesus

Revelation 1:9 "I, John, your brother and partner in the affliction, kingdom, and endurance that are in Jesus,

Kingdom (basileia) – Jesus inaugurated His kingdom as a suffering Savior. We enter the kingdom and serve as suffering saints. The pain and the praise go together, reigning and suffering are not mutually exclusive. It is the way of our Lord. It is also to be our way. We do share now, today, in His royalty, power and kingdom. Yes there is tribulation, but there is also a kingdom.

John learned that:

D. There is patience in suffering for Jesus

Revelation 1:9 "I, John, your brother and partner in the affliction, kingdom, and endurance that are in Jesus,

• Endurance (hupomone) – to abide under a heavy load, to persevere, endure, to stay with it, hang in there, not throw in the towel or drop out of the race. James 1:4 says, "let patience have its perfect (complete) work." God through companionship, tribulation and glory is training us and preparing us for heaven. He is a faithful Father who will never give up on us.

John learned that:

D. There is patience in suffering for Jesus

Revelation 1:9 "I, John, your brother and partner in the affliction, kingdom, and endurance that are in Jesus,

All of this is in Jesus, according to His will, His plan. John's exile to Patmos was no accident. It did not catch God by surprise anymore than any crisis or tribulation we face catches Him off guard or unprepared. It is in Christ, of Christ and for Christ. Christ will provide the needed strength for John, and for us, to endure extreme trials and suffering and come out of it all victorious conquerors.

- 1. Before Jesus showed up John was Suffering.
- 2. Before Jesus showed up John was in the Spirit.

John was able to:

A. Enjoy the control of the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard a loud voice behind me like a trumpet

4 times we see the phrase in the Spirit (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). This is not a normal state but a supernatural state. It is a true ecstatic condition. Nothing in the text indicates John sought it. It was a divine seizing by God. John did not resist it, but gave himself over to the sovereign control of God for His purpose in His life.

John was able to:

B. Enjoy the worship of the Lord's Day.

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard a loud voice behind me like a trumpet

Lord's Day – Sunday or Easter Sunday or "Day of the Lord." It was the day of worship and John was in church; not the building for that is not necessary, but in the Spirit who occupies all who belong to Jesus. It was resurrection day, and John was present to worship the Lord. In all aspects and avenues of life, enjoy the Spirit's control (cf. Eph. 5:18).

- 1. Before Jesus was seen John was Suffering.
- 2. Before Jesus was seen John was in the Spirit.
- 3. Before Jesus was seen John heard the Savior's Command.

Revelation 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard a loud voice behind me like a trumpet

Loud voice like a trumpet. What a different voice John heard on this day from that which he had heard almost 70 years ago! Then it was the earthly Jesus, now it is heavenly Son of God. Then was the humbled Savior, now it is the exalted Son of Man.

Revelation 1:11 (CSB) saying, "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches. These 7 churches were especially dear to the heart of God and the heart of John. These were actual historical churches in Asia Minor, modern day Turkey. The number 7 would also indicate their representative nature of the various types of churches that exist through the history of the church.

Revelation 1:11 (CSB) saying, "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

Christ had a word then and He has a word now for His churches. He tells John to write and write he does, one of the most magnificent books of all time. When we obey the Savior's command, we can count on the results being nothing less than supernatural. It was true for John and it is true for us!

When Jesus Shows Up...

1. See His Activity (vs. 12-13)

When Jesus Shows Up... 1. See His Activity

Revelation 1:12-13 (CSB) 12 Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was one like the Son of Man, dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest.

Seven golden lampstands – Moses constructed a seven-branched lampstand for the tabernacle (Ex. 25:31ff). Zechariah had a vision of a seven-branched golden lampstand which was said to be the "eyes of the Lord, which range throughout the earth (Zech. 4:10). Revelation 1:20 tells us that they are the 7 churches. As lampstands they held small oil lamps. From them light, God's light, was to go out to a dark and evil world. For us, the assignment is the same.

When Jesus Shows Up... 1. See His Activity

Revelation 1:12-13 (CSB) 12 Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was one like the Son of Man, dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest.

John also saw a person among the lampstands. His identity is no secret: it is the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus. Both his title and His location are significant. The title "Son of Man," goes back to Dan. 7:13-14. This is Jesus' favorite self-designation. It occurs 81 times in the gospels. It identifies Him as the heavenly Messiah who is also human who will receive a kingdom.

When Jesus Shows Up... 1. See His Activity

Revelation 1:12-13 (CSB) 12 Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was one like the Son of Man, dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest.

Note again the location of Jesus – "among" in the midst, the middle, the center of the lampstands. He is there, He is with them. They are not alone, they are not forgotten. He knows what they are going through for He is in their midst. He is watching and He is working in the midst of His churches. Though they may fail Him, He will not fail them, for He is with them.

When Jesus Shows Up...

- 1. See His Activity (vs. 9-11)
- 2. Survey His Features (vs. 12-16)

When Jesus Shows Up... 2. Survey His Features

Revelation 1:13-14 ...dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest. 14 The hair of his head was white as wool — white as snow — and his eyes like a fiery flame.

Jesus is seen clothed in the apparel of a prophet, priest and king, John saw the unveiled, glorified and exalted Jesus as He truly is.

When Jesus Shows Up... 2. Survey His Features

Revelation 1:13-14 ...dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest. 14 The hair of his head was white as wool — white as snow — and his eyes like a fiery flame.

Dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest - This was the dress of the Priest in the Old Testament as seen in Exodus 28:4:

Exodus 28:4 (CSB) 4 These are the garments that they must make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a specially woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. They are to make holy garments for your brother Aaron and his sons so that they may serve me as priests.

It signifies Jesus as our great High Priest and points to His work of atonement and intercession on our behalf (cf. Heb. 7:25).

When Jesus Shows Up... 2. Survey His Features

Revelation 1:13-14 ...dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest. 14 The hair of his head was white as wool — white as snow — and his eyes like a fiery flame.

Hair of his head was white as wool show infinite, divine wisdom (Dan. 7:9; cf. Lev. 19:32; Prov. 16:31; 20:29). (ESV SB)

Dr. Danny Akin sees five attributes of Jesus from this small phrase: 1. White as wool can refer to purity in character. 2. Dignity of his person. 3. Authority as a Judge. 4. Eternality in His existence (Ancient of Days from Daniel 7:9) 5. Excellency in His Wisdom.

Old Testament Connections

Revelation 1:14 The hair of his head was white as wool—white as snow—and his eyes like a fiery flame.

Daniel 7:9 "As I kept watching, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was white like snow, and the hair of his head like whitest wool. His throne was flaming fire; its wheels were blazing fire.

Revelation 1:13-14 ...dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest. 14 The hair of his head was white as wool — white as snow — and his eyes like a fiery flame.

His eyes like a fiery flame: His insights are penetrating: 1) penetrating insight 2) omniscient intelligence. In fiery holiness, the true condition of each church, each Christian, is transparent to the gaze of His eyes.

Revelation 1:15 (CSB) His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of cascading waters.

His feet were like fine bronze. These bronze feet signify 1) strength. Jesus will crush any opponents. 2) stability in the context of judgement:

Psalms 110:1 (CSB) This is the declaration of the Lord to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool."

Hebrews 10:13 (CSB) 13 He is now waiting until his enemies are made his footstool.

Revelation 1:15 (CSB) His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of cascading waters.

This means that his announcements are powerful with a pervasive authority that echoes forth His majesty and sovereignty like the waves which continually crash against the rocks of Patmos.

Revelation 1:14–15 The hair of his head was white as wool—white as snow—and his eyes like a fiery flame. 15His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of cascading waters.

Daniel 10:6 His body was like beryl, his face like the brilliance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

Revelation 1:15 His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of cascading waters.

Ezekiel 1:24 When they moved, I heard the sound of their wings like the roar of a huge torrent, like the voice of the Almighty, and a sound of tumult like the noise of an army. When they stopped, they lowered their wings.

Ezekiel 43:2 and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice sounded like the roar of a huge torrent, and the earth shone with his glory.

Revelation 1:16 (CSB) He had seven stars in his right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from his mouth, and his face was shining like the sun at full strength.

right hand – the hand of authority and honor. It is the hand that possess and protects his sheep. John 10:28 (CSB) I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.

Seven stars - These are the angels of the churches mentioned in Revelation 1:20, "The mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."

Revelation 1:16 (CSB) He had seven stars in his right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from his mouth, and his face was shining like the sun at full strength.

This is a thracian sword – long, broad and heavy; sharp on both sides (There are 6 in Rev.; 1:16; 2:12,16; 6:8; 19:15,21)

Most scholars believe this is a reference to the Word of God. Jesus possesses perfect judgment from the Word of God, full of power and authority. God's word searches the heart and judges rebels.

Hebrews 4:12 (CSB) 12 For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Revelation 1:16 He had seven stars in his right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from his mouth, and his face was shining like the sun at full strength.

Isaiah 49:2 He made my words like a sharp sword; he hid me in the shadow of his hand. He made me like a sharpened arrow; he hid me in his quiver.

Revelation 1:16 (CSB) ...and his face was shining like the sun at full strength.

John saw the brilliance, glory, holiness, majesty, and awesomeness of Jesus. Much like his experience during the transfiguration:

Matthew 17:2 (CSB) He was transfigured in front of them, and his face shone like the sun; his clothes became as white as the light.

Revelation 1:16 (CSB) ...and his face was shining like the sun at full strength.

John saw the brilliance, glory, holiness, majesty, and awesomeness of Jesus. Much like his experience during the transfiguration:

Matthew 17:2 (CSB) He was transfigured in front of them, and his face shone like the sun; his clothes became as white as the light.

When Jesus Shows Up Revelation 1:9-20

When Jesus Shows Up...

- 1. See His Activity (vs. 9-11)
- 2. Survey His Features (vs. 12-16)
- 3. Steady All Fears (vs. 17-20)

Revelation 1:17 (CSB) 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last,

I fell at his feet like a dead man - John fell as dead. No laughing, barking or roaring! •

Laid His right hand on me (gentle authority)

Don't be afraid "stop being afraid"

Revelation 1:17 (CSB) 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last,

I am the First and the Last - First (protos) and the last (eschatos). Said of God in Isa. 44:6; 48:12; of Jesus in Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13. He alone is God, absolute Lord both of creation and history. He starts and He finishes! He is before all – after all. All is under His sovereign control.

Isaiah 44:6 (CSB) 6 This is what the Lord, the King of Israel and its Redeemer, the Lord of Armies, says: I am the first and I am the last. There is no God but me.

Revelation 1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last,

Isaiah 44:6 This is what the Lord, the King of Israel and its Redeemer, the Lord of Armies, says: I am the first and I am the last. There is no God but me.

Isaiah 48:12 "Listen to me, Jacob, and Israel, the one called by me: I am he; I am the first, I am also the last.

Revelation 1:18 (CSB) and the Living One. I was dead, but look — I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Paradoxically, this ever-living One died to redeem believers and now lives forever as "the firstborn of the dead" (v. 5). Because Jesus died and rose again, John must "fear not" (v. 17), and the churches should not fear death, because Jesus has conquered it forever. (ESV SB)

Revelation 1:18 (CSB) and the Living One. I was dead, but look — I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades.

I hold the keys (authority, control, access) But to what? "death and Hades" (O.T. sheol, meaning the grave, place of all the dead, or place of the wicked dead.) Death claims the body, Hades claims the soul BUT, not unless Jesus says so! Why? Because He has the keys!

Revelation 1:19-20 (CSB) Therefore write what you have seen, what is, and what will take place after this. 20 The mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Vs. 19 the key which unlocks what John has seen (ch. 1), what is (chs. 2-3) and what will take place after this (cf. 4:1; chs. 4-22)

Revelation 1:19 Therefore write what you have seen, what is, and what will take place after this.

Daniel 2:28–29 But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has let King Nebuchadnezzar know what will happen in the last days. Your dream and the visions that came into your mind as you lay in bed were these: 29Your Majesty, while you were in your bed, thoughts came to your mind about what will happen in the future. The revealer of mysteries has let you know what will happen.

Daniel 2:45 You saw a stone break off from the mountain without a hand touching it, and it crushed the iron, bronze, fired clay, silver, and gold. The great God has told the king what will happen in the future. The dream is certain, and its interpretation reliable."

Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

What/who are the 7 stars = 7 angels (aggeloi)?

4 main views:

- 1. Specific messengers from John to the 7 churches
- 2. Specific messengers from the 7 churches to John
- 3. Guardian angels of the 7 churches
- 4. Pastors of the 7 churches (Angels can be translated "messengers")

"Just When I Need Him Most"

Just when I need Him, Jesus is near, Just when I falter, just when I fear; Ready to help me, ready to cheer, Just when I need Him most.

Just when I need Him, Jesus is strong, Bearing my burdens all the day long; For all my sorrow giving a song, Just when I need Him most.

Just when I need Him, He is my all, Answering when upon Him I call; Tenderly watching lest I should fall, Just when I need Him most.

Just when I need Him most, Just when I need Him most; Jesus is near to comfort and cheer, Just when I need Him most.

William C. Poole

The Book of Revelation

When Jesus Shows Up Chapter 1:9-20