

Second Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING – Acts 5:12-32

¹² The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. ¹³ No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. ¹⁵ As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. ¹⁶ Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

5:12-32 In this section of Acts, we hear how the crucifixion and resurrection become the message and the driving force of those Jewish disciples who said, "We must obey God rather than men. . . . God exalted [Jesus] at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him" (vv 29–32). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

From the beginning of Acts through this fifth chapter the ranks of believers swell in numbers. From the 120 followers of Christ living in the upper room, the Holy Spirit gives birth to some three thousand believers in one day; by continual preaching and healing, that number rises to five thousand men—double that, counting women and children. "The Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (2:47). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

Very relevant is the reaction of the chief priests and Sadducees. While the Pharisees of the Council are also opposed to the teaching about Jesus, we find the Sadducees and priests vigorously opposing the message preached by the apostles. The resurrection of Jesus flies in the face of their false teaching: Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection of the dead—ever! That they sentenced Jesus to die only to hear that he rose again is infuriating. The growing number of believers in Jesus reveals that the body of Jesus is standing tall in Jerusalem's temple! Surrounding towns are flooding in to meet in Solomon's Portico (v 12). The jealousy or envy (v 17) brings them to a boiling rage! If they don't see the physical body of Jesus, risen from death, they cannot help but notice the "signs and wonders" of Christ done in such a large scale by his body of believers that the sick have to be lined up, so that healing can happen in an orderly way, so that even the passing shadow of the apostle brings healing (v 15). Just as Jesus had said, the disciples would do "greater works" than he had (Jn 14:12–14)—but only in sheer magnitude, and not without Jesus being at the center of all they were proclaiming. The power and presence of Jesus in the growing body of believers is overwhelming, causing the Sanhedrin to threaten the disciples with persecution and death (5:33)—just as they reacted when Jesus walked their courts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

5:12 PERFORMED MANY MIRACLES – This season of unstoppable miracles would not always be the case. Cf 8:1; 14:22. An answer to prayer (4:29–30) as God continued to use the apostles for His work. (TLSB)

“Miraculous signs and wonders” is Luke’s phrase for identifying the work of the Spirit. The work of the Spirit is to point to the presence of Jesus (Jn 14:26; 15:26; 20:22–23). We are to see Jesus in the midst of the church. Through the apostles, Jesus’ preaching, teaching, and healing continue. Vv 13–17 show people coming to faith through the apostles’ teaching. The church grew through the Word (Mt 4:23; Lk 4:15, 33–44). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

Solomon’s Colonnade. See note on 3:11. (CSB)

Seemingly the apostles’ favorite retreat. (TLSB)

USED TO MEET – In direct defiance of the Sanhedrin’s order, the congregation met daily and openly in an area of the temple that could easily accommodate thousands at a time. The quietness and orderliness of the crowd, as well as the non-interference from the outsiders, was a miracle in itself. For the first time we hear about people coming from the towns surrounding Jerusalem. The success was phenomenal. It now seemed as though the entire population of Jerusalem and even surrounding towns would soon be won for Christ. (LL)

5:13-14 Many Christians kept their distance from the apostles on account of the fate of Ananias and Sapphira, but conversions continued at a brisk rate. (TLSB)

5:13 *No one else dared join them.* Because of the fate of Ananias and his wife, no pretenders or halfhearted followers risked identification with the believers. Luke cannot mean that no one joined the Christian community, since v. 14 indicates that many were coming to Christ. (CSB)

5:14 *more men and women believed.* See 4:4. This is the first specific mention of women believing (cf. 8:3, 12; 9:2; 13:50; 16:1, 13–14; 17:4, 12, 34; 18:2; 21:5; but cf. also 1:14). (CSB)

5:15 *Peter’s shadow.* Parallels such items as Paul’s handkerchiefs (19:12) and the edge of Jesus’ cloak (Mt 9:20)—not that any of these material objects had magical qualities, but the least article or shadow represented a direct means of contact with Jesus or his apostles. (CSB)

God’s work through Peter is amazing. (TLSB)

5:16 *all healed.* Cf Jn 14:12. (TLSB)

5:12–16 God heals many people through the apostles. This massive outpouring of God’s love and power comes with His serious appeals for repentance. God’s power to change lives is still at

work today. His greatest work always remains the forgiveness of sins. • Lord, fill us with all due reverence for You and Your mysteries. Stretch forth Your hand to heal the sicknesses of our bodies and souls. Amen. (TLSB)

The Apostles Persecuted

17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 20 “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people the full message of this new life.” 21 At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. 22 But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, 23 “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” 24 On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this. 25 Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.” 26 At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them. 27 Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. 28 “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.” 29 Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than men! 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

5:17 *high priest.* The official high priest recognized by Rome was Caiaphas, but the Jews considered Annas, Caiaphas’s father-in-law, to be the actual high priest since the high priesthood was to be held for life (see note on 4:6). (CSB)

his associates. His family members. (CSB)

party of the Sadducees. See note on 4:1. (CSB)

WERE FILLED WITH JEALOUSY – dzalou – Envy – The word consistently connects with the urge to kill.

Envy, unchecked, leads to murder (e.g., 7:58; 12:2). (TLSB)

eplēsthēsan zēlou, “filled with envy” (NIV: “jealousy”), is attributed by Luke to the high priest and his associates. The word for “envy” consistently connects envy with the urge to kill. Luke will later apply it as well to the brothers of Joseph (Acts 7:9) and to the Jews who oppose Paul (Acts 17:5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

5:18 *in the public jail*. To await trial the next day. (CSB)

City jail. (TLSB)

5:19 angel of the Lord. This phrase is used four other times in Acts: (1) Stephen speaks of him (7:30–38); (2) he guides Philip (8:26); (3) he liberates Peter (12:7–10); (4) he strikes down Herod (12:23). See also Mt 1:20–24; 2:13, 19; 28:2; Lk 1:11–38; 2:9.

Throughout the Scripture the primary task assigned to the angels is the care and protection of the believers until the end of time (Ps. 91:11-12). The Lord also uses His angels to thwart the attacks of Satan against His children, as Martin Luther so beautifully puts in his morning and evening prayers: “Let your holy angels have charge over us that the wicked one may have no power over us.” A daily use of these two prayers might help us remember this important blessing. (LL)

Angelos kuriou, “angel of the Lord”: These messengers of God play an important role through Luke and Acts (Lk 1:11,26; 2:9, 13; 22:43; 24:23; Acts 8:26; 10:3, 7, 22; 11:13; 12:7–15, 23; 27:23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

Not with the guards’ keys, but miraculously. Cf 12:7–10. (TLSB)

5:20 GO STAND - *Obtuse angels*: Which *angelia* (“message”) are they to follow? The high priest confronts the disciples emphatically: literally, “With a strict order we strictly ordered you not to teach in this name” (v 28). The noun and verb have the same root: *parangeliai*, *parēngelamen*. Contrarily, the angel (*angelos*) ordered the disciples to “Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people” (v 20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

Taking a stand: *anastas* (v 17) is Greek for “stand up, rise up.” It often indicates movement of purpose and resolve; here, the Sadducees *rise up* to take action against God’s Word being preached. Ironically, the verb *anastas* is also the root word for “resurrection.” Pun or not, the Sadducees “rise up” to confront the “rising up” of Christ among them; they think they are rising up against man, but as Gamaliel wonders, perhaps they are rising up against God (5:39). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

Despite this, the disciples are set free by the angel and told to resume their place in the temple, continuing their work. *Stathentes* (v 20) means “standing their ground” in the name of God. The place *is* very important, for the confrontation is not simply a battle of wills but about the validity of their call from God, as opposed to those priests whose own

call from God ended abruptly with the death and resurrection of Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

MESSAGE OF THIS NEW LIFE – hramata tas dzoas – All the words about this life. Similar to “word of this salvation.

The message focused on the life of the risen Christ. Cf. 1 John 1:2. (TLSB)

Panta ta rhēmata tēs zōēs tautēs, “the full message of this new life” is literally “all the words about this life.” This is an unusual phrase, but it can be compared to Paul’s words in 13:26, “word of this salvation” (NIV: “this message of salvation”). Jesus is called “the author of life” in 3:15. God has called the apostles, set them free, and commanded them to fill the temple with the full message of new life or salvation in Christ Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

The message at the heart of this controversy is the same, but described differently. The angel instructed the disciples to proclaim “*all the words of this Life*” (v 20). “*hrēmata*” literally means “words, teachings” but may also be “sayings” or “matters” or “things.” “Message” is how many phrase it (NASB). The GW translation has “Tell the people *everything* about life in Christ.” That is the essential matter: Life! The NIV felt it necessary to add the word “new,” so that it was clear that the angel meant the “*new life*” that we have in Christ and not about “life in general”; too many churches wander off onto this path to nowhere! *The “full message”* is what the Sadducees did not want to hear: “*this name*” and “*this man’s blood*” (v 28). Nevertheless, the disciples counter, “*this*” is the whole point! “We are witnesses to *these things*” (v 32), namely, “this name and this blood.” Truly, the message is not *about* Jesus; the message *is* Jesus. “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree” (v 30). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

Fullness is essential to this text. The chief priests and Sadducees, losing their authority, are “*filled with jealousy*” (v 17). The Sadducees cry out that “you have *filled* Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us” (v 28). *But* God’s will is that “all the words” be proclaimed (v 20). It is the *full* message the apostles are to speak. What better message can be preached today, consisting of Law and Gospel: “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (Jn 3:36). Preaching is truly “a matter” (*hrēmata*) of life and death. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 23, Part 2)

5:21 AT DAYBREAK - c 6 A.M. They probably went directly to the temple courts. (Josephus states that the temple gates were opened at midnight. They were likely closed after the evening sacrifice.) (TLSB)

Sanhedrin. The supreme Jewish court, consisting of 70 to 100 men (71 being the proper number). They sat in a semicircle, backed by three rows of disciples of the “learned men,” with the clerks of the court standing in front. (CSB)

5:23 The angel and the departing apostles had not attracted the guards' attention. Perhaps the Lord caused their sleep, a violation of a guard's service. (TLSB)

5:24 *captain of the temple guard*. See note on 4:1. (CSB)

diēporoun, "were puzzled" or "were perplexed": What can we conclude about the condition of the religious leaders? They could not comprehend what was happening. Their confusion and amazement are evidence from a hostile source that something greater is happening than can be explained. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

5:26 DID NOT USE FORCE - Temple guards wisely avoided a riot. "Superiors should therefore be honored by us with whatever respect we can, but in such a way that we do not reject or deny the Word of Christ and promise of grace on their account and lose the spiritual blessing. For all respect, honor, and services of every kind are to be paid to magistrates with a good conscience and joyful heart if they remain within the prescribed limits, that is, provided that obedience to God and confession of the Word remain intact" (AE 6:168). (TLSB)

THEY FEARED THE PEOPLE – *ephobounto gar ton laon* – The apostles preaching had had a very definite affect on the people to the point where there respected apostles more than their own religious leaders.

ephobounto gar ton laon, "Because they feared the people" indicates best how the word of Jesus preached and taught by the apostles affected the people. In the eyes of the people religious authority has passed from the Jewish religious leaders to the apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

STONE THEM - Penalty for blasphemy. The people acknowledged divine power at the work through the apostles. (TLSB)

5:28 YOUR TEACHING – *didachas* – Your doctrine. This showed that they had rejected anything to do with Jesus.

What were the charges? (1) Teaching in the name of Jesus, filling the people with doctrine *didachēs*. (2) The statement that the leaders of old Israel had rejected God's Christ by crucifying him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

make us guilty of this man's blood. Probably a reference to the apostles' repeated declaration that some of the Jews and some of their leaders had killed Jesus (2:23; 3:13–15; 4:10–11; cf. Mt 27:25). (CSB)

Indicates the high priest's guilty conscience. (TLSB)

5:29-42 Lutherans seem to read the Book of Acts primarily for the opening stories (Ascension and Pentecost) and for background to the travels of Paul. That means few

may have explored the meaning of Acts 3–8 and 10–12. If so, the preacher will have the opportunity to introduce hearers to the wonder and power and drama of these sections of the ongoing story of Jesus' words and deeds. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

For background, the discussion of these early chapters in Acts by Robert C. Tannehill may be extremely helpful (*The Narrative Unity of Luke–Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990], 59–79). Tannehill draws our attention to three patterns that give structure to chs 3–7. The first and most obvious is the repetitious but escalating pattern of conflict between those preaching in the name of Jesus and the Jerusalem authorities. Second, however, we see the apostles themselves experiencing many of the same things that happened to Jesus (and note that the setting and many of the characters have not changed from those of the Passion narrative). Third, in the experiences of the apostles, we see coming true many of Jesus' prophecies concerning the future situation of his followers. Now Jerusalem is laying hands on the apostles and delivering them to prison and bringing them before rulers (Lk 21:12). The life of the Church is clearly patterned after the life of her Lord. His victory is also our victory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

It is unfortunate that the reading could not include the entire episode, beginning with 5:17. The interactions between the apostles and the leaders of Jerusalem is very engaging. More important, however, this first part of the episode provides the necessary context in which to read Gamaliel's words of counsel: it has already been demonstrated that these men are beyond the reach of the Council's authority (5:18–19). What looks like a "wait and see" proposal in vv 38–39 is already laughably obsolete from the point of view of the reader who has been following the story carefully. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

5:29 GOD RATHER THAN MAN - "We must obey God rather than men": Given the clear command of the Lord in v 20, Peter and the apostles may be guilty in the eyes of the authorities, but their faithfulness as witnesses had them guiltless before God. Like them, we are called to witness to Jesus' teaching, no matter the cost or consequences. We may be told by associates, employers, or teachers not to speak for our faith or represent our faith in what we wear, perhaps a cross on a lapel or on a necklace. By law we may not be allowed to confess publicly or witness to Jesus. We may not be given time off from work or school for worship but be required to take vacation or personal time. Good Friday afternoon was once time off so employees could attend services. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

"We must obey God rather than men." It is worth noting that Peter does not make this as a statement in the first person plural ("we must"); rather, he uses an impersonal verb (*dei*, "it is necessary") and so states this as a universal principle (i.e., applicable to his "judges" as well). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

The commentaries draw attention to the remarkable similarity in wording and situation between Peter's response here and the response of Socrates in his trial as recorded in Plato's *Apology*. In the *Apology*, the situation, though hypothetical, corresponds very closely to the real situation of the apostles in Acts 4:18–21. Socrates lets his judges know how he would respond if they should release him on the condition that he stop teaching his allegedly corrupting philosophy. His response would be "Men, Athenians, I embrace and kiss you [i.e., greet you with warm affection], but I shall obey God rather than you [*peisomai de mallon tō hē hūmin*]." This is not the place for source criticism. What makes the situation seem universal is that in both cases, the prosecution is arguing, "Obey God by obeying man [us]," whereas the defendant is arguing, "Obey God rather than obey man [you]." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

The verb that Peter uses for "obey," *peitharcheō*, brings together via its components the ideas of persuasion, conviction, trust, and obedience on the one hand with the idea of authority on the other. There is also an interesting play on words between "high priest," *ho archiereus*; "obey," *peitharcheō*; and "leader," *ho archēgos*. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

"It is necessary for Christian to be obedient to their rulers and laws. The only exception is when they are commanded to sin" (AC XVI 6-7). Hus: "As we are commanded to obey our superiors in things lawful and honorable. With the circumstances taken into consideration, we are commanded to resist them to the face when they walk contrary to the divine counsels or commandments" (The Church, p. 222). Luther: "One of these two things has to happen: either the Word will abide and conquer them; or at least be unable to suppress it, even if they refuse to accept all its grace and goodness and salvation" (AE 21:121). (TLSB)

5:30-31 "Forgiveness of sins to Israel" shows the steady focus on the offer of salvation made to Israel throughout the Jerusalem section of Acts (1:6; 2:36; 4:10, 27; 5:21). Forgiveness of sins is preached only in connection to repentance as seen in Acts 2:38. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

5:30 *tree*. Used to describe the cross (1Pe 2:24; see Dt 21:22–23). Like its Hebrew counterpart, the Greek for this word could refer to a tree, a pole, a wooden beam or some similar object. (CSB)

Judean expression for crucifixion. Cf Dt 21:22–23. (TLSB)

Two allusions to the writings of Moses may be found in this brief summary statement by Peter. The more obvious is the reference to "hanging him on a tree," an allusion to Deut 21:22–23. Luke provides no record here of Peter developing the theological significance of the connection with Deuteronomy the way Paul does in Galatians 3, but the brief allusion at this point may be even more forcefully condemning than a lengthy exposition. A second allusion is the suggestion of a wordplay based on Deut 18:15–22. The pun becomes possible when God not only "raises up" a prophet by sending him to Israel but also "raises" him from the dead. The sentence structure of this verse corresponds nicely

with seeing a double referent for God's act of "raising up." By mentioning the "raising up" first, it could possibly refer to either act of raising up or, better still, to both: God provided you with his prophet par excellence and, even after you cursed and killed him, God still raised him up for you again. And he continues to invite you to repent and to call you to obey. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

5:31 PRINCE AND SAVIOR - The early speeches in the Book of Acts are fascinating for the titles they use for Jesus. This is the first time the word *savior* has appeared in Acts, but the more intriguing title here is probably the less familiar one. Peter was apparently the first to use *ho archēgos* as a Christological title. The word appears several times in the Septuagint, translating a variety of Hebrew words. It also, however, has a very rich history of usage in secular Greek literature. One study that raises the question of how best to represent the word and its meaning in English concludes that "pioneer-founder-victor-leader-ruler-hero" is "too cumbersome" for most passages. The author suggests "pioneer prince" or "founding king" as acceptable compromises (J. Julius Scott Jr., "Archēgos in the Salvation History of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 29, no. 1 [March 1986], 47–54). Perhaps the most important aspect of the word's meaning here is that Jesus is the one to whom obedience is due. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

FORGIVENESS OF THE SINS OF ISRAEL – This shows that God wants them to repent and then forgive them.

5:32 *so is the Holy Spirit ... given to those who obey him.*† See Jn 15:26–27. The disciples' testimony was directed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world through the word (Jn 16:8–11) and is given to those who respond to God with "the obedience that comes from faith," a gift from God (Ro 1:5; see note on 6:7). (CSB)

"We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit" combines the life of the church with Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit given in Baptism (Acts 1:5, 8). The teaching of the crucified Christ, repentance, forgiveness, and life in his name will fill the world. Nothing can stop it. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

Even as brief as this response of Peter and the others is, it concludes with a very nice *inclusio*. Peter had begun with the principle that obedience is due God rather than man; he ends with the declaration that God gives his Holy Spirit to those who obey Jesus (whom God has raised and exalted to be prince and savior) and that this Spirit also witnesses to Jesus as the exalted one. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

SECOND READING – Revelation 1:4-18

⁴ John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits ^a 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.⁷ Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.⁸ **“I am the Alpha and the Omega,”** says the Lord God, **“who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”**

1:4-6 John’s greeting explicitly mentions the persons of the Holy Trinity. (TLSB) See 1:4 – who is... Father / seven spirits...Holy Spirit / 1:5 – Jesus Christ – First born...Jesus

These verses give a trinitarian imprimatur by which God himself confirms the validity of the message of Revelation. It is given in the form of a greeting benediction in which John speaks the blessing of God’s grace and peace to his recipients, the seven churches. (CC p. 39)

The trinitarian formula is presented in the words “the One Who Is and Who Was and Who Is Coming, and from the seven Spirits ... and from Jesus Christ” (1:4–5). In these words John names the triune God: Father, Spirit, and Jesus Christ. At first glance it would appear that already in the first phrase, “the One Who Is and Who Was and Who Is Coming,” there is a representation of the triune God. Both Oecumenius (sixth century) and Andreas¹⁹ (sixth century) in their Greek commentaries on Revelation interpret it thus: the “One Who Is” is the Father; the one “Who Was” is the Son, the Logos; and the one “Who Is Coming” is the Comforter, the Spirit. Victorinus (third century) in his Latin commentary apparently believed that this entire threefold first phrase is not a reference to the Trinity but to Jesus Christ, and Athanasius also so interpreted this first three-part title.²¹ However, neither of those ancient interpretations is accepted by this commentary. It is better to hear 1:4–5 as naming three distinct persons: (1) “the One Who Is and Who Was and Who Is Coming”; (2) the seven Spirits; and (3) Jesus Christ. Each refers to one of the persons of the Trinity. (CC p. 39)

First, the revelation comes from God the Father. ὁ ὢν (“the One Who Is”) in the phrase ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (“the One Who Is and Who Was and Who Is Coming”) leads one to the LXX’s rendering of the holy name (the tetragrammaton, Yahweh) in Exodus 3. In Ex 3:14 the LXX translates יהוה אֲנִי יהוה אֲנִי (“I Am Who I Am”) with ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν (“I Am the One Who Is”). After God identifies himself, he then tells Moses to say to the children of Israel that, in the LXX’s rendering, ὁ ὢν (“the One Who Is”) sent him. In Rev 1:4 John follows the LXX rendering of the holy name by his use of ὁ ὢν; in the context of 1:4–6 ὁ ὢν then refers to God the Father. (CC pp. 39-41)

But what are the referents of ὁ ἦν (“Who Was”) and ὁ ἐρχόμενος (“Who Is Coming”), for these expressions do not appear in the LXX’s rendering of Exodus 3? Could ὁ ἐρχόμενος (“Who Is Coming”) be in the same or a similar tradition as the rendering of יהוה אֲנִי (“I Am”) with a future tense, as Aquila and Theodotion do in Ex 3:14? (Here in Rev 1:4 John uses the present participle ἐρχόμενος [“is coming”] in a future sense since it contrasts with the imperfect past tense of ἦν [“was”] and with the present tense of ὢν

[“is”].) That might possibly be part of the answer, but the full tripartite title seems to be unprecedented. (CC pp. 39-41)

John, in his own way, uses ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (“the One Who Is and Who Was and Who Is Coming”) for the holy name in Exodus 3. He takes ὁ ὢν (“the One Who Is”) from the LXX of Ex 3:14 and then expands it by adding καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (“and Who Was and Who Is Coming”). By so doing he states that the ever present One is continually present now, as he was in the past and as he always will be in the future.

The entire three-part phrase, then, is really a rendition of יהוה־אֵלֹהִים (“I Am,” which is in the Hebrew Qal imperfect tense) in Ex 3:14, which is God’s own explanation for the tetragrammaton, יהוה, the holy name, Yahweh (Ex 3:13–16). John may not have been the only one to interpret the holy name in this way, for a rabbinic tradition also interprets יהוה־אֵלֹהִים as “I am He Who has been, Who is now, and Who will be in the future.” (CC pp. 39-41)

Why does John have ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (“the One Who Is and Who Was and Who Is Coming”) in the nominative after ἀπό (“from”) instead of the genitive that normally follows that preposition? It is for the sake of emphasis. Whether John did this consciously in deference to the holy name, because to have used an oblique case would have necessitated a vocalized change of that name, can only be surmised. Certainly John, because of his Jewish background, would be aware of Jewish practices in deference toward the holy name. But more likely, if not also in addition, John wanted to make and emphasize a theological truth that the Father is the first among equals. The Father, while equal in essence with the Spirit and Jesus Christ, is nevertheless the primus of the three persons (cf. 1 Cor 15:28; Jn 14:16-17, 26). In deference to the holy name, that is, in deference to God the Father, through worship of Jesus Christ by means of the Spirit, John keeps this Greek rendering of the holy name in the nominative and does not put it in an oblique case such as the genitive. (CC pp. 39-41)

Wherever this Greek form of the holy name (ὁ ὢν, “the One Who Is”) appears in Revelation, John keeps to this theological principle, namely, that the Father is the first among equals; he also keeps to this principle throughout the book whenever the heavenly court worships God and the Lamb (in that order; e.g., 4:8–11; 5:9–14). ὁ ὢν appears a total of five times in Revelation, *all in reference to the Father* (Rev. 1:4, 8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5) In 1:4 and 1:8 the elements of the three-part title “the One Who Is and Who Was and Who Is Coming” appear in the same order, but in 4:8 ὁ ἦν (“the One Who Was”) comes first and then καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (“and Who Is and Who Is Coming”). In 11:17 and 16:5 only ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν (“the One Who Is and Who Was”) is present; ὁ ἐρχόμενος (“Who Is Coming”) is absent. In each case where there is a difference, the author is making a theological statement—each will be treated in the commentary on the respective verses. Here in 1:4 this Greek rendering of the holy name points to the fact that the message of Revelation comes first of all from God the Father. (CC pp. 39-41)

1:4 seven churches. Located about 50 miles apart, forming a circle in Asia moving clockwise north from Ephesus and coming around full circle from Laodicea (east of Ephesus). They were perhaps postal centers serving seven geographic regions. Apparently the entire book of Revelation (including the seven letters) was sent to each church (see v. 11). (CSB)

Second, the prophetic message of Revelation comes from “the seven Spirits” (1:4). Because of the number seven, commentators have wondered whether these are seven angels, corresponding to the seven archangels in Jewish tradition (see 1 Enoch 19:1; 20:1–7, where seven archangels are listed and named), or corresponding to the seven angels of the seven churches (and thus also to the seven angels with the trumpets [Rev 8:6–11:19] and censers [Revelation 15–16]). Against this identification is the fact that “the seven Spirits” (1:4) are on the same level of authority as God the Father and Jesus Christ. If these “Spirits” were angels, they would never be accorded the same status as God and Jesus Christ in Christian theology. (In Revelation angels are never worshiped, only God; cf. 19:10; 22:8–9.) Rather, these “seven Spirits” are a reference to the Holy Spirit. (CC pp. 41-42)

In biblical thought, the number seven symbolizes God. It is the sum of the number three, which symbolizes God himself (cf. Gen 18:1–2; Is 6:3), and the number four, which symbolizes creation (cf., e.g., Ezek 37:9; 1 Chr 9:24). Seven thus symbolizes the God of creation. Because God rested on the seventh day (Gen 2:2–3), the number is also used to picture or refer to perfection, completion, and holiness, especially in reference to God’s activities and creative works. (CC pp. 41-42)

Here in Rev 1:4 the “seven Spirits” are also a reflection of the seven lamps and seven eyes in Zech 3:9–4:10, where they represent the Spirit of God, by which God sees the whole earth. That is, *God is present with his creation through the sevenfold presence of his Spirit*. In Is 11:1–2 the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit from God will rest upon the Branch of Jesse, the Messiah. In Rev 5:6 the Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes. And in Moses’ tabernacle there was the menorah, the sevenfold lampstand (Ex 25:31–40), which represented God’s presence with his people by way of his Spirit (cf. Zech 4:2–6). *The seven Spirits of Rev 1:4 represent the Holy Spirit in his sevenfold presence*. God, by his Spirit, is always present with his people—fully present. *Throughout Revelation the number seven represents God’s presence by his Spirit*. Thus the church, when represented in Revelation by the seven churches (Revelation 2–3), is pictured as always under the Spirit of God. The heavenly hosts worship God by the presence of the seven Spirits before God’s throne (4:5). The Lamb of God, with the seven horns and eyes (5:6), is he on whom the sevenfold Spirit rests (Is 11:1–2). And the exalted Christ, as the Son of Man, stands in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, which represent the church under the lordship of Christ by the Spirit (1:13). (CC pp. 41-42)

Throughout Scripture, the number seven symbolizes completeness (cf. Gen. 2:1-3; 7:2; Lev. 4:6, 17; Rev. 2:1; 6:1; 8:2; 15:7). Accordingly, these seven churches may represent the whole Christian Church on earth and the challenges churches face.

However, this does not mean these churches represent epochs (A particular period of history – Dictionary) of Church history. (TLSB)

John was not speaking about worship buildings or formally organized congregations. None of the early Christian churches had public buildings for worship as we know them today. Most met in homes; and a few may have met in synagogues. By the word churches, John was referring to readers as people who belong to God. To those gathered around the Word and sacraments at these seven localities, Jesus will now give the reassurance of his final victory. (PBC p. 11)

Asia. A Roman province lying in modern western Turkey. (CSB)

John wrote a letter to each of these communities. (TLSB)

Grace and peace. See notes on Jn. 4:2; Jn. 14:27; 20:19; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2. “Grace” is used only twice in Revelation (here and in 22:21) but over 100 times by Paul. (CSB)

Grace is the undeserved pardon that God gave us in Jesus. It is a one-sided, forgiving love. Peace is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *shalom*. God’s forgiving love in the heart of the believer produces this peace. It comes from knowing that Jesus satisfied God’s anger over our sins and has declared an end to the war between himself and the sinner. (PBC p. 12)

“Grace” (*charis*) means “God’s undeserved love, God’s unmerited favor.” The theological importance of this word cannot be overestimated. It corresponds in meaning with the Hebrew word *chesed* usually translated “love,” “mercy,” or “loving-kindness.” “In the Old Testament the word *chesed* expresses Yahweh’s covenant grace to His people. Thus Yahweh is predicated as the God ‘who shows covenant grace to thousands of generations of those that love me and keep my commandment’” (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 9, p. 383). This is the word in the well-known liturgical refrain “his love endures forever,” as in Ps 136. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

In the synoptic gospels *charis* occurs only in Luke, who uses it to characterize the message of salvation. The word is used frequently in Paul’s epistles for the central concept that most clearly expresses his understanding of salvation: it is by *grace* and through faith. God’s grace is his favor toward us based on the atoning crucifixion of Christ. It is opposed to righteousness through works of the law. The word is used by Paul in the *sedes doctrinae*, Eph. 2:89: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” John ends Revelation with a benediction that uses this powerful word: “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all” (22:21). The book therefore both begins and ends with the theme of God’s grace in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

“Peace” (*eirēnē*) is another tremendously important theological word. “In the NT the meaning . . . has the sense of wellbeing or salvation . . . the principal meaning is salvation in a deeper sense . . . three conceptions call for notice: a. peace as a feeling of peace and rest; b. peace as a state of reconciliation with God; and c. peace as the salvation of the whole man in an ultimate eschatological sense” (*TDNT*, vol. 2, pp. 411–12). “The peace of which John speaks here is peace between God and man. It is the peace of heart, mind, and conscience which flows from the assurance of the forgiveness of sin (John 14:27; Rom 5:1; 1 Cor 1:3; Phil 4:7; 2 Peter 1:2)” (Luther Poellot, *Revelation* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1962] p. 8). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

The NT epistles usually contain a greeting like “grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” The greeting of Revelation is unique. God is not even described in the predictable sequence as the one who was, who is, and who is to come. Instead, the formula begins with the present, moves to the past, and ends with the future. The same form is used again in v 8. Perhaps this sequence emphasizes the Lord’s living presence with his people in the present, just as he was with his people in the past, and will return for his people in the future. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

The peace of which John speaks here is peace between God and man. It is the peace of heart, mind, and conscience which flows from the assurance of the forgiveness of sins (John 14:27; Rom 5:1; 1 Cor 1:3; Phil 4:7; 2 Peter 1:4-5) (Poellot p. 8)

who is ... was ... is to come. A paraphrase of the divine name from Ex 3:14–15. Cf. Heb 13:8. – This is “I am” language from Exodus 3:14 where God calls Moses to lead God’s people out of Egypt. (CSB)

God the Father. This characterization stress that God is eternal, without beginning or end. (TLSB)

ἀπὸ ὃ ὦν καὶ ὃ ἦν καὶ ὃ ἐρχόμενος—In standard Greek ἀπό takes the genitive, but here the nominative follows. John knows the usual usage of ἀπό for in 1:4–5 he uses it to govern the genitive (πνευμάτων, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). He *purposely* shifts from the genitive to the nominative. In Revelation ἀπό is used to point out the “source” of something and is never used of an angel. When an angel is the agent, the preposition διὰ (1:1), ἐν (10:8), or ἐκ (10:10) is used; in those cases too, the angel is only the *agent*, not the source. (CC pp. 34-35)

The description of God as the one “who is” alludes to Exod 3:14, where the Lord reveals the meaning of his name as “I am who I am.” The God who speaks to us in Revelation is Yahweh, the same God who revealed himself to his people long ago (cf. also Is 41:4). The description of God as the one “who is to come” equates God with the returning Jesus Christ. Similarly, God’s description of himself as “I am the Alpha and the Omega” (also in 21:6) is echoed by Christ in 22:13, emphasizing that Christ is God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

seven spirits.† See NIV text note; cf. Zec 4:2, 10 and the sevenfold description of the Holy Spirit in Isa 11:2: (1) of the Lord, (2) of wisdom, (3) of understanding, (4) of counsel, (5) of power, (6) of knowledge, (7) of the fear of the Lord. (CSB)

An unusual way of referring to the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)

As this and the following verse contain a benediction from the Father and the Son, we must suppose that it is the Holy Spirit who is joined with them, as elsewhere, and not any created spirits. In accordance with the emblematical character of this book, he is described under the number seven, to denote his manifold and perfect divine operations. God is fully present. (Concordia Bible)

The Holy Spirit is referred to here as “the seven Spirits,” a reference to Is 11:2 which describes the seven-fold gifts of the one Spirit: “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” Note the reference to all three persons of the Trinity in the greeting of vv 4–5. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

1:5 JESUS CHRIST WHO IS THE FAITHFUL WITNESS – Jesus, who fearlessly testified during His ministry and trial. (TLSB)

Third, in addition to the Father and the Spirit (1:4), the revelation comes “from Jesus Christ,” identified as the conqueror of death and as “the *ruler* of the kings of the earth” (1:5). Jesus Christ, the witness to the truth of God, was faithful in his messianic mission and went to his death. But he is the firstborn of the dead, raised on the third day. Thus, he is described as the one who set God’s people free from their sins and as a result made them a kingdom for God, as well as priests to serve in the kingdom (the royal priesthood of all believers). The doxology voiced at the end of 1:6, while directly applied to Christ, is through him directed to God the Father by the Spirit. (CC pp. 42-43)

Why is Jesus Christ spoken of last, after the Father and the Spirit? It is because of his saving work, by which he has redeemed God’s people so that they can now worship God as his royal priests. This worship is directed through Christ to the Father and is inspired by the Spirit. (CC pp. 42-43)

This is the only book in the Bible which has such a trinitarian imprimatur (1:4–6), at least in this explicit form, by which the source and authority of God is placed upon a human’s writing. Because Revelation is the culmination of all scriptural revelation, this imprimatur is also placed, by inference, on the entire Scripture, both the OT and the NT. This imprimatur placed on Revelation may also indicate that there will not be another word of God spoken until the Lord Christ comes at the End. And God’s people must listen, for “the time is near” (1:3)—the time of judgment, but in particular the time of blessing in the presence of the exalted Christ. (CC pp. 42-43)

ὁ μάρτυς, ὁ πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος—Again these are nominative when one would expect them to be genitive because they are in apposition to Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. While the use of the nominative in place of the expected case is found in classical Greek, it is not the usual practice in literary Greek. (CC p. 35)

FIRSTBORN – The first born was privileged to receive a double portion of the inheritance (Dt. 21:7) and the leadership over the family (Gn. 35:23; 43:33; 2 Chron. 21:3). Sometimes the birthright was given to a younger son (Gn. 25:23; 49:3-4). The term also signifies the preeminence of the exalted Lord Jesus and His relationship to the heavenly Father (Col. 1:15, 18). (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

πρωτότοκος—This word appears eight times in the NT. When used of the birth of a child, it refers to the firstborn, the first to open the womb. In the LXX it is used for בְּכֹרִית, which also means “firstborn” (Gen 25:13; 35:23). In Lk 2:7 it is used in reference to Jesus, the firstborn of Mary. Here in Rev 1:5, πρωτότοκος refers to the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the first one to conquer death *after whom many others will follow*, those who by right of his victory over death conquer death (cf. Rom 8:29). (In LXX Ps 88:28 [MT/ET 89:27], David is called the πρωτότοκος of God.) In Col 1:18 Paul also calls Jesus the firstborn of the dead, just after calling him the firstborn over all creation (1:15). (CC p. 35)

Though it is true that some were raised from the dead before Jesus was (1 Ki 17:22; 2 Ki 4:35; 13:21; Luke 7:14; John 11:43), Jesus may still be called “the firstborn from the dead.” This is because those who were raised were able to be raised only because of Jesus’ death and resurrection for them. Jesus is the first in the sense of being the cause of the resurrection of every believer, a fact obvious in Luke 7:14; John 11:43. He is the one who “has freed us from our sins by his blood.” Therefore, Jesus is able to make the divine claim, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:25–26). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

RULER – ἄρχων—In Rev 19:16 Jesus is called the βασιλεὺς βασιλέων. Here ἄρχων points to Jesus not only being *the* king among all kings, but the ruler or king who is the source of the royal authority and power given to all other kings (see Rom 13:1). ἄρχων is related to ἀρχή, which points to the source or origin or first cause of all things. Jesus Christ is called the ἀρχή of God’s creation in Rev 3:14 (cf. 21:6; 22:13). (CC p. 35)

Christ is the risen and ascended One, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given (cf. Mt. 28:19; Eph. 1:20-23). Jesus’ heavenly coronation is depicted in Rev. 5:1-14. (TLSB)

FREED – λύσαντι—This is the aorist participle of λύω, “to release, loose.” A variant reading has λούσαντι, which is the aorist participle of λούω, “to wash” (uncials P and 046^c and several minuscules and also the Latin Vulgate). Either reading makes good sense, but the manuscript evidence strongly supports λύσαντι. For the baptismal idea of

cleansing from sin through washing, see 7:14; 22:14; and the textual note on ἱμάτιον in 19:13. (CC p. 35)

1:6 *a kingdom and priests.* † This OT designation of Israel (see notes on Ex 19:6; Zec 3) is applied in the NT to the church (1Pe 2:5, 9). Cf. also 5:10; 20:6. (CSB)

Cf. Ex. 19:6. The Christian Church stands in continuity with God's OT people. The Church exercises its priestly function by offering intercessory prayers and by proclaiming "the excellencies of Him who called (them) out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Revelation repeatedly depicts the saints sharing in Christ's rule (Rev. 2:27; 3:2). Luther: "We have nothing from God except the pure Word, namely, that the Lord Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father and is the Judge of the living and the dead, and that through Him we are kings and priests (Rev. 1:6)...Meanwhile we should believe and hope. For it one could see it now before one's eyes, there would be no need of faith" (AE 4:357). Hus: "That person, Christ, is everywhere present, since he is very God whose right it is to be everywhere without limitation. He is the bishop, who baptizes and takes away the sins of the world, John 1:29. He is the one who joins in marriage so that no man may put asunder...Mt. 19:6. He is the one who makes us priest...(Rev. 1:6). He performs the sacrament of the eucharist.. (Luke 22:19). This is he who confirms his faithful ones...Luke 21:15)" (The Church, p. 120). (TLSB)

Note on Ex. 19:6 Israel was to constitute the Lord's kingdom (the people who acknowledged him as their king) and, like priests, was to be wholly consecrated to his service and to do his will. – We are also priests. Our sacrifices are to be sacrifices of repentance, prayer, and praise in a life of service and thanksgiving. (Poellot p. 12)

BE GLORY AND POWER – αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος—A number of similar doxologies appear in Revelation: 4:11; 5:12, 13; 7:10, 12; 19:1. Other passages that are similar to the doxologies include 4:9; 12:10; 14:7; 19:7. There is a fine line between doxologies that *call for* the ascription of qualities to God and/or the Lamb in praise, and passages that *describe* the praising as it is or was voiced by others. Actually, both kinds of passages really function as *calls* for the Christian reader(s) and hearer(s) to *join in the praise*, and by reading aloud or by silently praying or meditating upon the words of the passages, the Christian does in fact express such worshipful praise. Doxologies to the Lamb alone are in 1:6; 5:12; doxologies to God alone are in 4:11; 7:12; 19:1; and the doxologies in 5:13; 7:10 are to both him "who sits on the throne" and "the Lamb." (CC pp. 35-36)

Most of the doxologies share a common vocabulary. Most common is δόξα, "glory" (1:6; 4:11; 5:12, 13; 7:12; 19:1). Next in frequency are δύναμις, "power" (4:11; 5:12; 7:12; 19:1), and τιμή, "honor" (4:11; 5:12, 13; 7:12). Then follows εὐλογία, "blessing" (5:12, 13; 7:12). Appearing in two doxologies are ἰσχύς, "strength" (5:12; 7:12); κράτος, "dominion" (1:6; 5:13); σοφία, "wisdom" (5:12; 7:12); and σωτηρία, "salvation" (7:10; 19:1). Making a single doxological appearance are ἀλληλουϊά, "alleluia" (19:1); εὐχαριστία, "thanksgiving" (7:12); and πλοῦτος, "wealth" (5:12). The largest number of

qualities is found in 5:12, which has seven elements, while 7:10 contains a single element, “[All] the *salvation* is with our God, who sits on the throne, and with the Lamb.” (CC p. 36)

Most of the doxologies include the definite article before the qualities ascribed to God and/or the Lamb. In doxological contexts the articles imply the idea of “all”: “*all the* glory and *all the* dominion” (1:6; other passages are similar). Therefore throughout this commentary the translation of such doxologies will include “all” in brackets. (CC p. 36)

Note how we are dependent upon God as the source of everything good. “He has made us”—creation was God’s act alone, and so is re-creation. Birth is God’s prerogative, and so is rebirth. It is the Lord who has made us members of his kingdom; “For Thine is the kingdom,” we pray in the Lord’s Prayer. It is the Lord who has made us priests who serve him with our lives and our highest worship, hence the acclaim, “To him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.” It would be appropriate to end the sermon with a paean of praise in the finest doxology. You may wish to have the congregation rise at the end of the sermon and sing one of the hymns that would express such a doxology, such as “The Lord, My God, Be Praised” (*LW* 174). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

1:7 *he is coming with the clouds.*† See Da 7:13; Mt 24:30; 26:64; Mk 13:26; 14:62; Lk 21:27; Ac 1:9. The first prophecy in the book, which opens, as it closes (22:20), with a reference to the second coming of Christ. (CSB)

The prologue concludes with a reference to the returning Lord: “Behold, he is coming with the clouds” (1:7). Jesus’ words to Caiaphas were, “You will see the Son of Man ... coming on the clouds of heaven” (Mt 26:64; cf. 1 Thess 4:17). This suggests that the thought “the time is near” (Rev 1:3) refers to the coming of the Lord Christ at the End. The epilogue also leads to this interpretation (22:6–7, 12, 20). (CC p. 43)

Clouds were a symbol of God’s presence. A cloud by day and fire by night led them out of Egypt and also gave them direction in the desert. At Mt. Sinai he the spoke from a cloud. In the New Testament the Transfiguration was another example. – The whole human race will witness his coming. No one will be exempt from this confrontation with Jesus Christ, not “even those who pierced him.” – The whole history of the world and the Church is patterned toward and converges upon the glorious reappearance of Christ. (Stoeckhardt p. 2)

The description of Christ coming on the clouds reminds us of the many times Scripture records the awesome events of God’s dealings with mankind, making his presence known through the veil of the cloud. But this time the cloud does not conceal him, but is the vehicle of his return. The scene is also pictured in Dan 7:13. Our verse also quotes the well-known prophecy of Zech 12:10. Christ died also for all the unbelievers of the world, and so they are described as “those who pierced him” who will mourn at his return in glory. But for believers, it will be a day of great joy. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

EVERY EYE WILL SEE HIM – This refers to Christ’s second coming on the Last Day. Note that Jesus’ suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, sitting at God’s right hand, and returning to judge are all mentioned in vv 5-7. (TLSB)

pierced. See Ps 22:16; Isa 53:5; Zec 12:10; Jn 19:34, 37. (CSB)

The whole human race will witness his coming. No one will be exempt from this confrontation with Jesus Christ, not “even those who pierced him” (1:7). While this is not a direct quote of Zech 12:10, it brings to mind that prophecy that the Lord will pour out his Spirit of grace on the house of David, and, says Yahweh, “They will look upon me whom they have pierced.” The reference to this verse brings to light again Christ’s death (cf. Rev 1:5); note that John alone among the four evangelists recounts the piercing of Jesus on the cross (Jn 19:33–37; cf. 1 Jn 5:6). And this piercing will cause people to beat their breasts and wail over him. (CC p. 43)

These are most probably God’s manifest enemies. (CC p. 43)

PEOPLES OF THE EARTH WILL MOURN – Here in Rev 1:7 John states that “all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him.” While “those who pierced him” most probably refers to God’s manifest enemies, “the tribes” who wail and mourn over him probably refers to God’s own repentant people (Zech 12:12–14 suggests such an interpretation; see also Lk 2:35; 23:27; Jn 20:11). The fact that the Lord Christ at his second coming will be recognized as *the one who was pierced* is a witness and confirmation of the truth that *by his death and resurrection* he alone is the Savior and Judge of the human race (see Jn 19:33–35; 1 Jn 5:6–12). (CC p. 43)

So shall it be! Amen. A double affirmation. (CSB)

1:8 *the Alpha and the Omega.*† The first direct message of Jesus in the book (cf. v. 17); he makes the same claim at the end of the book, 22:13 (cf. 21:6). The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. God is the beginning and the end (see 21:6). He rules over all human history. (CSB)

First and last letters of Greek alphabet. As such, this title underlines God’s eternal nature. It should be noted that both here and at 21:6, this title is applied to God the Father, while at 22:13 it is applied to Jesus. This demonstrates Jesus’ eternal divinity. (TLSB)

We understand the name “Alpha and Omega” in the light of Is 44:6: “I am the First, and I am the Last, and beside Me there is no God.” It is “the Lord God,” the only true God. He will not give His glory to another, neither His praise to graven images (Is 42:8). All other explanations of the name “Alpha and Omega” must flow out of this. For example: Only the true God could be “the Author and Finisher of our faith” (Heb 12:2) (Poellot p. 15)

The last verse of the prologue (Rev 1:8), while strange when compared to ordinary literary style, is characteristic of the style of both the prologue and epilogue of Revelation (22:7, 12). The divine voice (first person singular) breaks in to confirm the authority of God the Father as the prime source and originator of the revelatory-unveiling of Jesus Christ. It is the voice of God himself, by which he confirms the exalted status of his Son, Jesus Christ, as the Lord and Judge of all history, the human race and the world. (CC pp. 43-45)

There is no consensus as to the identity of the speaker of 1:8. Some commentators take the speaker to be Jesus Christ, others God the Father. To take the voice to be that of Jesus Christ would break up the literary symmetry of the prologue, which begins with God the Father as the giver of the revelation and ends with the Father as the authenticator of it. While Jesus Christ is the subject and object of the message, only God the Father, who originates and gives it to Jesus, can also then be the one who authenticates it (cf. Mt 3:17). Swete is correct when he says, “The solemn opening of the book reaches its climax here with words ascribed to the Eternal and Almighty Father.” It is the voice of almighty God himself, who by these words testifies to the position that his Son has earned and merited. The revelation of his Son’s exalted position is now to commence and unfold in the prophetic message of Revelation. There is no greater witness, and the affirmation of the divine authority of the book calls for no less a witness (Jn 5:36–37; 8:18). (CC pp. 43-45)

The title τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὰ (“the Alpha and the Omega,” Rev 1:8) expresses the eternity of God. In rabbinic theology the letters א and ת, the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, represented totality and entirety, and in particular they represented the Shekinah, that is, God’s visible presence for the benefit of his people, as at the burning bush (Exodus 3). That rabbinic theology draws on OT passages such as Is 41:4; 43:10; 44:6; 48:12. The title “the Alpha and the Omega” appears again in 21:6, where it also is applied to God the Father, and in 22:13, where it is applied to Jesus Christ. Christ is the revealed glory of God (Jn 1:14, 18), the one through whom God graciously appears to his people. He is the eternal one who has entered human history and time. “The Alpha and the Omega” is one of the titles which God the Father and Jesus share in Revelation. In this case it is shared because the Son of God is eternal in the same absolute sense as is the Father. (CC pp. 43-45)

It is the Lord God, “Yahweh, the [only] God” (κύριος ὁ θεός, 1:8), who thus cries out that he is “the Alpha and the Omega.” Only here and in 21:5 does God the Father speak directly. God is further identified in 1:8 by ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, “the One Who Is and Who Was and Who Is Coming” (first mentioned in 1:4), but now he is also called ὁ παντοκράτωρ, “the Almighty.” While in Revelation God shares with Jesus Christ the title τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὰ (“the Alpha and the Omega”), the titles ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (“the One Who Is and Who Was and Who Is Coming”) and ὁ παντοκράτωρ (“the Almighty”) in Revelation are reserved for the Father alone. This is done so as to preserve the prime position of God the Father while at the same time displaying the equality of the Father and the Son. (CC pp. 43-45)

Thus the Father’s speaking of this word (1:8) here is analogous to the word at the transfiguration (with the added understanding here about the role of the Spirit from Jn 15:26–27; 16:13–15). At the transfiguration the Father confirms the Son, whom he has sent and on whom the Spirit rests: “This is my beloved Son; hear him” (Mk 9:7). Here in Rev 1:8 the Father confesses that this Spirit-given (Jn 15:26–27; 16:13–15) prophecy about the sent, crucified, and exalted Son (whose exaltation is the chief focus of the revelation) has its origin in himself, the Father, and so has his authority behind it. (CC pp. 43-45)

LORD GOD – κύριος ὁ θεός—This is the usual LXX translation of the Hebrew combination יהוה (יהוה) יהוה. Compare the MT and LXX of, for example, Gen 2:8; Is 17:6; 1Chr 22:19; Neh 9:7. The language and thought of Revelation draw heavily and frequently from the OT. To reflect that background, this commentary translates κύριος as “Yahweh” when it is used in combination with ὁ θεός after the pattern of יהוה (יהוה) יהוה in the Hebrew OT; that usage occurs in Rev 1:8; 4:8, 11; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 18:8; 19:6; 21:22; 22:5, 6. (CC p. 36)

ὁ θεός—Here the definite article acts as a “pointer” which suggests that “the God” is *the only* true God, “in distinction from the mythological gods.” See further the textual note on τῷ θεῷ in 19:4 and the excursus “The Use of the Definite Article with ‘God.’” (CC p. 36)

The description of God as the Alpha and the Omega (also in 21:6; 22:13) means first of all that there is no other God. But it also means that he is the creator of the world and the one who will bring this world to a close. He is the cause of all that exists, and the goal and purpose of all creation is to glorify and serve him (cf. the description of Jesus as “the author and perfecter of our faith,” both the source and the goal of faith, Heb 12:2). This idea is also contained in the title “Almighty,” which does not just emphasize the surpassing power of God, but also divine monergism in effecting our salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

Luther’s explanation of the First Commandment in the Large Catechism is applicable: “Therefore it is the intent of this commandment to require true faith and trust of the heart which settles upon the only true God, and clings to Him alone. That is as much as to say: ‘see to it that you let Me alone be your God, and never seek another.’” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 4)

Almighty. Nine of the 12 occurrences of this term in the NT are in Revelation (here; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22). The other three are in Ro 9:29; 2Co 6:18; Jas 5:4. (CSB)

Because Revelation reserves this title for the Father (4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22), it stands in contrast with “the Alpha and the Omega” designation, which is applied to both Father and Son. Luther: “We are not the ones who can preserve the church, nor were our forefathers able to do so. Nor will our successors have this power. No, it was, is and will be he who says, ‘I am with you always, to the close of the age.’”

AS it says in Hebrews 13:8, ‘Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever’ and in Revelation 1:8, ‘He who is and who was and who is to come’ (AE 47:118). (TLSB)

ὁ παντοκράτωρ—This means “the Almighty, the All-Powerful.” It is a compound noun from πᾶς (πάντα, “all”) and κράτος (“power”). It appears ten times in the NT, nine of which are in Revelation^b (the other occurrence is in 2 Cor 6:18). In every instance it refers to God. The LXX uses παντοκράτωρ to translate ΠΙΣΑΡ, “[Lord of] hosts,” and ἰϚ, “the Almighty,” and uses it only of God. (See also the commentary below and the textual note on this title in 11:17.) Paul in Eph 6:12 calls Satan the κοσμοκράτωρ. At the time of John the Roman emperors were called αὐτοκράτωρ. (CC p. 37)

⁹I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹which said: **“Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.”** ¹²I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man,” dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. ¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: **“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.**

1:9-22 The first scene of John’s vision is the Son of Man and the letters He dictates to the seven churches. (TLSB)

1:9 YOUR BROTHER – Notice that when the seer John identifies himself he calls himself a brother and fellow participant in the tribulation. He does not write as one superior to his readers or distant from them. He understood their sufferings from the inside. He is participating in their anguish, too. (Joy in our Weakness – Marva Dawn)

suffering ... kingdom ... patient endurance. Three pivotal themes in Revelation: (1) “suffering” (2:9–10, 22; 7:14), (2) “kingdom” (11:15; 12:10; 16:10; 17:12, 17–18), (3) “patient endurance” (2:2–3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12). (CSB)

John was on the island of Patmos because of his proclaiming “the Word of God” and because of his “witness” to Jesus Christ (1:9). Even as Jesus was “the witness, the faithful one” (1:5), so also John was an eyewitness (1Jn 1:1) who testified faithfully to the truthfulness of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Because he would not back

down, he suffered exile. He was a “partner” with Christ “in the *suffering*”—placed first for emphasis—and in the “kingdom” of God and in the “patience” given to him by Christ (Rev 1:9). Others also were suffering persecution in this time of affliction (cf. Mk 13:19), some even death (Rev 2:9–10, 13). (CC p. 48)

John was suffering persecution when he wrote this Book, as were many other Christians at that time. In fact, John wrote Revelation while exiled. (TLSB)

What exciting things can happen when we join in the action of God's incursions into human history and life and become reoriented in God's future – when we recognize the precious commodity we carry with us, in us, through us, wherever we go. Have you ever stopped to think that you bring the kingdom of God to your local grocery store? (Joy in our Weakness – Marva Dawn)

Patmos. A small (four by eight miles), rocky island in the Aegean Sea some 50 miles southwest of Ephesus, off the coast of modern Turkey. It probably served as a Roman penal settlement. Eusebius, the “father of church history” (A.D. 265–340), reports that John was released from Patmos under the emperor Nerva (96–98). (CSB)

Patmos, an island about forty miles west-southwest of Miletus (see figure 2), thus became the locale where Revelation was written. It was during a moment of worship and meditation “in the Spirit” (ἐν πνεύματι, 1:10) on the Lord's day that John heard a loud, trumpet-like voice commissioning him to write the revelation and to send it to the seven churches. In the midst of suffering (ἐν τῇ θλίψει, 1:9), the affliction which is part of the kingdom (Acts 14:22), John received the grace of the vision of the exalted Christ through which he received the revelation. (CC p. 48)

because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. † Exiled as a punishment for preaching the gospel (cf. v. 2). (CSB)

martooreeah – Someone who gives a witness to the evidence and records it in report form. Originally meant eyewitness testimony that could stand up in a court of law (Luke 22:71). I witness was a person who gave such testimony, and he would, if necessary, back it up with his name, wealth, and life. It was used to describe the apostles and others who were witnesses of Jesus' earthly ministry and of his suffering, death and resurrection (Luke 24:48 and Acts 1:20-22) and thus who were able to be his witnesses to the world (Acts 1:8). Eventually their witness got them into trouble with the authorities, and they then had to back up their witness with their lives (Acts 7:54-60; 12:1-5). In the apostolic and post-apostolic church “witness” was used to refer not only to those who died for the faith but to all Christians who gave faithful witness by word and daily living. Another word used when a Christian gave his life because of his witness was ἡϊϊϊϊ - meaning to exit or depart (figurative for death) taken from Luke 9:31, where the word is used in Luke's account of the transfiguration in reference to Jesus' death and resurrection. Only after the first few centuries A.D. did “martyr” displace “exodus” when referring to a martyr's death. (CC pp. 46-47)

1:10 *the Lord's Day*. A technical term for the first day of the week—so named because Jesus rose from the dead on that day. It was also the day on which the Christians met (see Ac 20:7) and took up collections (see 1Co 16:2). (CSB)

Sunday. Already by the late first century, Christians were worshiping on the first day of the week, in honor of Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is possible that John received his heavenly visions during a worship service. That would be most fitting, since heaven and earth are united a unique way during Christian worship. "Because it was necessary to appoint a certain day for the people to know when they ought to come together, it appears that the Church designated the Lord' Day (Rev. 1:10) for this purpose" (AC XXVIII 60). (TLSB)

in the Spirit.† In a state of spiritual exaltation—not a dream, but a vision like Peter's in Ac 10:10. Cf. 2Co 12:1–6. (CSB)

Because of the Spirit's role in his visions, John message was inspired and authoritative as those of the OT prophets. (TLSB)

No other person has been permitted to see and describe the exalted Christ in such detail. Stephen saw the exalted Christ at the right of God and was thus comforted and fortified for his death, but he gave no detailed description (Acts 7:55–56). Paul was met on the way to Damascus by the exalted Christ (Acts 9:1–9) through a light (φῶς), and he was once taken up into the third heaven and given revelations (ἀποκαλύψεις) of the Lord (2 Cor 12:1–4), but in neither case does he give a description of Christ. John was given the grace not only to see the exalted Christ but also to share his vision with the church. (CC pp. 48-49)

In an ecstatic state but maintained his personality ..Spirit in the OT involved (1) creativity – where human possibilities end, there the Spirit begins, (2) eschatology, Is. 11:42; 61:3), (3) charismatic gifts (Judges 13:25; 14:6, (4) prophecy (2 Peter 1:21; Ez. 2:2) (Stuenkel p 17)

John was in a spiritual mood, deep in thought with Bible study and prayer. God led him to a state of mind that was receptive to what Jesus was about to reveal to him. (PBC p. 19)

He was fully conscious, but his senses, especially of sight and hearing, were completely given over to those things which God conveyed to him. (Poellot p. 17)

LIKE A TRUMPET – That is loud and clear (PBC p. 19)

John is overwhelmed by the sound here not so much as an instrument of music but as a signal to alertness. (Stuenkel p. 17)

1:11 *scroll*. Pieces of papyrus or parchment sewn together and rolled on a spindle (see note on Ex 17:14). The book form was not invented until about the second century A.D. (CSB)

seven churches.† See note on v. 4. The order mentioned is no doubt the order in which the churches would be visited. (CSB)

1:12 SEE THE VOICE – This is a curious expression, since one cannot really “see” a voice. John stresses the mystery of the One appearing to him. (TLSB)

seven. See Introduction: Distinctive Feature. (CSB)

golden lampstands.† The seven churches (see v. 20). Cf. symbolism in Mt 5:14–16. (CSB)

(1) Ephesus where John had spent most of the last 30 years. He must have known practically every member there. (2) Smyrna with its model congregation, one of the two that escaped all censure in the letters which John was to write. (3) Pergamos where faithful Antipus had suffered as a martyr (2:13). (4) Thyatira the home of Lydia who had helped to open all Europe to the Gospel by opening the doors of her house to Paul at Philippi (Acts 16:14-40). (5) Sardis how the church had there needed spiritual strengthening! How its faithful few needed encouragement! (6) Philadelphia with its model congregation, like the one at Smyrna. (7) Laodicea rich in this world’s goods, but poor in spiritual riches. (Poellot p. 18)

Christ is here seen dwelling in the very midst of his churches, and so of the Church itself. So Christians are to think of Christ, not as a Lord in heaven only, but as One who is ever with them, having set up his abode in their very midst. (Stoeckhardt p. 3)

1:13 *son of man*. See notes on Da 7:13; Mk 8:31. (CSB)

In his description of the exalted Son of Man, John draws upon several sources in the OT. These sources serve as a literary palette from which he creates in artistic language the image of the one who commissioned him. But also he draws from his own experience and memory of the event of the transfiguration. He recognizes the one before him, but yet there is a difference. When John saw the glorified Christ on the holy mount, he received a preview of the glory into which Jesus would come as a result of his death and resurrection. Now in Revelation 1 he sees the same Lord in that glory, the merited glory that John saw beforehand on the holy mount, he now sees in all its fulfillment. Daniel had prophetically seen this merited glory of the Son of Man long before (Dan 7:13), and, as Peter says about all the prophets (1 Pet 1:10–12), Daniel longed for the time when Christ would come into that glory. John on the holy mount saw a preview of that glory, and now he sees the Christ fully in that glory. The prophetic promise, *seen prophetically by Daniel and momentarily experienced by John at the transfiguration shortly before the promise’s fulfillment*, stands *now consummated* in all its everlasting beauty. (CC p. 49)

The Lord Christ appeared to John “like the Son of Man” (Rev 1:13). John recognized the one whom he saw, but he noted some differences—not essential differences, but more a matter of degree. John had once before seen the heavenly glory of Jesus at his transfiguration, when Christ gave to the three disciples a *preview* of the heavenly glory that he would merit by his cross and resurrection and come into *fully* at his ascension (cf. 2 Pet 1:16–18). Here again John sees the Lord Christ in his heavenly glory, and as he sees Christ *he is reminded that his Lord is now in this glory because he has completed his mission through his death and resurrection* (Rev 1:18). (CC p. 49)

Excursus

Son of Man

Though the title “son of man” is used in Ezekiel as an appellation of the prophet, identifying him as a spokesman for God, it is chiefly the use of the term in Daniel that gives the theological background for its usage in the NT. Already in the intertestamental period a theology of the Son of Man developed. For example, 1 Enoch comments on and interprets the Son of Man described in Dan 7:13–14. The Son of Man *represents* the Ancient of Days and *rules* God’s people on his behalf (1 Enoch 46:1–8; 48:1–10). The Son of Man’s preexistence is affirmed, he is identified as the Anointed One (Messiah), and he will be the light of the Gentiles (1 Enoch 48:1–10). He is also identified with Wisdom and will be in charge of the resurrection and the judgment (1 Enoch 49:1–4; 51:1–5). (CC pp. 54-55)

When Jesus began to call himself the “Son of Man,” the term already had a theological meaning within Judaism. It was the favorite title that Jesus used when speaking of himself in the third person. It appears some eighty-eight times in the NT, eighty-four of which appear in the four gospels and two in Revelation (1:13 and 14:14). In the gospels it is used in connection with all of Christ’s ministry, but in particular in connection with statements that say that *because of his death and resurrection he will come again in judgment* (Mt 24:30; 26:64; cf. Ps 8:3–9). Jesus’ use of this title to identify himself and his ministry expresses that he is the fulfillment of the prophetic picture and word of the Son of Man in the OT (Dan 7:13–14; Ps 8:3–9; cf. also Ps 2:12). It also invites hearers to recognize him as such. He is *the* man whom God had chosen (Is 42:1; 49:7) to take Israel’s place (Is 49:3), and also that of the Gentiles (Is 49:6), and to represent them before God (Is 53:12). He is the one who established God’s kingdom (Rev 1:6), incorporating into it both Jews and Gentiles, and he did this by his own death and resurrection (Mk 8:31; Rev 1:5–6). (CC pp. 54-55)

The Bible bestows on Jesus the son of Mary three great titles: “Christ,” “Lord,” and “Son of Man.” There are of course many other descriptive names and terms that are applied to Jesus which help to explain the fullness of those three great titles, such as Savior, Holy One, Redeemer. In addition there are terms that describe his essence and person, such as Son of God, son of Joseph. To these can be added terms that describe the mystery of his being, such as Logos, light, truth. But the three great titles conferred upon Jesus of Nazareth *identify and encapsulate all that the Son of God became and did on behalf of the human race*. (CC pp. 54-55)

The title “*Christ*” (“Messiah”) designates Jesus of Nazareth as the chosen one, the anointed Redeemer of the world. As a result of his redemptive activity he became the “*Lord*” of God’s people, the church. And furthermore, as a result of his being the Christ and the Lord of God’s people, he is also the “*Son of Man*,” that is, the master of all history, of the human race and of the final judgment of God. The title “Son of Man” is bestowed upon Jesus because, as *the* man who represents God’s people before the heavenly Father, he reconciled them to the Father by his being the Christ. And now, as the Lord of the church, this same Son of Man will also be the Lord and Judge of the whole human race and of the world. (CC pp. 54-55)

This title, “Son of Man,” not only identifies Jesus, the Son of God, as the true man who came to take the place of the human race in his life and death and resurrection. It also emphasizes the fact that Jesus Christ, as *the* human being, was elevated to the high and unique status of being *the* Man to rule everything on behalf of God the Father. (CC pp. 54-55)

The OT roots, the intertestamental Jewish development, and the self-revelation of Jesus testified to in the NT all lead one to see that when the title “Son of Man” is applied to Jesus, the God-man, it emphasizes how he *represents* God’s people as he establishes for them God’s kingdom, and he also *rules* God’s people (and judges the whole world) by the authority of and on behalf of God the Father. These are the very emphases of Dan 7:13–14, the seminal passage that narrates how “one like a Son of Man” approached “the Ancient of Days” and received from him “authority, glory, and kingship” to the end that those from all peoples of the earth who are brought into his eternal kingdom will worship him forever and ever. (CC pp. 54-55)

Occurring over 50 times in the book of Ezekiel and at a strategic spot in the book of Daniel, the term was well known in Israelite circles, to the extent that when Jesus called himself by that name, he was greeted immediately with charges of blasphemy (see Mark 14:62-64). (Joy in our Weakness – Marva Dawn)

Favorite self-designation of Jesus, used c 80 times in the Gospels but almost never in the rest of the NT. Its meaning varies somewhat depending on the context. Indicates that though Jesus is fully man, He is much more. As a messianic title, it combines the ideas of a servant who will suffer and die for all people (Is. 53; Mt. 20:28) and the exalted Son of Man, whose reign is everlasting (Dan. 7:13-14; Mt. 24:30). (TLSB p. 2098)

Christ was anointed to be my Prophet, Priest and King. (Luther’s Small Catechism)

As my Prophet, He revealed Himself by word and deed, and by the preaching of the Gospel still reveals Himself as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the World. (Luther’s Small Catechism)

As my Priest, Christ fulfilled the Law in my stead perfectly (active obedience), sacrificed Himself for me (passive obedience, and still intercedes (pleads) for me with His heavenly Father. (Luther's Small Catechism)

As my King, Christ with His almighty power rules all creatures, governs and protects His Church, and finally leads it to glory. (Luther's Small Catechism)

robe ... to his feet. The high priest wore a full-length robe (Ex 28:4; 29:5). Reference to Christ as high priest is supported by the reference to the golden sash around his chest. (CSB)

He is attired like the prophets of old. He is a prophet, the eternal Prophet, who teaches his people and intercedes for his own before God. (Stoeckhardt p. 3)

As the Son of Man, the Lord Christ is clothed in a *long flowing robe* (ποδήρης). In the LXX this word refers to the stately garment of the high priest (Zecch 3:4; cf. Ex 28:4 and Josephus, Antiquities, 3,159 {3.7.}) Here then we have a reminder of the high priestly role of the exalted Christ before the heavenly Father (Heb 4:14–16). (CC p. 49)

His long flowing robe reaching to His feet differs from the usual short tunic worn by warriors and lords of power. (Joy in our Weakness – Marva Dawn)

A *golden belt or sash* is tied around his chest. Such a high tying of a sash, around the chest rather than around the waist, was usual with this robe (ποδήρης). The seven censer-angels in Rev 15:6 are girded or tied about the chest (στῆθος, the more common word for chest) with golden sashes or belts. According to 1 Macc 10:89 and 14:44, such a golden belt indicated royalty. In Dan 10:5 the heavenly figure dressed in fine linen has a golden belt tied around his waist. Thus noting the golden belt attached to the Son of Man (Rev 1:13), John deliberately links the heavenly figure of Daniel 10 with the Son of Man figure of Dan 7:13. The golden belt is indicative of the kingship of the exalted Christ and of his identification with the Son of Man figure of Daniel. (CC pp. 49-50)

And the golden girdle that he wears indicates his royal dignity. As a king he rules. All things are in his hands. He rules the world and directs his Church. (Stoeckhardt p. 3)

1:14 *white like wool.*† Cf. Da 7:9; Isa 1:18. The hoary head suggests wisdom and dignity (Lev 19:32; Pr 16:31). Whiteness is symbolic also of purity, holiness and righteousness. (CSB)

His head is *white like wool and snow*. In the OT the hoary or grey head of the aged commanded respect and was worthy of honor (Lev 19:32); it also symbolized a crown of splendor and righteous wisdom (Prov 16:31; 20:29). The Ancient of Days, to whom the heavenly court presents the Son of Man in Dan 7:9–14, has clothing white like snow and his head was white as wool. In Dan 7:13–14, when the Son of Man is presented to the Ancient Days, he is given authority to establish an everlasting kingdom. Here in Rev 1:14, the Son of Man now has this whiteness; glory and honor are now due him

because he has successfully carried out his commission of establishing—through his “suffering” (1:9), death, and resurrection—this everlasting “kingdom” (1:9). *Ascended, he now reigns. The whiteness of the Ancient of Days has been transferred to the victorious Christ.* The glory and worship given to God the Father now is also fully given to God the Son (see 5:11–14). (CC p. 50)

His head and hair are unusual in their brilliant wholeness – as wool and as snow. In the context of this picture such an image does not signify premature aging, but His purity and victoriousness and undoubtedly, the wisdom and spiritual maturity that are associated with white hair in the Hebrew Scriptures. The whiteness of wool and snow reminds us of Isaiah 1:18 and comforts us with the assurance that this Son of Man is the one who forgives our scarlet sins and makes us white and pure, too. (Joy in our Weakness – Marva Dawn)

eyes ... like blazing fire. † Penetrating insight (see 4:6). In the OT God’s eyes suggest his knowledge or his concern for his people (see Da 7:9; 10:6). (CSB)

The eyes of the Son of Man are “*like a flame of fire*” (1:14). In Dan 7:9 the throne of the Ancient of Days was flaming with fire. The eyes of the heavenly figure in Dan 10:6 were like lamps of fire. This is another hint that the Son of Man of Revelation is to be identified with the heavenly figure of Daniel 10 and is the same as the Son of Man of Daniel 7. In the OT fire symbolizes the holy purifying presence of God, before whom only those thus purified can stand (Ex. 19:10-19; Is. 6:1-7; Mal/ 3:1-4). The corollary is that the holy presence of God destroys evil. (Mal. 4:1-3 {MT 3:19-21}; Heb. 12:18-24). In antiquity, Greek and Roman authors spoke of eyes like flaming fire. The penetrating glance of Jesus while here on earth held a foreboding of righteous anger for those upon whom it fell (Mk 3:5). John now sees these piercing, fiery eyes in the exalted Christ, the one whom God had authorized to destroy evil and purify his people. (CC p. 50)

Also stands for agelessness. (PBC p. 21) – Omniscience (Stuenkel p. 19)

The blazing eyes call to mind the scrutiny and wisdom of a great ruler who care for his subjects and opposes their enemies. “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give an account” (Hebrews 4:13). (PBC p. 21-22)

1:15 FEET WERE LIKE BRONZE GLOWING – Feet of brass represent a strength that conquers all enemies. – This is as if they burned in a furnace, that is, like shining brightly, like metal under intense heat. God is not an idol, with feet of clay (Daniel 2:31-45). He shall stand forever and tread all his enemies underfoot, they shall be burned by the fire of his wrath and consumed by his anger and hot displeasure. (Poellot – p. 20)

The feet of the exalted Christ are like *fiery burnished brass* (Rev 1:15), reminiscent of the legs of the heavenly figure in Dan 10:6. Feet of brass represent a strength that conquers all enemies (Dan 2:33). The enemies of death and the grave now lie vanquished beneath his feet (Rev 1:17–18; 1 Cor 15:25–27). (CC p. 50)

These feet make his enemies his footstool: “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (1 Corinthians 15:25). (PBC p. 22)

VOICE WAS LIKE THE SOUND OF RUSHING WATERS – Like waters, surging, restless, rising and falling, overwhelming, and irresistible in persistence and power. (Poellot – p. 20)

His voice was like the *roar of mighty waters* (Rev 1:15), similar to the voice of the heavenly figure in Dan 10:6, whose voice sounded like a great crowd of people. But Christ’s voice suggests especially the mighty voice of God which attended the coming of his glory, which voice is like the roar of many waters (Ezek 43:2); compare the sound of the wings of the four winged creatures of God’s glory in Ezek 1:24. *When John stands before the exalted Son of Man, he is standing before the very majesty and glory of God* (see Rev 10:3). (CC p. 50)

When the King lifts his thundering voice (Ezekiel 43:2), “the earth melts” (Psalm 46:6) (PBC p. 22)

1:16 SEVEN STARS – They represent the angels of the seven churches. (CC p. 51)

The angels assigned to guard the seven churches. The fact that Jesus held these seven stars in His hand means that He plays an active part in protecting and caring for His people. (TLSB)

The Son of Man has *in his right hand seven stars*, which represent the angels of the seven churches (1:20). It is by his right hand of mercy (Mt 25:34; Rev 1:17) that the Lord Christ blesses and comforts his church through the sevenfold presence of the Spirit (Jn 14:15–17; 16:7). The angels are also a reminder that the church is represented before God’s heavenly throne by angels, through whom God also protects his people on earth (Heb 1:14; Mt 18:10; 25:31). (CC p. 51)

sharp double-edged sword.† Like a long Thracian sword (also in 2:12, 16; 6:8; 19:15, 21). The sword in 6:4; 13:10, 14 was a small sword or dagger. The sword symbolizes divine judgment, authority and God’s word (see Isa 49:2; Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12). (CSB)

But in particular the angels represent the human messengers of Christ’s Word to his church. The “*two-edged sword*” (Rev 1:16) indicates that the Son of Man will execute the judgment of God according to his Word (Heb 4:12). (CC p. 51)

Represents the Word of Christ, who rules in His Church by means of His Word. (CC p. 51)

The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). Here John saw the sword moving to action, and in Rev 19:15,21 it effectively

accomplishes its purpose, striking and slaying the nations. This sword of the Word is a devastating thing for the unbelievers, but a warm comfort for the children of God. (Poellot p. 21)

The Word of God alone changes the lives of people: it drives them to repentance when it convicts them of their sins through the preaching of the Law, and it gives them hope and comfort and empowers them for service through the Good News that God has been merciful to them by sending Christ to die for them. (LL p. 29)

FACE WAS LIKE THE SUN – Last of all John mentions how *the whole appearance* of the Son of Man is *like the sun in its most powerful brightness* (Rev 1:16). In the OT the sun is used as a metaphor for God, in particular for his glory, by which he blesses his people and bestows upon them the light which produces life, bringing them out from darkness (Is. 60:1-3, 20; Ps. 84:11; cf. Num. 6:22-27). In Mal 4:2 the prophet declares that “the Sun of righteousness” will arise with healing in his wings, a heavenly figure which is associated with the Messiah because of Mal 3:1–4 and 4:1–2. The heavenly figure of Daniel 10 is pictured with a face like lightning (Dan 10:6). In Matthew’s account of the transfiguration we are told that Jesus’ face was like the sun (Mt 17:2). Here in Revelation 1 *the face and the whole person of Jesus show that the exalted Christ is the person through whom the glory and the life-giving light of God are now present*. Christ’s face and person radiate God’s glory, which brings light to a world of darkness (Jn. Jn 1:4; 8:12; Heb. 1:3; cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). (CC p. 51)

To his enemies that brings disaster and death, but his own bask in this light, as they experience nothing but goodness, loving kindness, and mercy. (Stoeckhardt p. 4)

1:17 *fell at his feet*. A sign of great respect and awe (4:10; 5:8; 7:11; 19:10; 22:8). (CSB)

An act of worship and response to Jesus’ awesome appearance. Jesus is fully divine and worship is rightly directed toward Him (cf 19:10; 22:8–9). *the first and the last*. More or less synonymous with “the Alpha and the Omega” title of v 8; 21:6; 22:13. (TLSB)

The majesty of God turns us upside down, and we fall on our face in unworthiness. It throws us to our knees in adoration and utmost humility. (Joy in our Weakness – Marva Dawn)

When John now sees the exalted Christ in all his glory, he falls down before him as dead, as a corpse (1:17). Before the transfigured Christ, John (and Peter and James) first stood (Mt 17:1–5) and then, when the voice spoke from the cloud (Mt 17:6), fell on their faces (in a posture of worship) because of the fear that the experience evoked. But now John is completely knocked down and out as dead. While he could stand before the transfigured Christ and then in fear *willingly* bow down, here he is completely overwhelmed and *unwillingly*, as it were, forced down as when death strikes the body (cf. Jn 18:4–6). Perhaps when Jesus displayed his glory on the holy mount, it was dimmed just enough so that John could still remain standing. But here before the exalted Lord he is struck by a full blast of that consummate majestic glory, and as a

result he is knocked down as a corpse. John could no more stand before the heavenly Christ than he could approach the solar sun and touch it. Indeed, he could no more stand before the glorified Christ than Moses could stand before God and see his face at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:9-25; 33:18-20;34:29-30; cf. Heb. 12:20-21) – unless given special grace and permission. It is similar to what Isaiah said when he saw Yahweh on his throne:

Woe to me, for I am ruined, for I am a man unclean of lips and in the midst of a people unclean of lips I am dwelling, for my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts. (Is 6:5)

No human person can stand before the exalted Son of Man because of the corruption of sin and God's own holiness. Not even John could stand before Christ on his own ability and merit because of John's state of sinful corruption and Christ's own holiness and glory. John's falling down as dead is like the action of every proclaimer of the Word as he falls down in repentance before the Word that comes to him. Every ministry of the Word begins with the repentance of the minister and Christ's forgiveness of his sin (cf. Rev 10:9–11). (CC p. 51-52)

RIGHT HAND – The right hand always symbolizes fellowship in the Bible. (Joy in our Weakness – Marva Dawn)

But Jesus Christ gave John the grace and permission to stand before him. Placing his right hand on John, Jesus tells John, "Stop being afraid," (1:17). This word of gracious comfort (Cf. Gen. 15:1; Dan. 10:7-11; Mt. 28:5; Lk. 1:13, 30) empowers Christ's slave to stand up in his presence. (CC p. 52)

Do not be afraid.† A fitting introductory message to the gospel, as to Zechariah, to Jesus' mother Mary and to the shepherds (Lk 1:13, 30; 2:10). (CSB)

As long as fear holds men in its grip they are all their lifetime subject to bondage and slavery (Heb. 2:15). (Poellot p. 21)

For the people of God those words of assurance come as a great comfort, assuring them that God has put away their sins, that they stand cleansed before God, and that God has declared them to be his people. (LL p. 30)

1 John 4:18 "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

I am. See note on Jn 6:35. (The first of seven self-descriptions of Jesus introduced by "I am" (see 8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). In the Greek the words are solemnly emphatic and echo Ex 3:14) (CSB)

the First and the Last. Essentially the same as "the Alpha and the Omega" (v. 8; cf. Isa 44:6; 48:12). (CSB)

The Lord Christ identifies himself as “the First and the Last” (ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, 1:17). Like “the Alpha and the Omega” (1:8), “the First and the Last” also denotes the eternalness, but the titles are not synonymous. “The Alpha and the Omega” refers to the eternalness of God (1:8) and Christ (22:13), an eternalness that is far beyond creation, but “the First and the Last” refers to the eternalness of Christ *in relationship to his bride, the church*. It is a reflection and fulfillment of Is 44:6 and 48:12, where Yahweh says to the people of Israel as their King and Redeemer, “I am the first and I am the last” (LXX Is 44:6: ἐγὼ πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ μετὰ ταῦτα). In using this title Jesus assures John that, as the Eternal One, he *is* his Savior; therefore John should not be afraid (see also Is 44:8, where Yahweh tells his people not to be afraid). (CC p. 52)

A fitting introductory message to the gospel, as to Zachariah, to Jesus’ mother and to the shepherds. (CSB)

As long as fear holds men in its grip they are all their lifetime subject to bondage and slavery (Hebrews 2:15). (Poellot p. 22)

1:18 Living One. Based on OT references to the “living God” (e.g., Jos 3:10; Ps 42:2; 84:2). In contrast to the dead gods of paganism, Christ possesses life in his essential nature. (CSB)

Refers not merely to Jesus’ resurrection, but also to His capacity to impart eternal life to others (cf. John 11:25-26). (TLSB)

Furthermore, Jesus identifies himself as “the Living One” (Rev 1:18), a title used in the OT to contrast the true God with all idols, which are dead and thus have no existence (Deut. 32:40; Josh. 3:10; Is. 49:18; Jer. 5:2; Dan. 12:7; cf. Mt. 16:16; Acts 14:15; Rom. 9:26; Rom.9:26; 2 Cor. 3:3) . Jesus Christ was dead *but now lives forever*. Because of his death and resurrection Jesus Christ now has the keys of death and the grave. As the conqueror of death and the grave he demonstrates that there is only one true God, the God who now reaches out to all through Jesus Christ in order to bring life. All other gods are false and dead idols. The death *and resurrection* of Jesus Christ validate the truth that the God (“the first and ... the last,” Is 44:6) who is now present in the exalted Christ is the only true God (Is 44:8–10), Creator (Is 48:12–13) and Judge/Redeemer (Is 48:14–22). (CC p. 53)

keys of death and Hades. Absolute control over their domain (see Mt 16:18 and note). (CSB)

GOSPEL – John 20:19-31

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive

anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

20:19-31 Today’s lesson begins on the evening of Easter day with the disciples locked in a room in fear of the Jews. When Jesus appears to them, their initial reaction is greater fear still. But their fear begins to give way to the peace that Jesus brings them. A week later the disciples are once again found behind locked doors, implying that they remained fearful. Big fears go away slowly and require much encouraging. Thomas’s doubting was a symptom of his fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

humin, “Peace be with you.” Throughout the New **20:19, 21, 26** *eirēnē* Testament, the Greek recalls the Hebrew *shalom*. In this one word is comprehended—and conveyed—the entire essence of the Gospel. So much more than absence of war or conflict, *shalom* describes the full condition of well-being that accrues when God and man are at one. Since the fall, of course, this is possible only when sin, which put enmity between God and his creatures, has been removed. And this, then, takes us specifically to the cross, where the reconciliation took place. It was peace that was promised in the first expression of Gospel (enmity between the serpent and Eve’s seed meant reconciliation of her offspring to God, Gen 3:15), and it is peace that is described in the final images of Scripture, when the well-being of creation is restored (Revelation 21–22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Moreover, the blessing of peace, which Jesus extends three times in this text, is never simply a pious wish, but actually conveys all of this. When Aaron would speak the *shalom* upon Israel, God promised, “I will bless them” (Num 6:27). Many a pastor has wisely instructed his confirmation class that if they should miss the entire Divine Service and arrive only in time for the Benediction, the trip is eternally valuable. In those words of peace alone, hearers *have*, have been given, every blessing of a reconciled, all-powerful and all-loving God to his people. The disciples received all this each time Jesus spoke the blessing in this text. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Notice the way a speaking of peace introduces each major movement of the story: the reinstatement of the Ten (vv 19–20), the giving of the Office of the Keys (vv 21–23), and the restoration of Thomas (vv 26–29). These three occurrences for these three movements shape the outline here offered. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

This passage is paralleled at Luke 24:36-49 and Mark 16:14-18 which ought be read. It was late in the evening. The group was composed of the disciples, those with them and the two Emmaus disciples. They were eating. (Buls)

Word of Jesus' resurrection has already reached the disciples by Easter evening. Mary Magdalene and other women have seen the Lord and, we can be sure, have dutifully carried out their assignment to bring word to Jesus' brethren, especially Peter (20:17–18; also Mt 28:10; Mk 16:7; Lk 24:9–10). Peter himself, with John, had seen the empty tomb, and John had even “believed” (Jn 20:6–8). Further, the personal appearance to Peter (“Simon,” Lk 24:34; “Cephas,” 1 Cor 15:5) has almost surely taken place before our text. The fact that Jesus had risen could no longer have seemed like the “idle tale” the disciples had taken it to be earlier (Lk 24:11). What remains to make *this* appearance so noteworthy? Fear of Jesus himself! The disciples had abandoned him at the most crucial moment. Was it entirely good news that he was alive? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:19 FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK – “That first day of the week” is a conscious effort to inform the reader that we are still on Easter Day. The identification of the risen Christ with the crucified Jesus is made at the first appearances. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

“Evening of that first day of the week”—this is a resurrection day event. “It is still Easter,” we would say. “The disciples” includes more than the 10 (Judas and Thomas missing) as Lk 24:33–36 supports. Security-conscious, out of fear for what the Jewish leaders might do to them, the disciples had all doors locked. “Jesus came and stood among them.” He was suddenly there! “Peace be with you!” never meant so much to the disciples (cf in 14:27). They might have expected to be taken to task for their conduct on the past Thursday and Friday. Instead, Jesus comforts and reassures his followers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

ousēs oun opsias tēi hēmerai ekeinēi tēi miai sabbatōn, “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week.” Time is often hard to determine in John’s Gospel, but clearly this is the evening of Easter Day. Jesus announces peace to the whole assembly of gathered disciples and gives the Holy Spirit. The giving of the Holy Spirit is something associated with Pentecost. The Spirit is given to commission the Church and lead it to confess Jesus as Lord before the world so that all may have life in Jesus’ name (v 31). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

disciples. Probably includes others besides the apostles, “the Twelve” (v. 24). (CSB)

hoi mathētai, “the disciples.” This may be a group as large as 120 (Acts 1:15). It includes more than the Twelve, as v 24 seems to indicate in its designation of Thomas. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

This includes more than the 10 (Judas and Thomas are missing). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

DOORS LOCKED – Security-conscious, out of fear for what the Jewish leaders might do to them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

“the doors being locked . . . for fear of the Jews.” That was the disciples’ obvious fear, but if Jesus was alive *and on their side*, the Jews would be of no concern. The disciples’ rejection of Jesus’ mission left them in doubt as to whether Jesus was their friend any longer or rather might abandon them—or worse. This is the beauty behind Jesus’ word “Peace” (also vv 21, 26). They *are* reconciled! Thank God our faithlessness does not stop Jesus from coming with his blessing of peace. This is a peace defined by Jesus’ character and work and delivered on his terms. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

They knew that Caiaphas could have his soldiers drag them into the night and hold a trial that even quicker than Jesus’ trial. After all, as long as Pilate had agreed to Jesus’ death, he would have to be consistent and agree to theirs. So a sense of fear and dread filled the room. (LifeLight)

But just as heavy was the sadness. Despite the reports of the women, the disciples were still convinced that everything was over. Three years of hoping, learning, and growing were gone. God was now far off again instead of being as near as Jesus’ presence. The ugliness of the cross was still etched in their memories. It was all over. They were weeping not only for themselves, but also for Israel and for the world. (LifeLight)

Yet they heard again and again the strange stories – the message by the angels to the women (Matt 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-8; John 20:10-13), the appearances of Jesus to the women (Matt 28:8-10; John 20:14-17) and the appearance of Jesus to the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:13-35). Did they dare to hope? The mind plays tricks when one is sorrowing and fervently wishing that things aren’t as they are. (LifeLight)

Besides showing how utterly the Jew rejected Jesus, it clearly shows the disciples’ lack of faith at this time. After the Ascension and Pentecost they are joyful and fearless. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

the Jews. See note on 1:19. (CSB)

The disciples were afraid that they would be arrested for supporting Jesus' alleged conspiracy against the authority of imperial Rome. (TLSB)

CAME AND STOOD AMONG THEM – The body of Jesus, now glorified, was no longer contained by time and space limitations. He could suddenly be there. John's gospel began with the marvelous assertion that the Word, The Son of God, "became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (1:14). Now here He was again coming just as quietly as He had the first time when He was born in a stable in a quiet an insignificant village to two unimportant people, as the world counts unimportance. Standing in their midst made all the difference in the world. Now they would know and believe. Now they would listen and wait. Now Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would come. Now they would make a difference. (LifeLight)

estē eis to meson, "stood among them." The Word that became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14) continues to dwell in the midst of his people. This is the reason his people have peace, can forgive sin, and witness to the signs so others believe and have life in his name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

After His resurrection, Jesus more fully manifested His divine attributes. Thus, though still completely human, He did not allow physical barriers to keep Him from revealing Himself to His disciples. Luther states, "The evangelist says not that they saw him enter, but 'He appeared or stood in their midst' (Luke 24:36), which sounds as if he had been there already, hidden, and now revealed himself, as he also did to Mary Magdalene at the grave (John 20:14), and with all to whom he appeared" (AE 37:66). (TLSB)

Peace be with you! The normal Hebrew greeting (cf. Da 10:19). Because of their behavior the previous Friday, they may have expected rebuke and censure; but Jesus calmed their fears (see note on 14:27). (CSB)

"Fear of the Jews" paralyzed the disciples. Closed doors shut out the enemy, but did not shut out the risen Christ, who came to them to dispel their guilt and fear with a message of peace. "Peace be with you!" is, in this context, far more than a casual greeting. This is the peace all the prophets declare, the peace Jesus himself promised to give to his disciples (Jn 14:27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

The *shalom* “shalom” behind the Greek *Eirēnē*, “peace” has many implications about salvation of the whole person. Used with the dative of address, this is a translation of the common greeting on arrival (1 Sam 25:6). Instead of rebuking the disciples for their conduct on Good Friday, Jesus bestows his peace on them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

eirhvnh uJmi'n, “peace be with you”: Though the disciples were huddled together in fear, Jesus does not come to them saying, “Don’t be afraid,” but instead greets them with, “Peace be with you.” Peace is the antithesis of fear. Jesus only uses this greeting in the context of appearing to his disciples after the resurrection (here and in Lk 24:36). This greeting is common in the Epistles, especially in the opening words, echoing the peace that Jesus extended to his first disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The greeting of “peace” in the OT wished prosperity in body and soul to the person being greeted. It occurs many times in Luke: (1) Mary (1:28), (2) Birth (2:14), (3) Forgive sins (7:50), Healed (8:48), Sending of 72 (10:5-7), Palm Sunday (19:38). (CSB)

eirēnē humin, “peace be with you.” In John, “peace be with you” is the equivalent of the Synoptics’ “fear not.” Fear can be set aside because of the one who is present. While the resurrected Jesus is present when not visible, he makes this visit Easter evening and eight days later to assure the disciples that he is in their midst. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Peace is the antithesis of fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

Now the Father’s anger over sin had been satisfied through the death of His son, the perfect substitute for our sins. (LifeLight)

This is not an empty greeting. This is full Gospel. It is an absolution. The greeting is in keeping with the Greeter. The first thing He does is to forgive their sins and declare that all is well. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:20 *his hands and side*. Where the wounds were (John does not refer to the wounds in the feet). According to Lk 24:37 they thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus was clearly identifying himself. (CSB)

“Showed them his hands and side”—He flashed his “identification badges” to establish who he was, the Teacher and Lord they had known so intimately for three years, Jesus of Nazareth. This was not an apparition produced by intense fear or mob psychology.

His wounds prove that the same body that hung on the cross is now risen. For their own faith, as well as their future testimony, it was essential that the disciples positively identify him. The holy wounds of Jesus continue to bring joy and assurance to us today. They are evidence of Jesus' atoning sacrifice. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Jesus is always reaching out and teaching. For their own faith, as well as their future testimony, it was essential that the disciples positively identify him. The wounds of Jesus bring joy and assurance to us today. They are proof of Jesus' death and resurrection. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 2)

“After he said this.” The greeting of peace is to be connected to the actions that follow. Jesus chose to retain in his glorified body the mortal wounds of the crucifixion. He did so because these are the wounds that heal and the marks of “the punishment that brought us peace” (Is 53:5). They are not marks of shame, but of victory because, through them, the sinner has been reconciled to God. (“Behold his hands and side, Rich wounds, yet visible above, In beauty glorified” [LW 278:3].) The wounds verify that this man standing among the disciples was the very Jesus who died on a cross on Friday. They are, of course, filled with joy, just as Jesus had promised (Jn 16:20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

“He showed them his hands and his side.” Salvation is an “in the dirt” affair. He became “sin who knew no sin” (2 Cor 5:21) so that we might be saved. He got his hands dirty and bloody. Salvation is also an event in history. These are not metaphorical hands; these are the hands of Jesus, the one who was crucified, died, and was buried. The salvation of God has handprints and footprints in history so that “peace on earth, goodwill toward men” might be visible to all. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

This was no ghost, no figment of battered imaginations. This really was the Lord with a real body, the same body that had seen suffering on the cross! Finally, all their fears and forebodings and hopelessness disappeared in the joy of recognition and realization. Jesus was truly alive and in their midst! (LifeLight)

Proved beyond doubt that the risen Lord, though appearing with a glorified body, was the same person as the crucified Christ. Luther, “So the very same Christ who was born of Mary and who was nailed to the cross truly rose again. It was He and no other, as He showed His disciples the scars in His hands and His side. (TLSB)

WERE OVERJOYED – chairō -- to be full of “cheer”, that is, calmly *happy* or well off.

Lenski remarks: “Jesus appeared again and again, intensifying faith and joy, until nothing could ever disturb the solid certainty. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

THE LORD – This the title used in vv 18,25, 28 by those who believed in His resurrection. John is writing this from the perspective of post-Easter faith as he records its awakening in the disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

20:21-23 The peace won for them and offered to them is now to be carried by the disciples to the whole world. Repeating the greeting of peace, Jesus commissions the disciples to undertake a mission of peace carrying the word of peace. The First Adam received the breath of life from God. Jesus, the Last Adam, now breathes the divine breath that bestows the Spirit of life to the disciples. This Spirit will empower them to carry out the mission of forgiving and retaining sins. Jesus speaks of forgiving as “releasing” sins, *ajfh'te*. The opposite of releasing is “grasping,” or retaining, sins, *krath'te*. Both words of the church actually convey what is spoken, as Luther says in the Small Catechism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

These verses demonstrate that the essence of Jesus’ work is forgiveness achieved and delivered. These verses, like Mt 28:18–20, also demonstrate that God’s gifts of life and salvation are for all. The disciples are to be agents of his grace, ambassadors of his reconciliation by the power of the Holy Spirit. Even this work is not our work for him, but the Holy Spirit’s work in us for others. Graced people get to live gracious lives. Forgiven people get to live forgiving lives. Eph 2:8–10 says it well—that we are saved by grace and are given works that he already prepared beforehand for us to do. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:21 *Peace be with you!* See note on v. 19. (CSB)

“Peace” is at the very heart of the Gospel message (Rom 5a:1–5) that the disciples would now be sent to proclaim. The sending is repeated in Mt 28:19–20 and Acts 1:8; connected with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Christ’s giving the Spirit by breathing on his disciples at this time is seen by Lenski as a “preliminary stage” to Pentecost. By his word from the cross “It is finished” Jesus established a “done” religion, a salvation accomplished and paid for, so that the disciples would work with a completed justification as they went out to “forgive” or “not forgive” sins (in what we know as the Office of the Keys). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Peace is at the heart of the Gospel message.

First He actually bestowed the only peace to them personally. Now He does it again for their important office, not just to the disciples, for more than disciples were present. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

FATHER HAS SENT ME – apostello - *set apart*, that is, (by implication) to *send out* (properly on a mission). – Jesus was sent in a unique way for a unique mission.

Note the different verbs used for send: *ajpostevllw* is used by Jesus to describe how the Father had sent him, while *pevmpw* is used to describe how Jesus is sending his disciples. Jesus was sent in a unique way for a unique mission. We are sent to proclaim his work—to echo the Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

I am sending you. See note on 17:18. (CSB)

pempo - to *dispatch*, send, thrust. We are sent to proclaim his work – echo the Gospel.

Christ sends forth His disciples in equality, without any distinction... He says, ‘As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.’ He says that He sends them individually in the same way He Himself was sent (John 12:44-50). Hus, “Jesus sends them to bear testimony to the truth, to preach the word of salvation, and, by life and teaching, to show the way of blessedness to the people. (TLSB)

20:22 BREATHED ON THEM – *empusao* - *blow at or on*:—breathe on.

Greek term used only here in NT. Jesus’ words, formed by breaths of air, delivered the Spirit to the disciples (Greek *pneuma* translates as “spirit” or “wind” [breath]). Augustine says, “ That bodily breathing, proceeding from the body with the feeling of bodily touching, was not the substance of the Holy Spirit, but a declaration by a fitting sign, that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son” (NPNF). (TLSB)

enephusēsen: aorist of *emphusaō*, “to breathe on.” Suggests new creation. Jesus creates the authority to loose and bind. There are overtones of Gen 2:7 and the creation of a people here. The chief character of this new creation is the vehicle of God’s forgiveness in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

In close connection to the sending of the disciples, Jesus breathes on them, *ejnefuvshsen*, to give them the Holy Spirit. This is reminiscent of Gen 2:7 and may indicate the new creation ushered in by Jesus' victory over sin, death, and the devil. It is the giving of the Spirit for a specific purpose—in this case in connection with the establishment of the Office of the Keys (v 23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

The word *emphusaō* means “to breathe on” and takes the dative. In the LXX of Gen 2:7 it is used with *eis*, “into,” as the Lord God blows into the man and he becomes a living being. In Ezek 37:9 the Spirit or wind blows into the enflashed dry bones, and they become alive—a type of resurrection. Although the preposition is not used here, “John expects his readers to see a parallel between God’s creative breath in Gen 2:7 and Jesus’ act of breathing here” (Newman and Nida, p 615). The life imparted here is not mere physical life, but new life in the Spirit, and in particular the ability granted by the Spirit to carry out the office of the keys, described in the next verse. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

The word uses in 2 Tim 3:16, *theopneustos*, “God-breathed, inspired,” comes from a different root, *pneō*. Jesus blows his Spirit on the disciples, and the Spirit has called, gathered, enlightened, and kept us all, but the church is not inspired in the same way Scripture is inspired. The accent in 2 Tim 3:16 is on the effectiveness of the written Word, not the reported news. However, we dare not denigrate the proclamation, which carries the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Receive the Holy Spirit. Thus anticipating what happened 50 days later on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2). The disciples needed God’s help to carry out the commission they had just been given. (CSB)

By giving the Holy Spirit, Jesus was equipping the disciples for the ongoing work assigned to them, including especially the exercise of the Office of the Keys. (TLSB)

The gift is the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose. They already had the Holy Spirit for they were believers. And this is not the same bestowal of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost for that is called “power from on high.” Here Jesus bestows the Office of the Keys, a permanent bestowal on all Christians. Cf. Mt. 16:19; 18:17, 20. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:23† Lit. “Those whose sins you forgive have already been forgiven; those whose sins you do not forgive have not been forgiven.” God does not forgive people’s sins because we do so, nor does he withhold forgiveness because we do. Rather, those who

proclaim the gospel are in effect forgiving or not forgiving sins, depending on whether the hearers believe in Jesus Christ or not. (CSB)

There are only two classes of people, those who are to be absolved and those who are not be absolved. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

THEY ARE FORGIVEN – – *aphiemi* - to *send forth*, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up. – In Leviticus 16:10 on the Day of Atonement the sins of the people were laid on the scapegoat and sent away from the sight of God and the people.

“They are forgiven” (v. 23) is a common translation of the perfect tense expressing the present state which results from previous action. However, “in a conditional sentence it emphasized the continuous character of the action,” as in “God forgives them, and they remain forgiven” (Newman and Nida). The tense therefore emphasizes the efficacy of absolution. The textual variants (the present and future tenses) are more poorly attested. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

These words show that the Keys are given to all the apostles alike and that all apostles are sent forth alike. In addition, it must be recognized that the Keys belong not to the person of one particular man, but to the Church. Many most clear and firm arguments show this. For Christ, speaking about the Keys, adds, for example, “If two of you agree on earth” (Mt. 18:19). Therefore, He grants the Keys first and directly to the Church. This is why it is first the Church that has the right of calling. (TLSB)

Lenski rightly quotes Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19; Isaiah 43:25. Forgiven sins are buried and gone. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Psalm 103:12, “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

Micah 7:19, “You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.”

Isaiah 43:25, “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

The sins have already been lastingly forgiven. Christians merely declare what is already true. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

All Christians exercise the Office of the Keys privately. The pastor by virtue of his call, exercises it publicly for the specific congregation to which he is called. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:19–23 The once-crucified Jesus appears to His disciples, commissioning them for their work and equipping them with the Holy Spirit. Christians have received the most precious treasure on earth—the Gospel of forgiveness—but often keep it hidden from others. Pray that the Lord would grant you boldness. God raised Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and will equip us with every good thing to do His will (Heb 13:20–21). • O God, give us Your eternal peace and also boldness through the Holy Spirit. Amen. (TLSB)

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.” ²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “**Peace be with you!**” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “**Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.**” ²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “**Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**” ³⁰ Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

20:24-25 The first “mission project” of the disciples falls on hard ground. Their fellow apostle Thomas refuses to believe the testimony they bring to him. He insists upon seeing and touching before he believes. “I will not believe” is emphatic. These are the words of hardened, determined, willful unbelief, not just weakness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

Jesus breaks through walls of fear to get to the disciples. With Thomas, he bursts through a wall of doubt. Thomas’s doubt reaffirms the uniqueness of Jesus’ actions; he is the Messiah who must serve. Thomas knew that Jesus was the Crucified One with

nail prints and a hole in his side. Yet, like Peter (Mt 16:21–23), Thomas struggled with how a “crucified Messiah” could be the Savior. False expectations of Jesus’ mission (expecting glory rather than a cross) caused Thomas to stumble. His doubt is emphatic in the Greek. It is resolute unbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:24 *Thomas*. See note on 11:16. (CSB)

THOMAS WAS NOT WITH THE TWELVE – Perhaps some necessity kept him away. Perhaps he was overcome with despair and hopelessness. – Sadly many miss the Lord today because they do not join the gathering of fellow Christians in worship and study of the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Since Thomas was absent from the gathering of Christ’s people, he missed so much—in this case, seeing the risen Lord. Sadly, many miss the Lord today because they do not join the gathering of Christian brothers and sisters in worship and study of the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Why he was absent is not known. But to absent one’s self from Christian brethren in a time of crisis leads to trouble. Christians assemble for mutual comfort in Christ. Heb. 10:25. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:25 OTHER DISCIPLES TOLD HIM – *Elegon*, imperfect, indicates that the other disciples kept, repeatedly telling Thomas that they had seen the Lord. Note also the contrast here between the witness of the 10 disciples and the hardheadedness of Thomas, who insists on seeing Christ’s identification marks and touching them with his own hands. He rejects the testimony of others as invalid or unreliable. How many today still reject the apostolic testimony? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Unless I see ... and put ... I will not believe. Hardheaded skepticism can scarcely go further than this. (CSB)

Thomas insists on irrefutable, physical evidence despite the word of 10 faithful witnesses. His statement “I will not believe,” *ouj mh; pisteuvsu*, is an emphatic, categorical denial. It shows that Thomas lacked faith, *pivsti*, both in the testimony of the other disciples and in the words of the Lord to which they were testifying. In this state of unbelief he resorts to a worldly standard for acceptance and trust: I will only believe that which can be proven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Instead of accepting the testimony of fellow disciples, Thomas remained deeply skeptical and demanded tactile proof of Jesus' physical resurrection. (TLSB)

pisteuo to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), to *entrust* (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ):—believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with. – This is an emphatic and categorical denial of both what the disciples and Jesus said. In this state of unbelief he resorts to a worldly standard for acceptance and trust: I will only believe that which can be proven. How many today still reject the testimony of the Scriptures.

This is an emphatic, categorical denial. It shows that Thomas lacked faith, *pistos*, both in the testimony of the other disciples and in the words of the Lord to which they were testifying. In this state of unbelief he resorts to a worldly standard for acceptance and trust: I will only believe that which can be proven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 2)

Thomas was not just doubting. Thomas would not believe. And in this state he speaks in a superior, demanding fashion. He was not so "gullible" as were the rest, he maintained. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:26-27 What patient, seeking love of the Savior! He condescends to Thomas' requirement for both visual and physical "proof" of his resurrection, adding the plea, "Stop doubting and believe." Was it really necessary for Thomas to physically touch Jesus before he would believe? Most likely, the sight of the living Jesus was enough. Here is one more example of Jesus conquering unbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Jesus recognizes Thomas's unbelief. He calls him to believe, if not on the testimony of his fellow disciples, then on the evidence standing before him. Jesus' command to Thomas, *mh; givnou a[pisto" ajlla; pistov*", is a present imperative with a negation. The structure indicates that a present action should cease and a new action begin in its place. Thomas's response shows that Jesus not only commands faith, but he works the faith he commands. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Jesus graciously provided Thomas the proof he demanded. Thomas, after all, as an apostle, had to be an eyewitness of the risen Christ. Again—and again through closed doors—the risen Christ brought the message of peace, but knowing the thoughts and words of Thomas, he offered the nail marks in his hands and the wound in his side to

the finger and hand of the unbelieving disciple. This offer was given together with a rebuke, “Stop doubting and believe.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

Jesus comes looking for Thomas as he does for us. Faith is always a gift. Jesus comes with peace that opens a doubting heart. He offers again the witness of his suffering and death, his hands and side, so Thomas could see the victory that comes only through the cross. Jesus’ rebuke is also an invitation: “Stop your doubting and believe.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:26 A WEEK LATER – The following Sunday (calculated by using Jewish inclusive reckoning). (TLSB)

HOUSE AGAIN – Perhaps same location as in verse 19. (TLSB)

Why the disciples had not yet gone to Galilee (Mk. 16:7) is not known. Ylvisaker says: None of them could summon the courage necessary for such a journey.” Lenski remarks: “As far as making the start for Galilee is concerned, the safest view is that the disciples awaited specific directions from the Lord.” In any case, their waiting in Jerusalem was providential, for its afforded opportunity to retrieve unbelieving Thomas. Jesus cared much for Peter who had denied Him, Mary Magdalene, from whom He had driven seven evil spirits, and Thomas who would not believe. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Peace. See vv. 19, 21 and note on 14:27. (14:27 Note...*peace ... my peace.* A common Hebrew greeting (20:19, 21, 26), which Jesus uses here in an unusual way. The term speaks, in effect, of the salvation that Christ’s redemptive work will achieve for his disciples—total well-being and inner rest of spirit, in fellowship with God. All true peace is his gift, which the repetition emphasizes. *I do not give ... as the world gives.* In its greetings of peace the world can only express a longing or wish. But Jesus’ peace is real and present.) (CSB)

20:27† See note on 20:17. (CSB)

PUT...SEE...REACH – What patient, seeking love of the Savior! He condescends to Thomas’ requirement for both visual and physical proof of his resurrection, adding the plea, “Stop doubting and believe.” Here is one more example of Jesus conquering unbelief. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Jesus graciously accommodated Thomas’s request, to his astonishment and perhaps even his shame. (TLSB)

Jesus condescendingly meets all demand made by Thomas. Thomas ended with a categorical denial. Jesus ends with a prohibition. The display of omniscience in the human nature of Jesus must have impressed Thomas deeply, plus the fact that Jesus' human nature not fully used the omnipresence of the of the divine nature. Did Thomas actually feel Jesus' wounds? WE know not. But we know what 1 John 1:1 says. Did he kneel or prostrate himself before Jesus? We know not but we know what he said in verse 28. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

The present imperative means that the action to be stopped is presently going on. Jesus bids Thomas to stop being an unbeliever and to become a believer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

BELIEVE – Literally, “become believing.” (TLSB)

The words *apistos* and *pistos* are often used to distinguish between unbelievers and Christians, respectively. The present imperative means that the action to be stopped is presently going on. Jesus bids Thomas to stop being an unbeliever and to become a believer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

Jesus conquers unbelief by His Word. With the prohibition comes the power to believe. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:28-29 Thomas was convinced by seeing the risen Jesus. He immediately humbled himself before Jesus and declared him to be Lord and God, both clearly divine names. Jesus used the joyful occasion of Thomas's “conversion” to pronounce a greater blessing on those who believe without seeing such proof, namely, on the basis of the Word alone. In the very near future, the whole church would be gathered through this Word alone. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

20:28 *My Lord and my God!* The high point of faith (see note on 1:1). (CSB)

How fitting is the bold confession of Thomas, “My Lord and my God.” *Kurios* and *theos* is a combination found in the LXX for the name of the God of Israel (*Yhvh elohim* “Yahweh Elohim/God”; see, for instance, Gen 2:4; Pss 72:18 [MT 72:19]; 84:8, 11 [MT 84:9, 12].) John's book has come full circle from 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word . . . with God . . . was God” to the clear, awesome identification of Jesus as “Lord . . . God.” Jesus had not been addressed this way before, but is commonly spoken of this way in the remainder of the New Testament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

Restatement of 1:1, a central Christological affirmation in John. (TLSB)

To understand Thomas' answer as a mere exclamation of surprise is blasphemous in view of the context. The words are, of course, an exclamation, but at the same times, an address (vocative) and a humble confession of sin and confession of faith.

(Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:29 BECAUSE YOU HAVE SEEN – Even though Thomas believes, Jesus criticizes him for rejecting the witness of the other disciples and believing only when the evidence was overwhelming. Because Thomas had been with him longer Jesus was disappointed that Thomas had still not gotten it. BUT he didn't give up on him and uses this opportunity to teach others who will read about this account.

Few have had sight-based faith as did Thomas. Peter speaks of those who, without seeing, love and believe in the Christ and have the same joy as those who saw him (1 Pet 1:8). Down through the ages faith has come by means of hearing the message of Christ since the Spirit works through the Word (Rom 10:17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

those who have not seen and yet have believed. Would have been very few at this time. All whom John mentions had seen in some sense. The words, of course, apply to future believers as well. (CSB)

hoi mē idontes kai pisteusantes, “those not seeing and believing.” We are not eyewitnesses and yet are blessed because we believe. This is also a challenge to Thomas and the rest who did not believe Jesus was present. We may rethink our misconception about doubting Thomas and consider the doubting disciples. Do we see? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Even though Thomas believes, Jesus criticizes him for rejecting the witness of the other disciples and believing only when the evidence was overwhelming. *makavrio*”, “blessed,” reminds us of the Beatitudes and the blessings of faith that come through the Word. Unlike Thomas, we have not seen but have come to faith through the Gospel—the same Gospel that was first proclaimed by the disciples who were locked in the Upper Room on Easter night in fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

Makarios – supremely *blest*; by extension *fortunate, well off*:—blessed, happy – Blessed reminds us of the Beatitudes and the blessings of faith that come through the Word.

Down through the ages faith has come by means of hearing the message of Christ since the Spirit works through the Word. (Romans 10:17). This is the same Gospel that was first proclaimed by the disciples who were looked in the Upper Room on Easter night in fear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

After Jesus' ascension, people would come to faith without seeing Jesus, on the sole basis of the apostles' witness (cf. 17:18, 20; Rm 10:17). (TLSB)

What Jesus is really criticizing is not merely "seeing" but the fact that Thomas categorically rejected the witness of the other disciples. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

20:24–29 Jesus appears before a skeptical Thomas, who upon seeing Jesus is moved to confess Him as Lord and God. Today, we live in a skeptical age that operates by the saying "I'll believe it when I see it." However, in the Word and the Sacraments, we see and we do receive the benefits of Jesus' death and resurrection. Those who believe receive God's divine favor, for whoever believes has everlasting life (3:36). • Even though I do not now see You, Lord, I believe and rejoice with inexpressible joy. Amen. (TLSB)

20:30-31 οὐκ connects these two verses with the story of Thomas or, at least, Jesus' blessing upon those who believe without seeing. Though John's conclusion applies to the whole Gospel, it is also directly related to the immediate context. The disciples saw many other signs besides those recorded, but these recorded testimonies (in John's Gospel) were written by the evangelist for the purpose of engendering faith in the one who hears without seeing. Through these written words, the hearer may and should believe that Jesus is the Christ, the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises concerning the Messiah, the Son of God. This faith leads the believer to "life in his name." The purpose of John's Gospel, indeed of all Scripture, is to make sinners "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 14, Part 2)

John reminds us that Jesus is coming to us through the testimony of these words. The fear of the disciples and the doubt of Thomas were met with the grace and peace of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. These things are not only "written" but testified to, so that we might believe also. The very lives of the disciples, who are transformed from fearful ones to faithful, courageous ones, bear witness to the hands and side of Jesus Christ for you and me. John, like Luke (Lk 1:1–4), challenges the reader to put his or her trust

in this Jesus who is testified to in these words, for there is life in his name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

20:30 *miraculous signs*. See note on 2:11. John had selected from among many. (CSB)

The word *sēmeion*, “miraculous sign,” is used in the synoptic gospels to denote the signs the Jews requested from Jesus but which he did not perform for them. It is also used of “the sign of the Son of Man,” which will appear in the last days. It is often tied to *terata* (“wonders”) as evidences accompanying the Messiah. But the synoptics do not use *sēmeion* for the miracles of Jesus; instead, they use the word *dunamis*, “power; miracle.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

However, John uses *sēmeion* 17 times, usually referring to Christ’s miracles. The “miraculous signs” are markers pointing beyond themselves to hidden divine truths. They are understood after Easter and Pentecost, but seldom when they occur. Because the Sacraments are also part of the reality toward which they point, Brown (p 186) sees them as continuations of *sēmeia*, “signs.” (See Morris, pp 684–91, for an excellent discussion of these words and their theological significance.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

The signs spoken of in verses 30 and 31 do not refer to proofs (Acts 1:3) of His resurrection, but those performed throughout His life beginning with the first miracle in Cana. Do they include His Resurrection? Yes, but it is not called that here, because it was not performed “in the presence of His disciples.” (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

in the presence of his disciples. Those who could testify to what he had done. John again stresses testimony (see note on 1:7). (CSB)

20:31 *that you may believe*.† Expresses John’s purpose. See NIV text note and Introduction: Purpose and Emphases. (CSB)

believe. See note on 1:7. (CSB)

This crucial verse summarizes John’s purpose in writing his gospel, and the reason we (and everyone) should read it. John’s gospel contains 98 occurrences of *pisteuō*, “to believe.” “Believing and Christ are so much part of one another that the former inevitably implies the latter. . . . (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

This verse summarizes not only all of Easter but also John's Gospel account. Every sign, every word, every name and title given to Jesus is given so we may believe and have life in his name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

John admits that his gospel reports relatively few of all the "miraculous signs" of our Lord but enough is written that you may believe, *pisteu[s]ēte*. Why is the sigma in brackets? Both readings are equally good. Without the sigma it would be a present subjunctive, "that you may continue believing." This would indicate that John was writing to Christians. However, with the sigma it is an aorist subjunctive, "that you may believe." This would indicate that John's intended readers were not yet believers. "By believing you may have life in his name" is another application of John's words in chapter 1, "In him was life" (v 4), which was based on a new relationship with God as his children. (See the earlier sermon for Palm/Passion Sunday for more on the life-giving name of Jesus.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 8, Part 2)

pisteuo - to *have faith* (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), to *entrust* (especially one's spiritual well being to Christ):—believe (-r), commit (to trust), put in trust with. – In this case the form means "to keep on believing." - This is really the purpose of John's gospel and the purpose for our witness to Scriptural truths.

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Faith has content. (CSB)

the Christ. See note on 1:25. This whole Gospel is written to show the truth of Jesus' Messiahship and to present him as the Son of God, so that the readers may believe in him. (CSB)

that by believing you may have life. Another expression of purpose—to bring about faith that leads to life (see notes on 1:4; 3:15). (CSB)

name. Represents all that he is and stands for (see note on 2:23). (CSB)

Believing . . . takes the believer out of himself and makes him one with Christ" (Morris, p 337). The phrase "in his name" is equivalent to "in him" (Newman and Nida, p 621). The name of Jesus conveys his person and all his blessings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)

John not only states the purpose of his Book, but summarizes succinctly its content. (TLSB)

20:30–31 John, the author of this Gospel, clearly states its purpose and summarizes its central message. People commonly and mistakenly think that biblical books were written mainly to provide rules for godly living. Speaking through John, God announces the Good News that Jesus is His Son and that by faith in His name, we have life and salvation—the core message of the entire Scripture. • Let me gladly share this Good News, O God, that others may believe and live. Amen. (TLSB)