



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 504

Revelation 1:17-18 "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

John, who writes Revelation, saw Jesus. He is not called that by name, but by appearance. Our verse shows John's reaction, he fell like a dead man. I think that happened for a couple of reasons. First, standing face to face with the Holy One, is stunning. Can you imagine? Secondly, John remembers Jesus. For three years he traveled with Him and was there at the cross. John knew Jesus. The Lord had risen to Heaven more than fifty years before this. John has not seen Jesus in a long time. John is now an old man.

Notice the "I" statements of Jesus. I am the first...I was dead...I am alive...I have the keys. I especially like the statement, "I am alive forevermore." What a powerful statement. What assurance and what hope. He didn't just come back from the dead, He is alive forevermore. Forevermore has no ending point. It is ever lasting. Every person who was resurrected had to die again-all that is, except Jesus. He is alive forevermore.

Jesus tells John "do not be afraid." We keep running into that statement this week in our Jump Starts. Mary was afraid. The shepherds in the field were afraid. Joseph was afraid. Now, John is afraid. Over and over, Jesus tells believers, "do not be afraid."

The image John saw was amazing. Jesus' hair was white, like snow. His eyes looked

like fire. His feet like polished bronze. His voice thundered loudly. He wore a robe that went down to His feet. This is not the cute baby in a manger. This is the image of one in charge. His presence commanded authority and respect. This is the conquering King. This is the Lord of lords. This is the mighty God. Impressive, absolute and powerful. This is not one to argue with. This is not one to challenge. This is Jesus.

Not many talk about this image of Jesus these days. They want a fishing buddy, a friend to laugh with, someone to high-five and do cool things with. They want to hang out with Jesus. They want to be, as a popular religious magazine quoted one woman, "a Jesus girl who goes out and parties." No one would fall like a dead man if they saw that kind of Jesus. They'd invite Him to sit on the couch, eat some chips and watch the ballgame. Instead of trying to live up to Jesus' level, they bring Him down to their level. Jesus becomes one of us.

Our casual society and our looseness with the word of God has dethroned Jesus, tamed Him and made Him a "good ole' boy." Sad. Blasphemous! And missing who and what Jesus really is. He is God. He is the Lord. He wants you to obey Him, listen to Him and trust Him. I fear we leave Jesus in the crib and have manufactured our version of a God that we like. The sense of awe is missing. I see it in the popular religious books today. I see it in the attitudes of many people.

Jesus is God. John saw that. John fell at the feet of Jesus. May we do the same as we worship Him. May we do so as we read His gospel. May we do so as walk through life. May we stand in awe of the holiness of God. Awesome is our God!

Roger Shouse

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