

The Vision

by St. John of Kronstadt

The sermon is a warning of the coming of the Antichrist and the end of the world, and a call to prayer and vigilance.

Scripture: Matthew 24:24, 1 Peter 4:12, Revelation 2:10, Revelation 13:16, Revelation 21:4

Topics: "End Times", "Faithfulness"

Description

St. John of Kronstadt recounts a vivid vision he had in 1901, where he was visited by a starets who revealed to him significant events and symbols related to faith, martyrdom, heresy, and the end times. The vision included scenes of martyrs, fallen churches, the Antichrist, and the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom. Through this vision, St. John emphasizes the importance of faithfulness, prayer, and staying true to the Orthodox Church amidst trials and tribulations.

Transcript

The Holy and Righteous John of Kronstadt recalled this vision which he had in January of 1901:

After evening prayers I laid down to rest a little in my dimly lit cell since I was fatigued. Hanging before the icon of the Mother of God was my lit lampada. Not more than a half hour had passed when I heard soft rustle. Someone touched my left shoulder, and in tender voice said to me, 'Arise servant of God John and follow the will of God!'

I arose and saw near the window glorious starets (elder) with frosty grey hair, wearing a black mantia, and holding staff in his hand. He looked at me tenderly, and I could scarcely keep from falling because of my great fear. My hands and feet trembled, and I wanted to speak, but my tongue would not obey me. The starets made the sign of the cross over me, and calm and joy soon came over me. Then I made the sign of the cross myself. He then pointed to the western wall of my cell with his staff in order that I should notice certain spot. The starets had inscribed on the wall the following numbers: 1913, 1914, 1917, 1922, 1924, and 1934.

Suddenly the wall vanished, and I walked with the starets toward a green field and saw a mass of crosses-thousands standing as gravemarkers. They were wooden, clay, or gold. I asked the starets, 'What are these crosses for?' He softly answered, "These crosses are for those who suffered and were murdered for their faith in Christ and for the Word of God and have become martyrs!"

And so we continued to walk. Suddenly I saw an entire river of blood and asked the starlets, 'What is the meaning of this blood? How much has been spilled?' The starlets looked around and replied, 'This is the blood of true Christians!' The starlets then pointed to some clouds, and I saw a mass of burning white lamps. They began to fall to the ground one after another by the tens and by the hundreds. During their descent they grew dim and turned to ashes. The starlets then said to me, 'Look!' I saw on a cloud seven burning lamps. I asked, 'What is the meaning of the burning lamps which fell to the ground?' He said, 'Those are the churches of God which have fallen into heresy, but these seven lamps on the clouds are the seven Catholic and Apostolic Churches which will remain until the end of the world!'

The starlets then pointed high into the air and I saw and heard angels singing, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth!' Then a large crowd of people with candles in their hands rushed by with joy on their shining faces. They were archbishops, monks, nuns, groups of laymen, young adults, and even children and babies. I asked the wonderworking starlets, 'What is the meaning of these people?' He responded, 'These are all the people who suffered for the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church, for the holy icons at the hands of the wicked destroyers.' I then asked the great starlets if I could sit down next to them. The starlets said, 'It is too early for you to suffer, so joining them would not be blessed by God!'

Again I saw a large group of infants who had suffered for Christ under Herod and had received crowns from the Heavenly King. We walked further and went into a large church. I wanted to make the sign of the cross, but the starlets said, 'It is not necessary to cross yourself because this is a place of abomination and desolation!' The church was very gloomy. On the altar was a star and a Gospel book with stars. Candles made of tar were burning and crackling like firewood. The chalice was standing there covered by a strong stench. There was prosphora with stars. A priest stood before the altar with a face like pitch and a woman was under the altar covered in red with a star on her lips and she screamed and laughed throughout the church saying, 'I am free!' I thought, 'Oh, Lord, how awful!' The people, like madmen, began to run around the altar, scream, whistle, and clap their hands. Then they began to sing lecherous songs. Suddenly lightning flashed, a frightening thunderbolt resounded, the earth trembled, and the church collapsed, sending the woman, the people, the priest, and the rest into the abyss. I thought, 'Oh Lord, how awful, save us!'

The starlets saw what had happened as did I. I asked, 'Father, tell me, what is the meaning of this frightening church?' He responded, 'These are the earthly people, heretics who have abandoned the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church and recognized the newly innovated church which God has not blessed. In this church they do not fast, do not attend services, and do not receive Holy Communion!' I was frightened and said, 'The Lord has pity on us, but curses those with death!' The starlets interrupted me and said, 'Do not mourn, but just pray!' Then I saw a throng of people, each of whom had a star on his lips and was terribly exhausted from thirst, walking here and there. They saw us and yelled loudly, 'Holy Fathers, pray for us. It is very hard for us because we ourselves cannot. Our Fathers and Mothers did not teach us the Law of God. We do not even have the name of Christ, and we have received no peace. We rejected the Holy Spirit and the sign of the cross!' They began to cry.

I followed after the starlets. 'Look!' he said pointing with his hand. I saw a mountain of human corpses stained in blood. I was very frightened, and I asked the starlets, 'What is the meaning of these dead bodies?' He replied, 'These are people who lived the monastic life, were rejected by the Antichrist, and did not receive his seal. They suffered for their faith in Christ and the Apostolic Church and received martyr's crowns dying for Christ. Pray for these servants of God!'

Without warning the starets turned to the north and pointed with his hand. I saw an imperial palace, around which dogs were running. Wild beasts and scorpions were roaring and charging and baring their teeth. And I saw the Tsar sitting on a throne. His face was pale and masculine. He was reciting the Jesus Prayer. Suddenly he fell like a dead man. His crown fell. The wild beasts, dogs, and scorpions trampled on the anointed Sovereign. I was frightened and cried bitterly. The starets took me by my right shoulder. I saw a figure shrouded in white - it was Nicholas II. On his head was a wreath of green leaves, and his face was white and somewhat bloodied. He wore a gold cross around his neck and was quietly whispering a prayer. And then he said to me with tears, 'Pray for me, Fr. John. Tell all Orthodox Christians that I, the Tsar-martyr, died manfully for my faith in Christ and the Orthodox Church. Tell the Holy Fathers that they should serve a Panachida for me, a sinner, but there will be no grave for me!'

Soon everything became hidden in the fog. I cried bitterly praying for the Tsar-martyr. My hands and feet trembled from fear. The starets said, 'Look!' Then I saw a throng of people scattered about the land who had died from starvation while others were eating grass and vegetation. Dogs were devouring the bodies of the dead, and the stench was terrible. I thought, Oh Lord, these people had no faith. From their lips they expelled blasphemy, and for this they received God's anger.

I also saw an entire mountain of books and among the books worms were crawling emitting a terrible stench. I asked the starets, 'What was the meaning of these books?' He said, 'These books are the Godlessness and blasphemy which will infect all Christians with heretical teachings!' Then the starets touched his staff to some of the books, and they ignited into flames. The wind scattered the ashes. Further on, I saw a church around which was a large pile of prayer intentions for the departed. I bent over and wanted to read them, but the starets said, 'These prayer requests for the dead have been lying here for many years, and the priests have forgotten about them. They are never going to read them, but the dead will ask someone to pray for them!' I asked, 'Who, will they get to pray for them?' The starets answered: 'The Angels will pray for them!'

We proceeded further, and the starets quickened the pace so that I could hardly keep up with him. 'Look!' he said. I saw a large crowd of people being persecuted by demons who were beating them with stakes, pitchforks, and hooks. I asked the starets, 'What is the meaning of these people?' He answered, 'These are the ones who renounced their faith and left the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church and accepted the new innovative church. This group represents priests, monks, nuns, and laymen who renounced their vows or marriage, and engaged in drinking and all sorts of blasphemy and slander. All of these have terrible faces and a terrible stench comes from their mouths. The demons beat them, driving them into the terrible abyss, from where hell fire comes forth.' I was terribly frightened. I made the sign of the cross while praying, Lord deliver us from such a fate!

I then saw a group of people, both old and young, all of whom were terribly dressed, and who were raising a large, five pointed star. On each corner were twelve demons and in the middle was Satan himself with terrifying horns and a straw head. He emitted a noxious foam onto the people while pronouncing these words, 'Arise you accursed ones with the seal of the Antichrist!' Suddenly many demons appeared with branding irons and on all the people they placed the seal: on their lips, above the elbow and on their right hands. I asked the starets, 'What is the meaning of this?' He responded, 'This is the mark of the Antichrist!' I made the sign of the cross and followed after the starets.

He suddenly stopped and pointed to the east with his hand. I saw a large gathering of people with joyous faces carrying crosses and candles in their hands. In their midst stood a large altar as white as snow. On

the altar was the cross and the Holy Gospel and over the altar was the vosduch with golden imperial crown on which was written in golden letter, 'For the short term.' Patriarchs, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, and laymen stood around the altar. They were all singing, 'Glory to God in the highest and peace on Earth' Out of great joy I made the sign of the cross and praised God. Suddenly the starets waved his cross upwards three times, and I saw mountain of corpses covered in human blood and above them Angels were flying. They were taking the souls of those murdered for the Word of God to heaven while they sang, Alleluia! I observed all this and cried loudly.

The starets took me by the hand and forbade me to cry. 'What is pleasing to God is that Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and shed His precious blood for us. Such ones will become martyrs who do not accept the seal of the antichrist, and all who shed their blood will receive heavenly crowns.' The starets then prayed for these servants of God and pointed to the east as the words of the Prophet Daniel came true, 'Abomination of desolation.' Finally, I saw the cupola of Jerusalem. Above it was a star. Within the church millions of people thronged and still many more were trying to enter inside. I wanted to make the sign of the cross, but the starets grabbed my hand and said, 'Here is the abomination of desolation!'

So we entered into the church, and it was full of people. I saw an altar on which tallow candles were burning. On the altar was a king in red, blazing, porphyry. On his head was a golden crown with a star. I asked the starets, 'Who is this?' He replied, 'The Antichrist!' He was very tall with eyes like fire, black eyebrows, a wedge-shaped beard, a ferocious, cunning, evil, and terrible face. He alone was on the altar and he reached his hands out to the people. He had claws as those of a tiger for hands and he shouted, 'I am King. I am God. I am the Leader. He who does not have my seal will be put to death.' All the people fell down and worshipped him, and he began to place his seal on their lips and on their hands in order that they should receive some bread and not die from hunger and thirst.

Around the Antichrist his servants were leading several people whose hands were bound as they had not bowed down to worship him. They said, "We are Christians, and we all believe in our Lord Jesus Christ!" The Antichrist ripped off their heads in a flash and Christian blood began to flow. A child was then led to the altar of the Antichrist to worship him, but he boldly proclaimed, 'I am a Christian and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, but you are a minister, a servant of Satan!' 'Death to him!' exclaimed the Antichrist. Others who accepted the seal of the Antichrist fell down and worshipped him. Suddenly roar of thunder resounded and thousand lightning flashes began to sparkle. Arrows began to strike the servants of the Antichrist. Then a large flaming arrow flashed by and hit the Antichrist himself on the head. As he waved his hand, his crown fell and was crushed into the ground. Then millions of birds flew in and perched on the servants of the Antichrist.

I felt the starets take me by the hand. We walked further on, and I again saw much Christian blood. It was here that I remembered the words of Saint John the Theologian in the book of Revelation that blood would 'be up to the horse's bridle.' I thought, Oh my God, save us! At that time I saw Angels flying and singing, 'Holy, Holy, Holy. Lord of Sabaoth!' The starets looked back and went on to say, 'Do not grieve, for soon, very soon, will come the end of the world! Pray to the Lord. God be merciful to His servants!' Time was drawing near to close. He pointed to the east, fell to his knees and began to pray. So I prayed with him. Then the starets began to quickly depart from the earth to the heights of heaven. As he did so I remembered that I did not know his name, so cried out loudly, 'Father, what is your name?' He tenderly replied, 'Seraphim of Sarov!'

That is what 'saw, and this is what ' have recorded for Orthodox Christians. A large bell rang above my head, and I heard the sound and arose from bed. 'Lord, bless and help me through the prayers of the great starets! You have enlightened me, the sinful servant, the priest John of Kronstadt.'

(Translated by Priestmonk Orestes

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-john-of-kronstadt/the-vision/>

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