



The Book of Revelation: Week 2

John's Greeting

To The Seven Churches

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Review

Last week we began by looking at a little background on the Book of Revelation.

- The name of the book is the **Revelation** of Jesus Christ.
 - Revelation is the Greek word *apocalypsis*.
 - An apocalypse means an unveiling of something hidden.
 - God is showing us the future, and that He controls the future.
- The second thing God is telling us is that it's not just any revelation, but it's the Revelation of Jesus Christ. He is the subject!
 - It's not Revelations...
 - Neither is it the revelation of Antichrist. It's the Revelation of Jesus Christ!

Text: Revelation 1:4-8

(4) John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, (5) and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, (6) and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

(7) Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

(8) "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

1. The Greeting

1.1 The Author

Verse 4 contains the actual greeting of the letter. In ancient times, a letter began with the name of the author.

1.2. The Recipients

The greeting of a letter also identified the recipients. So, in the letters of Paul it might say, "Paul and Timothy to the saints in Philippi," and here we see the same pattern.

1.3. The Benediction

In the next part of the greeting, verses 4 and 5, we have a benediction. This is a blessing which John pronounces over the people who are receiving the scroll, meaning those seven churches but including of course you and me.

(4b) Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, (5) and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

John is wishing that we might receive and experience grace and peace. This is the most common blessing that the Apostles use to begin letters with in the New Testament. There is a powerful reminder of our salvation in that blessing. It's the grace of God and the mercy of God that allows us to experience His peace!

1.4. The Source of Blessing

Notice how John refers to each of the persons of the Godhead, the Source of blessing.

First, he refers to the Father is the One who was, who is, and who is to come. John emphasizes the eternity of the Father, God's wisdom, and unchanging nature.

Next, John refers to the Holy Spirit as the seven Spirits which are before the throne of God. The number "seven" has a powerful significance in Scripture and particularly in Revelation. Are there seven Holy Spirits? No!

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit has a seven-fold aspect to His working.

*1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.*

*2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. (Isa. 11:1-2)*

Finally, John references the Son. He refers to Jesus Christ as: *...the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.*

Jesus is the faithful witness. This means that he was faithful even to the point of death.

- The Greek word *martys* is the source of our English word *martyr*.
- A Christian martyr is someone who is willing to maintain his testimony and not give up his testimony even to the point of death.
- Just as Jesus maintained his witness and was exalted and rewarded by God, so also shall we be if we bear testimony to Christ and do not shrink back!

John also emphasizes that Jesus is the first born from the dead. Here again, John is writing to encourage us. There is a Resurrection coming and you can share in it!

Finally, John calls Jesus the ruler of the kings of the Earth. He wants us to hold on and be encouraged to know that things will not always be so dark.

2. Opening Doxology

(5b) To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, (6) and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

What is a doxology? A short hymn of praise to God in which we give glory to God by talking about his greatness or by thanking him or admiring what God has done for us.

This doxology introduces us to one of the other important themes in Revelation: the priesthood of believers. John is reminding you that if you hold onto your faith steadfastly, you will one day rule and reign with Jesus Christ as a king and a priest in his eternal kingdom.

A priest is someone who intercedes for another and offers spiritual sacrifices to God. And throughout the book of Revelation, you will see priestly worship. You will see the prayers of the Saints are rising up into heaven and God acting upon those prayers.

Why do we pray? In Revelation, we see God acting upon the prayers of the saints in the form of releasing his judgments, even though He is sovereign in how and when.

Revelation is the unveiling of God's program: how He will take his dominion and power and begin to rule the Earth through the man He has appointed, Jesus Christ.

3. The Warning

(7) Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

3.1 He is coming with clouds!

This section announces Jesus as the all-powerful Coming Judge of the Earth. He is coming with the clouds, meaning He is coming to execute wrath on the wicked.

3.2 Mourning at His Appearing

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. (Zech. 12:10)

The Gentiles also lament their lost opportunities, as *all the tribes of the Earth will mourn because of Him*. There is nowhere to hide: *every eye will see Him*. Then John says, “*Even so, Amen.*” What does this mean?

3.3 Alpha And Omega

(8) “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Christ is everything from A to Z. He shares in the Father’s eternal power!

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