

THE OPENING PERSPECTIVE OF REVELATION, REVELATION 1:4-6

Let's turn in our Bibles, please, to the book of Revelation chapter 1. We're going to be reading together verses 1 through 6:

“¹The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: ²who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. ³Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

“⁴John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; ⁵and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, ⁶and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Last Lord's Day, we began our exposition of the book of Revelation by looking at its prologue in verses 1 through 3. In that prologue, we saw several things. First of all, we saw the source of the book of Revelation, and we saw that it was of divine origin. It is the revelation that comes *from* Jesus Christ, which was given *to* Him by God the Father. So what John wrote came from God the Father and God the Son. Clearly, the book of Revelation was not of human origin.

Secondly, we saw the recipients of the book of Revelation, and we saw in verse 1 that this book was written to the servants of Christ. That is, it was written to ordinary Christians. It was meant to be read and understood by all believers, and all believers *can* understand it when they grasp the symbolic method that it uses to convey its message. So it was not written to highly advanced Christians or to great scholars. It was written to the ordinary servants of Jesus Christ.

The recipients of this book are not only ordinary believers of John's generation, but they are also ordinary believers of every generation hereafter, until Christ returns. We saw that these are things which must shortly come to pass. We saw that the time is hand for these things. The time for the beginning of the fulfillment of the things of this book was starting in John's day, it has continued to this very day, and will continue until the end of time. Wherever you find servants of Jesus Christ, this book is written to them, has application to them, and is fulfilled for them.

Thirdly, we saw the messengers of the book of Revelation, and we saw that God the Father gave this revelation to God the Son, who then sent it by means of an angel to the apostle John, who then wrote it down in a book. Therefore, as read this book, we see all of these persons involved in conveying the message of this book to us.

Fourthly, we saw the content of the book of Revelation in verse 2. We saw that it contained a record of the word of God the Father. We saw it contained a record of the testimony of Jesus Christ. And we saw that it contained a record of the witness of John of all that he saw.

So the entire book of Revelation is one of divine revelation, filled with divine content and marked by divine infallibility. This book has no content that arises out of men's ideas or men's imaginations. Instead, it is a revelation of symbolic visions that have been given to John by the Father and the Son, through the agency of an angel.

Fifthly and finally, we saw last time the blessing of the book of Revelation in verse 3. We saw that those who read and hear and keep the instructions and commands it contains will obtain all of the comforts and all of the rewards and all of the promises that Jesus made to those who endure to the end. Those who follow Christ faithfully and who do not deny and forsake Christ because of the persecution of the world are completely blessed in every respect, in every way, for all of eternity. Blessed are they that read, that hear, and that keep the sayings of this book.

Well having completed the examination of the prologue of this book in verses 1 to 3, we now come to the main body of this book, which begins at verse 4 and goes all the way through to chapter 22. We see in the main body of this book that it is addressed to the church, in particular. Notice verse 4, "John to the seven churches." And in fact, the first three chapters are devoted to directly addressing the seven churches in Asia.

But it's important to understand that it's not just the first three chapters that are directed to the church. It is important to understand that the entire rest of the book is written to the church as well. We are told by Jesus Christ Himself at the very end of this book that the whole book is a testimony from Christ to the churches. In Revelation 22 and verse 16, it says, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches."

All of the things in the book of Revelation, from chapter 1 to chapter 22, Jesus sent His angel to communicate specifically to the churches in particular. Jesus makes it very clear that the book of Revelation is a church epistle, addressed to the churches. Let us, then, as a church, give careful heed to its message and consider what the Head of the church has to say to His church in this wonderful and in this encouraging book.

In the first place then this morning, let us consider together the parties addressed. The parties addressed are revealed to us in verse 4, when it says, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia." Of course, Asia in the Bible is modernday Turkey in our geographical understanding today. So when you think of the country Turkey, that's what the Bible called Asia. And there were these seven churches in that geographical region. They were literal churches, they literally existed there.

In our previous message, which I have just reviewed for you, we said there that the recipients of this letter were the servants of Jesus Christ. In verse 1, it says, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ,

which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.” You remember we said the recipients of the letter were ordinary Christians. But now John says he’s writing to the seven churches. So which is it? Is he writing to His servants, or is he writing to His seven churches? The answer is simply this: One thing we know about the servants of Christ is that they are committed to and that they are members of local churches.

In other words, when he’s writing to the servants of Christ, he’s writing to them in view of the fact that he expects that they will be part of a local church. And to write to the churches *is* to write to the servants of Christ, and to write to the servants of Christ *is* to write to the churches, because all servants of Christ are in churches. The New Testament knows nothing of loneranger Christians. It knows nothing of doityourself spirituality.

Christ expects every one of His servants to be committed to and to be involved in a biblically functioning local church. It is as individual believers are joined together into a unified biblical church that they then have the strength and the resources to overcome the onslaught of Satan and his people, which onslaught is described in the remainder of the book of Revelation, because it is in the church that most of the means of grace are deposited and reside and function, and through which we obtain the strength that we need to be victorious and overcomers in the battles we face.

When John speaks of showing these things to the servants of Christ in verse 1 of this chapter, he views those servants as those who are gathered together into individual local churches, in verse 4. Listen carefully: the New Testament knows nothing of unchurched Christians. Every Christian in the New Testament is involved in a local church up to his or her neck. So unless you are providentially hindered by illness or distance from other believers, then you need to be part of a biblically functioning local church. John and Jesus expect you to be, as a servant of Christ, in a church of Christ.

Now we notice here that John writes to the seven churches which are in Asia. Although there were more than seven churches in Asia—for example, there were churches in Colossae, there was a church in Hierapolis—the fact is, John was instructed by Christ in verse 11 to write to only seven of them.

Notice verse 11. Jesus is saying, “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia,” and then he lists them by name. And the church at Hierapolis isn’t there, and the church at Colossae isn’t there, and other churches are not there which we know existed, because we’re told about them elsewhere in the book of Acts and in the epistles.

The fact that John was instructed by Christ to write to only seven of them shows here that the number *seven* is used in a symbolic sense to indicate completeness. You recall from our introductory lessons to the book when we talked about numerology, that *seven* is the number that symbolizes completeness, when that number is not being used literally. These seven churches represent the complete church of Jesus Christ, because seven is the number of completeness.

These seven churches are representative, then, of the whole church throughout the entire time between the first and the second coming of Jesus Christ. These seven churches were selected to be representative of the whole church in every age between the first and second coming. As Christ addressed each individual church, He closes His exhortation to each of them with these words: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,” plural.

For example, when he writes to the church, singular, at Ephesus, and He says what He has to say, then He says, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Jesus is not just addressing these seven churches that literally existed in this day, in this literal piece of real estate, but He’s saying that the message to each of these churches is a message for all of the churches. And these seven represent the complete church of Jesus Christ.

So clearly, these letters are not just for the church they are addressed to, but they are for all churches. These letters address the problems they struggle with, they address the virtues that they possess, and they address the opposition they experience. These seven churches, and by extension all churches, are the parties that the book of Revelation is addressed to.

This book is therefore a book that is directly addressed to *our* church, and we as a church need to take heed to all that Christ says as being said directly to our assembly. So when it says, “John to the seven churches which are in Asia,” we may take that to mean, John, to Sovereign Grace Bible Church, which is in Lebanon. Those, then, are the parties addressed.

In the second place, let us consider together the prayer offered. It says in verse 4, “John to the seven churches which are in Asia,” now here’s the prayer offered: “Grace be unto you, and peace.” This prayer for grace and peace is being given to these churches in particular, and the church at large in general, which they symbolize. This prayer offered on behalf of those being written to is found in most of the New Testament epistles, time and again.

We see Paul, for example, open his letters with this prayer for grace and peace to those to whom he is writing. This prayer is not just some throwaway line, like we say to people, Hello. We really don’t mean anything by “hello,” it’s just saying, I’m paying attention to you, you pay attention to me. When you greeted someone with grace and peace, that wasn’t a throwaway line, it was something that meant something; indeed, it meant a great deal. It is a prayer that God’s grace and a prayer that God’s peace would be given to those to whom John is writing.

There are obviously two requests in this prayer, and we’ll look at each of them in turn. Notice the first request is that God’s grace would be upon his readers. He says, “Grace be unto you.” Grace is God’s unmerited, saving favor that is given to undeserving people, and in particular, undeserving sinners. Through God’s grace, all the saving benefits of Christ’s saving work are conveyed to God’s elect.

Grace is always salvific; that is, it always conveys salvation to those who are the objects of it. God's goodness is not necessarily saving, and God's mercy is not necessarily saving. Those things are shown to all men, without exception. But God's grace is shown, in particular, to God's elect. Initially, grace conveys to us regeneration and justification. Subsequently, grace conveys to us sanctification and preservation. Then ultimately, grace conveys to us resurrection and glorification.

All we have of salvation we have through God's grace, whether it is the initial reception of salvation, or whether it is the ongoing outworking of salvation, or whether it is the ultimate consummation of salvation, all of salvation from start to finish is conveyed to us by God's grace. So we need grace to be saved, we also need grace to live out that salvation until the end, and especially do we need grace to persevere under the persecution and the temptation that Satan and his helpers assault us with, which assaults are so graphically described in this book.

Great grace is needed to enable us to be overcomers in our spiritual warfare, and this is what John prays that we shall have. You received grace when you got saved, but you need ongoing supplies of grace in order to be overcomers when assaulted by Satan and his helpers. So John prays for further applications of Christ's saving work to the lives of His people when he prays for them that God would extend grace to them.

The second request is that God's peace would be upon his readers. He says, "Grace be unto you, and peace." Once again, like grace, peace is applied to us sequentially, progressively, over the process of time. Peace is first obtained when we become saved. Romans 5 and verse 1 says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." So not only did the enmity and the warfare and the conflict between our souls and God cease when we got saved, we also became fully reconciled to God and became fully unified with God in love and in loyalty and in affection and in commitment and closeness.

But there is much turmoil in the Christian life, and there are many anxieties that arise in the course of spiritual warfare. In the Gospel of John, chapter 16, verse 33, Jesus says, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." While the conflict between our souls and God ends when we get saved, our conflict between our souls and the world begins when we get saved. We have no communion with the world, and the world hates us and stands against us.

In John 14, verse 27, Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Jesus is well aware that even though we're at peace with Him, we need additional supplies of peace during and in the midst of our conflict with the world and the flesh and the Devil.

We're told in Philippians 4, verses 6 and 7, to be anxious for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known unto God. And the

peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard our hearts and our minds. There is a great deal to be anxious about, because Satan and his people are at war with us and we with them, and in the midst of that turmoil, when everything is going crazy around us, we need that peace within us to give us a sense of tranquility and contentment, knowing that all these things are under the control of God, they're working together for our good and for the glory of God and the accomplishment of His purposes.

Believers need ongoing supplies of a felt sense of peace from God, as their peace is disturbed by the warfare that they are in with Satan and his helpers, as described in this book. This prayer for grace and for peace really sums up all of the benefits and all of the blessings of the gospel. What he's doing when he says, Grace unto you and peace, is that may all of the benefits and the blessings of Christ's saving work be applied to your lives on an ongoing basis in the midst of the conflict that you are facing. So as we go through these conflicts, we have strength given to us from God in the form of grace and peace, which enable us then to be overcomers in this conflict.

Grace is God's favor given to those who do not deserve it, pardoning their sins and bestowing on them the gift of eternal life. Peace is the rest in our spirit that we enjoy when we know that God's smile is on us and He is reconciled to us, and the awareness of those things gives us great tranquility in the midst of tremendous chaos.

That brings us then to our third and final point this morning. Having seen the parties addressed, having seen the prayer offered, notice thirdly, the persons described. These blessings of grace and peace do not arise out of a vacuum, nor are they self-generated. We don't generate grace, and we sure don't generate peace. These things are given *to* us from outside *of* us, and John now proceeds to tell us where they come from, and he plainly tells us that they arise from the divine Trinity. They arise from the Father, they arise from the Spirit, and they arise from the Son.

Notice the description that God provides us with for each member of the Trinity. Verse 4: "4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace"—now notice the source—"from him which is, and which was, and which is to come." Here we have a description of the Father. Here we have in this description of the Father a declaration of the eternity of God, as the One who always has existed, as far back as you can go; the One who presently exists, to be with us and to give us grace and peace; and the One who will always exist in the future to continue to supply that grace and peace on into eternity.

What we have here in verse 4, in this description of God the Father, is the New Testament statement of God that parallels the Old Testament statement of God in Exodus 3, verse 14, when God tells Moses at the burning bush, "I am that I am." Here it is being said, I am He who is. So God's eternal selfexistence which is set forth here is a profound source of comfort to the believer.

God will always be there for us. He always has been, He is now, He always will be there for us, and no kind of enemy and no amount of time will ever be able to erase His life or His power or

His presence with us, and because God is eternal, the grace and the peace that He gives to us will never end. This, then, is the first person that is described, and that is the person of the Father.

Having seen the description of the Father, notice secondly, the description of the Spirit. It says that this grace and peace not only comes “from him which is, and which was, and is to come”—notice it’s also—“*from* the seven Spirits which are before his throne.” Here is a second obvious use of the symbolic meaning of the number seven.

It’s interesting to note that the number seven is used twelve times in the first chapter. But leaving that aside, here is an obvious use of the symbolic meaning of the number seven. It talks about the seven Spirits in verse 4—“from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.”

You notice the word “Spirits” there is capitalized. It’s clearly a reference to the Holy Spirit, and the question we have to ask ourselves is whether there seven different, distinct holy spirits. The answer is clearly, loudly, and resoundingly, No! In Ephesians 4 and verse 4, we are clearly told, “There is one body, and one Spirit.” Never, never in the rest of the Bible is the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, ever referred to in the plural. Never. He is always referred to in the singular. He is always “the Spirit,” or “the Holy Spirit,” or “the Spirit of God.”

Why, then, does it speak here of “the seven Spirits”? Well, remember the symbolic meaning of the number seven. It symbolizes completeness. Here the Holy Spirit is set before our eyes in all the fullness and all the completeness of His manyfaceted works—works that execute the will of the enthroned God, before whose throne He is, and works which God sends Him forth to accomplish in the world and in the church.

You’ll recall that Jesus says, When I leave, I and the Father are going to send the Comforter. I’m going to send the Holy Spirit. He’ll do work in the world—He’ll convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, and He’ll do work in the church—He’ll be your Comforter, He’ll be your teacher, He’ll bring all things to your remembrance that I have said to you. So the Spirit of God is before the throne of God, ready to completely and fully execute the will of God in the building of the kingdom of God.

You recall that the lampstand in the temple had seven lights, and these seven lights represent the perfect illumination that the Holy Spirit provides in bringing to light the person of God and the will of God in the tabernacle. This was the menorah. You’ve seen pictures of the candlestick. It’s got a central column with a lamp on the top, and then it’s got branches that come out to the side, and another branch that comes out to the side, and another branch that comes out to the side. So there are seven lights on the top of the menorah, the candlestick that’s on the lefthand side of the Holy Place, which illuminates the work of the priest that’s done in that place.

This term “the seven Spirits” draws its number from that candelabra with its seven lights. This term “seven Spirits” refers to the Holy Spirit in the fullness of His operations and influences in the world and in the church as he brings the light of God’s revelation to humanity. Because what

do we know about the word of God? It was inspired by the Spirit of God. So He is ever before the throne of God, ready to be sent to execute the will of God.

That then brings us to the description of the Son, Jesus Christ. Notice, if you will, in verse 4, “John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, *from* him which is, and which was, and which is to come,” that’s the Father, “and *from* the seven Spirits which are before his throne.” Now notice verse 5: “and *from* Jesus Christ...”—and it gives an extended description of Christ—“who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, ⁶ and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”

Now you may wonder at the unusual order of the presentation of the persons of the Trinity. Ordinarily when we talk about the Trinity, we talk about the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, right? But here we have the Father, the Spirit, and the Son. The question is, Why are they presented in that order? Once again, this has its roots in the Old Testament tabernacle, which is a picture of the true tabernacle in heaven. Hebrews 9:24 says that the earthly tabernacle is a picture of the true tabernacle, which is in heaven. The earthly tabernacle had at the back end of it the holy of holies, and the ark of the covenant was there. The Shekinah glory of God dwelt over the mercy seat between the cherubim, and only the high priest could go in there, and only once a year. It was very remote, very hidden, very closed off.

Then as you proceed outward, you come into the holy place, and there you have the candelabra, the menorah, the seven lampstand lamp. There, all the priests could go, and indeed, went in there constantly. But the common people couldn’t go in there. They were never allowed in there.

Then as you move outward, you come outside the tabernacle, and what’s in front of the tabernacle but the brazen altar. That is where the sacrificial lambs were offered. There, all of the people could come, they could come right up to the altar, they could give their lamb, they could watch it slain in front of their eyes, and then of course, the priest would take the blood and go into the holy place and he would sprinkle it on the altar of incense.

You recall that once a year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would go into the holy of holies. The holy of holies, then, represents the Father in His remoteness. Only the high priest could see this. The seven lights, the menorah, represent the Holy Spirit. All the priests could see that. Then there was the brazen altar before the tabernacle, which represents the slain Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, that represents Jesus Christ, and all the people could see that.

So as you look at the structure of the tabernacle, it goes from the distant and the hidden to the near and the visible. The distant and the hidden was the holy of holies, then something a little closer, a little more visible, the holy place. Then something that is very close and highly visible,

the brazen altar. And because Jesus is the nearest to us and the most visible to us, we have the fullest description of Him given to us.

Thus, the order—the Father, the Spirit, and the Son; the holy of holies, the holy place, and the brazen altar. And if John, caught up to heaven, saw things in heaven, he would see the heavenly tabernacle and he would begin with the Father, he would proceed to the Spirit, and then he would speak of the Son. And what do we see in this book of Revelation? The vast majority of it is a setting forth of the Son, Jesus Christ.

Notice, if you will, this extended description of Jesus. It says this grace and this peace come from Jesus Christ. And it says of Him that He is “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth...that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, ⁶and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father”—here is the conclusion—“to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

So the glorious nature of Christ and the authoritative position of Christ is set forth in these six terms that are used to describe Christ in who He is, and are used to describe Christ in what He has done.

Notice first of all the description of Christ in who He is. We see that He is glorious in who He is. It first says of Him, regarding who He is, that He is the faithful witness. That is, He always told the truth about everything He described. His witness can be absolutely relied upon as being utterly infallible and completely faithful to the truth.

Now a lot of times, people will tell you stuff, and you find out that they were a false witness. What they told you wasn't the truth. But you can count on the fact that everything Jesus says is a faithful, infallible, inerrant representation of the truth. Jesus always and exclusively told the truth, and nothing but the truth.

Then secondly, regarding who He is, not only is He the faithful witness, it says of Him in verse 5 that He's the first begotten of the dead. He is the resurrected Savior who conquered death. Not only did He conquer death for Himself, but for all those who are begotten of Him. He's just the first begotten, and there are many, many more after Him to be begotten from the dead. So He leads the way, He opens the tomb, He goes forth first to show that not only has He defeated death, but He is the first begotten, demonstrating that there are going to be many more after Him to follow in what He has provided, in terms of victory over death.

Thirdly, regarding who He is, it says of Him not only that He is the faithful witness and the first begotten from the dead, it says He's the prince of the kings of the earth. What this means is that Jesus is Lord of lords and King of kings. So we need fear no prince or king, because their hearts are in the hand of the Lord, and He turns them whithersoever He wills.

So here, John is writing to these believers that are facing persecution, and he says to them, The faithful witness of Jesus is what will overcome the lies of the Antichrist and his people. The resurrection of Jesus is what will overcome their efforts to put you to death and to eliminate you. And the kingship of Jesus is what will subdue all of these kings and bring them down beneath His feet. Therefore, you can have peace when they lie to you, when they try to kill you, when they exercise dominion over you—you recognize that there is One who triumphs over them in all of that because of who He is.

But not only does John describe who Jesus is, he also describes what Jesus does. Notice, secondly, He is glorious, not only in who He is, He is glorious in what He does. It says, “Unto him that loved us.” What does Jesus do? Jesus loves us. We are the objects of the infinite love and care of our Savior, to the point that nothing can ever separate us from that love, either in time or in eternity. He will forever draw us to Himself. He will forever keep us near to Himself, and He will forever give all of Himself to us, and never leave us or forsake us.

Not only does He love us, but secondly, He washed us from our sins in his own blood. Verse 5 says, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Of course, the greatest manifestation of His love to us is that He laid down His life for us. He has cleansed us from the guilt and the penalty of our sins, and He presents us holy and unblameable and unproveable before His Father. We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according the riches of His grace, so that He presents us faultless before God’s throne—faultless. And He does it with exceeding joy.

So He’s glorious in what He does. What does He do? He loves us, He has washed us from our sins in His blood, thirdly, it says in verse 6, “and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.” He allows us to share in His rule, we sit in His throne with Him, and He enables us to serve in His kingdom. He gives us access as priests to bring before God the Father the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving.

We see, then, that this grace and this peace come from God the Father, who is always there; God the Spirit, who is fully working in implementing all the will of the Father; and from God the Son, who is glorious in who He is, and is glorious in what He has done. What is the conclusion of all of this? Verse 6: “to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

What should our response be when we see who Jesus *is*? He is the faithful witness, He is the first begotten from the dead, He is the Lord of the kings of the earth. What should our response be when we see what He has *done*? He has loved us, He has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and He has made us kings and priests. Well, we should say, To Him be the glory. That is, we should give Him worship and thanksgiving. We should ascribe to Him not only glory, but dominion. To Him be dominion; that is, we should render to Him submission and service, because He has dominion over me. And how long should we give Him glory and dominion? We should do it forever and ever.

We give worship and thanksgiving, we give Him submission and service, we do it all without limit, and we do it without end. We do it because He's the faithful witness; He's the first begotten from the dead; He is the Lord of the kings of the earth; He loved us; He washed us from our sins in His blood and elevated us to be kings and priests. Who would not want to worship and thank and obey and serve, forever and ever, a Savior like that?

When you look at people who want to rule us, saying, Elect me to be your ruler! You know, you look at all of them, and you say, I don't want these guys to rule me. I want Jesus Christ to be my ruler. He is the one I want to give worship and allegiance, submission and service to. He's the one I want to exalt and proclaim and glory in. He is the King of the kingdom in which we reside, which kingdom is in conflict with the kingdom of darkness.

The rest of this book is going to describe that conflict, but we need to remember as we're dealing with that conflict in our lives and as we go through that conflict in the future, that we have grace from God, we have peace from God, and it is this triune God that is on our side, who is for us and is employing all resources on our behalf to ensure that we will be overcomers and we will be faithful, because He has chosen us and He has called us, and He will ensure our faithfulness in the conflict.

So let us fight the good fight of faith, people, with the confidence that the triune God is with us, is for us, and is fighting our battles, and He will triumph, and in His triumph is our triumph. May we as Sovereign Grace Bible Church, to whom this book is written, recognize that and rejoice in that and revel in that and find our confidence in that, and not look around at the human resources and the human numbers we have, but instead, look *above* and see the divine God that we have, and with our focus on Him, move forward in triumph and in victory in the conflict that we will face until the end of our lives.

Thank God for such an elevated picture of the position we're in and the blessings we have as we fight this good fight of faith. And what John does is say, Churches, look up! See the Father, see the Spirit, see the Son. And as you're looking there, you'll have triumph and strength and grace to fight down here.

So the book opens on a grand note of victory. Because of Jesus Christ and who He is and what He has done, the victory's already been secured. It's just a matter of implementing it through the process of spiritual warfare. So settle down and fight, but fight with the confidence that the victory is certain. Shall we pray together.

Father, thank you so much for this wonderful book and the wonderful perspective that it opens with: of the great and glorious God, who was and who is and who is to come; and that perfect Holy Spirit, who fully carries out all of the work of God in all of its fullness, in every realm and dimension in implementing the victory that Christ has purchased; and then, what our Lord Jesus has provided us with. Father, thank you that He has washed us from our sins in His blood.

Thank you that He loved us enough to do that, and thank you that He then invites us into His kingdom and elevates us to the position of kings and priests.

Father, from this perspective of privilege and honor, may we then face and fight a world that would strive to tear us down and pull us away and entice us into conforming ourselves to its rebellion against you. Father, may we never flinch, may we never give in, may we never fold, but Father, may we stand firm and tall, with our eyes fixed on you, and our confidence in you, and the certainty that you will make us overcomers. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.