

Revelation 1:4-8

"Behold, He Is Coming"

You live *presently* in a time *prophetically* whereby you do well to safeguard your relationship w/J.C. "For the time" John says, (at the end of Vs 3) "is near". The word that John uses for "time" is the word "Kairos" speaking of a period of time, & the time period that he's referring to is the time of the end. (The wrapping up & winding down of human history on planet earth as we know it).

The point being that now's not the time to tune out & lose focus but rather we're to turn toward & tune in to J.C. Because the things that John is writing about are going to happen & mark my words (mark God's word) "the time is near". There is an urgency about the book of Revelation. We don't want to be those servants who say in their heart, "My Master delays His coming" so that we begin to slack in the responsibilities that He's committed to our trust. But rather we're to watch & be ready, for we *do not know* the day or the hour of His appearing. What we *do know* is that the time is near. The word "near" meaning "close by" the idea being that we're w/in it's vicinity.

So we read beginning in Vs 4...

Vs 4-6

I called this message, "Behold, He Is Coming" but I almost called it, "A Greeting From The Godhead" because essentially that's what we have in this particular passage. We have a greeting from God the Father, God the Spirit, & God the Son; specifically the greeting goes out to the 7 churches, which are in Asia.

Now today when we think of Asia we think of Korea, or China, Japan, places like that. When John was writing, those weren't the geographical locations he had in mind. He was writing to the Roman province of Asia which to you & me is modern day Turkey.

So the greeting goes out, "Grace to you & peace". We see these words coupled together so often throughout the NT that we can almost begin to take them for granted. But God forbid that we take for granted the grace that He has lavished *upon us* & the peace that He has so freely given *to us*. It's because of God's grace that we can experience God's peace, both peace with Him & the peace that belongs to Him that He imparts to us. We *stand* in His grace, we *experience* His peace. Apart from God's grace we could never know true peace. So already we're reminded of reasons for which we should give God praise; His heart toward you (in Christ) is one of grace & peace. I'm so glad it doesn't say, "Hellfire & damnation to you; eternal torment & suffering to you." ☺

God would certainly be justified in such a position, but His heart toward you (in Christ) is that of grace & peace. “Grace to you & peace from Him who is & who was & who is to come.”

Now when John uses the words, “who is, who was, & who is to come” he’s painting for us an obvious picture of the eternal nature of God the Father. Obviously those attributes apply to the Spirit & to the Son just the same, but because they’re mentioned next we understand that his focus as this particular point is that of the Father.

He is the unchanging, everlasting One. It’s not enough to speak about God in the past tense, or in the present tense, or even in future tense; He rules it all, He’s Lord over eternity. He’s not subject to time; He’s the Uncreated, Self Existing One who is & who was & who is to come. The psalmist said it like this, *“Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will have no end.”* Psalm 102:25-27 & Again *“Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”* Psalm 90:2

So grace to you & peace from the everlasting to everlasting God who is & who was & who is to come; & from the 7 Spirits who are before (or in the presence of) His throne. Now I don’t want you to be confused here as though there are 7 separate Spirits before the throne of God. This is where we begin to get into & need to have an understanding of biblical numerics.

You will discover throughout your study of the word of God that the #7 is a very significant #, it speaks not of perfection, but of completion. Now sometimes completion is perfection, but not always. *But when the #7 comes up it’s a reference to the fullness of something, or a completeness. God has woven the #7 into the fabric of our existence & into the fabric of His word. For instance there are 7 days in a week, that’s a complete week & then we begin again on the 1st day.* There are 7 notes in a scale, then it begins again on the 1. God created the heavens & the earth in 6 days, on the 7th day He rested because His work was complete. The nation of Israel was the farm the land 6 yrs on the 7th yr it was to rest, there was to be a release of debt every 7 yrs (De 15:1). *As you travel through the scriptures you recall that Israel was to march around Jericho once a day for 6 days & there were to be 7 priests w/7 trumpets going w/them blasting the trumpets, & on the 7th day they were to march around the city 7 times.*

Elisha instructed Naaman the leper to dip in the Jordan River 7 times & he would be cleansed. Jesus spoke 7 times from the cross. Here's my point (though I'm not even touching the tip of the iceberg) the #7 is significant in the scriptures; it points us to completion, or a fullness.

We note here in Vs 4 that the letter was issued to the 7 churches that were in Asia. Now there more than the 7 churches that will be listed here in that region (Colosse, Troas, Heiropolis), but the Lord selected these because they would paint for us a complete picture of the church. Be it literally at that time, historically down through the years & presently at this time. These churches will also cause us to confront where we're at personally w/the Lord. Everyone who considers themselves a Christian will find themselves fitting into the congregation of one of these 7 churches. So understand that 7 will surface as the key # in this book.

As a matter of fact you may get tired of the #7 before we even finish this book 😊. We've already ran across our 1st of a set of "7" last week & I would dare to say that no one even noticed it. It's found in Vs 3 (read). It's the 1st of 7 beatitudes that are found in the book of Rev. If you'd like an additional something to study, take the time to find the other 6 "Blessed are" or "Blessed is" statements found in this book. (I'll give you a hint; you won't find the next one till you get to Ch 14).

So when John speaks of the 7 Spirits, we're not talking about angels or anything like that (keep the context), angels aren't the wellspring of grace & peace, God is. The reference here is to the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Probably out of Isaiah Ch 11 where we read, *"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."*¹ So we have here 7 attributes accredited to the Spirit of God, #1 The Spirit of the Lord. That's critical, the Holy Spirit isn't some force or mystical energy to be tapped. The Holy Spirit is a Person, that Person is God (The Spirit of the Lord). #2 The Spirit of wisdom, #3 The Spirit of understanding, #4 of counsel, #5 of might, #6 The Spirit of Knowledge, & #7 the fear of the Lord. These are characteristics that the Spirit of God possesses in fullness & in complete perfection.

They're also the things that God wants to be present (through the power of the Spirit) in every believer. (He wants you to have the Spirit of the Lord, of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might [that you might lead a life of victory & power over sin], knowledge & the fear of the Lord) we need these things & have them through the Person of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives.

¹ The New King James Version. 1982 (Is 11:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But the 7 Spirits, to the 7 churches. The Holy Spirit will manifest Himself completely, perfectly & appropriately to each church individually & will give them an understanding of the totality of what is needed for them to be the overcomers that Christ has called them to be.

Then last but certainly not least, “& from J.C.” John has quite a lot to say about Jesus here & as well he should. Probably why He’s listed last, because the Spirit wants to focus in on & glorify Him as Jesus said He would. It’s in John’s gospel Ch 14 where Jesus said, *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me,”*²

So we have the Trinity all present & accounted here right from the beginning of the book. That’s how the scriptures show us the 3 Person’s of the One True Living God. The Trinity isn’t spelled out in scripture so as to satisfy our curiosity as to the nature of God. It’s simply a truth that’s threaded throughout the tapestry of scripture.

Btw here’s another “set of 7” for you. The Holy Spirit through the apostle John issues forth a 7-fold shout of acclamation & praise unto our Lord; “The faithful witness, the 1st born from the dead, the ruler over the kings of the earth, who loved us & washed us from our sins in His own blood, who has made us kings & priests to His God & Father, to Him be glory & dominion forever & ever.”

J.C. is the quintessential faithful witness. I thought about where to apply this, the fact of the matter is that it applies to virtually every arena of godliness there is. He’s the faithful witness of the Father. One day Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father to which Jesus responded, *“Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father;”*³ If you want to know what God the Father is like, study the life of Jesus. He’s the faithful witness.

He’s the faithful witness having taught the way of God in truth w/out regard for the person of man. Meaning He taught the truth of the word of God in love & let the chips fall where they may. He faithfully witnessed what a life set apart to God looks like & stayed true to His witness even unto death. He will deal w/us, giving the true testimony of our works on the day of judgment. He will be faithful to you; not only in giving you direction, but when necessary correction. J.C. is the faithful witness.

² *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Jn 16:13-14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Jn 14:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He's the 1st born from the dead. This isn't to say that others weren't raised from the dead before Him, there were several who had been both in the OT & the new. But Jesus is the 1st fruits of the *resurrection*. Everyone prior to Him was raised in their old body only to face death again. **But for Jesus, His tomb became a womb of sorts whereby He was "born" out of death in His new resurrection body. He is He who lives, & was dead, & behold, is alive forevermore. Now many (that is, every believer) will follow Him ultimately, but presently He is the only 1 who has taken part in the resurrection. He is the 1st born from the dead.**

Of course "1st born" is a title of preeminence, of prominence & authority, as the "1st born" from the dead He rules over any & all others who will come after Him. In the book of Romans we read it like this, ***"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."***⁴

He is the ruler over the kings of the earth, of course this is true concerning His sovereignty but also it points out His position prophetically as it pertains to the millennial reign of Christ whereby He will rule the earth in righteousness for 1,000 yrs at His 2nd coming.

Now here toward the end of Vs 5 John brings us into another dimension to the character of Christ so that not only do we see who He is, but *how* who He is involves us. Who is Jesus? Jesus is "Him who loved us, & washed us from our sins in His own blood." What a marvelous title for our Lord, "Him who loved us & washed us from our sins in His own blood." **Now there is *some* dispute among scholars as to whether or not the word "loved" should be translated in the past tense or in the present tense. So if you have a NAS or an NIV, perhaps a NLT it reads, "To whom who *loves* us."**

Both are certainly true, I prefer to keep it in the past tense & here's why. When "loved" is used, it points back to a particular time & place where Jesus loved us. It takes us back & causes us to remember the work of the cross. No greater love has anyone than this, than to lay down his life for his friends. That's what Jesus did for you, He loved you & laid down His life for you.

This is so often the reason that believers struggle in being secure in the love of God. Because they focus on the present rather than the past; they think the love of God is circumstantial in nature. They're what we might call "daisy plucking Christians".

⁴ *The New King James Version*. 1982 (Ro 8:29). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

On a good day, “He loves me” on a bad day “He loves me not.” But God never said that we could prove His love by the fact that we have primrose problem free lives. The life of the believer (the bible makes clear) will be filled w/difficulties, hardships, trials & tribulations. So it’s not a *present situation* that shows me how much God loves me, but a *past demonstration*. Paul said it like this, “*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*”⁵

So the ultimate proof of God’s love for us isn’t in the present, it’s in the past. Now He can certainly give *additional* proof, but He can give no *greater* proof than the cross of Jesus whereby Christ loved you & washed you from your sins in His own blood. **That’s what happened when He loved us there at the cross. He washed us, He cleansed us from the deep stain that sin had imposed upon us. Through the blood of Christ you have been made clean before God... What love is this; it’s too high for me, that Jesus would shed His own blood for me. Not the blood of bulls & goats, we’ve been washed in His own blood.**

Now notice the order, it’s significant. We were loved, *then* washed. It wasn’t that God washed us out of some sense of duty or guilt or pity, then once we were cleaned up He thought, “Hey, now that these people are clean I can love them, they’re not so bad after all.” That’s not the way it happened. It was when we were still sinners, still stained, still *against* Him that He *loved* us, *then* He cleansed us, having washed us in His blood.

Now check this out, it just keeps getting better & better, Jesus does everything, then He gives positions of status to us sinners whom *He* has cleansed. It was more than enough, more than we deserved that He would love us, that He would die for us, that He would wash us (or free [loose] us) from our sins in His own blood.

But goes far above & beyond simply (if you’ll allow me that word) loving us, & washing us, He makes us kings & priests to His God & Father! Even in the innocence of Eden I don’t recall Adam every being referred to as a king & a priest unto the Lord. The work of redemption through J.C. by far exceeds & outshines the original order of creation; He has made us kings & priests to His God & Father.

Now let me just say this, the bible teaches that every believer is a priest. You don’t need a man in a black robe to help you get to God. You have direct access through Christ. As a priest unto God you represent God to man, & man to God as you intercede on people’s behalf & share the love of God, the word & the ways of God w/those around you. That’s what Jesus has done for you.

⁵ The New King James Version. 1982 [Ro 5:8] Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He's loved you, washed you, freed you from sin through His own blood, He's made you kings & priests to His God & Father... How is it that we can refrain from praising His holy name? John couldn't & we shouldn't. He says, "To Him be glory & dominion forever & ever. Amen" He already has it, it belongs to Him, but we do well to recognize it & honor Him in it.

Vs 7-8

"Wait a minute, I thought God the Father was the One who is & who was & who is to come?" He is. "Then how can *Jesus* be the One who is & who was & who is to come?" Because there's only 1 God; Jesus made it clear in John 17 that He & the Father are one. Jesus is the Almighty God who reigns supreme over all things. The Alpha & the Omega, the beginning & the end. Jesus is the A-Z & everything in between, He is before all things & beyond all things, eternal & sovereign.

Behold, He is coming w/the clouds & every eye will see Him. Perhaps we'll pick up on these thoughts next time but for now know that this is a reference to His 2nd coming. There are distinct differences between the 2nd coming of Christ & what we call the rapture of the church.

When Jesus Raptures the church He will come as a thief, no one will know it, it will just hit. No one will see Him, we'll be called up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess 4:17) & so shall we ever be w/the Lord. But when He comes again to the earth "every eye will see Him." Like lightening that flashes from the east & is seen in the west even so everyone will know, & every eye will see when Jesus comes again to stake claim to planet earth.

"Even they who pierced Him." Now we realize that the Jews weren't the only guilty party when it came to the execution of Christ, we Gentiles had our hand in that as well. Thus John says that "all the tribes of the earth" will mourn because of Him. We will all grieve the scars imposed upon Him due to our sin. But we know that John was referencing the nation of Israel w/this phrase "Even they who pierced Him" because of Zechariah 12:10 (which you can look up later).

Here's what you need to know. He *is* coming; the time is near. Have you been washed from your sins through the blood of Jesus Christ? He has *loved* you...& has given His life *for* you. Now may you humble yourself & surrender your life totally & completely to Him...

Prayer Points:

Father teach us the meaning of surrender, teach us what it means to submit our lives *to* You & to walk intimately *with* You. Jesus we praise You today; You have loved us & have washed us from our sins in Your own blood. You have demonstrated Your love for us in that while we were still sinners You died for us; to you be glory & dominion both now & forever for You are worthy of all honor & all blessing & all praise. Continue to speak to our hearts & have Your way in our lives to the glory of Your name.

Jesus is coming again, the question that confronts you today is, "Have you been washed in His blood? Have you called upon the Lord & been cleansed of your sin?" If not **than why not make today the day?** I'm not talking about becoming religious, or playing church, I'm talking about the fact that Jesus has loved you & died upon the cross for you & in response to that you're going to repent of your sin, turn from your sin & trust in Jesus for the *forgiveness* of your sin & the gift of everlasting life. If you're not ready for His return than get ready today, give your life to Jesus.