

(28)

**INTRODUCTORY REVELATORY TRUTH #10** – God reveals the source of the grace and peace that His people have. **1:4d–8**

The following prepositional phrases totally and completely emphasize that **the grace of God that saved believers and brought them into a peaceful relationship with God is solely and totally the sovereign work of God.** The relationship that any person has with God is due to the work of the entire Godhead, the entire Trinity.

There are three stated Divine originating sources of the grace and peace that God gives which grammatically are given in the form of three prepositional phrases, each of which begins with the preposition “from” (απο). G. Abbott-Smith says this particular preposition “from” has to do with both motion and origin (*Greek Lexicon*, p. 48). Grace and peace originate from God and comes as a result of a motion or movement from God. He is the source.

**Divine Source #1** - The source of grace and peace is God the Father. **1:4d**

The text says that grace and peace is “from Him who is and who was and who is to come.” We know this is a reference to God the Father by virtue of the fact that the second prepositional phrase connects us to the Spirit and the third prepositional phrase connects us to Jesus Christ.

The description given here concerning the Father is one that certainly refers to His eternity. Any Being “who is and who was and who is to come” is unlimited in time, and has moved within time and will move in future time. God is the God of the past, the God of the present and the God of the future. **If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, what you need to know is that God the Father moved within the time frame of your life and gave you His grace and peace. In fact, Jesus said, “no one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day (John 6:44).**

Much in this book of Revelation is futuristic and prophetic and every bit of it is time-controlled by God the Father. Also carefully notice that it is stated that God “is to come.” God will come and God will judge and when it all happens, only those who have experienced His grace and peace will be safe.

**Divine Source #2** - The source of grace and peace is God the Spirit. **1:4e**

We may observe that the second source of our grace and peace is a Divine Being identified as being “the seven Spirits who are before His throne.” Now, of course, the question arises concerning the identity of these seven Spirits; specifically who are these Spirits and to what does this refer.

There are three different proposals concerning the identity of these seven Spirits:

**(Proposal #1)** - This refers to seven special spirit beings located at the throne of God.

**(Proposal #2)** - This refers to seven different angels at God's throne; perhaps seven angels of seven churches.

**(Proposal #3)** - This refers to the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity.

Now there are eight observations we want to make in forming our conclusions:

**Observation #1** - The flow of the context would favor a listing of the Trinity.

There is certainly a reference to God the Father (1:4) and God the Son (1:5), which would naturally lead us to conclude that this is a reference to God the Spirit.

**Observation #2** - Theologically the source of "grace" and "peace" is always God, never angels.

These are three source prepositional "from" ( $\alpha\pi\omicron$ ) phrases informing us as to the source of grace and peace and **never are angels in a position to grant grace and peace to sinners**. It is totally beyond sound Biblical theology to place angels alongside God the Father and God the Son in a role of granting grace and peace.

**Observation #3** - When seven angels are referred to in Revelation, they are specifically called seven angels, not seven Spirits (Revelation 8:2).

**Observation #4** - There is an article "the" before the noun "Spirits" indicating that God wants this specifically identified as a Being operating before His throne.

**Observation #5** - The number seven is a critical number of completion.

**Observation #6** - The other references in Revelation indicate this Spirit Being has an important ministry to people (1:4); to God's actual throne (4:5) and to Jesus Christ and His sacrificial work on earth (5:6).

**Observation #7** - In other writings of the Apostle John, it is clear that the primary responsibility for carrying on God's gracious work on earth is the Spirit of God - John 16:7-15.

**Observation #8** - There is clearly a sevenfold ministry of the Holy Spirit connected to Jesus Christ reigning on this earth revealed in the Old Testament: Isaiah 11:2 - wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, fear of the LORD, judgment.

There is clearly a sevenfold ministry of the Holy Spirit connected to individuals revealed in the New Testament - conviction, restraint, regeneration, baptism, indwelling, sealing, filling.

**The best interpretation is to identify "the seven Spirits" as a reference to the Holy Spirit.**

Now of course the question that this raises is ‘why is the Holy Spirit referred to as the seven Spirits here in Revelation?’ Actually there are several possibilities as to what this means:

**Possibility #1** - Because the number of churches in Revelation is seven and God wants us to know that the Holy Spirit is operative in the church and all through the Church Age until it is completed.

**Possibility #2** - Because when Jesus Christ reigns on earth the Holy Spirit will have a sevenfold ministry as described by Isaiah. Isaiah 11:2

**Possibility #3** - Because in the Church Age the Holy Spirit has a sevenfold New Testament ministry so this refers to the complete work of the Spirit of God in the Church Age.

**Possibility #4** - Because in Zechariah 4:2, 10 there are seven lamps which correspond to Revelation 4:5 which speaks of the eyes of the Lord ranging all over the world seeing everything, which emphasizes the prominence of the Holy Spirit’s work in the world. Zechariah 4:6

The point of this is that the Holy Spirit was intimately involved in bringing grace and peace to every believer.

**Divine Source #3** - The source of grace and peace is God the Son. **1:5**

Now typically when the Trinity is listed, God the Son is listed second in position to God the Father and God the Spirit is third. But in this case, God the Son is mentioned third because the writer wants to develop many descriptions of Jesus Christ.

We get a remarkable glimpse of Jesus Christ in these next verses, including some descriptions that He gives of Himself. In **verse 5** we get three descriptions:

- 1) Jesus Christ is “the faithful witness”
- 2) Jesus Christ is “the firstborn of the dead”
- 3) Jesus Christ is “the ruler of the kings of the earth”

Before we examine each of these descriptions it is important to observe that this is the final time in Revelation when God the Son is referred to as “Jesus Christ.” This is clearly a reference to the fact that He is the Savior/Messiah in that order. From this point on, John will use the name Jesus 11 more times (**1:9, 9; 12:17; 14:12; 17:6; 19:10, 10; 20:4; 22:16, 20, 21**). With the exception of the final two verses of the book, the emphasis of the name **Jesus is on the fact that He alone is the Savior. The only Person that can save from God’s wrath is Jesus. He is the source of grace that saves and gives peace with God.**

**(Description #1)** - Jesus Christ is the faithful witness. **1:5a**

The grammatical construction “the faithful witness” is very emphatic (ο μαρτυς ο πιστος). What is being discussed here is not any faithful witness, but God’s own faithful witness of God Himself.

**Jesus Christ is the legal and perfect witness and testimony of God concerning everything.** Everything that Jesus Christ says is Divinely faithful to God and legally true. In fact the word “witness” refers to a legal testimony or witness. Everything Jesus Christ is, does and says is the faithful testimony and witness of God.

In this book of Revelation, Jesus Christ will assess every church and will reveal an amazing future, and everything that is revealed is an absolutely faithful and true testimony of God.

There are two specific things that are said in this very verse that you may be absolutely certain are true: 1) Jesus Christ continually loves us; 2) Jesus Christ released us from our sins by His blood. These two realities come from God’s own faithful witness.

**(Description #2)** - Jesus Christ is the firstborn of the dead. **1:5b**

What this specifically means is that Jesus Christ was the first to be raised in resurrected life never to die again. This is our guarantee that the same will happen to us (I Cor. 15:20-23). There are five resurrections yet to occur and the proof that they will occur is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who was the firstborn of the dead.

- 1) The resurrection of Church Age saints who have died at the Rapture. I Thess. 4:16
- 2) The resurrection of God’s two prophets during the Tribulation. Rev. 11:11-12
- 3) The resurrection of martyred saints after the Tribulation. Rev. 20:4
- 4) The resurrection of O.T. saints after the Tribulation before the Millennium. Daniel 12:2
- 5) The resurrection of all unbelievers after the Millennium at the Great White Throne.  
Rev. 20:12

**(Description #3)** - Jesus Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth. **1:5c**

Jesus Christ is the sovereign ruler and He has all authority over every leader in the world whether political or religious. This point of Christ ruling and reigning is a key theme of Revelation (11:15; 17:24; 18:16).

William Newell said that this point must be remembered throughout all of Revelation because it is not Satan or man who will rule; it is Jesus Christ who is the ruler and the King of Kings and He and will take over everything in this book of Revelation (*Revelation Chapter by Chapter*, p. 12).

Wise are those who bow their knees to Jesus Christ now for it is clearly revealed in Scripture that one day “every” knee shall bow to Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:9-11).

In **verses 6-8**, there are three prophetic realities concern Jesus Christ:

**PROPHETIC REALITY #1** – The eternal worship of Jesus Christ. **1:5d, 6b**

John begins a worshipful doxology pertaining to Jesus Christ which he begins with the words “to Him” in the middle of **verse 5** and then picks it up again in **verse 6** with the same words “to Him.”

What John is actually doing is emphasizing that Jesus Christ is God who deserves and who will be honored and glorified as such forever. To Him belongs the glory and dominion. This language is reserved for One who sits on the throne of God (**Revelation 5:13**). Forever and ever Jesus Christ will be honored as the glorious God.

The Greek text is written in such a way that we could understand it to mean that Jesus Christ has the glory and honor of God forever and ever whether or not one admits it. In other words, Jesus Christ is honored and glorified right now in heaven as God.

The responsibility one has now is to admit this or else when they see Jesus Christ they will mourn. However, whether or not one admits this does not change the reality of it. The glory of God and the dominion of God is eternal and forever and it belongs to Jesus Christ. That is precisely John’s point here. When he says “amen” he emphasizes this is the absolute truth.

**PROPHETIC REALITY #2** – The personal present work of Jesus Christ.

Now in the middle of the worship doxology is a list of three specific accomplishments of Jesus Christ that should cause everyone to worship Christ at the level He deserves:

**Accomplishment #1** - Jesus Christ continually loves us. **1:5d**

Dr. Bill McRae, who expounded Revelation at Believers Chapel in Dallas, Texas years ago, made a very important observation when he said **this is the only place in the New Testament where the love of Christ is in the present tense. Every other time the love of God is presented it is in the past tense (i.e. John 3:16; Galatians 2:20).**

The participle “love” (τω αγαπωντι) is present tense and it presents the idea that Jesus Christ continually has an abiding love for those who have believed on Him. For the world the love of God is always in the past tense at the cross, but for the believer the love of God is in the present tense which means it is continual and abiding forever.

This is not a conditional love; this is a factual love. In other words, it is a fact that those who have believed on Jesus Christ are continually loved by Him right now and nothing they can ever do will be able to separate them from that love or stop that love. In fact, Jesus made it very clear that He will love His own “to the end” (John 13:1).

Revelation is a book that paints the picture of a very angry and wrathful Jesus Christ, so John begins by letting believers know Christ continually loves His own. No believer needs to be afraid of the book of Revelation. No matter what your circumstances, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, He continually loves you no matter what the situation or circumstance.

**Accomplishment #2** - Jesus Christ released us from our sins. **1:5e**

Now there are five very important grammatical matters to observe from this participial clause:

- 1) The Greek word “release” (λυσαντι) means that Christ has loosed believers from their sins.
- 2) The word “sins” (αμαρτιων) is plural, indicating we have sinned against God many times.
- 3) The preposition “from” (εκ) means that we were “in” sin and we have been completely removed “out” of the sin-state.
- 4) The participle “released” is aorist tense meaning that this action happened at one specific point in past time, which was the specific moment one believed on Jesus Christ. The contrast is that Christ’s “loving” is present tense and His “loosing” is past tense. The loosing from sin is once forever and the loving of the Savior is forever and ever.
- 5) This releasing from our sins was accomplished by means of Christ’s blood. It was not our works or religion or morality that got us out of our sin-status; it was the blood of Jesus Christ that did it. Charles Spurgeon used to say “morality can keep you out of jail, but only Christ’s blood can keep you out of hell.”

The blood of Jesus Christ is not just a symbol; it is the key to life. We were not redeemed with corruptible things, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:18-19). By Christ’s own blood, which He willingly shed, He releases us from all our sins so that in the mind of God when He sees the blood of Jesus Christ applied to you, your sins are gone.

The reason this is so critical in Revelation is that God is going to pour out His wrath on a God-mocking and Christ-rejecting world of sinners. God wants His people to know that their sins are gone.

If you have believed on Jesus Christ, when God sees you He sees the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ applied to you, and that blood washes away all of your sin and you never need worry about the wrath of God. As William Cowper wrote, “There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains ...”

**Accomplishment #3** - Jesus Christ has made us sacred royalty. **1:6a**

I want us to observe that He made us royalty; we did not make ourselves royalty. Jesus Christ has elevated those who have believed on Him from the status of a sinner to the status of a priest. Think of the implications of this statement. We are all sinners who have fallen far short of His glory, and Jesus Christ by His shed blood elevates us to a position in which God classifies each of us as a priest for Him.

In the Old Testament there was a distinct priesthood which acted as “go-betweens” between Israel and God. The priests were in charge of the Temple and all of its sacrifices and offerings. **What we learn here is that Jesus Christ has elevated every single believer to the status of being a priest (I Peter 2:2-9).** We have different gifts but we are each in a position of royalty.

When the Apostle John thought about this, it caused him to explode in a wonderful doxology that to Jesus Christ belongs “the glory” and “the dominion” forever and ever. The article “the” that is used before the nouns “glory” and “dominion” indicate that John has a specific glory and a specific dominion in view.

The reference “the glory” refers to the glory of God and “the dominion” refers to the might and strength and power of God. **What John is saying is that Jesus Christ is to be worshipped and revered and honored as the true glorious God and as the all powerful God and He is to be viewed this way forever and ever.** By adding the word “amen” (αμην) which means of certain, firm truth, John is stating this with dogmatic certainty.

Think of it. What other Person could take a bunch of sinners and give them a priestly status with the Holy God? What other blood could wash away sin? There is no other blood shed and there is no other name under heaven that even comes close to the glory and honor of Jesus Christ.

### **PROPHETIC REALITY #3 – The universal future work of Jesus Christ. 1:7-8**

In these verses there are eleven amazing facts brought out about Jesus Christ:

**Fact #1** - Jesus Christ will come actually - “Behold, He is coming.” **1:7a**

The word “behold” (ιδου) is used some 26 times in Revelation (1:7, 18; 2:10, 22; 3:8, 9, 9, 11, 20; 4:1, 2; 5:5; 6:2, 5, 8; 7:9; 9:12; 11:14; 12:3; 14:1, 14; 16:15; 19:11; 21:3, 5; 22:7, 12). When it is used, God is saying look carefully at this, behold this, see this, discern this, and know this.

The first point to grasp here is that Jesus Christ is coming again. As the song says, it “may be morning, may be noon, may be evening and may be soon.” You can be certain He is coming again. Right now Jesus Christ is in heaven, but He does not intend to stay there forever because He is coming back to take care of some unfinished business.

**Fact #2** - Jesus Christ will come astrophysically - “with the clouds.” **1:7b**

At the Rapture of the Church we are caught up to meet Christ in (εν) the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:17), but at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ He is seen coming on (επι) the clouds (Matthew 24:30). In the Old Testament a literal, physical cloud displayed the glory of God (Exodus 13:2), and we may be certain that Jesus Christ will come and display all the glory of God.

**Fact #3** - Jesus Christ will come publicly - “every eye will see Him.” **1:7c**

Christ Himself taught this very fact about Himself in Matthew 24:30. One question that has been raised is how would it be possible for every eye to see Jesus Christ when there are various time zones? In some parts of the world it is day and at other parts of the world it is night, so how could all see Christ? One very possible solution to this is that when Christ comes, He could actually bring His armies in heaven with Him and they could circle the world in a spectacular procession. This becomes a real possibility in view of **Revelation 19:11-16**. It would be nothing for Him to circle His universe, displaying His glory in the heavens with His army with Him. It certainly would cause every human on this earth to look into the sky and see Him in all of His glory.

**Fact #4** - Jesus Christ will come nationally - “even those who pierced Him.” **1:7d**

More than likely this is a reference to the fact that Israel will finally acknowledge who Jesus Christ is. In fact, Zechariah made a specific application of this to Israel (Zechariah 12:10).

**Fact #5** - Jesus Christ will come internationally - “all the tribes of the earth.” **1:7e**

This clearly has reference to all ethnic groups of people who are on earth when Christ returns.

**Fact #6** - Jesus Christ will come judgmentally - “all tribes of the earth will mourn.” **1:7f**

Carefully observe that when Christ returns, all tribes of the earth will mourn. That word “mourn” (κοπτω) is one that means that **all people in the world will wail with grief when they see Jesus Christ**. People are indifferent to Jesus Christ today but not when this happens; “all will mourn.”

**Fact #7** - Jesus Christ will come with dogmatic certainty - “amen.” It is of absolute truth.

**Fact #8** - Jesus Christ will come and He is the “I AM.” **1:8a**

**This identifies Jesus Christ as the Jehovah and God of the Old Testament - Exodus 3:14.**

**Fact #9** - Jesus Christ will come and is the Alpha and Omega. **1:8b**

Three times in Revelation Christ is identified as the Alpha and Omega - **1:8; 21:6; 22:13**. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Koine Greek (common Greek) was the language spoken and written at the time John wrote Revelation. **Greek was the language God selected to write His New Testament.**

**What this title means is that Jesus Christ is the subject and revealer and the inspirer of all written New Testament truth. All written revelation comes from Jesus Christ and is about Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the New Testament.**



(36)

In fact, Jesus Christ is the entire program of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible is about Him and by Him. He is the beginning and ending of all things written in Scripture. He is the Alpha and Omega and all things in between.

**In the Old Testament, Jesus Christ is coming (Genesis - Malachi). In the Gospels, Jesus Christ is here (Matthew - John). In the Epistles and Prophetic Scriptures, Jesus Christ will return (Acts - Revelation).**

Everything in the written Scriptures is inspired by and about Jesus Christ. He is the Alpha and the Omega.

**Fact #10** - Jesus Christ will come and He is the Lord God. **1:8c**

Do not miss this point; Jesus Christ is the Lord God! He is Almighty God! One who is wise acknowledges this now or he will be forced to mourn in the future when he will acknowledge it.

**Fact #11** - Jesus Christ will come as eternal God - “who is and who was and who is to come.”  
**1:8d**

The phrase “who is” refers to the present; “who was” refers to the past and “who is to come” refers to the future. This is the identical language that was used in **verse 4** to describe God the Father. What this means is that Jesus Christ is also eternal God just as God the Father is eternal God.

Jesus Christ is coming back to this world and He is coming back as eternal God for all to see. It is no wonder that John said, “To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”