

Look! Listen! - And Overcome!

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

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Look! Listen! – And Overcome!

"I Will Come Again!"

Lord's Day Morning

August 26, 2007

Pastor Jeff Crippen

heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

The Revelation of Jesus Christ announces to His suffering Church –

Sermon Text: Revelation 1:6-8

"Jesus Wins!"

Introduction

NKJ John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

NKJ Acts 1:10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into

Listen to the titles of these commentaries on the book as an example of this –

1. The Lamb Wins (Richard Bewes)
2. More Than Conquerors (William Hendriksen)
3. Triumph of the Lamb (Dennis Johnson)
4. The Returning King (Vern Poythress)

This is the message Christ's Church needs to hear. You need to hear it if you are a real follower of Jesus Christ because you live in times that are increasingly openly antichrist.

Children and young people – if you are going to persevere to the end in the faith, if you are going to stand firm and unmoved against the enemy, not loving your life even to death, then you must get hold of the message of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This world is not getting better. Based upon the Word of God, we are optimistic pessimists. In the short run, in your lifetimes, you can expect this world to grow ever more hateful against Christ and against all who follow Him. Every true Christian here is suffering and is going to suffer tribulation in this world, and for you young people, you may well see persecution in this very country raised to a level never seen before in America.

So it is vital to get hold of the message of the Revelation – Jesus is going to win! In Him we are more than conquerors. The martyrs are in a better place by far than they ever were in this world. Do not fear those who can only kill your body.

NKJ Revelation 12:11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

"In this life and in this present temporal world, very, very few things are as they seem to be."

So we must see them as they really are – not as how they seem. The book of the Revelation gives us those eyes. Jesus is not the suffering servant – He is the reigning King of the rulers of the earth. Follow along as I read the entire first chapter.

[Revelation 1:1-20]

I. A Kingdom and Priests 1:6

We had left off last time in the midst of this wonderful doxology John writes as he brings greetings to the seven churches from the three Persons of the Triune God. The doxology is in particular a praise to the Second Person, the Lord Jesus Christ –

NKJ Revelation 1:5 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.

It is this matter of *kings and priests* to which we now turn – we dare not move ahead without understanding it. We will meet the doctrine again –

NKJ Revelation 5:10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

NKJ Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The Old Testament Backdrop

As we have repeatedly pointed out, hardly a sentence in the Revelation lacks an Old Testament allusion, and so it is in this matter of the people of God being made "kings and priests." Here we have it way back in Exodus 19 –

NKJ Exodus 19:1 In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came *to* the Wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they had departed from Rephidim, had come

to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain. 3 And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. 6 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Up to this point, there had been kings and priests. We think, for instance, of Melchizedek –

NKJ Genesis 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. [See also Hebrews 7:1]

And Jethro –

NKJ Exodus 3:1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian.

And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

But now we meet this language of a *kingdom of priests and a holy nation*. What does this mean? Peter applies the very same terminology to the Church (as does the Revelation) –

NKJ 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Listen to these Scriptures and see if you can get hold of John's meaning that Christ has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father –

NKJ Deuteronomy 4:20 "But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day.

NKJ Deuteronomy 7:6 " For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for

Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. 7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 "but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

NKJ Deuteronomy 14:2 "For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

NKJ Deuteronomy 26:18 "Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that *you* should keep all His commandments, 19 "and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken."

NKJ Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify

for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

NKJ Isaiah 61:6 But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, And in their glory you shall boast. 7 Instead of your shame *you shall have double honor*, And *instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion.* Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs.

NKJ Isaiah 66:20 "Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. 21 "And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites," says the LORD.

Do you begin to get hold of it? To be an Israelite in the Old Testament era was to be a member of the chosen people of God. For Israel to be a nation meant that God, in His free electing mercy *chose* Abraham and his descendants out from among all the other nations of the earth – to be redeemed by a lamb's blood out of

slavery in Egypt – and thereby be the chosen, special people of God – holy to the Lord. His own special possession among whom He would dwell in the holy of holies.

NKJ 2 Samuel 7:23 "And who *is* like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name -- and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land -- before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? 24 "For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God.

So these people who were not a nation have become a nation. And in the New Testament, of course, this privilege has been given to the Gentiles as well –

NKJ Romans 9:25 As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved." 26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, '*You are not My people,*' There they shall be called sons of the living God."

So just as the nation of Israel was elected by God and chosen by Him for His own special, holy people, a people who in a general sense mediated between God and the world, a people whose priesthood in a special sense mediated between the people of God and God – so says John it is with us, only in a far more glorious and real sense.

The New Testament then uses this Old Testament type and shadow of a nation made to be a kingdom and priests to God as a picture of what God in Christ has effected in regard to the *true circumcision, the Church- the Israel of God*.

Let me read to you a number of New Testament Scriptures then that speak of the kingly/royal and priestly privilege of all who are in Christ –

NKJ 1 Corinthians 6:2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

NKJ Revelation 2:26 "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations -- 27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' -- as I also have received from My Father;

NKJ Revelation 3:21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

NKJ Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

NKJ Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your* reasonable service.

NKJ Philippians 2:17 Yes, and if I am being poured out as a *drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

NKJ Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the

veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

NKJ Hebrews 13:15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

NKJ 1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Understand then? In Christ the believer can –

- Enter the holy of holies;
- Be really and actually pleasing to God;
- Reign and rule the creation with Christ.

And what is the effectual, instrumental cause of all this privilege? It is this –

"by His blood"

See it? How did Israel become a nation, a special and holy nation set

free from slavery and bondage? *Redemption. Purchase. Price paid.* The blood of the Passover lamb. And so it is with us. The blood of the Lamb has purchased us. That is why we stand now in Christ as this chosen people, a royal and holy nation, priests to God. And, get this –

"we are the sacrifice that ascends before Him and is pleasing to Him."

What is man's greatest need? Well, we might put it this way –

"to be able to get into the holy of holies and live – for God to be pleased with him."

By Christ's blood, that impossibility has been effected.

Dr. Vern Poythress makes this very important observation concerning this matter of believers as kings and priests –

"Freeing us from sin removes negative consequences. The positive side of redemption is found in being made a kingdom and priests. Saints enjoy God's rule and, as priests, have intimate access to him. In the future, they will reign with him (Rev 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6). Even now people from all nations share in the priestly privileges given to Israel in Exodus 19:6. The purposes of redemption that

were embodied in the Exodus and the purposes of dominion that were given to man at creation are both fulfilled through Christ." [The Returning King]

What did God intend for man way back at creation? For man to rule over the creation –

NKJ Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

In Christ, you see, man's original station is restored. He reigns with Christ over the creation. It is subdued as God intended and this is the very point the Apostle makes in Hebrews –

NKJ Hebrews 2:5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we

speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

We do see Jesus reigning, and when He ultimately subdues that last enemy and His kingdom is effected in its fullness, man will be restored to that rule and reign. We enjoy that rule in part now. We are no longer slaves – we are kings. We can do battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Furthermore, right now, in this present age, when a Christian leaves this life through the death of his body, he reigns with Christ! He is seated on a throne with Christ. He has overcome. He is more than conqueror. No

wonder John tells these churches who are being persecuted -

"To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

II. He is Coming With the Clouds 1:7

NKJ Revelation 1:7 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.

The doxology has ended. I have labeled this seventh verse as –

"The heralding of the King."

Christ is coming again.

On August 15th a severe earthquake rocked Peru. Witnesses said that the earth rocked in waves like jelly. Who would have thought of it just moments before? In an instant, all was changed – in some respects forever. Over 300 people were killed. That day will be remembered and in some cases people will begin to think in terms of life before and after August 15th.

Someday, this earth is going to be shaken – one more time.

NKJ Hebrews 12:25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God *is* a consuming fire.

Christ is coming again – *"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him..."*. The earth and the heavens will be shaken once more –

NKJ 2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of *persons* ought you to be in holy

conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

Christ is coming again. Behold, He is coming. EVERY eye will see Him, and EVERY man will have to stand before Him. Are you ready? Are you robed in His righteousness?

Christian, do you need help in persevering in this world? In overcoming the enemy? Then here it is. *Behold, He is coming.* This voice of the Apostle John heralds the final entrance of King Jesus. At any moment that last trumpet is going to sound and everything will change forever and ever.

NKJ Psalm 9:1 To the Chief Musician. To *the tune of "Death of the Son."* A Psalm of David. I will praise *You*, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. 2 I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High. 3 When my enemies turn back, They shall fall and perish at Your presence. 4 For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness. 5 You have rebuked the nations, You have destroyed

the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever. 6 O enemy, destructions are finished forever! And you have destroyed cities; Even their memory has perished.

NKJ 2 Thessalonians 1:6 since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

He is coming. He is coming. Don't give up, don't give in. We have troubles in this world, but He has overcome this world. Following Him may well mean the separation between you and those most intimate relationships in this life – but don't give in. The world hates the people of God – but Christ is coming. If you take your thinking about things from

the newspaper, you will conclude that the beast is winning – but all is not as it appears to be in this world. The devil is not winning. Christ has conquered. And Christ is coming.

Will someone here one day find themselves in prison for being a Christian? Or even being called upon to renounce Christ or die? Don't give up and don't given in. Overcome. Christ is coming. Every single eye will see Him, including those who hated Him and killed Him. We can look anyone right square in the eye and say –

"You are going to see Christ one day. You will stand before Him. You may call me a fool now, but on that Day you will not. You may spit on me now for telling you these things, but on that day you will tremble before Him. Kiss the Son now, before His He appears in the clouds."

Think of it. YOU are going to be there, and so am I. Look around – every single person here is going to be there. Whether we are alive and remain on this earth until that trumpet sounds or whether the trumpet and shout raises us from the grave – we will each one see Him.

"...special attention is called to the fact of Christ's coming by the introductory word 'behold.' It is as if

the Word of God here would have the church conceive of this coming as a present fact: always the church must have the eyes of hope fixed upon that final event. Constantly she must stand in the attitude of expectancy and longing, the attitude of the bride looking for the coming of the Bridegroom, with the prayer on her lips, 'Come, Lord Jesus!'...Let the church never doubt, never grow faint: the Lord will surely come! The time may seem long, but He cometh. The suffering of the waiting church may be severe, and it may seem sometimes as if the Lord were slack concerning His promise; but He is surely coming. The promise is sealed with a double oath: 'Even so, Amen!'" [Herman Hoeksema]