

A Vision of Victory

Revelation 1: 1-20 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,

2 who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Greeting to the Seven Churches

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,

5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood

6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Vision of the Son of Man

9 I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.



10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet

11 saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,

13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire,

15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last,

18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

19 Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.

20 As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

A couple driving home from a conference talked about how they might use what they had learned at their jobs.

Rounding a curve in the road, they came upon a serious motorcycle accident.

The bike seemed to catch on something and flip into the air.

The helmet-less driver was thrown fifty yards or so, and the bike landed not far away.

The two were the first to arrive.

The man pulled off the road just north of the accident.

Before he shut off the engine, the woman was out of the car and running to the victim's side.

The man stopped another car and sent the occupants for help while he began to try to direct traffic.

At one point in the chaos, he saw his wife crouched by the unconscious young man, stroking his hair and talking to him.

When the ambulance arrived and whisked the young man away, the couple got back into their car in silence.

There was blood on the woman's hands and around the hem of her skirt.

After a bit her husband said, "I saw you talking to that young man.

He was obviously unconscious.

He may even have been dead.

What could you possibly have been saying to him?"

She replied, "I just told him over and over, the worst is over.

The healing has already begun.



The healing has already begun; hold that that thought.

Revelation 1—In this grand model of apocalyptic literature, John shares with seven Asian churches a vision that God gave him.

A vision of victory; a vision of hope; a vision of Christ, the most exalted of kings.]

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Easter is Christ the King Sunday, a day on which we are to recognize the Lordship and Kingship of Christ Jesus.

Pope Pius XI instituted this day in 1925 to celebrate the kingship of Christ as a way of combating the destructive forces of his age (needed now more than ever).

A. Theologically, it is the end of the church year.

For Christians, the year begins with the birth of Jesus, follows his life to Easter and culminates with the recognition that Christ Jesus is King.

The end of the year typically features a look at prophecies concerning the second coming.

B. You may be surprised to know that for every prophecy in the Bible concerning the first coming of the Messiah there are 8 that look forward to the second coming.

Scholars estimate some 1845 references to the second coming of the Messiah in the OT.

In the NT, one out of every 30 verses speaks of the second coming of the Messiah.

C. This Messiah, or Anointed One, is Christ; John begins his epistle by establishing Christ as the King above all Kings, the one worthy to be called the Anointed One.

2. The first chapter of Revelation should be a must-read for anyone forming an opinion about Jesus Christ.

The typical Christian has an image of Christ taken from liberal theology, cultural philosophies, Hollywood characterizations and personal beliefs, but not from the Bible.

A. For them the modern Jesus is tolerant.

He loves and accepts everybody regardless of his or her beliefs, morals, values, or lifestyle choices.

He doesn't make any demands of them.

Doctrine and holiness aren't important.

All that matters is that you profess to love Jesus, and that will make Him happy.

B. The vision of Revelation strongly contradicts that view.

It presents a figure of Christ that makes many professing Christians uncomfortable.

Yet, amid the `sometimes-frightening portrayals stands the most exalted of Kings: the hope of every Christian.

Today we consider the role of Jesus that John shared with seven churches.

It is a fitting reminder of who Christ really is, and a stern warning to those who see him as something other than Savior and Lord.

He begins, however, with the attributes of God the Father. . .

II. ATTRIBUTES OF GOD THE FATHER

Revelation 1: 4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,



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1. God the Father is the source of divine favor and its resulting spiritual well being; he opens his salutation with Grace and peace to you from [God].

Grace is divine favor shown to the human race; peace is the state of spiritual well being that follows as a result.

Apart from God's grace, man has no peace; apart from grace and peace, man has no hope.

2. God is eternal; him who is, and who was, and who is to come.

Christians in John's day faced terrible persecution from both political and religious figures.

They needed reassurance that the power of Christ in them was God's power, and that said power would not wither away.

That is John's point; God is, was, and is yet to come; he has no beginning, no end, and there is no limit to the grace and peace John wishes them.

[If God is the eternal provider of grace and peace, what then is Christ's role? How do his life, death and resurrection affect us

III. THE ROLE OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation 1: 5a: and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness,

Not only does grace and peace proceed from the eternal God and the seven spirits before the throne, but from Jesus Christ as well, who is designated by a threefold title that expresses his role in God's plan.

1. He is the faithful witness.

A. Christ mediates the revelation he received from God (the "testimony" of 1:1 and 22:16).

Revelation 1: 1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,

Revelation 22: 16 *“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”*

B. Christ bore witness to the truth from God (Jn. 3:32-33; 18:37); so much so that his death followed as a result.

John 3: 32-33 *He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. 33Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true.*

John 18: 37 *Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”*

You may find it interesting that the Greek word for witness has come over to English as martyr, one who suffers death for allegiance to a cause.

2. He is the firstborn from the dead.

A. **Col. 1:18** declares Christ sovereign over the church by virtue of his resurrection from the dead.

Colossians 1: 18 *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*

B. **Psalm 89: 27** says of David (and extends to his descendants culminating in Jesus the Messiah), I will appoint him my firstborn.

Psalm 89: 27 *And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.*

C. Robert Mounce writes, “If faithful witnessing should result in a martyr’s death, the believer is to remember that Jesus, the ideal martyr, is the firstborn from the dead.

As the risen Christ now exercises sovereign control, so also will the faithful share in his reign (**Rev. 20:4-6**).”

Revelation 20: 4-6 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

3. He is the most exalted king.

A. This comes from his being the firstborn from the dead.

The expression looks forward to Christ’s manifestation as “King of kings” (**Rev. 17:14; 19:16**).

Revelation 17: 14 They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

Revelation 19: 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

B. At the consummation, mankind will universally acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Supreme Ruler

Philippians 2: 10-11; so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

[This role, explained in his threefold title, encourages and sustains believers entering a time of persecution for their faith in Jesus. It reminds them Christ has gone before, opened the way through death to victory.]

IV. CONCLUSION

1. We must evaluate our understanding of Christ.

If we see Jesus Christ as anything less than the most highly exalted ruler of all that is in heaven and on earth, we miss John's point and have adopted the contemporary concept of who Christ is:

2. The tolerant Jesus, who loves and accepts everybody regardless of his or her beliefs, morals, values, or lifestyle choices.

The one who makes no demands, and to whom doctrine and holiness aren't important.

You profess to love Him, and it makes Him happy.

3. This is not the Jesus John is talking about; it is a fabrication of those who want to have salvation without a lifelong commitment to Jesus; those who believe that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is a one-time event that requires nothing of them from that time on.

4. There is, however, great hope for those who embrace Christ as their Savior and Lord.

Those for whom life centers around their own spiritual formation, those dedicated to living the life God intends for them to live.



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5. Despite the sins of your past, despite your anemic allegiance to Christ, he stands ready to heal you.

As the woman at the scene of the motorcycle accident said to the unconscious rider: “The worst is over, the healing has already begun.”