

Blessings from the Triune God

Revelation

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Bible Verse: Revelation 1:4-5
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We return this morning to our exposition of the book of Revelation, and I invite you to turn to chapter 1, where we will read verse 4 and the beginning portion of verse 5 for our text here this morning. Revelation chapter 1, verses 4 and 5.

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.

Now, last time we looked at seven different texts in Revelation that all contained the word "blessed," an indication of the privileged nature that those who read and heed the book of Revelation have in the program and in the outworking of the purpose of God. God intends blessing upon those who read Revelation, who study it, who heed it, who respond to it, and we saw that as we looked at the prologue in the first three verses. Look at those with me as we just kind of remind ourselves of the context here. "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, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw." And here's our word, "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." And what I want to do today, having looked at those seven blessings in some detail last week, I want to use the text that follows in verses 4 and 5 to show you the source of those blessings, from whom we receive these great blessings, these gifts from God that we read about in the book of Revelation. The gift, the blessing of being prepared for the end of the world, being prepared for eternity, these are great and wonderful blessings, and what we want to do is just look at this in a three-fold manner here this morning, starting with a review, point number one here today, the recipients of the blessings. The recipients of the blessing, who is it that receives the blessings that are described in the book of Revelation. And another way to frame this, is to realize that Revelation is not a book that is given for all of the world to read and to take part in, to just enter with unholy hands and an unsanctified mind and give rough treatment to the things that are described in the symbols that are given there in Revelation. One of the things that you're going to find as we go through this book in coming months is that in a way that perhaps is unparalleled in

all of Scripture, the book of Revelation assumes that you know your Bible. The book of Revelation assumes that you know the Old Testament and that you know the New Testament which preceded the writing of Revelation. All of that is assumed, and it assumes a spiritual stature and a spiritual reality in the lives of the readers.

By way of review, we emphasized last time that this book is written to true Christians. It is written to true Christians. Look at verse 1 with me. This is just by way of review. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place." And then in verse 3 we read, "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." His servants are the ones to whom this book is given. The ones who keep the word of God are the ones to whom this book is given. And the word "servant," as we said, is a word for slave. It's those that recognize the Lordship of Christ, that submit to him, that walk to him. And so the audience of this book from the very beginning is narrowly focused. There is a subset of humanity to whom this book is given, and it is given to the servants of Jesus Christ, the slaves of Christ, those who keep his word.

Now, we looked at all of that last time, and as you continue on and as we come to verse 4, you'll find that this is immediately reinforced by what you read in verse 4. Again, it's so easy to overlook some of these prepositional phrases, and yet they are fundamental to understanding the book. Revelation chapter 1 verse 4, remember we're looking at the recipients of these blessings, who is it that receives the goodness and the gifts that God communicates through the book of Revelation? Look at verse 4, "John to the seven churches that are in Asia." Once again you see a book that is being written to the servants of God, to true Christians, to those that are gathered in local churches. That's what we see here in verse 4. And we're going to see the churches again in verse 11, and in chapters 2 and 3. Drop down to verse 11 where we find the churches laid out with specificity, Revelation chapter 1 verse 11, "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." And when you read chapter 2 and chapter 3, you'll find letters addressed to each one of those churches in the same sequence that they're given here in verse 11. My only point is that this is a book that is targeted for the people of God and it's reinforced as you look at verse 6 as it talks about Christ who loves us, freed us from our sins by his blood there at the end of verse 5. You see, and I can't emphasize this enough, I guess, because Revelation just makes it so clear that the audience for this book are the redeemed people of Jesus Christ. The audience for this book are those who are in the kingdom of God. Verse 5, "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father." That's not a description of the world. That's a description of the true people of God, those that have been washed in the blood of Christ, those who have been redeemed, delivered out of the world, delivered out of the kingdom of Satan, and delivered into the kingdom of God and the kingdom of his beloved Son.

And so, beloved, when we contemplate who the recipients of the blessings of this book are, Revelation makes it plain over and over again, and particularly in a very bold, clear,

definitive way in the opening verses, that this book is written to those who are in the kingdom and are under the righteous rule of God. The priest, the idea of a priest there, a priest is someone, simply stated, someone who has a right to enter into the presence of God. Well, that's only true Christians. Only true Christians have a right to enter his presence because only true Christians have the true mediator, the true high priest that introduces us to a holy God. And so, beloved, right from the very beginning, in just the fullness of these opening verses, it's astonishing to see how clearly, how definitively, with such precision, Revelation asks this question to every single heart that would have an open Bible in front of them: are you a slave of Jesus Christ? Are you in the kingdom of God? Are you yielded to the rule of the King of kings? And I don't know how else to say this. I'll say it in kind of a colloquial way, I guess. I realize, I've acknowledged this multiple times, that there's a certain broad curiosity, interest in the book of Revelation, people want to pry into the secrets of what the future holds, but as you come to the book of Revelation, beloved, I have a responsibility to tell you, before you get to any of that, you have to examine your own standing before God to see if you're even in the kingdom. You should not presume to read mail that is not actually addressed to you. You should not presume to read mail that is not actually addressed to you. This book is to the servants of Christ. This book is to those who have been freed from their sins by his blood, those who are in the kingdom of God, those who are in the church of God. Over and over again it makes it clear this is a book of targeted blessing for the people of God and we can't emphasize that enough.

And so as I've interacted with people in and outside of our church, when people first hear that I was going to do a study of Revelation, people immediately want to jump into the finer details, the theological curiosities of the rapture or the millennium or all of that, and what I hope that our introductory weeks here have shown to you is that those questions are secondary to the primary question of addressing the glory of Christ, addressing the worship of God, the fear of God, and confronting ourselves with the overriding question of whether we have repented of our sins and been placed in the kingdom by Jesus Christ. It's good to let that question hang in the air because I'm just deathly afraid of people approaching this book for the wrong reasons, approaching it without even giving consideration to what Revelation itself makes the introductory theme of it all. The kingdom of Christ, the glory of Christ, those who are his servants, those are the ones to whom the book is written. Those are the recipients of the blessing. You cannot avoid that issue. That is the foundational, fundamental issue. It's the first question that's asked before you get to anything else, are you in the kingdom of God? And for those of us that are, those of us that have been saved by Christ, those of us, however imperfectly in our many stumblings, God has worked in your heart a desire for Christ, a desire to know him, to walk with him, this is a book for you. This is a book that is intended to bring spiritual blessing, spiritual help, spiritual gifts, spiritual growth to you. And so, if you're in the kingdom, there should be a sense of great anticipation of coming to this book. If the Spirit convicts you, this is not describing you, then there are prior issues that you need to address about your standing with God. But for the true believer, this is a book that is filled with promise and with hope and with inestimable, infinite blessings that run throughout all of eternity.

I have been astonished at the greatness of this book of Revelation, and we're only five verses into it. We've got 400 verses after this one to go, 400 plus. There's 400 verses to go, and yet in these opening verses and in the briefest of surveys of the themes of this book, of the outcome of this book compared to the opening chapters of Genesis, we just realize that we are in the presence of a great revelation from God, a great manifestation of his mind, a great manifestation of his plan. It just has a dwarfing impact upon us as we look at it. And so it's with this great sense of anticipation that we step further into the book now as we move to point number two, the nature of the blessings, the nature of the blessings that are held out before us and Revelation opens with a benediction to its readers. And look at there in verse 4 with me where it says, "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." Look at that opening phrase there, "Grace to you and peace." Beloved, the New Testament is filled with this benediction. It is filled with this greeting in so many places in the whole course of the 27 books of the New Testament. This exact phrase, "Grace to you and peace," is found in the book of Romans, in 1 and 2 Corinthians, in Galatians, in Ephesians, in Philippians, in Colossians, in 1 Thessalonians, in 2 Thessalonians, in Philemon. Over and over and over again, the inspired writers of Scripture are conscious that as they were writing what God was leading them and inspiring them to write, that they were communicating spiritual blessings to the people of God. And it's easy, especially those who were raised in legalistic or ritualistic environments, to completely miss this most fundamental aspect of the New Testament, to think that God is a God of rules, you know, God's going to get you for that, or have you said your prayers, have you gone through the rituals and all of that, and to just have a completely legal understanding, a legal mindset of approaching God and missing the whole point of it, as if God needed us to keep certain rules to advance his purposes. No, the whole nature of Christian salvation is that God has come to sinners like you with grace. God has come to sinners like you with the promise of peace. And having entered into the kingdom, God would have us know the fullness and the abounding nature of this grace, the fullness and the abounding nature of this peace. That's why we sing, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." It's amazing, it's astonishing, it's overwhelming, it's abundant, it's free, it's full. And I say this to help you, those that have come from those backgrounds and still think of God in that rule-based manner, to understand that God has delivered us into a kingdom where the operative principle is one of grace.

Now, grace, to just give a familiar definition, grace is the idea of God's undeserved favor extending goodness where his judgment could have prevailed. God's undeserved favor extending goodness where condemnation could have prevailed. And think about it, beloved, we're all guilty sinners. Scripture says that all of our righteousness is like a filthy rag, that there are none righteous, none who do good, there are none who seek for God, there's not even one, and that the outcome, what the justice of God requires on sinners is judgment, eternal judgment for the breaking of his law, the violation of his principles, the ignoring of the gospel, and the ignoring of the character of God. You know, we're born into that condition and then we live it out so that our lives before Christ were just an accumulation of offenses and trespasses and transgressions that deserved the judgment of God. Dead in trespasses and sin. Dominated by the devil. Under the wrath of God. That's

the state of every man, woman, boy, and girl who's ever been born into the world since the fall of Adam and righteously and rightly so. Justice would have demanded our eternal condemnation. And so, that word "grace" is of inestimable preciousness. It is exceedingly sweet to know that God is a God of grace, that to those who are guilty and condemned, God extends an offer of grace, of favor, of kindness in the Lord Jesus Christ that you could never have earned. And it is the principle on which he extends salvation to us is that God extends goodness to those who do not deserve it. We do not live a good life and then God rewards us for it. God looks on our guilty lives and says, "I will extend kindness and goodness to you in Christ. Will you come? I invite you," God says, "I invite you to come and to partake of this eternal grace."

John says, "Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come." But not just grace, peace. "Grace to you and peace," he says. And peace in the Bible has the idea of spiritual wholeness, spiritual restoration. And before Christ, you were separated from God by your sin. You were in a status, you were in a condition, you were in a position of separation. If you think about it in terms of the actions of nations, there was a state of war declared between God and you. Romans 5, you were an enemy of God. You were separated from him. It's not just that you had internal agitations. It's not just that you were unsettled emotionally when it talks, Scripture talks about the absence of peace. It's describing a state, a condition of hostility, a status of separation that has to be addressed before anything internal by the way of peace can be accomplished. And so in Christ, in the Lord Jesus Christ, that status of separation, that status of enmity is addressed. In Christ, in his blood, in his righteousness, the one who puts his faith in Christ, is reconciled to God. That status of enmity, that status as an enemy of God is changed. It is reconciled so that whereas once you were an enemy, now you are a child in the family of God. Whereas once you were hostile to God and he was hostile to you, now Scripture can call us the friend of God, that we have a brother in heaven who advocates for us. There's a unification that has taken place. If you wanted to call it a reunion, God has brought us near to him.

Look at 2 Corinthians chapter 5 with me for just a moment. because it just expresses it so well. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, the idea of separation, being resolved, being addressed, all of this flowing from the undeserved kindness of God. In verse 17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." This peace of which we speak here in Revelation chapter 1 verse 4 is the idea that sinners can be reconciled to God in Christ so that the hostility is removed and a permanent condition of friendship and reconciliation is introduced. In an objective way, the Christian is no longer the enemy of God. God, having reconciled us in Christ, will never go back to being our enemy. He is now eternally our Heavenly Father. If we sin against him, if we persist in a life of disobedience as a Christian, God does not separate us and cast us away, he disciplines us as a Father. We are in the true family of God. We are reconciled. Your sins are forgiven.

God is now favorably disposed to you and always will be. He always will be. That, beloved, is the idea communicated to us by peace. It is the foundation for what we more often think about subjective peace. You know, I have peace in my heart. I have peace like a river and, you know, those other things that some of us used to sing. The inner subjective sense of well-being, of peace, of an absence of anxiety and a sense of contentment and joy, that inner sense, beloved, is only truly based on the objective reconciliation with God, which comes from being found in Christ and being reconciled to him.

And so you must have the objective peace by being put into Christ, by giving yourself to Christ, putting your faith in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and being reconciled to God before the other things come, and in this, beloved, what God is showing us here is he's giving us two different ways in which it's so easy to just go so far astray before you even begin. We've seen in Revelation, in the book of Revelation, we don't jump into the eschatological controversies and ask those questions first and just bypass the issue of who the book is written to, bypass the issues of the glory of Christ, the fear of God, the worship of God, repentance from sin. You start there and then you get to the other things when they come up in the text later on in the book. Well, in a like manner, the horrifying reality of the way that most people think about God and approach him because they've been fed this poisonous stew for decades, is to start with the fact that I want internal peace. I want to be free from my anxieties and I want to be free from my bad habits or whatever the case may be, and people start there, start with wanting the internal peace and bypassing the very thing that actually gives it to you. Rather than dealing with this status and a condition of being a sinner separated from God, people don't want to talk about that because that involves doctrine and that involves teaching and that involves conviction. People want to bypass all of that just so that they can have a contented feeling inside their heart. That's not the way God does it. You don't start by seeking subjective peace, you start by recognizing that you're an enemy of God and that you need objective reconciliation with him.

And, beloved, that's a more rare thing. You know, the mere fact that someone goes to church in and of itself, by itself, doesn't mean anything. It doesn't mean that that person is actually reconciled to God. It doesn't mean that they actually want to be godly and obedient. You know, there's a lot of things that might draw people inside a physical structure called a church and I emphasize these things just so that none of you would be found coming up short of the grace of God, that you would understand that there is an objective separation from God that must be addressed if you're going to be in the kingdom. There is an objective separation from God that must be addressed before you can come to this book, before you can have internal peace. You must be reconciled to God as we saw in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and that is only as you come and confess your sins and yield your life to Christ. You can't bypass that. The entryway into the blessing of God is through Christ alone. He said, "No one comes to the Father except through me. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved." The name of the Lord Jesus Christ, you must come in that way. You must come in confessing your sins. You must come in yielding your life to Christ. You must come in with a repentant spirit. And those who reject a repentant spirit, those who

are not interested in the teaching of doctrine, the teaching of the Bible, those who are not interested in the Lordship of Christ are on the outside. No matter what else they may do about going to church, no matter what else they may do or say about spiritual God talk, we must address the reality of our sin and separation from God. And beloved, what I want you to see in the context of the book of Revelation is that is exactly where the book proper begins. Look at it again there with me there at the end of verse 5; we'll look at this more next week if my plans come to fruition. "To him who loves us, to him who graciously loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father." You see, the "us" here are the true slaves of Christ, the true servants of Christ, true Christians. What it means to be a true Christian is to be in the kingdom of God, to be on the receiving end of the love of Christ, to be freed from your sins and have his blood applied to your account and his righteousness. All of those things.

And so we're about to pivot away from this issue and move on to other things. It's just that I just have this sense to emphasize that point so much that Revelation, before it tells us anything about future events, is confronting us with who you are in the presence of a holy God. Are you under grace? Are you at peace with God? Have you been washed by the blood of the Lamb? And until we deal with those questions, until a reader deals with those questions, he really hasn't started to deal with the primary issue found in the book of Revelation. That is the nature of the blessing that's given to us, grace and peace and salvation that is communicated to us, and a grace and a peace and a salvation that is eternally secure, a grace and a peace and a salvation that secures one in Christ in a way that perfectly protects them through the calamities of world history that Revelation reveals later on. You must be in Christ before you are protected from these coming calamities. You must be in Christ before you even think about those calamities, because that is the fundamental issue.

So, the recipients of the blessing are true Christians. The nature of the blessings, grace and peace. And now, thirdly, we want to come to the source of the blessings. The source of the blessings, and we'll spend the rest of our time here. Today's message, for those of you that take notes, I've titled it, "Blessings From the Triune God." Blessings from the Triune God. As we look at point number three, the source of the blessings, what we're going to see here in verses 4 and 5 laid out before us, is just a thrilling display of the nature of God put on display and that the source of these blessings emanate from the very throne of God, from the Triune God himself. This is a book that has nothing to do with people that deny the Trinity. This is a book that has nothing to offer to those who deny the deity of Christ. This is a book that from its start is emphasizing the Triune nature of God, the Trinity.

Now, before I go any further, let me just give you a definition of the Trinity so that we're all on the same page here. The Trinity is the teaching of Scripture that there is one true God with only one undivided essence, and that one true God eternally exists in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each fully and equally God, they equally deserve worship and obedience, and yet these three persons are only one God. This is something that we know by revelation. This is something that you can't figure out on your own. This isn't something that you feel in your heart and you

follow your heart and come to a knowledge of the Trinity. No, none of that. This is the revelation of God, the revelation of his nature that there is one God and yet this one God exists in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and we're going to see that on full display in the verses that we're about to look at.

But before we get to verses 4 and 5, I just want to remind you of things that we've already said in prior messages. Again, this book is just astonishing. It's staggering in the depth, the breadth of things that it communicates. It's a humbling book. Even in the preliminary verses, it's just so utterly humbling to see the great magnificence of God put on such full display immediately. It's no wonder that John, as you read about him throughout this book, he's falling down in worship. In chapters 4 and 5, people and elders and angels are falling down in worship. Well, that's the effect that this book has on you. And we see the fullness of the Trinity on display in the very beginning. Look at verse 1 with me. You see, "The revelation of Jesus Christ," there's the second person of the Trinity right in the opening clause of the book. "Which God," meaning God the Father, God the Father "gave to him," gave to Christ. So in English, the first six words of the book of Revelation have already introduced you to the first two persons of the Trinity. Before you've gone anywhere you see the first two persons of the Trinity, and then when you drop down to verse 10, you see the Holy Spirit introduced as well, actually not introduced as we'll see, referred to again. But in verse 10, you see, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet."

So, beloved, here's what I want you to see. Verse 1, Father, Son, verse 10, Holy Spirit. The Triune God on full display. And it's why, beloved, I have just emphasized to the point of exhaustion, perhaps, it's why I have so consistently shown you and emphasized to you that you don't jump into this book with your questions about the rapture and the millennium. You go and you follow and you enter through these holy gates into the city of the book of Revelation. You walk through the holy gates of the character, the revealed character of God before you look at the palaces inside the city. You look at these things and you find the glory of God on display, the person of God on display. And you can't bypass this as a student of the book of Revelation. And so, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day," beloved, here's what I want you to see and by the way, you know, we looked in an earlier message in how John said he was in the Spirit on four different occasions, the Spirit giving these things to John, we see these things on display. The book of Revelation comes from each member of the Triune God, each person of the Trinity. The blessings come in the harmony of the divine essence.

Now we come to the real meat of today's message, and this just falls onto the platter of understanding like fine meat falls off the bone in a fine restaurant. The grace and favor, the grace and peace that are communicated to us in this book come from an eternal source. Look at verse 4 with me and notice the word "from." Notice the word "from." "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, and *from* Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth." Notice that three times in an obvious intentional parallel in the giving of this book, this grace and peace come to us

from one, from another, from a third. We'll get into exactly what those mean, but we see a three-fold source of these blessings that are communicated to us. And in these brief verses, verse 4 and the first half of verse 5, you see the Triune God on full display.

Let's see, first of all, God the Father as we consider the source of these blessings. It comes from the Triune God. We're going to see, first of all, God the Father as we look at verse 4. "Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come." Beloved, that is a reference in this context to God the Father. It is a reference to his eternal existence. He has always existed. He exists now. He will always exist. This is a reference to God the Father, not referring to Christ right now because Christ is referred to in verse 5. And so God the Father, the eternal God is the source of the grace and peace that we receive.

Now secondly, we see God the Spirit, and we'll have to spend a little bit more time here. God the Spirit. The grace and peace come not only from God the Father, it says, "and." Look at it there in verse 4 with me, "who is to come, and grace to you in peace from him and from the seven spirits who are before his throne." Now, this is a difficult phrase to understand. It's actually not all that difficult, but it takes some time and if you're reading it for the first time, the number 7 can really throw you off there. So let me just say this, this phrase is a reference to the one and only Holy Spirit. It's a reference to the one and only Holy Spirit, but it is admittedly difficult on a first reading to see that.

Now, Let's step back from it before we go any further. Remember what I said earlier in today's message, that the book of Revelation assumes that you know your Bible. It assumes somebody that is familiar with the teaching of Scripture from Genesis down through the New Testament and as a result of that, the writer of Revelation, the book of Revelation, assumes that you know that there is only one true God. Deuteronomy 6:4, "The LORD our God is one." The book of Revelation assumes that you know that there is one God. The writer of Revelation assumes that you know that there is only one Holy Spirit. And therefore, it doesn't insult us by trying to explain immediately, "Well, it's seven spirits, but I'm referring only to the Holy Spirit." It assumes that you understand this and so rather than reading a verse like this and immediately questioning the whole nature of God that is taught elsewhere from cover to cover in the Scripture, we have to ask, "Well, what is it teaching us? What is the fullness of what it's saying here? I know that it's not teaching me that there's, you know, that there's seven or eight or nine persons in the Trinity. I know that. So what is this seven spirits teaching us?" And as I'm going to show you, it's a reference to the one and only Holy Spirit and let's look into this briefly.

First of all, you should know, you should understand that the phrase "seven spirits" is used at least three other times in the book of Revelation. Look at chapter 3, verse 1, "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.'" In chapter 4, verse 5 we read, "From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God." And then in chapter 5, verse 6 we read, "And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which

are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth." Seven spirits referred to time and time and time again. There's something being communicated there.

Now, as we read that, you saw the number seven being made prominent there, seven stars, seven different things. Seven is a critical number in the book of Revelation. There are seven seals, there are seven churches, there are seven trumpets, there are seven bowls of wrath, seven, seven, seven, all communicating this, seven communicating an idea of perfection, of completeness, of fullness being communicated to us. And beloved, rather than telling us that we need to count differently when we talk about the Trinity, what the number seven instead is teaching us is this when it talks about the seven spirits of God, this is so cool. This is so cool. What the seven spirits is showing us is that it's emphasizing the Holy Spirit in all of his glory. The fullness of the glory of the Holy Spirit is on display and is being emphasized in this phrase, "the seven spirits of God." The completeness, the fullness of it, of him, the Spirit, is being displayed.

Now, along with that, many commentators will refer to an important passage in the book of Isaiah to help explain this, and I invite you to turn back to Isaiah chapter 11 with me. Isaiah chapter 11 when we read this about the Spirit of God. Isaiah chapter 11. Watch for the word "Spirit, the Spirit of," notice these things as we read through it here. "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him," start counting, "the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom," number two, "and understanding," three, "the Spirit of counsel," four, "and might," five, "the Spirit of knowledge," six, "and the fear of the LORD." You have a seven-fold manifestation of the attributes, the strength, the power of the Holy Spirit being laid out for you in that one verse. And just to review them, we see that the Spirit of God there in Isaiah 11 is the Spirit of the LORD, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, the Spirit of the fear of the LORD, a seven-fold reference to the one Holy Spirit.

And so as you interpret Scripture with Scripture, you get insight into the fact that this is referring to the Holy Spirit before the throne of God. And beloved, think about it this way, think about it this way, it has to be a reference to deity because the grace of God, the peace of God can only come from God himself. An angel, a prophet cannot communicate the essence of the grace of God and the peace of God. It's something that has to come from God himself. And so having seen it come from God the Father in verse 4, now when we see the seven spirits of God, we see the fullness of the Spirit, we see something that must be divine, must be deity, we see the Spirit of God laid out before us there, Father and the Spirit, and that's reinforced as we look, thirdly, at God the Son. God the Son, the blessings of grace and peace also come from Jesus Christ himself. Look at it there with me, "and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth."

Now beloved, let's just slow down and look at this one more time because I really want you to absorb this and to understand it. We are talking about gifts that come from God, grace, and peace. We see that there are parallel sources given to us. There is a three-fold

reference. him who was and is and is to come, from the seven spirits of God, from Jesus Christ. There's a three-fold parallel. The first element in that parallel, clearly deity. The final element in that three-fold parallel, Jesus Christ, God in human flesh. Bookends. In the middle of that it must be a deity that it's referring to. It must be referring to the Holy Spirit and that's supported by what we see in the use of seven elsewhere in the book of Revelation. It's supported by what we see in Isaiah. We have here before us a profound display of the Triune nature of God and the Triune nature of God coming to his people, communicating his blessings to them. It could be nothing else. You know, there are those internet heretics that try to redefine the very nature of God and go on the seven spirits, but it's totally ignorant, and I mean that graciously if you can understand it that way, it's just so ignorant of biblical truth and biblical principles of interpretation and letting Scripture be consistent with itself to take it in any other way. And so stepping back, looking at the great privilege that it is to be a believer in Jesus Christ, to realize that the eternal God, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are exercising their power and their will to communicate blessing to the people of God is unspeakably staggering and astonishing to realize that this is what God does for us and that the fullness of the nature and essence of God is engaged in giving these blessings to his people. Now, beloved, if you don't grasp that, it's really a waste of time to start talking about eschatology before you grasp that, because the eschatology comes in the greater context of these opening principles that frame everything else that comes in the book of Revelation.

Now, let's just say a word about verse 5 here. When we talk about the Trinity, we are used to a certain sequence in speech. We are used to saying, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. "Praise God from whom all blessing flows. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," they used to say. We're used to it in that sequence. Why is it different? Why is it different here? Why is Christ listed third here when he's understood to be the second person of the Trinity? Well, beloved, go back to verse 1. Go back to verse 1 where it says, "The revelation of Jesus Christ." Why is Christ listed third? Why are so many other titles given to him, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, the ruler of kings on earth? Why Christ at the end here? Why Christ in these threefold titles ascribed to him? Why Christ who is the revelation of it? Well beloved, as I understand it anyway, Christ is listed third here because he comes as the climax of the source of all of these things. He's listed as the climax of the blessing. Jesus Christ, by definition from the opening clause of the book, Jesus Christ is in a unique way the subject of the entire book of Revelation. And so he is listed third here in a climactic way to focus the attention and focus the glory on him uniquely in a book that is uniquely about his glory and then it goes on to describe him and why he's worthy of such glory. He's the faithful witness. Jesus Christ is the one who gives us the true revelation of God. He said in John 14, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." Hebrews 1 says that he is the exact representation of the nature of God. And so in Jesus Christ, you see a faithful witness, you see a faithful testimony to what God is truly like in the fullness of his nature.

He's a faithful witness. Look again at verse 5 with me. He's the firstborn of the dead. That doesn't mean that he's the first person ever resurrected from the dead. Lazarus was resurrected from the dead before him. Jesus Christ raised him. It's not a statement of sequence, of simplistic counting. It's a far greater term than that. When it says that Jesus

Christ is the firstborn of the dead, it means that he is the preeminent one. He is the preeminent one in the resurrection. He is the preeminent one over those who will share in the resurrection with him. He's preeminent. He's the true revelation of God as a faithful witness.

And then it goes on and it almost anticipates the fact that later in the book you're going to see Christ ruling and judging nations. In verse 5 it says, just in brief summary, he is the ruler of kings on earth. I mean, it's just staggering. It's just staggering. Think of all the kings that have lived throughout the course of history. You know, you can go back to the kings of Egypt, Pharaoh. You can go back to Assyria and Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. You can go to Cyrus from Persia and Alexander the Great in Greece and the great Caesars in Romans and the subsequent kings that have risen and fallen over the course of human history. You look at the dwarfs of men that hold power in the world today. None of them fit to hold a candle to the Lord Jesus Christ. None of them men of enduring strength. None of them with true sovereign power. Christ over all of them. All of those who hold temporal, magisterial authority on earth and in earthly capacity, Christ infinitely supreme above all of them, raising them up and casting them down at his pleasure without any difficulty whatsoever. As the ruler of the kings on earth, he's a ruler over men who have authority for a time here on earth. He's sovereign over all men, as the book of Revelation will put on perfect display in what is to come. He is the sovereign, majestic King. Christ sovereign over the churches as he goes about and judges them in Revelation 2 and 3. Christ, the Lamb of God on the throne in Revelation 4 and 5. Christ, the great warrior coming to bring judgment and to establish his kingdom on earth in Revelation 6 through 20. Christ, the King of heaven, the King of eternity in Revelation 21 and 22.

Yeah, the climax of the presentation here in this presentation of the Trinity is the source of the blessings that are given to us. Do you see, beloved, why the book of Revelation calls you to a fear of God, worship of God, repentance from sin? Do you see why the first theme that we talked about from Revelation was the glory of Christ? Beloved, the one true God is a Triune God and to his people, to his servants, he comes in the fullness of his grace and peace. He comes with blessing for his true servants and that's what we see here in these opening verses. Before you can get to all the other stuff, you start with the fact that an infinitely glorious and great God comes bearing infinitely great and glorious gifts for the sake of his people. This Triune God comes with blessings for his true servants. You know what I would counsel you? You know what my advice to you would be as you enter into the book of Revelation? I would counsel you this, you should not miss this, should you? You should not miss the blessings that the Triune God communicates to his people, because this is the difference between eternal blessedness and eternal damnation. This is the difference between reconciliation with God and eternal separation from God.

And so the question is whether you yourself have been saved by grace through faith. And beloved, we're not playing games here. The Lord Jesus Christ does not trifle with his word. When Christ comes, as I've said many times in the teaching on the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus Christ teaches, when the Word of God reveals the word of Christ to his people, Jesus Christ is teaching for keeps. He means what he says. He will bring blessing to his people. He will bring judgment on all of the unsaved. And so it is the

matter of most high urgency for every one of us to examine ourselves in light of this, to examine whether we carry a repentant spirit in life, whether there is an attitude and a disposition of submission to Christ that rules our heart, whether we are entrusting ourselves to him and his righteousness and shed blood and nothing of our own merit or something else, whether these things even matter to you or not. And so, my dear friends, my dear friends, for the sake of your eternal soul, for the sake of the glory of Christ, I urge you not to take these things lightly.

I'll close with this quote from a commentator of past years just to enforce upon you the responsibility that is now yours having heard these things, and every time you hear the word of God taught, when God presents his truth to people, responsibility comes with it. When God presents Christ to them, tremendous responsibility is put upon them. If you hear the message and reject Christ, do not be surprised if you are caught in one of these unholy ideas of the present day and perhaps never be delivered from it until you wake up in a lost eternity. Christ offers you grace and peace. There's no reason for you to end up in a lost eternity when grace and peace are so freely offered to you by the Triune God, but it's incumbent upon you not to harden your heart, but to yield yourself to this gracious Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, the ruler of kings on earth.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for the grace and peace that you bring to your true servants. We praise and honor you as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, gracious beyond measure, willing to be reconciled with any sinner that would take up the offer of the gospel. Spirit of God, we pray that you would take these things, seal them to our hearts, those of us that know you, and chase after those who have rebelled, those who have been indifferent. Chase after them, as it were, whistle them to yourself, with that divine authority of the Spirit of God within the human heart, beckon them and say, "Now is the time. Today is the day of salvation. You must come." And dear Lord, in response to that internal call, may there be many who rise, take up, and follow thee. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

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