

THE COMING OF CHRIST

(Rev 1:4-8) 09-23-18

Grace Bible Church, Gillette, Wyoming

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I. DIVINE REVELATION (Rev 1:1-3)

II. DIVINE GREETING (Rev 1:4-5a)

A. Divine Greeting to The Seven Churches (Rev 1:4a)

1. **John** (son of Zebedee, Mat 4:21) is the same John who wrote the Gospel of John and the epistles of John.
2. His greeting is the customary greeting identifying the author, recipients, and salutation.
3. John is writing to the **seven churches in Asia** (Modern Turkey), which are identified in Chapter 2 and 3. They are the churches in **Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea**.
4. His salutation extends the **grace** and **peace** of God to his believing readers.

B. Divine Greeting from The Trinity (Rev 1:4b-5a)

1. The greeting is from the Father. The Father is identified as “Him who is and who was and who is to come.”
 - a. This does not refer to Christ because He is mentioned distinctly in Rev 1:5.
 - b. The description portrays the Father’s attribute of eternity (self-existent in the past, present, and future). He is the One **who is** (*ho òn - present participle*) and the One **who was** (*ho èn - imperfect verb*).
 - c. He is also the One **who is to come** (*ho erchomenos - present participle of erchomai - “to come.” “[T]he present tense of the participle acquires a future significance through the meaning of the word” [Thomas].*).
 - d. The three-part title is used in Rev 1:8 and Rev 4:8. It is also used in two other verses but without the third phrase (“who is to come”). The reason is that God will indeed come to the world in the sense of judgment (Rev 11:**17-18**; 16:1,**5**).
2. The greeting is from the Holy Spirit. Though some interpret the “**seven Spirits**” as angels, it most likely refers to the Holy Spirit (cf. Rev 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).
 - a. Since the greeting includes the Father and the Son (Rev 1:4-5), it is only proper for the third Person of the Trinity (Holy Spirit) to also be included, not angels.
 - b. The “seven” Spirits refers to the fullness of the Spirit and may refer to the Spirit’s sevenfold ministry in Isa 11:2. Also compare Rev 5:6 with Zec 4:2, 6, 10.
 - c. **Grace** and **peace** can only come **from** (*apo*) a divine source, which can only be the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not angels (cf. Thomas, MacArthur, Morris, Fee).
3. The greeting is from the Son. There is no dispute that this is a reference to Christ.
 - a. Christ is the **faithful witness**. He reveals the Father in all His fullness (Joh 1:18; 14:8-9; Col 1:15; Heb 1:1-3) along with the Father’s revelation (Rev 1:1).
 - b. Christ is the **firstborn of the dead**. He is preeminent (Col 1:18) and His resurrection is the basis upon which all other resurrections depend (1Co 15:17-20).
 - c. Christ is the **ruler of the kings** of the earth. He is the sovereign ruler of all kings on earth (Psa 89:27; Rev 17:14; 19:16; Zec 9:9), yet there will be a future fulfillment when Christ literally sits on David’s throne in the Millennium (2Sa 7:13; Psa 89:3-4; Isa 9:7; Luk 1:32-33; Rev 5:5; 20:6; 22:16). Christ is Lord, yet not all things are subject to Him (Heb 2:8). Christ is Lord, yet some day every knee will bow (Php 2:10).

III. DIVINE DOXOLOGY (Rev 1:5b-6)

A. Doxology to Christ Himself

1. A doxology (*doxa - glory, logia - words*) is an expression of praise that glorifies God.
2. John gives this specific doxology to Christ (“**to Him**”). It ought to promote a praiseworthy response from all believers (Rev 1:5a).

B. Doxology to Christ’s Work

1. Christ loves the church. There is some mention of Christ’s **love** for the church in the book of Revelation. However, since it primarily deals with God’s judgment, there are only four references to Christ’s love and one of them includes discipline (Rev 3:9, 19). Notwithstanding, in the midst of prophecies of judgment, persecutions, and tribulation, Christ communicates His “continual love” (*present tense of agapaō*) for believers.
2. Christ released the church from sin.

- a. Christ demonstrated His love for His church by **releasing** believers **from their sins**. The word “**release**” is the Greek word *luō*, which means to “loose” (Some translate “washed [KJV]” from *louō*, but “released” from *luō* has better manuscript support).
 - b. The idea of having been loosed or released (*aoist participle of luō*) from our sins means that the believer has been set free from the punishment and power of sin.
 - c. This was accomplished through Christ’s shed **blood** on the cross. The blood was the evidence of Christ’s death and atonement (Lev 17:11). Christ’s “blood” is mentioned five times in Revelation (Rev 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11; 19:13).
3. Christ made the church a kingdom of priests.
 - a. The word “**kingdom**” suggests an association of believers.
 - b. Believers have already been made a “holy priesthood” (1Pe 2:5) and a “royal priesthood” (1Pe 2:9). However, in the future, believers will reign as **priests** upon the earth (Rev 5:9-10) with Christ (Rev 20:6).
 - c. In His humanity, Christ calls the Father “**His God.**” However, in His deity, the Son has an eternal relationship with the “**Father**” (cf. Rom 15:6; 2Co 1:3).
 4. Christ’s glory and dominion are forever. John is responding in praise to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and to what He has done for His church. The eternal (*tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*, “**forever and ever**”) **glory** and **dominion** in John’s doxology belong to the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Rev 1:5).

IV. DIVINE COMING (Rev 1:7-8)

A. The Theme is the Second Coming of Christ.

1. John inserts the theme of Revelation. It is the Second Coming of Christ (Rev 1:7; 2:5, 16; 3:11; 16:15; 19:11, 14; 22:7, 12, 20).
2. The word “**behold**” (*idou*) is used some 25 times in Revelation. It is characteristic of apocalyptic literature. It is an interjection that gains the reader’s undivided attention and introduces a divine intervention, prophecy, or message. In this case, it introduces the Second Coming of Christ.
3. Christ will come with the clouds. This is an allusion, if not a quote, from Dan 7:13. Daniel’s passage referred to the coming Messiah, whose title is the “Son of Man.” The word for “**coming**” (*erchomai*) is in the present tense suggesting that Christ is on His way and could come at any time (i.e. imminent return of Christ). “**Clouds**” refer to the fact that Christ will come from heaven. Clouds also denote God’s presence and glory (Exo 13:21-22; 19:16; 33:9; 1Th 4:17; Mat 24:30).
4. Every eye will see Christ. The phrase “**every eye** shall see Him” distinguishes Christ’s Second Coming from the Rapture (1Th 4:14-17). At the Rapture, only believers will see Christ (1Th 4:16-17). Whereas at the Second Coming, He will be visible to everyone on earth. “**Those who pierced Him**” do not refer to the Romans but to Christ’s own people, the Jews (Act 2:22-23 cf. Act 3:14-15). In Zec 12:10, they are the ones who pierced the Messiah and are from the “house of David” (cf. Joh 19:37). The “**tribes of the earth**” are the Gentile nations and they too will see Christ. Christ Himself spoke of this while on earth (Mat 24:30). The fact that these Gentiles will mourn does not necessarily mean that they have “repented” (*metanoia*). The word “**mourn**” (*koptō* - *literally cut, figuratively lament*) can mean to lament at the coming of Christ for the wrong reason (Rev 18:9, *koptō* - “lament”). However, there will be Jews (Rev 14:3) and Gentiles (Rev 7:14) who will be saved in the Tribulation and will enter into the Millennium.

B. The Revelation is from the Father

1. There is some confusion in deciphering who is the One speaking in vs. 8. Is it Christ or the Father? The confusion lies with the fact that the title “Alpha and Omega” is also attributed to Christ (Rev 22:12-16).
2. However, the title “**Lord God**” along with “**Almighty**” is attributed to the Father in this book (Rev 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 19:6; 21:22). Rev 21:22 specifically shows that the “Lord God the Almighty” (Father) and “the Lamb” (Son) are distinct persons. In addition, Rev 4:8 alludes to titular references to the Father in Isa 6:3 (“Holy, Holy, Holy”) and in Rev 1:4 (“who is and who was and who is to come”).
3. The idea that the Father is the source of the book of Revelation comes full circle (Rev 1:1 cf. Rev 1:8). He is described as the One who began all things and who will consummate all things through the Second Coming of Christ.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS: The Second Coming of Christ

- A. The Second Coming of Christ is distinct from the Rapture (“in the air” 1Th 4:17 cf. Mt. of Olives (Zec 14:4).
- B. The Second Coming of Christ will institute judgment (Rev 19:19-21).
- C. The Second Coming of Christ will deliver Israel (Rev 7:3-4; Rev 21:12).
- D. The Second Coming of Christ will bring in the Millennium (Rev 20:4).
- E. The Second Coming of Christ is denied by skeptics (2Pe 3:4-6).
- F. The Second Coming of Christ sanctifies the believer while he waits (2Pe 3:11-14).
- G. The Second Coming of Christ will take place.
 - 1. As promised in the OT (Psa 2:9; Isa 25:7, 9; 26:19; Jer 3:18; Eze 20:38; Zec 12:10).
 - 2. As promised by John (Rev 1:7 cf. Dan 7:13; Rev 2:5, 16; 3:11; 16:15; 19:11, 14; 22:7, 12, 20)
 - 3. As promised by Peter (2Pe 3:4-14)
 - 4. As promised by Paul (2Th 2:8)
 - 5. As promised by Jesus (Mat 24:30-31)