

Gaining a Vision of Christ: Through His Love

Revelation 1:4-8

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Introduction: John opens with this salutation to identify his audience. He is writing to the seven churches in Asia (modern day Turkey). [Note that the number 7 occurs 54 times in this book; it is the number of completion & perfection.] These were local bodies of believers, representative of all churches everywhere. In these verses, there is an emphasis upon the number three, which usually suggests Divine fullness in unity, or simply the number of God (3 Persons in the Trinity). We are reminded here that He who came the first time as our Savior is coming again as our Sovereign. As we concentrate on the Person & work of Christ in our Scriptures we are caused to praise & worship Him in our service.

I. The Three-fold **Designation** of the Trinity (:4-5) - the source of "grace" & "peace" ["grace" represents our standing; "peace" speaks of our experience]

A. God the **Father** (:4) - "*Him which is, & which was, & which is to come*"

1. The Eternal God - He Who spans the past, present, & future.

2. The Eternal Omnipotence of God.

B. God the **Holy Spirit** (:4) - "*the seven Spirits which are before His throne*"

1. Reference to Isaiah 11:2, "*...the Spirit of the Lord... the Spirit of wisdom & understanding, the Spirit of counsel & might, the Spirit of knowledge & of the fear of the Lord."*

2. "The Holy Spirit is seven-fold in His gracious character & imputation of spiritual attributes" (Morris).

C. God the **Son** (:5) - "*Jesus Christ*"

1. Jesus - "Jehovah saves" or "Savior."

2. Christ - "Anointed One" or "Messiah."

II. The Three-fold **Description** of Christ (:5)

A. The Faithful Witness:

1. "*Witness*" - martus: from which comes 'martyr; Christ was faithful unto death (cf. 2:10).

2. John 18:37 - as a Prophet, "*...to this end was I born, & for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth...*"

B. The first begotten of the dead:

1. John 10:18 - Christ was able to lay down His life & take it up again.

2. I Corinthians 15:20 - Christ is called the firstfruits of the resurrection, that is the first to receive a resurrection body (cf. Acts 13:33; Col. 1:18).

- C. The Prince of the Kings of the earth:
 1. "*Prince*" - 'chief' or 'first' (cf. Psalm 2:1-7).
 2. "*King of kings & Lord of lords*" - Revelation 19:16 & I Timothy 6:14-16. He reigns as "King" now in our hearts & will one day be recognized as such by all - Philippians 2:11 [contrast Proverbs 14:14 with 3:5-6].

III. The Three-fold **Declaration** of Christ's Work (:5-6)

- A. "*Him that loved us*" - Present tense, "He Who keeps on loving us" >
 1. The **demonstration** of His love:
 - a. He claims us (as His own) - John 10:9-11.
 - b. He cleanses us - John 15:3 (cf. 15:9 & 13).
 - c. He chastens us - Revelation 3:19.
 2. The **determination** of His love:
 - a. We love Him - I John 4:19.
 - b. We serve Him - II Corinthians 5:14.
 - c. We love others - John 13:34-35.
- B. Him that "*washed us from our sins in His own blood*" >
 1. The **tense** - Aorist or past tense: once for all in the past.
 2. The **teaching** (World Congress of Fundamentalists' declarations):
 - a. The blood is incorruptible because of its purity - I Pet. 1:18-19.
 - b. The blood is indestructible because of its permanence - Heb. 12:24.
 - c. The blood is invaluable because of its parentage - Acts 20:28.
 - d. The blood is indispensable because of its power - Rev. 7:14.
- C. Him that "*made us kings & priests*" (:6) >
 1. "A kingdom, priests unto God" or "a kingdom of priests."
 2. Priests - We are to offer up spiritual sacrifices: I Pet. 2:5 & 9; Heb. 13:15-16.
 3. Kings (Kingdom) - We shall reign with Him: II Tim. 2:12 & Rev. 20:4-6.

Conclusion: John looks forward to Christ's Second Coming in Glory in verse seven. In contrast to the Rapture, when only believers see Him, at this coming everyone on earth will witness His appearing. Those who pierced Him probably refers to the nation of Israel, as prophesied in Zechariah 12:10. But all nations shall mourn, referring to those who had previously rejected Christ (Mat. 24:30). John concludes his salutation by quoting Christ, Who declares Himself to be the Alpha & Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, meaning He is the Eternal One. He is also the Almighty, meaning the "One of all power." This declaration is the first of seven great "*I am's*" in Revelation. Do you know Him personally? Is He your Savior? If so, will this vision of Christ through His love cause you to love Him more in order that you may serve Him better? May God allow us to concentrate on the Person & work of Christ in these Scriptures in order that we might praise & worship Him in our service!