

# Gaining a Vision of Christ: Through His Love

*Revelation 1:4-8*

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Introduction: Last Sunday morning we were reminded of the purpose to gain a vision of Christ through His Word (1:1-3). The concluding challenge & prayer was that “God might grant us a proper vision of Christ that will cause us to love Him more & serve Him better. As we examine verses 4-8 we are reminded to gain a vision of Christ through His love (1:4-8). John opens with this salutation to identify & address 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. John addresses his readers with the traditional greeting, “*Grace be with you, & peace...*” Grace represents the believer’s standing while peace speaks of the believer’s experience. In these verses (:4-8), 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)

### 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 (Deut. 33:27 & Gen. 21:33).

### 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 (He sealed His testimony with His blood).
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** (or the outcome) of His love.
  - a. We love Him - I John 4:19.
  - b. We serve Him - II Corinthians 5:14-15.
  - 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 Petet1:18-19.
  - b. The blood is *indestructible* because of its permanence – Hebrews 12:24.
  - c. The blood is *invaluable* because of its parentage - Acts 20:28.
  - d. The blood is *indispensable* because of its power – Revelation 7:14.Summary: There are 19 references to the "*blood*" in Revelation.

C. Him that "*made us kings & priests*" (:6) >

1. "A kingdom, priests unto God" or "a kingdom of priests" (see Exodus 19:6).
2. Priests - We are to offer up spiritual sacrifices: I Peter 2:5 & 9; Hebrews 13:16.
3. Kings (Kingdom) - We shall reign with Him: II Timothy 2:12 & Revelation 20:4-6.

[Note: The Church as a kingdom manifests Christ's rule over the Church; individually we are priests to God. "*Amen*" (used 9 times in Revelation) carries "the weight of approval, confirmation, & support of what is said or sing" (Custer)].

Summary: David Jeremiah suggests that this three-fold work of Christ could be described as: He "loved" us; He "loosed" us; & He "lifted" us.

**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 (see Daniel 7:13-14). 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 (Matthew 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." Christ "exercises Sovereign control over every person, object, & event & not one molecule in the universe is outside that dominion" (Mac Arthur). 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!