

Lessons From Revelation

Greeting The Seven Churches

(Rv 1:4-8)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
 - a. Greeting...
2. New series of “Lessons From Revelation.”
 - a. We looked last week at some things that were necessary to recognize if we were going to properly understand this great book.
 - i. This book is an answer to the question from the martyrs.
 1. **Rv 6:10** “They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?””¹
 - ii. Thus it is a book of encouragement that evil will not endure because Christ is the victor.
 - b. Today we will look at a most magnificent greeting to the seven churches of Asia.
 - i. **Rv 1:4-8** “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.””
3. The greeting is a very common apostolic, epistle greeting.
 - a. The name that mentioned is not defined because it is assumed to be understood.
 - i. “John...”
 - b. The greeting is typical of other apostolic greetings.
 - i. “Grace to you and peace from...”
 1. **Ro; I Co; II Co; Ga; Ep; Ph; Co; I Th; II Th; Pl; Rv**
 - c. The greeting is also similar in that it points to deity as the one greeting.
 - i. This makes since considering God is the ultimate author.
 1. **II Ti 3:16-17** “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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4. The seven churches of Asia.
 - a. They are listed as...
 - i. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.
 - b. This is not a complete list, however of every church in Asia Minor.
 - i. There were others in Phrygia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Pontus, Cappado..."
 - ii. This is, it would appear, to be those churches that were in need of special instruction.
 - iii. It could be the case that these were congregation near and dear to John specifically but that cannot be proven.
 - c. We do know that the number seven is significant.
 - i. It is the number which represents completeness.
 1. God rested on the seventh day showing His completed work.
 2. Israel was to rest on the seventh day to remember a completed week to worship God.
 - ii. It is found a large number of times in the Bible.
 1. The word seven is found 373 times in the Bible. (ESV)
 2. The word seventh is found 124 times in the Bible. (ESV)
5. The seven churches of Asia are being greeted by them who are truly magnificent.
 - a. Let us look at These "Magnificent Ones" as They are described by John.

I. Those Who Are Greeting The Churches

- A. Him who is and who was and who is to come
 1. This is a clear reference to God the Father.
 - i. He is deity and as such simply "is."
 2. There are numerous verses that point to this truth.
 - i. **Is 46:10** "declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose'"
 - ii. **Is 45:21** "Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me."
- B. The seven Spirits
 1. Who is this?
 - i. There is much discussion on this concerning who or what all this term represents.
 - a. There are two basic schools of thought.
 - ii. This could be angels.
 - a. The Jews believed that there were seven archangels that served God at His throne.
 1. Tobit 12:15 "I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand in the glorious presence of the Lord, ready to serve him."
 2. Targum Jonathan "God said to the SEVEN ANGELS which stand before him, Come now..." (from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

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- b. This does not seem to be the most likely however.
 - 1. They would be receiving the same blessing God the Father and God the Son are receiving.
 - 2. Angels cannot invoke “grace and peace” that is deities role.
 - 3. Consider that two of the three personalities are mentioned and thus it would seem less likely that angels are under consideration.
 - 4. If this is angels it is an act of worship toward angels and we see in this book that this is not permitted.
 - iii. This could be the Holy Spirit
 - a. How could this be if He is called “seven spirits?”
 - 1. Remember the number seven represents “whole” or “completeness.”
 - i. Hence the complete or perfect Spirit ie Holy Spirit.
 - 2. This is not a stretch as the Holy Spirit has already been seen as such.
 - i. **Is 11:2** “And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.”
 - b. Thus this fits best and seems best to be talking about the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. He is before the Father’s throne.
 - i. This does not suggest that the Holy Spirit is inferior to the Father any more than it does to say Christ is in subjection to the Father.
 - a. **I Co 11:3** “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.”
 - ii. This simply refers to the Holy Spirit being prepared to be sent forth by the Father.
 - a. **I Pt 1:12** “It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”
- C. Jesus Christ
- 1. He is the faithful witness
 - i. A faithful witness to the Father’s message.
 - a. **Jn 8:28-29** “...“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. 29 And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.”

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- b. **Jn 16:13-14** “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”
- c. **I Jn 5:7** “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” (NKJV)
- 2. He is the first born of the dead
 - i. He is the first to be raised from the dead to never die again.
 - a. **Co 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. **Ac 26:23** “that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”
- 3. He is the ruler of all the earth
 - i. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords.
 - a. **Rv 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.”
 - b. **Rv 19:16** “On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”

II. The Revelator Who Is Worthy Of Praise

- A. He is worthy because He loves us
 - 1. **Ro 8:35-39** “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- B. He is worthy because He freed us from sin by His blood
 - 1. **Ep 1:7** “We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Through his blood our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God’s grace is so rich.” (NIRV)
- C. He is worthy because He made us a kingdom
 - 1. **Co 1:13** “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son”
 - 2. **He 12:28** “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe”

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- D. He is worthy because He made us priests to His Father
 - 1. **I Pt 2:9** “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
- E. He is worthy because He is the Almighty
 - 1. The word “almighty” is found nine times in Revelation but only once used to describe Jesus.
 - i. **Rv 1:8** ““I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.””
 - 2. Though it is not often used to describe Jesus He none the less is still Almighty and worthy of worship because of such.
- F. Thus...
 - 1. He is worthy of “glory and dominion forever and ever.”

III. The Alpha & Omega Is Coming

- A. He is coming in the clouds
 - 1. John is told to make it clear, Jesus is coming.
 - i. The idea of clouds is often found in Scripture and refers simply to judgment.
 - a. **Dt 33:26** “There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to help you, And in His excellency on the clouds.” (NKJV)
 - b. **Is 19:1** “...Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt; and the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.”
 - ii. Thus Jesus is coming to make judgment on Rome which He does.
 - a. **Rv 19:11, 20-21** “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war...20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.”
- B. All will see Him
 - 1. There will be no doubt to those under Roman rule that Christ is the victor.
 - i. History points to Christianity as a factor in Rome’s fall!!!

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- C. Every tribe on earth will wail
1. This is vividly depicted in **Rv 18**.
 - i. **Rv 18:10-11** "...Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." 11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore."
 - ii. **Rv 18:17-19** "...For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste." And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off 18 and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning...And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned..."
- D. We too must understand Jesus is coming
1. He is coming like a thief in the night.
 - i. **I Th 5:2** "For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."
 - ii. **II Pt 3:10** "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed."
 2. Everyone will see Him and bow before Him.
 - i. **Ro 14:10-12** "Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God."
 3. Everyone not in the clouds will wail and weep.
 - i. The righteous will ascend to the clouds with Christ to be judged.
 - a. **I Th 4:16-17** "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."
 - ii. The unrighteous will at this time be judged and sent to outer darkness.
 - a. **Mt 25:30, 46** "And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth...46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

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CONCLUSION

1. What an amazing thing each of us that reads this revelation, the Godhead is greeting us.
 - a. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are sending us their greetings.
2. Question: Are you living in such a way as to not feel ashamed to accept such greeting?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**