



Empowering People to Change the World

## **Grace to You and Then Peace**

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## Grace to You and then Peace Revelation 1:4-8

The book of Revelation is the ultimate action thriller...

It is a book for those going through struggles and difficulties! It is a book of hope, faith, and most importantly, the glory and power of Jesus Christ.

- This is a book for the overcomer.
- This is a book for the one who loves the Lord, and longs to see the glory and majesty of the Lord coming with justice and power.

### Vs. 1-3

**The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. 3 Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.**

- Vs. 1a Theme of this book: The word rendered *revelation* is the translation from the Greek word, *apokalypsis*, meaning an unveiling, uncovering, manifestation, of Jesus Christ!
  - This is the *apokalypsis Yesu Christu*...the revelation of Jesus Christ—not as a humble servant but as a glorious Lamb of God, a reigning King seated in the heavenlies upon a throne.
  - In our teaching today, we will see a fresh revelation of Christ in the names of Christ we will study.

### Vs. 4

**John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:**

- As we mentioned last week, John is the last of the Lamb's 12...all the other original Apostles have been martyred for their faith.
- Unlike modern letters, in which we place our names at the end, in ancient times, the writer would put his name at the beginning.

- This book is written to the 7 churches in “Asia.”
  - The name “Asia” is not to be confused with the continent that bears that name today.
  - This was a Roman proconsular province named “Asia,” it was in what is now, western Turkey.
- Why not the other churches? Even more prominent churches like Rome? Jerusalem? Colossia? Hierapolis? There were important churches there too.
  - These 7 churches represent to all churches for all time. They represent problems and issues for all time.
- Many in America say they don’t care about the church...what a careless and immature statement.
- Every Epistle or letter in the New Testament (except Philemon) is written to churches.
- If you didn’t go to church in the first century, you were not considered a Jesus follower.
- The scriptures are clear...“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:25)
- Jesus is writing to the churches! To those in church!

**“grace to you and peace from Him...”**

- These churches around 96 AD are under great persecution.
  - Nero had burned Rome around 66 AD and the persecution of Christians had been going on for 30 years.
  - Jerusalem had been destroyed in 70 AD.
  - Christians had been fed to lions in the Coliseum in Rome for over 20 years.

- These believers are living in the Catacombs in Rome. I have been to those underground tunnels. They were wet, smelly, dark, and cold...
- Domitian is the current emperor and he is just as ruthless as Nero. Eusebius and Papias write that John was released from the Island of Patmos upon the assassination of Domitian in 96 AD.

### **Yet, he says, “grace and peace”**

- Whatever problem you may have: disease, death, loss of job, whatever! The Lord would say to you and me, “grace and peace.”
- You are beloved. You are still in the hallow of His hands. You are still a friend of God. No matter your shame and brokenheart...you are beloved.
- It is always grace and then peace.
  - Never peace then grace. The order really matters.
  - Grace must be first. Grace, unmerited favor, chosen by God, loved by God, beloved, set free...then comes peace!
  - You must open your heart to Jesus and His grace first and foremost...then the peace will follow.
  - It is not according to our performance, but according to His performance. Not according to our good works, but because of His good works on our behalf.

### **“...from Him who is and who was and who is to come,**

- **Who is.** This is for us. From God’s perspective, He is always NOW.
- **Who was.** Grace and peace is being extended to me for “who was.”
- **Who is to come.** He knows your future. He chooses you and loves you knowing your failings.

- Ex. Hugh Ross had a photograph of a triangle...
- This is also the outline of the book:
  - The One who is...chapter 1.
  - The One who was...chapters 2-3.
  - The One who is to come...chapters 4-22.

**“from the the seven spirits who are before His throne.”**

- One interpretation is that this is a description of the attributes of the Spirit as found in **Isaiah 11:2**.

**“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 of the fear of the LORD.”**

- More than likely, it is a reference to the lampstand with 7 lamps, a Jewish Menorah...
- **Revelation 4:5 “And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”**
- In Revelation and Zechariah, this describes the perfection or completeness of the Holy Spirit.

**Vs. 5**

**and from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.**

**To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,**

- John explodes with praise and worship...describing the beauty and majesty of Jesus.
- This book is the *apokalusis Yesu Christu*...the revelation of Jesus Christ.

### **“the faithful witness”**

- He is genuine, He is faithful.
- Jesus is the faithful witness for all time!

### **“the firstborn from the dead”**

- Jesus is the first to receive a resurrected body!
- The Jehovah Witnesses don't like John very much. Jehovah Witnesses: “See he is the first born, he is a created being.”
- Read Palms 89, Colotions 1, Romans 1, Hebrews 1, you will pick up “first born,” “tow protocast,” he is the first of a new order, never to die again. The first resurrected one!

### **“the ruler of the kings of the earth”**

- His resurrection is in the past, and His full rulership over the earth is in the future, to be achieved after the defeat of the Anti-christ and false prophet—but this is in the present tense.
- Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth—even with ISIS, terrorism, and the Middle Eastern confusion.

### **“To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood”**

- The priest would take the sacrificial lamb and kill it, sprinkling the blood on the altar, to exhibit the forgiveness of sins.
- Jesus is our sacrificial lamb that went to the cross to sacrifice His life for our sins.
- The title most often used of Jesus Christ in Revelation is “the lamb of God,” 28x in 22 chapters.
- This is the present: if you are a Jesus disciple, you are loved, washed from your sins by the blood of Jesus.

**Vs. 6-7**

**and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

- We are “kings and priests” with our God—we are taking hold of our birthright, our inheritance given to us in the Garden to rule and reign over the earth.

**Romans 5:17**

**For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.**

- Through the abundance, overflow of God’s grace, and the gift of righteousness—the Holy Spirit freely given to us when we put our faith in Christ.
- Through Christ, the only One who can give us such grace and righteousness.

**Genesis 1:27-28**

**So God created man in His *own* image...Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

- The original mandate was given for the purpose of the spread of the grace and righteousness of God over the earth.

**Vs. 7**

**Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.**

- Daniel 7:13 “I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.”

- Matthew 24:30 “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”
- Mark 14:62 “And Jesus said, ‘I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.’”
- All the families will mourn for Him! That should be good motivation for you to become a member of the church. Let me share with you how you become a member of the church, not this church, but the church.....
- Church membership does not get you into heaven! The Road did not go to the cross and die for you!
- You must be born again...you must invite Christ to come into your life and live His life in and through you.

#### **Vs. 8**

**“I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End,*” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”**

- There’s your guarantee! You have no guarantee’s with this life!
- Now that’s a wonderful guarantee: The Alpha and Omega!
- Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega, the last...this pictures His omniscience.
- He is all knowing...He has all knowledge.

John Phillips writes,

*One of the most stirring pages in English history tells of the conquests and crusades of Richard I, the Lionhearted. While Richard was away trouncing Saladin, his kingdom fell on bad times. His sly and graceless brother, John, usurped all the prerogatives of the king and misruled the realm. The people of England suffered, longing for the return of the king, and praying that it might be soon. Then one day Richard came. He landed in England and marched straight for his throne. Around that glittering coming, many tales are told, woven into the legends of England. (One of them is the story of Robin Hood.) John’s castles tumbled like ninepins. Great Richard laid claim to his throne, and none dared*



*stand in his path. The people shouted their delight. They rang peal after peal on the bells. The lion was back! Long live the king!*

*One day a king greater than Richard will lay claim to a realm greater than England. Those who have abused the earth in His absence, seized His domains, and mismanaged His world will all be swept aside. (Exploring Revelation)*

Will you love His appearing? Or Mourn? Make you choice today! Come to Jesus and be born again!

Remember: Grace and Peace to You! It is always grace and then peace.

- Are you looking for peace in your life? Come to Christ!
- Grace must be first. Grace, unmerited favor, chosen by God, loved by God, setting us free...then comes peace!
- You must open your heart to Jesus and His grace first and foremost...then the peace will follow.