

GREETING AND DOXOLOGY (Revelation 1:4-8)

Read the following verses and notes. Discuss the questions among your group. May be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

Read Revelation 1:4-6 (NIV) REV 1:4 John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, and from the seven spirits before His throne, [5] and from Jesus Christ, who is the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth.

To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, [6] and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father--to Him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

What Scholars Say

Rev. 1:4-6. This greeting - like Paul's salutations in his epistles and the salutation of John himself in 2 John - specifies the book's destination. The recipients of this message were **the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia** in Asia Minor (Rev 1:11; chaps. 2 and 3).

The words **grace and peace** concisely summarize both a Christian's standing before God and his experience. "Grace" speaks of God's attitude of undeserved, unmerited favor toward believers; "peace" speaks of the harmonious relationship between God and man, accomplished through the gospel (Acts 10:36).

The salutation describes the One **Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come** (cf. 1:8).

He **who is**, is the translation of the divine title in the Greek Septuagint translation of Ex 3:14, where the title in Hebrew is "I AM."

He **who was**, declares God's eternal existence and may be expressed by "... God, who exists now and has always existed."

Who is to come, "the Coming One," expresses God promise to come as a Judge and Redeemer. (See 2 Peter 3:3-4, 10-18)

The seven spirits before His throne probably refers to the Holy Spirit (cf. Isa 11:2-3; Rev 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). The word **throne** identifies God as the supreme ruler, attended by the seven spirits or sevenfold Spirit, who are at His service.

Jesus Christ is here mentioned last. He is described as **the faithful Witness**, that is, the source of the revelation to be given; **the Firstborn from the dead** (cf. Col 1:18), referring to His historic resurrection. He is the first to be resurrected with an everlasting immortal, spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:23-26, 44, 54), the first one to "be born" to a new life by being raised from death. The use of "first" indicates that there are and will be others to be "born." The **Ruler of the kings of the earth**, indicates His role as King and supreme Ruler (Matt. 28:18; Acts 17:7; Phil. 2:9-11).

To Him who loves us ...the Greek present participle "the One who always loves us" (LB) emphasizes the continual, never-ending love of Jesus Christ for His people.

In His dying on the cross Christ **who loves us** is the One who **freed us from our sins by His blood** (some Gr. mss. have the word "washed" instead of "freed"). **By His blood** indicates the price paid for the freedom, "His Blood."

Believers are now **a kingdom and priests** with the purpose now and forever of serving God. All believers are called to be priests in the sense of offering spiritual sacrifices and praise to God (Heb 13:15; 1Pe 2:5). This prompted John to express a benediction of praise and worship – **to Him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.** (lit., "so be it").

Read Revelation 1:7-8 (NIV)

REV 1:7 Look, he is coming with the clouds,
and every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.
So shall it be! Amen.

REV 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."

Rev. 1:7-8. Readers are exhorted to **look for He is coming**. This is His second coming which will be **with the clouds** (cf. Acts 1:9-11). The subject is Jesus Christ. The figure of "coming with the clouds" goes back to Dan 7:13 and appears a number of times in the Gospels (Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62). This describes the return of the glorified Christ to the world, and the clouds are, so to speak, His means of transportation (see Ps 104:3b). The present tense "He comes" describes the event as taking place in the immediate future.

Every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him. These words reflect Zech 12:10, "They will look on [Him], the One they have pierced" (Zech 12:10). The figure here is used of those responsible for Jesus' death, either the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem or the Roman authorities, or all of them. Christ's second coming will be visible to the entire world including unbelievers, in contrast with His first coming at His birth in Bethlehem.

All the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. Here **mourn** means to weep loudly, but it is not clear whether the weeping is caused by remorse or repentance over what they did,

or by fear or despair over what is about to happen. Commentators are divided on the question. Commentators who prefer the idea of fear or despair point to Rev 18:9 and Matt 24:30, and this is probably the meaning intended.

So shall it be! Amen. This is a double confirmation. It may be expressed as "It will be like this for sure. So be it!"

"I am the Alpha and the Omega." Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last. Used of God they indicate the beginning and the end. "I cause all things to begin, and I bring all things to an end."

Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty. Almighty as a title occurs eight more times in Revelation and appears in 2 Cor 6:18. Almighty can be translated as "Who is all powerful," or "Who is the strongest of all."

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****Questions****

1. Who were the recipients of this message? (1:4)
2. Define "grace" and "peace." (1:4)
3. Explain briefly the meaning of "Who is, Who was, and Who is to come." (1:4)
4. Is God a trinity, seven spirits or One? (1:4)
5. Why is Jesus called a "faithful witness"? (1:5)
6. Explain the meaning of "the firstborn from the dead." (1:5)
7. In what sense is Jesus the "ruler of the kings of the earth?" (1:5)
8. The Greek present participle gives what meaning to the phrase "to Him who loves us?" (1:5)
9. Did Jesus free us or wash us by His blood? (1:5)
10. Define the word "kingdom." (1:6)
11. As a "priest" what is your purpose? (1:6)
12. How is the return of the glorified Christ described? (1:7)
13. Christ's second coming will be visible to who? (1:7)

14. Why will people mourn when Jesus Christ returns? (1:7; Matt. 25:31-46)

15. Who is “the Almighty”? (1:8)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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