

Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 10:29 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Revelation 1:4-8

"Behold, He's coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him! So, it will be! Amen! (Revelation 1:7)

The Book of the Revelation is all about the "unveiling" of a resurrected Jesus Christ, in heaven--our Savior and Lord who is "coming back again"--amid a host of dramatic events that we are told will happen, before, during, and after that great event!

The "revelation" was given by God the Father, through His Son, communicated by an angel, to the "beloved apostle," John, for the "church" (and that would include us)! Forty-seven times in this book we will read about all the things John "saw" in a vision, while "exiled" on the isle of Patmos! And those "who read, and hear, and heed the words of the prophecy" are promised, we are told, to be "blessed"!

God the Father obviously wanted His people--those who put their faith and hope in Jesus Christ--to know, as Constable notes, that His Son, Jesus Christ, was and is, and will be, "the culminating figure in all of human history," and to prepare them (and us!) for "the things to come"!

John addressed this letter to the "seven churches" that were in Asia (modern-day Turkey) which are believed to have been "representative" of all the churches at that time--but also of all churches down through the ages of time, including those in our day! According to the noted theologian William Barclay, the very completeness of the number "seven" is a clear indicator that the message was intended for the "whole" church--and is meant for us today! (Get used to the number "seven" in the book of Revelation, by the way, for it appears 54 times in a whole slew of applications! Along with a lot of other numbers! John Walvoord, a long-recognized authority on systematic theology and eschatology, who served as a professor and later president of Dallas Theological Seminary, stated that "the general rule to be followed is to interpret numbers in the Bible literally unless there is clear evidence to the contrary"! Interestingly, he noted that infamous number "666" for the Antichrist signifies that "he is only a man after all, and falls short of the number seven, which signifies completeness"!)

John greets the seven churches, in verse 4, as you probably noted, with the words, "grace" and "peace," which, ironically, is exactly how the apostle Paul addressed all his epistles! These two words perhaps capture the richness of the Christian faith! The amazing grace of God that "saves a wretch like me"--and the peace that is made with God at the time of one's salvation, and also what we as believers can experience when we walk in obedience to His Word! And it's what "the world needs now"!

The "seven Spirits" cited in verse 4 appear to represent the seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit (noted in Isaiah 11:2)--but the focus of the book of Revelation is on Jesus Christ, who is called "the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth! The faithful witness who replied to Pilate, in John 18:36-37, that while His kingdom was "not of this world...He was a king...and came into the world to testify to the truth"! And, here in the book of Revelation, we see Him as the faithful witness, specifically in revealing "what's to come"!

And just as the first-born child was given a special place of honor in the Jewish culture, Jesus, as "the first-born over all creation" (as noted in Colossians 1:15), was (and is) given the prominence over all created beings! The context of the title given in Revelation 1:5, as Constable notes, looks at the culmination of His past earthly ministry, at the point when God the Father raised Him to new life at His resurrection and set Him at His right hand! And, in that sense, He is the firstborn who "conquers death"!

"Ruler of the kings of the earth" speaks of His future role and ministry following His second coming, when He comes in power and glory to rule! Wilbur Smith, who wrote about the Revelation in the Wycliff Bible Commentary, considered this the key title of Jesus Christ for the book of Revelation! (In Revelation 17:14 and 19:16, He is called the "King of kings and Lord of lords"--and worthy of our praise and adoration!

Verse 6 says that when Jesus "released us from our sin by His blood, He made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father"! In Revelation 5:10, we're going to learn that we will one day "reign with Him on the earth" (during the 1,000-year millennium)! And that deserves the first of 16 doxologies that we'll see in Revelation! "To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever! Amen!" Wow!

But then, in verse 7, the BIG revelation concerning His "second coming" (and our memory verse for the week): "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him! So, it will be!" And another "Amen!" (This claim fulfills the prophecy of Daniel--particularly in Daniel 7:13--and the claims of Christ Himself, in Matthew 24:29-30!)

Interestingly, as Constable notes, "all that intervenes between this verse and 19:11-16 leads up to that event (the second coming of Jesus Christ)! And we're going to get into it all in the weeks to come!

But we're not finished with our text! John records, in verse 8, how God "confirms the preceding forecast with a solemn affirmation of His eternity and omnipotence"! "I am the Alpha and Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty!" Wow! God is the originator and terminator of all things! He is powerful enough to bring about what John just predicted (to perfectly fulfill His prophetic words about the future! He is the Almighty!" Hear the Word of the Lord!

Again, Wow! And speaking about "things to come," on to our next lesson on Revelation 1:9-20, and "John's Vision of the Son of Man"!

May God bless your week!

Lowell