

“THE PATMOS PENMAN’S PREFACE”

Rev. 1:4-8

Did you ever pray that God would bless you? We all do, don’t we? Is there a secret code word, a certain mantra that we have to say to get blessed? Many people seem to think so!

There is a prayer for a blessing prayed by a man named Jabez, an obscure Old Testament figure, that is recorded in 1Chron. 4:10 - “And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain.” Then there is this statement, “So God granted him what he requested.”

I have read that some who prayed that prayer said it worked like magic. I’ve got bad news and good news for you - the bad news is that there is no magic in the prayer of Jabez! The good news is that you do not have to pray the prayer that Jabez prayed in order to get blessed!

Do you want to get blessed? Then read this verse and practice it: “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.” (Rev. 1:3) This is the only book with a promised blessing written out in black and white, promising a blessing for reading it, heeding it and practicing it.

Did you ever study the Beatitudes in the book of Revelation? There are 7 Beatitudes – they all begin with the word “blessed”. Here they are:

- Rev. 1:3 “Blessed is he who reads”
- Rev. 14:13 “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”
- Rev. 16:15 “Blessed is he who watches
- Rev. 19:9 “Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper ...”
- Rev. 20:6 “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection ...”
- Rev. 22:7 “Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”
- Rev. 22:14 “Blessed are those who do his commandments.”

The Lord sprinkles blessings throughout this book. Some Christians, do not look at this book as a book that blesses but as a book that has only blights. Blights there are but there are blessings also. In the midst of the woes pronounced upon Christ-rejecting earth dwellers, there are blessings pronounced upon God’s people.

Let us proceed in our study of this first chapter and be blessed as we mine the riches of God’s Word. Our first study was titled: *Postmark: Patmos* and covered the first three verses of chapter one. We dealt with questions like:

- What is this book?
- Who wrote this book?
- Where was the book written?
- What is the purpose of the book?

The Patmos Penman’s Preface. We come now to verses 4-8 which comprise the preface to
©2009 -Permission is granted for personal use small group Bible studies, on the condition that no charge is made.

the book. In this preface we will notice: (1) The Churches Addressed v.4a; (2) The Central Attraction, v.4b-6 & 8 and (3) The Climactic Announcement, v.7. Consider first:

I. THE CHURCHES ADDRESSED. V.4

“John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come.” (1:4) We have here, first:

A. The Location of The Recipients.

“...in Asia” the area referred to by the word “Asia” is Asia Minor, which is now Turkey. The 7 churches are named in v.11 are: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, to Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Remember that John was on the prison island of Patmos located just off the coast of Asia Minor. There were churches other than these 7 in that region but these 7 were nearest to Patmos. It is likely that these churches were specifically under his care before he was exiled to Patmos.

Although addressed to these 7 particular churches, the messages are for all churches in all eras, for, as II Tim. 3:16 reminds us, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

B. The Salutation of The Penman.

“Grace to you and peace...” The recipients of this correspondence are greeted with the words “grace and peace” even though there is no peace for the earth’s inhabitants during most of the period of time covered in this book.

The phrase “grace and peace” is used 18 times in the Epistles and Revelation. Grace is the undeserved and unmerited favor of God. Peace, in the biblical sense, is the cessation of internal conflict with God resulting in a calm reliance upon Him at all times and in all situations.

This phrase is always in the same order: “grace and peace.” Grace always precedes peace. Never is it otherwise. John is saying to the seven churches and to all who read this book that they are going to need much grace and God will give them peace as they move into the future.

But how do we obtain grace and peace? v.4 tells us: “from Him.” Look at it this way:

“grace” – that is the course that God’s gifts take in coming to us;

“peace” – that is the force as a result of grace;

“from him” – that is the source of grace and peace.

OR

“grace” – that is the flow;

“peace”- that is the fruit;

“from him” – Who is the fountain!

The title of an old hymn is: “Come Thou Fount Of Every Blessing.” The hymn writer had it right. Our Savior is the “fount of every blessing! Grace and peace come from Him! The 7 churches in Asia Minor were the recipients of bestowed grace and peace. God has a bountiful supply of both for us today and we need both in our churches.

First then, we have the Churches Addressed. We move on now to see:

II. THE CENTRAL ATTRACTION. 1:4b-6

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

These verses contain some of the most descriptive language depicting the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. The book of Revelation is rich in its descriptions of the person and the work of Christ. Indeed He is the Central Attraction. Let us divide up this section as follows:

1. Christ and the Trinity;
2. Christ and His Titles;
3. Christ and His Triumphs.

A. Christ And The Trinity. V. 4 & 5a

Note the trinity in these verses:

- *God the Father* - “Him who is and who was and who is to come...” v.4a
- *The Holy Spirit* - “and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne....” v.4b (The Holy Spirit is not 7 persons. (The Living Bible: “and from the seven-fold Spirit before His Throne.”) Isaiah 11:2 helps clarify the statement:
 - “(1) The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
 - (2) The Spirit of wisdom
 - (3) and understanding,
 - (4) The Spirit of counsel
 - (5) and might,
 - (6) The Spirit of knowledge
 - (7) and of the fear of the LORD.” Seven-fold Spirit !
- *Jesus Christ* - “and from Jesus Christ” v.5a
Here we have the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This book has the full authority of the God-head behind it.

B. Christ And His Titles. vs.5 & 8

There are multiple titles for the Christ here:

- “*Faithful witness*”_ v.5a

Revelation 3:14 “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God’s creation.”

- *“the firstborn from the dead”* v.5b

“Firstborn”, in this instance, describes a position of authority rather than physical birth. Christ is also called “the firstborn over all creation” in Colossian 1:15.

- *“and the ruler over the kings of the earth”* v.5c

Note that each of these 3 titles corresponds to the 3 periods of Christ’s ministry:

* “faithful witness” refers to His earthly life and ministry;

* “firstborn from the dead” points to His death and resurrection

* “ruler of the kings of the earth” - His future reign.

- *“The Alpha and Omega”* – v.8 The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet – in other words, He is the A to Z and all the letters in between! This phrase conveys the thought of infinitude, of an unbounded existence which transcends all – eternal!

- *“The beginning and the end”* - v.8 This phrase means basically the same thing as Alpha and Omega.

- *“The Lord”* v.8c – Some manuscripts have “Lord God.”

- *“The Almighty”* – v.8d That is, “the omnipotent”.

“Almighty” occurs often in Revelation and nowhere else in the N.T. except once in 2 Cor. 6:18.

These seven titles (seven is the number of completion) are used at the beginning of this final Bible book and preceding the final written revelation from Christ, to stamp divine authority, authenticity and finality upon the communication.

We have briefly examined Christ and the Trinity and Christ and His Titles. Now, to conclude this section, consider with me:

C. Christ And His Triumphs. vs.5b-6

Illust. After the Youth Leader had been teaching the book of Revelation for several weeks, he asked a teenager if he could summarize the book of Revelation in one sentence. “That’s easy”, the boy replied. “Jesus wins!”

We do not have to wait to the end of the book to learn that Jesus Wins! Right here in vs.5 and 6 we see several triumphs that Jesus has already won. Notice:

- *He Loved Us.* “To Him who loved us” v.5

Some translations read: “loves” – present tense. As sinners, was there anything about us that made us lovable? No! I believe that one’s salvation begins right here. Triumphant love!

- *He Loosed Us.* v.5 “washed us from our sins in His own blood.” The word translated

“washed” is the Greek word “lutron” meaning “to pay a ransom and release”. The NASB reads: “and loosed us from our sins by his blood”. We don’t have to go around as though we have a ball and chain around our leg, dragging our sins with us. He has loosed us!

Illust. Lazarus, when Jesus raised him from the dead, was still wrapped in grave clothes and Jesus said, “loose him and let him go!” (John 11:44) Off with the wardrobe of the dead, on with the wardrobe of the living! Now, back to v. 6:

- *He Lifted Us.* “and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (v.6) Again, the NASB renders it: “and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.’ Jesus! Jesus! What triumphs He has won and we are the beneficiaries! It’s all about Him!

Illust. A missionary in China was always talking and teaching about Jesus. A Chinaman asked him, “Why you always talk Jesus, Jesus Jesus?” The missionary asked: “What did you eat yesterday?” The man answered, “Rice.” “What have you eaten today?” The Chinese man said, “Rice.” The missionary asked again, “What will you eat tomorrow?” He replied, “Rice.” The missionary asked, “Why do you always eat rice, rice, rice?” The Chinaman answered, “Because it gives me life and health.” The missionary said, “Ah, that is why I talk and teach Jesus, Jesus, Jesus because He gives life and health to the soul!”

Jesus is the Central Attraction in this book and He should be the Central Attraction in every church! The Apostle Paul said, “We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Cor.4:5)

He loves us, He loosed us, He lifted us but Satan has fought him every step of the way. Yet Christ, our Lord and Savior triumphs ! Jesus wins !

As we conclude our study let us consider one more verse: v.7 and:

III. THE CLIMACTIC ANNOUNCEMENT.

“Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him.” v.7

The golden thread that runs throughout the book of Revelation is the return of Jesus Christ. The book both begins and ends with the emphasis upon His coming. This is the next event on God’s calendar. think with me about this event as follows:

A. The Mention Of Christ’s Return.

“Behold, he comes.” - “Behold” is the paramount attention-getting word in the N.T. Some examples of its usage:

- (1) John 1:29 “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”
- (2) Luke 24:49 “Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you.” (The Holy Spirit)
- (3) I John 3:1 “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us...”
- (4) Rev. 3:20 “Behold, I stand at the door and knock...”
- (5) Rev. 16:15 “Behold, I am coming as a thief....”

God wants to get our attention! v.7 is saying “Attention ! Jesus is coming!” But it seems as though few are paying attention.

B. The Manner Of Christ’s Return.

“He comes with clouds.” Here is a very interesting statement. What does it mean? Really want to know? Well, let me give you 2 principles of biblical interpretation that will help you to understand any Bible passage:

First, When interpreting scripture it is absolutely essential that we compare scripture in one place with similar scripture in another place. Got that?

Second, consider every word in each similar passage. You will see what I mean as we unravel this statement about “clouds”.

In understanding v.7 and the words, “He comes with clouds” consider:

- (1) There are two different types of clouds that mentioned in scripture:
 - a. *There are vapor clouds.* Acts 1:9 is one of many examples: “He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”
 - b. *There are people clouds.* Heb. 12:1 “Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us... ” The “people clouds” in this passage refer to the persons in chapter 11, the Faith Hall of Fame.
- (2) Furthermore, there are 2 different prepositions used in reference to clouds:
 - a. “IN clouds” – Luke 21:27 “Then they will see the Son of Man coming IN a cloud with power and great glory.” Vapor cloud..
 - b. “WITH clouds” – Rev. 1:7 “He comes WITH clouds.” And Jude 14: “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints” (Different translations: “with Thousands upon thousands”; “with myriads”; “tens of thousands”; “with many thousands”; “with millions”. These are clouds of people!

The manner of the Lord’s coming is that He will come accompanied with clouds of people -all those who have previously ascended to be with Him. Let’s move on to our final phrase inv .7 :

C. The Multitudes At Christ’s Return.

Rev 1:7 - “and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.”

Keep in mind that the return of Christ is in two phases:

He Comes “For” His People. I Thess. 4:16-17 – “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

This event is called “The Rapture.” The word “Rapture” is from the Latin word “rapier”

which means “to catch up or be caught up.” In the biblical sense it means “to be physically and literally caught up”.

He Comes “With” His People. Jude 14,15 - "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." This is called “the revelation” phase of Christ’s return. This is what v.7 is referring to.

You may say, “I thought the Book was The Revelation! It is, but there are two types of revelation that we are dealing with: There is the Revelation in *print*, the Book of Revelation and there is the revelation in Person, the revealing of Jesus Christ. Revelation 1:7 is referring to the Revelation in Person when Jesus comes in power and great glory to judge. Read the last half of Jude 14 again.

- The Rapture is for the saints *deliverance*,
The Revelation is for the sinners *damnation*;
* The Rapture is a *disappearance*, when Jesus takes us out of this sinful world;
The Revelation is an *appearance* when Jesus will be seen by all on earth;
- The Rapture is glad event when believers are taken to be with the Lord;
The Revelation is a sad event when all the tribes of the earth will mourn...”
(It is a fulfillment of prophecy from the book of Zech. 12:10-11 - “then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem...”)

CONCLUSION

We have seen the Churches Addressed in Asia Minor and courteously saluted with grace and peace in the opening verses of this book;

We have glimpsed the glory of the Central Attraction, the Lord Jesus, as a member of the Holy Trinity, with divine titles and singular triumphs;

We have heard the Climactic Announcement, “Behold, He is coming” Surrounded by clouds above and seen by crowds below.

And now, what is the proper response of all who love the soon-to-appear Savior? The last 3 words in v.7 are the appropriate response: “EVEN SO, AMEN!”

JdonJ