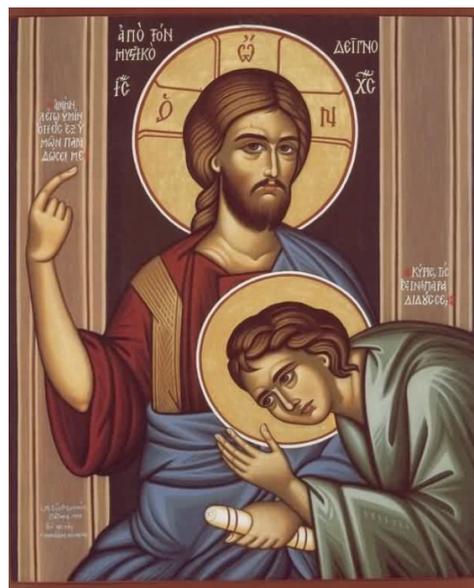


## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

### Greeting and Doxology (1.4-8)



<sup>4</sup> 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, <sup>5</sup> 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 <sup>6</sup> and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1.4-8)

### Review From Last Week (Rev 1.1-3)

1. What kind of a book is Revelation? (apocalypse; prophecy; letter)
2. Author, Audience, Purpose
3. How should we listen to it?

## I. The Greeting (1.4-5a)

“Grace to you and peace

(1) from him who is and who was and who is to come,

(2) from the seven spirits who are before his throne,

(3) and from Jesus Christ

(a) the faithful witness,

(b) the firstborn of the dead, and

(c) the ruler of kings on earth.”

### 1. “Grace to you and peace”

#### a. Grace (*charis*)

i. typical greeting in ancient world: *chaire* (welcome!)

ii. in the New Testament = God’s mercy, love, unmerited favour

#### b. Peace (Hebrew: *shalom*)

i. not the absence or cessation of conflict, but the fullness of the God’s blessing (cf. Ephesians 2)

### 2. “from ... from ... from”

a. the source of grace and peace is the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

### 3. “from him who is (*ho ōn*) and who was and who is to come”

a. **Exodus 3.14:** God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. [*egō eimi ho ōn.*]” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

b. **Isaiah 44.6:** Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.

c. “who is coming”: note connection to Christ; revelation and presence of God the Father is mediated by the Son (cf. John 1.18)

4. “from the seven spirits who are before his throne” (excursus on the Holy Spirit in Revelation)

a. “in the Spirit” (cf. Revelation and Ezekiel)

**Revelation 1:10** I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet.

**Revelation 4:1-2** After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”<sup>2</sup> At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.

**Revelation 17:3** And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

**Revelation 21:10** And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

**Ezekiel 3:12-14** Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great earthquake: “Blessed be the glory of the LORD from its place!”<sup>13</sup> It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them, and the sound of a great earthquake.<sup>14</sup> The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the LORD being strong upon me.

**Ezekiel 8:3** He put out the form of a hand and took me by a lock of my head, and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy.

**Ezekiel 37:1** The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones.

**Ezekiel 43:5** The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

➤ *It's by the agency and activity of the Holy Spirit that John is able to see the visions.*

b. The Spirit of Prophecy

**Revelation 2-3** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Rev 2.7, 11, 17, 29, 3.6, 12, 22)

**Revelation 11:7-8:** And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,<sup>8</sup> and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically [*pneumatikōs*] is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.

**Revelation 14:13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

**Revelation 22:17** The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

- *The Spirit enables John to discern/understand what he sees and enables him to communicate what he's perceived. The Spirit speaks to the Church through the book of Revelation, and enables her to hear what is said. Thus, the Spirit is active throughout the whole process of the revelation, composition, communication, and reception of God's word.*

c. The seven spirits in Zechariah and Revelation:

**Zechariah 4:1-7** And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. <sup>2</sup> And he said to me, "What do you see?" I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. <sup>3</sup> And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." <sup>4</sup> And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" <sup>5</sup> Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." <sup>6</sup> Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts."

**Revelation 1.20-2.1:** As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: "The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands."

**Revelation 3:1** "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. "I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

**Revelation 4:5** From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God.

**Revelation 5:6** And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

- *Note the relationship between Christ, the Spirit, and the church. Christ bears the Spirit and gives it to church, who also bears the Spirit. Christ speaks to the church by the Spirit and sends her in the power of the Spirit to carry out his mission in the world (bearing faithful witness to the Gospel in the power of the Spirit). Christ speaks to the church by the Spirit and to the world through the church by the Spirit.*

5. "and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of kings on earth"
  - a. **Psalm 89** (Davidic/Messianic Psalm)
 

"And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. <sup>28</sup> My steadfast love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him ... Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. <sup>36</sup> His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. <sup>37</sup> Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies." (Ps 89.27-28, 36-37)

## II. Doxology (1.5b-8)

**To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood <sup>6</sup> and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1.5b-6)**

1. Present, continuous love
2. Liberation from both the power and penalty of sin (by his blood – cf. Exodus 12)
3. Kingdom and Priests
  - a. Adam was a king and priest

**Genesis 1.26-29:** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

**Genesis 2.15:** The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work (*abad*) it and keep (*shamar*) it.

**Numbers 3.8:** They [the priests] shall keep (*shamar*) all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and keep guard over the people of Israel as they minister (*abad*) at the tabernacle.

- b. Israel was a kingdom of priests

**Exodus 19:2-6** They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, <sup>3</sup> while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: <sup>4</sup> You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; <sup>6</sup> and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

c. The church is a kingdom of priests

**1 Peter 2.9-10:** 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. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

**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. (Rev 1.7)**

1. "he is coming with the clouds"
  - a. God's glory/presence (cf. Exodus 40.34-38) and judgment (cf. Isaiah 19.1-9; Daniel 7)

**Daniel 7.9-18:** "As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. <sup>10</sup> A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. <sup>11</sup> "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. <sup>12</sup> As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. <sup>13</sup> "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. <sup>15</sup> "As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. <sup>16</sup> I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. <sup>17</sup> 'These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. <sup>18</sup> But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.'

2. "every eye will see him, even those who pierced him" (cf. Zech 12.10ff)

**"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Rev 1.8)**

1. "I am the Alpha and the Omega"
  - a. a merism, used to convey totality (e.g., heaven and earth)
2. Revelation 22.13: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Jesus is clearly divine)
3. "the Almighty" = the Lord of Hosts (esp. in Haggai and Zechariah)