

The Voice of Truth # 470

The Salutation

The book of Revelation is a book of prophecy which gives us the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a sealed book, as some would make you think, but it is an open book and is to be read, heard, and kept according to Revelation 1:3. There is a blessing upon those, those who read it, hear it, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.

The ignorance and blindness of the present-day ministry and church about the great teachings of prophetic message of the Book of Revelation is nothing short of a tragedy. As a result of this ignorance, our people are in spiritual darkness, floundering and have no concept of what we face, where we are going and where we are in the world's history. God's child is not ignorant, if he will study God's word, as to what time it is on God's time clock.

Now open your Bibles at Revelation 1:4. Revelation 1:4, and let's read. John to the seven churches which are in Asia, grace be unto you and peace from him which is, which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him. And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, even so.

Amen.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Now let's take it up. John, to the seven churches which are in Asia. The Lord Jesus Christ here addressed himself to the Apostle John directly and gave him this message for the seven churches in Asia Minor. He did not address it to the church

of Asia Minor, but he addressed it to the seven distinct local New Testament churches of his own selection.

Now you listen. The New Testament nowhere knows or speaks or infers in any way an ecclesiastical hierarchy. It is not the Church of Asia, but the churches of Asia. The Lord Jesus Christ never intended for his children to be tied into organized religion. It was just a group of believers in a given place, living, working, moving, and worshiping in the simplicity of Christ as their head, who walks in their midst as their Lord and their Savior. This is the manner in which he writes to the seven churches of Asia. They knew no head but Christ. They knew no laws but Christ and his word. Christ dealt with each church and each pastor individually and directly. The early churches knew nothing about a hierarchy. They only knew Christ and him alone. Again, grace be unto you.

This salutation opens with these words, “grace be unto you and peace”.

Grace, what a word, what emotions it arouses in the hearts of a believer who knows he was saved by the grace of God. Grace is the inexhaustible riches, the boundless goodness and kindness of God toward lost sinners. Grace is nothing less than the unlimited love of God expressing itself in measureless grace as he reaches down through the atoning blood of the Son of God, and by the power of his spirit rescues fallen man. Grace finds man buried among the ruins of the fall, digs him out, cleanses him and makes him a new creature in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Peace be unto you. I know this expression, grace be unto you and peace, is a salutation of greeting to another believer, but what weight it carries with it. John recognized these believers as being in the grace of God, with the peace of God abiding in their hearts, because Christ is our peace, and being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God. Then again, the Word says, “Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee”. My friends, remember there is a false peace, which is a peace unto death, but Christ is the believer's peace.

Then look again, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come. “From him which is”, refers to the first person of the Trinity, namely, God the Father. Jehovah is a compound name formed from three words. The first meaning “he is”, the second, “he was”, third, “and he will be”, or “he will come”.

Jehovah is the triune God, but in the present passage it is clear that Christ is referred to, it is clearly that the reference is to God the Father. He is bringing salutation from God the Father when he says here, **Grace be unto you and peace from him, which is and which was and which is to come.** It is Jehovah God who is spoken of as the source of all grace and peace to the human heart. It is the ever-present, the great I am, which stands forth as one from whom flows all grace and peace. Let every man fall before him crying, My Lord and my God. Our churches have lost the sense of the majesty and the greatness and the sovereignty and the omnipotence of Jehovah God. He is not revered in the churches today as such. Why do we not approach our churches to worship him with uncovered heads, with solemn awe, in sack cloth and ashes, and in utter broken-hearted repentance? if we are going to meet him there instead of being dressed in our finery and our faces all decorated and with light-hearted and gossiping tongues, my friends, give us reverence in our churches. Then again, the Holy Spirit greets us, the seven spirits which are before his throne, grace be unto you and peace from the seven

spirits which are before his throne. Here the third person of the triune God is speaking. He is the Spirit of grace. The number seven is the number of perfection. And the expression here, seven spirits, sets forth the Holy Spirit in His completion. This is brought out very clearly in Isaiah 11:1,2, where He is spoken of as the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord. We do not know the name of the Spirit of God, but the Bible calls him the Holy Spirit, because his principal business in this age of grace is to make people holy. Holy. Now, what is a religion without the Holy Spirit? Why his name is withheld, we do not know, but we see him here in his completeness. The Holy Spirit is the Vicar of Christ. Satan has done his best to imitate the Spirit of God in this day until a cult has grown up in his name. And his followers get so angry when you try to tell them what they have is not the Holy Spirit, but the imitation of the Spirit of Satan. The Holy Spirit came to show unto us the things of Christ. So, then we see the seven spirits which are before his throne. Now let me call your attention to this fact, before we progress any further, will you listen? There are five great teachings in God's Word, The Bible, which if rightly understood, unlock the entire Bible in all of its marvelous beauty and majesty. The first is the doctrine of **the**

sovereignty of God. Second, **the doctrine of the total depravity of fallen man.** Third, **the doctrine of blood redemption in Christ,** or salvation by grace through blood redemption. Fourth, **the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.** And fifth, **the doctrine of the second coming of Christ,** or His revelation.

Every teaching of God's Word, get it now, centers around one of these great doctrines, with Christ as the center. If you go astray on any one of these doctrines, you are caught in a whirlpool of confusion. An individual in such a state will twist the word of God to make it mean almost anything he wants it to mean.

Listen again. And the greetings came from Jesus Christ. Grace be unto you and peace from Jesus Christ. Isn't it beautiful to see how each person of the Trinity greets the churches? They greet them in grace with peace. You need not be afraid of God when he approaches you in grace with a dove of peace in his hands. If you'll turn to Revelation 22:21, you'll find that the book closes with these words, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. David the psalmist said, grace is poured into his lips. Everywhere Christ moved, grace poured forth from his lips in the healing of the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, healing the leper, cleansing the harlot, saving the sinner. He scattered grace and truth wherever he went. Thank God, he met me one day.

In our study of this prophetic book, let's never be moved from this one point. It's a revelation of Jesus Christ, not primarily a revelation of events, but the revelation, the unveiling, the appearing, the appearance to mortal view of our blessed Lord. In Revelation 1:5, Christ is spoken of as the faithful witness. Then in Revelation 3:14, he is spoken of as the faithful and true witness. Christ is God's faithful and true witness in the betrayal, in the downgrade, in the times of apostasy. Though a man fails, Christ never fails. He cannot deny himself. This word 'witness' signifies a martyr. You may say he was a martyr witness. He is unlike many faithless self-seeking, self-indulgent, professional preachers and prophets of the day. Therefore, he is declared here to be the faithful witness.

Oh, that we would be like our Lord. May God make me faithful. The second thing said about Christ is he's the first begotten of the dead. Christ is the first begotten of the dead in that he died and was resurrected and now liveth to die no more. He says in that 18th verse of the first chapter, I'm alive forevermore. Amen.

Again he says, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Christ was the only begotten Son, therefore he was the first begotten of the dead. But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept. Therefore, this assures us of our resurrection in his likeness. Isn't that marvelous?

And listen again, and he is called the prince of the kings of the earth. The word prince here means ruler. He is ruler of the kings of the earth. Now, you get this. The book of Revelation is the unveiling of the ruling reigning king, the Lord Jesus Christ. And it shows us how he will take the kingdoms of this world by the scepter of force and rule them with a rod of iron. The faithful witness speaks of Christ as prophet. The first begotten of the dead sets him forth as the priest. The prince of the kings of the earth reveals him as the king. Therefore, he is set forth right here in the first chapter of Revelation as prophet, priest, and king. The New Testament from Matthew to John sets forth Christ as the prophet. From Acts to Jude sets him forth as a priest. And the book of Revelation sets him forth as the king of kings. He is the prophet like unto Moses. He is the priest like unto Melchizedek. He is the king like unto David. Christ is the prince of prophets. He is the prince of priests. He is the prince of the kings of the earth. My friend, we need none other.

He who thinks of Christ only as the lowly Nazarene by the name Jesus does not know the Christ of Revelation or the Christ of the New Testament. Isn't that marvelous? Praise the Lord, the unveiling of our blessed Lord, unto him that loved us. The word loved here is more correctly translated loveth. It is rendered in the Greek first "arius" tense and states the fact without respect of time. It does not tell us when he began to love us or when he ceases to love us. No, it doesn't. But as we have said, Scripture interprets Scripture. So, if you'll turn with me to Jeremiah 31:3, we will find the answer. **Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.** That means from everlasting to everlasting, God loved his elect. God so loved that he gave. God commended his love toward us. Herein is love, not that we love God, but he loved us and sent his Son. As we have said, he loved us with an everlasting love, and then he saved us with an everlasting salvation, and keeps us with the blood of an everlasting covenant. And he accepts us in the beloved.

What matchless, what precious love, love which passeth knowledge. And then again, he said he washed us from our sins in his own blood. The word washed. is in the same tense as the word love. In the mind of God, the work of redemption in Christ was complete before the foundation of the world and will be until everlasting. When we send a child to the wash basin to wash his hands, he takes the soap, lathers them good, and dirt is loosened up and separated from him, and the boy is clean physically, "and the blood of his Son cleanseth us from all sin". We are not redeemed with silver and gold from our empty religious profession, but with the precious blood of Christ. Jehovah said, I have given you the blood upon the altar as an atonement for the soul. The Lord said, Come now, let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Again, he said, when I see the blood, I'll pass over you. The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ shed on Calvary's cross loosens us from our sins, washes them away, and leaves us clean, whiter than snow.

All through the Old Testament flows a river of blood as a type of the coming Christ. the Son of God, the sinner's sin offering. Yonder on the banks of Jordan, John the Baptist looked upon Christ as he walked and said, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

There in the garden of Gethsemane on that awful night we see God the Father laying the sins of his elect upon the heart of the Son of God, and dripping with blood, Christ marches forth from that garden, makes his way slowly to Golgotha's hill, where he pays the sinner's sin-debt in full. Thank God our sin-debt was paid in full on Calvary's cross. Isn't that marvelous, loosed us, loosed us from our sins.

Then he said, **hath made us kings and priests unto God**. This means he made us a kingdom and every born-again believer is a priest unto God, offering thanksgiving, praise and worship unto him who is and who was and who is to come.

Man needs no one on earth to stand between him and God as a priest. You get that! The Holy Spirit indwells the born-again believer and makes intercessions for us. The Lord Jesus Christ now, is at the right hand of the Father as our living High Priest. There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. He is the believer's only High Priest. Listen, I come directly to him. I don't have to go through no human instruments.

Listen again. **Behold, he cometh with clouds.** Now my friend, this is the theme text of the book. That word behold is used to attract our attention just as when John the Baptist said **behold the Lamb of God** or when the Apostle John said **behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.** Behold he cometh. Our Lord is coming. He came the first time as a babe in Bethlehem. He'll come the second time for his bride. He came the first time as a suffering servant. He'll come the second time as a warlord, riding a great white stallion and leading the armies of heaven. He came the first time as a sin offering, a lamb slain. He'll come the second time as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He came the first time to redeem his elect with his own precious blood. He'll come the second time, apart from a sin offering, to destroy those who obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be admired in all them that believe. Behold, he cometh with clouds. He came once to die, but behold, he cometh to reign. He liveth now as our high priest, but behold, he cometh. Behold, he cometh, unsaved one. Behold, he cometh, born-again believer.

He said on the night of his betrayal, I will come again. infidel! Behold, he cometh! Ye rulers of the earth, behold, he cometh! You atheists and scoffers, behold, he cometh! The word cometh is in the present tense and sets forth the imminency of his coming. This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven will come in like manner as he went away. He went away in clouds. He will come back with clouds, which means the armies of heaven, in all thy shining glory. Behold, he cometh, is the personal coming of Christ. Behold, he cometh.

We are not looking for the Antichrist, or for war or earthquake, but for Christ. We are not looking for the conversion of the world, but we are looking for Christ. And while we are looking, watching and waiting, we are doing our best to gospelize the world and pluck the meanest brands from the burning. And every eye shall see him. Yes, every saint shall behold him with a shout, crying, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!

And they also which pierced him, every infidel, every atheist, Every agnostic, every evolutionist, every Christ-rejecter shall behold him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Every Jew shall behold him, whom they pierced, and mourn because of him, as if they mourned for their firstborn.

You who have rejected the truth and turned your back upon him, you will behold him and cry for the rocks and the mountains to hide you from the face of him that sits on the throne. Every unsaved preacher will behold him, but it will be too late then, because you will be in hell weeping and wailing and gnashing your teeth for leading your congregation astray. Every unsaved church member will see him and go down under the cloud unseen, because he is the king of kings, and the Lord of Lords.

I do not fear the kings of the earth. My King, the Lord Jesus Christ, sits now on his Father's throne and in the paradise above. But behold, he cometh with clouds, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes in his great unveiling as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, men will smite themselves upon their breast, they will cry aloud for the rocks and the mountains, to hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne.

You may laugh and make fun of me sitting here before this microphone, calling you to repentance, pleading with you to turn to Christ. But when you see his coming, in all of his splendor and glory and majesty and power, you would give ten million words or more if you had it, if you knew him then. Yes, the nations of the earth shall wail because of him, because they've made fun of him and rejected him. Let me say, old Khrushchev, who today with Castro and others are strutting themselves around the earth, will one day wail because of him when he cometh. Brother, he's coming. The Lord is coming. He's coming. I don't care what you say or anybody else says. The Lord Jesus is coming. Even so, amen. Amen!

Let me call your attention to those three little words, at the close of the seventh verse, John here puts his approval upon the will of God. John knew, as well as you and I know, that God has done all He could for humanity. What more can He do for you than He's already done in giving His Son, then for you to reject the truth and ultimately turn your back upon Him, reject Him and laugh at Him, and count Him as naught. Then for you to stand before him wailing and impenitent, I'll have to say, Amen! Amen! Even so, amen to your own condemnation, amen, son, to your own condemnation, amen, daughter, to your own condemnation, amen,

congregation, to your own condemnation, amen, radio audience, to your own condemnation, if you will not turn to him as your Lord and your Savior.

Yes, sir. Brother, I can't help that.

Then he said, **I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.**

Here we have the same words describing the Lord Jesus Christ as we had describing God the Father, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. These words set forth the ancient of days, the great Jehovah God, the great I Am, the Almighty, the Omnipotent, Sovereign, Eternal Lord, who is from everlasting to everlasting, the ever-present Lord Jesus, the Eternal One, with no beginning, no ending, Christ is all in all. He will have no other gods before Him.

My friends, I've delivered my soul to you this morning, and may I leave you at His feet wherewith myself, and may we find ourselves together on our faces, crying, My Lord and my God, My Lord and my God, He's mine, is He yours? He's coming, friend, prepare to meet your God.

Will you?