

The Time of the End – Part Two
A Series on the Book of Revelation
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Adapted from Arlen Chitwood's Book; Presented by Jeanne Alley

Revelation 1:4-8

4 John to the seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne: 5 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, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 7 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. 8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

- 1). The opening three verses of the Book of Revelation, which we looked at last week, relate both the subject matter of the book and the means which God used to convey His Word as the Spirit of God moved John to pen the things which he had both seen and heard.
 - a) The announced subject matter of the book is an unveiling, a *revealing* of Jesus Christ. It is an opening up and a making known the Old Testament Scriptures through the Word which became flesh, through God's Son (cf. Luke 24:25-27, 44, 45).
 - b) The means of conveying the written Word through the living Word in this book was accomplished through angelic ministry, with John being removed from Man's Day and placed, at a future time, in the Lord's Day (Rev. 1;10). And at this future time in the Lord's Day, John was allowed to see and hear that which the Spirit moved him to record.
 - c) The next five verses which we will be studying today (vv. 4-8) then take us through a description of God's Son, and these specific descriptions are of course what God would have us see and understand about His Son. And this description of the Son would be with a view to that about to subsequently be made known through an opening up and unveiling of the living Word.

d) And what we will see is that everything surrounding God's description of His Son throughout these verses centers around regality. And, reflecting back on the Old Testament, from which the material in the Book of Revelation is drawn, the whole of the Old Testament moves toward a future day which is being revealed through God's Son in this book.

e) The One Whose right it is to rule is about to take the sceptre and reign over the earth, as seen in the second Psalm, the one hundred tenth Psalm (and numerous other Old Testament passages) –

Psalm 2

1 Why are the nations in an uproar, And the peoples devising a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand, And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed: 3 "Let us tear their fetters apart, And cast away their cords from us!" 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury: 6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain." 7 "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee. 8 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. 9 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.'" 10 Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. 11 Worship the LORD with reverence, And rejoice with trembling. 12 Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

Psalm 110:1-7

1 (A Psalm of David.) The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet." 2 The LORD will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies." 3 Thy people will volunteer freely in the day of Thy power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Thy youth are to Thee as the dew. 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." 5 The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. 6 He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. 7 He will drink from the brook by the wayside; Therefore He will lift up His head.

f) And it is these passages — the written Word, the Old Testament Scriptures — which are being opened up and revealed in the Book of Revelation through the living Word.

2). The words “which is, and which was” in Revelation 1:4, referring to God the Father, are used in this same sense in four other verses in this book (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5). The additional words “and is to come” can be found in the first two references, but the presence of these words is open to question in the third reference (some Greek manuscripts have the words, some don’t). Then, in the last reference, the words “and is to come” are not found in the Greek. (Instead, in this last reference of 16:5, a word referring to holiness is used – “the One existing, and the One Who was, the Holy [or ‘righteous’] One.”

a) We said that to say this - the same phrasing is used when talking about both the Father and the Son, in Rev. 1:4 and 1:8. The first reference (v. 4) has to do with the Father, and the second reference (v. 8) has to do with the Son. So, both the Father and His Son are seen as the One “which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

b) The first two expressions (“which is,” and “which was”) are timeless. Both are translations of the same Greek word (eimi), which would not include any thought of a beginning or an ending (just like the English words “to be” or “being”).

c) In the Greek text, the first (translated, “which is”) is a present participle, and the second (translated, “which was”) is a verb in the imperfect tense. Both together show continuous, timeless action existing throughout all of the past, into the present, without any thought of ending. So, as seen in these two verses (vv. 4, 8), both the Father and the Son exist in a co-equal sense throughout all time, without reference to a beginning or an ending. And the coming of the Father (v. 4) occurs through a coming in the person of His Son (v. 8).

According to John 1:1, 14a:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made [‘became’] flesh...”

d). “God” and “the Word” are seen as one and the same; and continuous existence, without reference to a beginning or an ending, is seen occurring during past time through the use of this imperfect tense, “eimi” (translated as “was” in the previous verse). Also in John 1:1, there is no definite article before “beginning” in the Greek text, for God, His Son, and His Word have no beginning, as they have no ending.

e) Then, in the first part of verse fourteen, the Word from verse one, which was identified as God and seen to have existed throughout all past time, “was made [‘became’] flesh, and dwelt among us...” The verb used in this verse (“was”), though translated the same as eimi in verse one, is from an entirely different word in the Greek

text – ginomai. And ginomai in verse fourteen, unlike eimi in verse one, is not used in the same timeless sense.

f) The word “ginomai” calls our attention to a definite beginning point, which occurred at the time of the incarnation. The Word, inseparably identified with both the Old Testament Scriptures and with God, and being timeless, became flesh at a point in time in the person of the Son.

g) The incarnation is nothing more and nothing less than God becoming “flesh” in the person of His Son (cf. John 10:30; 14:9). And, in turn, the incarnation is nothing more and nothing less than the Old Testament Scriptures (which are inseparably identified with God and are, in their entirety, about His Son) being set forth in a manner other than in written form. The incarnation has to do with the written Word, being revealed through “flesh,” in the person of the Man Christ Jesus.

3). The description of Christ in Revelation 1, vv. 5 and 6 is that of a King with His co-heirs –

5 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, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

a) Israel and the nations are then brought into the picture immediately following in verse 7 –

7 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.

b) Then there is the picture of His eternity, with no beginning or ending, following this in verse 8 –

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

c) And throughout these four verses (vv. 5-8), what we see is the coming intervention of this Individual into the affairs of man once again.

d) So what we can know for sure is that things are not going to go on and on, uninterrupted, in man’s affairs as they occur during Man’s Day. God works with set

times (known only to Him) in connection with circumstances (usually brought about by man's failures). In history, God has always stepped into man's affairs when the time and circumstances were right. And He will do the same thing again yet future.

4). The current Middle East situation, for example, is not only *about to* tumble completely out of control... it *will* tumble completely out of control; it's just a matter of *when*. God will allow this to occur for a revealed purpose. And, because the problem is of a spiritual nature which man has no control over, man can't do anything about it. It is inevitable.

a) The whole matter lies in God's hands, under His sovereign, providential control of all things. And when the time and circumstances are right – when God's purpose for allowing conditions in the Middle East to become so completely out of control that “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” – God will once again step into the affairs of man and straighten the whole thing out.

b) And that is really what the Book of Revelation is about. It is about “the time of the end,” when God once again steps into man's affairs – a time not only dealt with extensively by the Old Testament prophets, but a time which the world is rapidly approaching. But the book has to do with more than God just stepping in once again; the book details a final intervention in order to bring 6,000 years of redemptive work to a close and usher in the Messianic Era.

5). “The seven spirits” before God's throne in Rev. 1:4 are seen in connection with “the faithful witness” of the Son (v. 5). These seven spirits are referred to in Rev. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6, and the faithful witness of the Son can be seen in Rev. 1:2, 9; 3:14; 22:20. There is an inseparable connection between the two. And let's not forget what Jesus says of Himself –

John 18:37

Pilate therefore said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

a) So these “seven spirits” have an inseparable connection with the unveiling of the Son of God, who was born King and whose purpose is to exercise that role as King. Everything about the revelation of the Son points to Him attaining to and performing this role for which He was “begotten,” for which He came into the world.

b) We'll remember that the number 7 is a number showing the completeness of that which is in view, and doesn't necessarily depict a literal number of that which it is

describing (we will see this quite a bit throughout the Book of Revelation). And what is clearly in view concerning the “seven spirits” is the revealing of the mystery of the Son. And the seven spirits emanating from God’s throne, in connection with the faithful witness (unveiling) of the Son, would show the manner in which all things surrounding the introductory statement in verse one is brought to pass. Meaning, this revelation of the Son of God will be brought to pass by angels.

6). Revelation 1:5

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.

a) The words “first begotten” are a translation of the compound Greek word “prototokos.” This word is made up of protos, meaning “first” and tikto, meaning “to beget,” or “to bring forth.” This is the word used in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the O.T.) in Ex. 4:22, which states, “Thus saith the Lord God, Israel is my son, even my firstborn [‘prototokos’].”

b) The word is used relative to Christ in Rev. 1:5 in exactly the same sense that it is used relative to Israel in Ex. 4:22. In both instances God’s firstborn Sons are in view; and in both instances, death, burial, resurrection, and ultimately regality, are inseparably in view as well.

c) Note how all of this is set forth in the Exodus account under Moses. God’s firstborn son, Israel, through a vicarious death, is seen as dead in Exodus chapter twelve (both national Israel and individual Israelites are seen in this respect, for a lamb dies “for an house [both for the house of Israel and individual families in the nation]” (cf. Ex. 4:22; 11:4, 5; 12:1ff).

d) Then there is a subsequent burial in the Red Sea and a rising up out of the place of death on the eastern banks of the Sea, removed from both Egypt and the Sea (chs. 14, 15). And all of this is with a view to one goal – realizing an inheritance in another land and exercising the rights of the firstborn therein.

e) This is something set forth symbolically through baptism, relating to Christians, today. Exactly as in the type in Exodus, baptism pictures a burial after the firstborn has died, vicariously (in this case, through appropriating the shed blood of Christ, available because of and through His finished work at Calvary). And, also as in the type, resurrection is to occur following burial, which is pictured through a rising up out of the baptismal waters, exactly as a rising up out of the Sea in the type.

f) Then, having come up out of the waters, out of the place of death, the Christian is to “walk in newness of life,” setting his mind on “those things which are above...not on

things on the earth [exactly as the Israelites under Moses were not to look back to Egypt but out ahead]" -

Romans 6:4

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Colossians 2:12

...having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

And the end -- *or goal* -- for Christians under Christ is exactly the same as seen for the Israelites under Moses -- realizing an inheritance in another land and exercising the rights of the firstborn therein.

g) This is the manner in which Christ is presented in Rev. 1:5, when seen as "the first begotten ['firstborn'] of the dead." And because Christ occupies this position, when "the manifestation of the sons of God" occurs (spoken of in Romans 8:19), when God brings "many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10), God's Son will then occupy the position of "the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29).

h) Note the following passage -

Colossians 3:1-4

If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

i) The third verse has to do with Christians during present time, and the fourth verse has to do with Christians during future time. This is the same thing as Jesus said during His earthly ministry -

John 12:23-25

And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal."

j) Christ being referred to as “the first begotten of the dead” in Rev. 1:5 is in connection with what Christ is called immediately following, which is “the prince of the kings of the earth.” The word translated “prince” in verse five is ‘archon’ which refers to a “ruler.” And this is in connection with everything we’ve already seen pertaining to the purpose of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

7). Revelation 1:5 ends with this statement –

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

a) Based on manuscript evidence and contextual usage, “loosed,” rather than “washed,” would appear to be the preferred translation in Rev. 1:5.

b) In the Greek text, the word for “loose” is ‘luo,’ and the word for “wash” is ‘louo.’ There is not only a close spelling of these two words but a similar-sense etymological (meaning their origin) use as well. Some manuscripts have ‘luo,’ and some have ‘louo.’ A letter has either been dropped or added to the word. And, considering the context, which is regal (a king frees by issuing a royal decree), evidently the latter has occurred, making the KJV text incorrectly read “washed” instead of “loosed.”

c) Everything surrounding the Christ coming into the world –the “Lamb of God” – begins with redemption, a “loosing” from sin, which is with a view to ultimately bringing fallen man back into the position where he can realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning – “...let them have dominion [‘let them rule’]” (Gen. 1:26-28).

d) And God’s love surrounding the matter of redemption is seen in God’s character. God, as to His essence, His being, is “love” (I John 4:8). This is why John 3:16 begins, “For God so loved...” As seen in this verse and elsewhere, God will not manifest Himself apart from His revealed character.

e) Note something often misunderstood relative to God revealing Himself through love – God’s harsh treatment of individuals and nations during and at the end of the coming Tribulation, along with His treatment of the unsaved following the Millennium. On the former, God’s love for His son, Israel, is so great that He has decreed that blessings or curses are contingent on man’s treatment of His son [e.g., Matt. 25:31-46]. On the latter, God’s love for His Son, Jesus, is so great that He has decreed that man’s eternal destiny will rest on man’s acceptance or rejection of His Son. [e.g., John 3:18; Rev. 20:11-15].)

8) God’s redemptive work of mankind, emanating from His love, began in Eden following man’s sin. God slew one or more animals, took the skin, and clothed Adam

and Eve. Death and shed blood occurred, which set an unchangeable pattern for God's continued redemptive work.

a) We can see this in a two-fold sense in the story of the Israelites under Moses in the type picture in Exodus. First, a redemptive work resulted in the death of the firstborn in Egypt; then, a continuing redemptive work (for a people already redeemed) subsequently occurred through Aaron's high priestly ministry after the Israelites had been removed from Egypt. And both were based on death and shed blood and were with a view to that which lay out ahead – an inheritance as God's firstborn son, to be realized in another land.

b) The is also seen in a two-fold sense with respect to Christians under Christ in the antitype today. First, a redemptive work has resulted in the death of the firstborn in the world (exactly as it occurred in connection with the death of the firstborn in Egypt over 3,500 years ago); then, a continuing redemptive work subsequently occurs through Christ's present high priestly ministry for Christians, who are in the world but not of the world (exactly as seen through Aaron's ministry in the camp of Israel [John 15:19; 17:14-16; cf. John 18:36]). And, exactly as in the type, both are based on death and shed blood and are with a view to that which lies out ahead – an inheritance as God's firstborn son, to be realized in another land.

9) Revelation 1:6

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father;

a) The expression, "kings and priests," (also found in Rev. 5:10) could be better translated, "a kingdom, priests." The expression is similar to and in keeping with the one in I Peter 2:9 –

I Peter 2:9

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR [God's] OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

b) And the Septuagint translators (the Hebrew O.T. translated into Greek) used the identical wording seen in I Peter 2:9 (relative to Christians) in God's description of Israel in Ex. 19:6 – "a kingdom of priests."

c) The picture is that of one kingdom with a body of priests, whether in a past or future theocracy, and whether relative to Israel or Christians.

d) In the past theocracy, "God," in the nation's midst, was the King. "Israel," because of God's presence as King, formed a kingdom; and the Israelites in the kingdom were

looked upon as priests, with the nations to be ruled by and blessed through Israel, “a kingdom of priests.”

e) This is the position which Israel will occupy yet future when the theocracy has been restored, with Christians occupying exactly the same position from a heavenly sphere under Christ. And Christians can occupy such a position only because, “in Christ,” they are “Abraham’s seed [the only seed through which all spiritual blessings flow], and heirs according to the promise” -

Galatians 3:26-29

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

And so next week we will pick up by looking more closely at the following verses –

7 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. 8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.