

# Kings and Priests

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 for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 1:4-6

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 **And hast made us unto our God kings and priests**; and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 5:10

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him** a thousand years.”

Revelation 20:6

## **Introduction:**

1. What do you do to stir up yourself to the love of Christ you ought to have? Consider a salutation!
2. God’s gift of salvation through Jesus Christ is much more than only forgiveness and pardon, which would leave us acquitted of our sins, but without the blessings and privileges the gospel describes.
3. While deliverance from eternal torment is itself an incredible blessing, there is truly much more!
4. God decreed and Jesus Christ secured much more for us than merely acquittal from sin to neutrality; we have not been raised from enemies to be servants, but rather to be sons, with angels our servants!
5. As we come to the Lord’s Table today, let us remember what His death actually and fully did for us.
6. Let’s explore the *salutation* of our Lord’s Revelation to John (4-6), which followed its *preface* (1-3): the salutation being the formal identification of both writer and audience and a greeting and blessing.
7. Do not overlook the situation of John’s blessing – for he was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day (1:10).
8. Note the form of its two sentences: first, there is a three-fold ***from*** showing grace and peace from God the Father, from the seven Spirits, and from Jesus Christ; second, there is the response of glory and dominion forever to Jesus Christ by ***unto him***, with details of Christ in both sentences. Amen.

## **JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia:**

- A. The writer of Revelation identified himself and identified those to whom He wrote.
- B. They are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea (1:11).
- C. Asia is not the Asia we know – the largest continent on earth stretching from Europe to Alaska and from the Arctic to Australia; it was a Roman province covering the eastern part of what is now modern Turkey. Compare Acts 16:6 and 19:10.
- D. The churches at Ephesus and Laodicea are also found elsewhere (Col 2:1; 4:13,15,16).

## **Grace be unto you, and peace,**

- A. This is a variation of the apostolic salutation (Rom 1:7; I Cor 1:3; Philemon 1:3; I Peter 1:2; etc.). The valediction was often similar (II Thess 3:17-18; Rev 22:21).
- B. God’s grace in our lives is totally necessary for anything good spiritually or naturally.
- C. God’s peace in our lives is totally necessary for living comfortably and pleasantly.

**From him which is, and which was, and which is to come;**

- A. This is a reference to God the Father by His eternal nature (Rev 1:8; 4:8; Heb 13:8).
- B. The source of grace and peace is God Himself, without Whom there can be neither.
  - 1. Peter confirmed Moses that He is the God of all grace (Ex 34:6-7; I Peter 5:10).
  - 2. He is *the God of peace* (Rom 15:33; 16:20; Phil 4:9; I Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20).
- C. The eternal nature of God, indicated by these words, should provide great comfort, for everyone and everything else we know is very temporal and unstable in comparison.
- D. Confidence is from the eternal God and His everlasting arms under you (Deut 33:27).
- E. Grace and peace from this eternal, unchanging Being is a glorious salutation indeed!

**And from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;**

- A. These seven Spirits of God are also mentioned in Revelation 3:1; 4:5; and 5:6. For comparative purposes, you can also see them symbolically in Zechariah 3:9 and 4:10.
- B. Some think they are angels or other created spirits, but we do not for several reasons.
  - 1. They are included as a source of grace and peace, which can only come from God, for how can dependent creatures dispense the will of the infinite Creator, I AM?
  - 2. John was inspired and wise to know that he could not bless churches from angels!
  - 3. Listed between God the Father and Jesus Christ, thus closely connected to them, angels are only servants of God, Christ, and saints without right of such a location.
  - 4. Since the two other Persons of the Trinity are identified, they cannot be creatures, or else there is an inspired neglect of the Holy Spirit and divine honor of angels!
  - 5. Angels in this company should be worshipped, but angels must not be (Col 2:18).
  - 6. They are burning lamps (4:5), and angels are fiery, but the Spirit more (Ac 2:3-4).
  - 7. They are Christ's seven horns and eyes (5:6), and seven angels are not worthy to be part of Him who was God, but Jesus had unlimited Spirit graces (John 3:34).
  - 8. If angels were meant, the word could have been used, as it is throughout the book.
  - 9. Though called spirits, angels are nowhere in scripture called the spirits of God.
- C. We rather understand that these seven Spirits of God is reference to the Holy Spirit.
  - 1. We make this choice for far more than capitalization, which had no consistent rule for deity in 1611, as Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6 compared to Daniel 3:25 should prove.
  - 2. The reasons above against angels argue as well for one answer – the Holy Spirit.
  - 3. How can a great salutation with two Persons ignore Him? Compare II Cor 13:14.
  - 4. As the language is clearly of worship to God and Christ, it must be God the Spirit.
  - 5. The number seven in scripture refers to completeness or perfection, which the Holy Spirit most certainly is by diversity of operations and perfection in divine power.
  - 6. The number seven is symbolically popular in this book of signs, thus the use here.
  - 7. The book was written to seven churches, each with the Spirit's presence, so seven.
  - 8. He is before the throne in the sense of going forth to divinely perform God's will, just as the scriptures present the Holy Spirit (Gal 4:6; Luke 11:13; John 7:39; etc.).
  - 9. Jesus has the oil (fuel) of gladness above others – joy of the Holy Ghost (Heb 1:9).
  - 10. Jesus also has the Holy Spirit's horns, symbolic of authority, and eyes, symbolic of oversight, of the seven churches, for it is His Spirit (Gal 4:6; Rev 3:1; 5:6).

- D. In addition to the points above, we add the following to help explain verses in context.
1. We understand the seven stars of 1:20 as the pastors of the seven churches, for it was to them and not angels that Jesus sent commendations, threats, and warnings, for no angel has ever lost his first love or fulfilled a single phrase of the context; further elaboration on this point not related to the salutation is for another time; the only reason the word angels is used is to trip up those who value sound over sense.
  2. We understand the seven churches of 1:20 to be the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit in each church, for He (note *him*, as in Gen 3:15) could be taken from each church (2:5), leaving a church a mere corpse of a church (Jas 2:26; Pr 21:16).
  3. It is absurd to think the stars are literal angels or the candlesticks literal churches.
- E. Rejoice with scripture that grace and peace are from the Spirit sent forth to give them, which is the seal of our inheritance and God and Christ's perpetual presence with us.
- F. When was the last time you prayed for and sought a greater filling of the Holy Spirit?

### **And from Jesus Christ,**

- A. Here is our Saviour, God the Word made flesh, distinct from the Father and the Spirit, just as John had written earlier in his gospel and epistle (John 1:1,14,18; I John 5:7).
- B. He was named Jesus by both Joseph and Mary, for He would save His people from their sins and be David's son and king forever (Matthew 1:20-21; Luke 1:31-33).
- C. This child to be born and son to be given was by the LORD's zeal (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7).
- D. Before Mary had her holy child, there was no Jesus of Nazareth, only the Word of God; gospel faith confesses Jesus of Nazareth as God's Son (Acts 8:37; I John 5:1-5).
- E. Let it be declared boldly and believed fully – the Man Christ Jesus is Lord and Savior – and preaching like Peter at Pentecost should bring similar results (Acts 2:32-38).
- F. The great work we must do for God is to believe His record of His Son (John 6:28-29; I John 5:6-11), which we shall do this very day with the blood witness on earth.

### **Who is the faithful witness,**

- A. This descriptive statement is given to comfort believers in the total truth of the gospel.
- B. Every fact, promise, instruction, or warning is true and profitable (Psalm 19:7-11).
- C. Only Jesus is the faithful Apostle and High Priest, as all others had failures and sins.
- D. Bearing record of Himself, He did not exaggerate, misrepresent, or lie (John 8:13-14).
- E. On trial for His life, He witnessed a good confession to ignorant Pilate, who had no concept of truth, and who was willing to let Him go free (I Tim 6:13 cp Jn 18:33-38).
- F. Jesus revealed God the Father; there is no other way to know Him (Matt 11:25-27).
- G. You may count on Him in every respect for grace and peace, as He honestly and truly declared God and His will to us directly in person and through His chosen apostles.
- H. There is no other religious leader of any type anywhere that is such a faithful witness.
- I. Contrary to the devil that lied about Job, Jesus intercedes perpetually in truth for you.
- J. Whether 12 or 33, Jesus always declared the truth of God without fear or compromise.
- K. Whether refuting all denominations of His day or declaring the coming horrific judgment, Jesus faithfully declared the whole gospel truth and nothing but that truth.

- L. You may fully trust and lay hold of every single promise of His that you can locate.
- M. He is coming again for us, as He promised He would, and He would never forsake us.

### **And the first begotten of the dead,**

- A. This descriptive statement is given to comfort believers in the resurrection of the dead.
- B. There is no reason to fear death, for Jesus our Saviour defeated it for us. Hallelujah!
- C. It is stated in nearly identical language in Colossians 1:18, *the firstborn from the dead*.
- D. The gospel emphasizes the glorious message that Jesus was first to rise (Acts 26:23).
- E. He was begotten as God's Son by His resurrection (Ps 2:7; Acts 13:30-37; Heb 1:4-6).
- F. Jesus of Nazareth was the first to rise from the dead and remain alive forevermore, as all others that were resurrected from death had the necessity of dying again.
- G. Jesus of Nazareth was the first to rise from the dead by His own power (Jn 10:17-18).
- H. Jesus of Nazareth was the first to rise from the dead for the church (I Cor 15:20,23).
- I. Note: Romans 8:29 and Hebrews 1:6 miss the mark, by not referring to resurrection.

### **And the prince of the kings of the earth.**

- A. This descriptive statement is to comfort believers by His political, military might.
- B. What glorious comfort for those who worry about political and military world events, which today have no right to do so in comparison to our martyred fathers in the faith.
- C. This is not the only occurrence in this political and military history of such glorious language depicting Jesus Christ as the Lord and Sovereign of all. See 17:14; 19:16.
- D. He is the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords (I Ti 6:13-16)!
- E. Here ends the first sentence of the salutation: it has been grace and peace *from* three.

Note: The division here in the salutation is helpful for understanding and very precious.

### **Unto him that loved us,**

- A. Here begins the second sentence of salutation: responsive praise *unto* Christ the Lord.
- B. This descriptive statement is given to elicit our delight in Christ as Lover of our souls.
- C. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is far greater than *political* – an executive pardon.
- D. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is far greater than *judicial* – a legal justification.
- E. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is far greater than *economic* – a redemptive ransom.
- F. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is far greater than *religious* – a sanctifying offering.
- G. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is far greater than *relational* – a peaceful mediation.
- H. It is rather *affectionate, personal, and familial* – adopted as beloved children/brethren.
- I. The same writer, John, exalted the Father's love in Christ by our adoption (I Jn 3:1-2).
- J. Consider Ezekiel 16:1-14 for God's love for the Old Testament church and marvel!
- K. Consider Jeremiah 31:3 of everlasting love drawing you to Him in lovingkindness!
- L. Greater love hath no man (Jn 15:13), but yet He had much greater love (Rom 5:5-8).

**And washed us from our sins in his own blood,**

- A. This descriptive statement is given to elicit our delight in Christ as Saviour from sins.
- B. By nature you are so defiled, filthy, polluted, and spotted that it cannot be fully said.
- C. By nature you are so deceitful, evil, sinful, and wicked that it cannot be fully written.
- D. *Washing* is cleansing action of taking a dirty thing and making it clean for noble use, and you could meditate on both the washing (Is 1:18) and the washed (I Cor 6:9-11).
- E. The cleansing here described is for *us* only, those in the context, believers in churches.
- F. We are no longer the same, for we have been freed *from* sins, once and forevermore.
- G. We cannot blame any other for the sins we have by *our* nature, for they are *our* sins.
- H. The offence of our *sins* is hard to define, for it takes infinite holiness to truly judge it.
- I. Not just painted or touched up from sins, we were thrust deep *in* a fountain of blood.
- J. It was *His* blood, the precious blood of the Lamb of God without blemish or any spot.
- K. It was His *own* blood – He personally gave His life for His sheep, not a sheep's life.
- L. It was His own *blood* – He had to die, for the wages of sin is death and always death.

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

- A. This descriptive statement is given to elicit delight in Christ for our exalted position.
- B. Oh reader, do you grasp that God's purpose and Christ's love have done great things?
- C. What shall we say to this declaration? Those who were evil criminals are now kings!
- D. What shall we say to this declaration? Those who were vile sinners are now priests!
- E. A royal priesthood?! Solomon was no priest, and Zadok was no king! You are both!
- F. Consider well the exalted position you have in Christ both in authority and religion!
  
- G. Jesus Christ by His life, death, and perpetual life **has made us kings**. Let us consider.
  - 1. This concept of being a king and reigning is repeated in this book (Rev 5:10; 20:6).
  - 2. Christ's kingdom was not of this world, so be spiritually minded here (John 18:36).
  - 3. Kings reign, so we reign in various ways (Rom 5:17; II Tim 2:12; Rev 5:10; 20:6)!
  - 4. Death is king of terrors (Jb 18:14), we are victorious kings over it (I Co 15:54-57)!
  - 5. Satan is a cruel king against us (Rev 9:11), but we shall yet judge him (I Cor 6:3)!
  - 6. If you resist this despotic tyrant on a daily basis, he will flee from you (James 4:7)!
  - 7. Kings have a kingdom, so we have one and will have one (Luk 22:29; Matt 25:34)!
  - 8. Kings have thrones, and the throne of Christ is promised to overcomers (Re 3:21)!
  - 9. Kings have great and vast possessions, so all things are properly ours (I Cor 3:21)!
  - 10. Kings have numerous, powerful, wise servants, so angels are yours (Heb 1:13-14)!
  - 11. Kings have white horses, so you should not be surprised at your horse (Rev 11:14)!
  - 12. Kings inherit great wealth, and you are joint-heir with Christ of God (Rom 8:17)!
  - 13. Kings' children are princes, and we exchange fathers for them in Christ (Ps 45:16)!
  - 14. Jesus has raised us up and will raise us up to sit with Him with riches (Eph 2:4-7).
  
- H. Jesus Christ by His life, death, and perpetual life **has made us priests**. Let us consider.
  - 1. This concept of being a priest with God is repeated in this book (Rev 5:10; 20:6).
  - 2. A priest is absolutely essential to be forgiven and have peace with God (He 5:1-4).

3. Job begged for a daysman to stand between God and him and mediate (Job 9:33).
  4. From Melchisedek to Aaron to Joshua, priests of the most high God were glorious.
  5. Israel's high priest entered God's symbolic presence only once a year (He 9:6-10).
  6. Israel was a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:6), but O.T. terms are very inferior to these.
  7. In fact, Peter wrote Jews and taught only in Christ were they priests (I Pet 2:4-10).
  8. Priests confess sins and obtain God's forgiveness, as you easily do (I John 1:9).
  9. Priests offer sacrifices acceptable to God, as you do (Rom 12:1; Heb 13:10-16).
  10. Malachi foretold Christ purifying N.T. sons of Levi for perfect service (Mal 3:1-4).
  11. Isaiah prophesied of all God's people named Priests and Ministers (Isaiah 61:6).
  12. Isaiah prophesied further of new priests taken from among Gentiles (Is 66:17-21).
- I. Our position as kings and priests is **unto God and Christ's Father**. Let us consider.
    1. Simply, a king of a nation in this world is nothing in comparison to one of God.
    2. We do and will serve Jehovah God of heaven by His appointment and authority.
    3. Simply, a priest of any worldly religion is less than nothing compared to our God.
    4. We do now and will forever have complete, direct, and free access to the true God.

**To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**

- A. We conclude this half of the salutation connecting *unto him* to *glory and dominion*.
- B. The Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the object of every phrase of this great sentence.
- C. For all Jesus Christ has done for us, we seek His glory in every way possible forever.
- D. For all Jesus Christ has done for us, we seek His total dominion in all ways forever.
- E. The salutation is so weighty it deserves its own concluding, **Amen!** See Romans 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; Galatians 1:5; Ephesians 3:21; I Timothy 1:17; 6:16; Revelation 5:14; etc.

**Conclusion:**

1. "O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so...." (Psalm 107:1-2).
2. "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 106:48).
3. Let us come to the table of the Lord Jesus Christ and remember and celebrate His death til he comes.
4. Then leave His Table and go into the world to live victorious lives as ***kings*** and holy lives as ***priests!***

**For Further Study:**

1. The sermon outline, "A Good Confession," ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/good-confession.pdf>.
2. The sermon outline, "The Facets of Salvation," ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/facets-of-salvation.pdf>.
3. The sermon outline, "Sonship of Jesus Christ," ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/sonship-of-christ.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, "Coronation of Jesus Christ," ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/coronation-of-jesus.pdf>.
5. The sermon, "Blessed and Only Potentate," ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/blessed-and-only-potentate.pdf>.
6. The sermon, "Jesus Is King of Kings," ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/king-of-kings.pdf>.