

Revelation Announcements

Revelation 1:4-8

Introduction

“Excuse me. I have an announcement to make, a message, a revelation, a declaration, proclamation, annunciation.”

We make and receive announcements almost every day. “I am getting married. My son is graduating from High School. My daughter is having a baby”.

The book of Revelation is Messiah’s message, Jesus Christ’s announcement. The message is addressed to seven churches. We will look at each of these churches in detail as we study the book of Revelation. I believe these churches represent all churches in every generation until the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord. The book of Revelation is a series of announcements. We have four in this section.

The announcements include;

- (1) Grace and peace are available to you (v.4)
- (2) Jesus Christ is our great Savior and the great Redeemer (vv.5-6).
- (3) Jesus Christ is coming back, visible and victorious (v.7).
- (4) Jesus Christ is the everlasting God, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent (v.8).

Some of you might be thinking, “I thought the book of Revelation is about the end of the world! What a bizarre way of announcing the end of the world!” Remember we are following Jesus into the future. The book of Revelation does contain information about the future, and the book of Revelation will pick up the prophetic threads of the Old Testament and the New Testament and weave a picture about the future. We will see the churches grow, we will see the coming apostasy of faith, the rapture of the church, wars, famines, pestilence, we will see the coming of the beast and the false prophet followed by catastrophic persecutions and the wholesale slaughter of human beings. We will see Armageddon, followed by a golden age, and the eternal destinies of human beings. The book of Revelation will alternate with scenes in heaven and on earth. Chapter 1 is set in heaven, chapters 2-3 and set on the earth; chapters 4-5 are back in heaven; chapters 6-7 are back on earth again. The book begins in heaven and ends in heaven” (John Phillips p.12).

Why is that? The answer is simple—we have the full and final answer to the Lord’s prayer, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). God’s will is announced in heaven, the Deity—decrees; and we see it done on earth.

There is no power in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, that can frustrate, thwart, hinder, or delay the plan of God. We follow Jesus into the future. As we

Revelation Announcements

Revelation 1:4-8

study the book we view the person of Christ and the purpose of God. This book will teach us to adore His person and accept His purposes, and so impact our lives.

Grace and Peace (v.4)

Revelation 1:4 (NKJV)

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, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

John's audience are seven churches in Asia. This the Roman province now known as the modern state of Turkey.

The announcement does not begin with, "hold on to your seats, the earth is about to be judged, singed, seared, and destroyed. The book does not begin with, God has been treasuring wrath and judgment since the cross of Calvary, and the earth in its wickedness and sin is about to get a heavenly wake-up call of judgment. Make no mistake about it, the book of Revelation is filled with judgment, but it begins with grace. In this book—wicked human beings will get what they deserve—but saints—who have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb will be spared from God's wrath and judgment.

Grace means favor and blessing from God. Grace is more than a prayer you say before you eat. Grace is God's active role in our lives.

Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines him to bestow benefits upon the undeserving. It is a self-existent principle inherent in the divine nature and appears to us as a self-caused propensity to pity the wretched, spare the guilty, welcome the outcast, and bring into favor those who were before under just disapprobation. Its use to us sinful men is to save us and make us sit together in heavenly places to demonstrate to the ages the exceeding riches of God's kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

Why is this important? Because grace precedes judgment. We do not deserve the grace of God. God begins the message of Revelation with the announcement that grace is available to you!

Not only is there grace but there is peace. Peace is not simply the absence of conflict, but rather it is the cessation of hostilities with God. We can have peace with God—even though we may not always have peace with human beings. Peace means not feeling distant from God, or the sense that God is always looking over our shoulder for the purpose of punishment.

Revelation Announcements

Revelation 1:4-8

This is the first announcement, the great declaration to the Church. Grace and peace are available to all mankind. But make sure you understand the source of grace and peace, it comes from heaven not from the earth. It comes from—

“him which is, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before the throne”.

The source of blessing is none other than God the Father and God the Spirit. It must be God the Father in this context—because God the Son is later described. John presents Him as the one who transcends time, the unchanging one, He lives in the present and in the past and in the future.

Irwin Moon of Moody Institute of Science wrote; “All of us have looked up, on a clear night, and seen the sparkling, twinkling stars. But, how many of us have realized that we cannot see the stars as they now are? Every time we look, we are looking into the past, seeing them as they were. The nearest naked-eye star, Alpha Centauri, is about four light years away. The most distant naked-eye object, the Andromeda Galaxy, is about a million and a half light years away. This means that the light has been traveling four light years or over a million years to reach us. As a result, we are looking into the past. But this works both ways. If you were on one of the stars you would—assuming an adequate telescope—see the earth as it was sometime in the past. From the star Sirius, you could see what you are doing nine years ago, because, in a profoundly true scientific sense, you are still doing it. Yes, everything you have ever done, you are still doing. The ghost of your past haunts the universe. But remember. . . God is omnipresent. This means that, for God, every sin you have ever committed, every evil thing you have ever done, you are still doing, and will continue to do forever, apart from God’s forgiveness. Only the omnipotent, eternal God, who controls all the factors of time, space and matter could ever remove sin” (quoted from John Phillips p.17-18).

Ecclesiastes 3:15 (NKJV)

15 That which is has already been, And what is to be has already been; And God requires an account of what is past.

In Peru a fortune teller offer to tell my future for an American dollar. I said, “You can tell my future?” “Oh yes. Tomorrow, next week, next year.” I said I will give you five dollars if you can tell me what I did this time yesterday, but you must give me five dollars if you are wrong.” She did not take me up on my offer.

The Lord God is eternal and unchanging. God has infinite power and knowledge. God knows we need grace and peace.

Revelation Announcements

Revelation 1:4-8

“And from the Seven Spirits which are before His throne”. What does this mean? Some scholars suggest these are angelic spirits. More likely it is a reference to the Holy Spirit. The number seven is simply the number of fullness, completeness and perfection. I suggest the seven spirits is a description of the Holy Spirit in all His fullness. The Holy Spirit is before the throne of God in all of His perfection and fullness. In light of that—the believer finds grace and peace in the fullness of the Holy Spirit living in the believer.

We must learn to walk—that is live in the fullness of the Spirit so we experience grace and peace.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer (vv.5-6)

Revelation 1:5-6 (NKJV)

5 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,
6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The second announcement is just as amazing as the first announcement. Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer. As a matter of fact, five great things are announced about Jesus in these two verses:

- (1) Jesus Christ is the faithful witness.
- (2) Jesus Christ is the first to arise from the dead.
- (3) Jesus Christ is the prince of the kings of the earth.
- (4) Jesus Christ has redeemed us.
- (5) Jesus Christ has exalted us.

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness.

What does that mean? He is the one person we can depend on. We can trust what Jesus Christ tells us. Jesus Christ came from God, from Heaven itself, to reveal the truth to us—the truth about God and man and the world in which we live. What Jesus Christ has revealed can be trusted. He is the faithful witness.

John 3:11 (NLT)

11 I assure you, I am telling you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe us.

Revelation Announcements

Revelation 1:4-8

John 3:11 (NKJV)

11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.

Jesus Christ is the first to arise from the dead.

This means the first to rise from the dead, never to die again. The expression “first begotten or “first-born” means first in rank, in means supreme, preeminent in the resurrection. This means of all people who have risen and will rise, Jesus is primero.

Every single person who rises from the dead—do so—because Jesus rose from the dead.

John 5:25-29 (NKJV)

25 Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.

26 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

27 and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

29 and come forth— those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Jesus Christ is the prince of the kings of the earth.

What is the point? Jesus has been raised from the dead, exalted and seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus and Jesus alone has been given the seat of Sovereign rule over the earth. The world may seem politically unstable, social unrest, poised on the verge of a global economic collapse, but no matter how big the world’s problems will be when Jesus assumes rule, he will be able to deal with them. Well then-why doesn’t God just get with it, deal with the mess, get rid of the evil in the world? Why delay any further?

“God is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). What’s the hold up? It may be you. Are you saved? Jesus Christ is delaying His return so more people can be saved and live forever with the Lord.

But the weight of the evidence is pushing us closer and closer to that final day.

Jesus Christ has redeemed us.

“To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood”

Revelation Announcements

Revelation 1:4-8

The word “loved” is actually in the present tense in the Greek language. This means Jesus loves you right now—he always loves you. He loved you in the past and he loves you in the present. The word washed ‘lusanti’ means to be loosed, set free, and released from sin. How did the blood of Jesus Christ set us free from sin? Jesus took our sins and died for them. Jesus lived a perfect, sinless, life as a man on the earth. Therefore He was able to present Himself as the Ideal and Perfect Man before God. The Bible teaches through one man sin entered the world—Adam—and by one man Jesus—all sin can be forgiven. Jesus died the perfect and ideal sacrifice. He was able to take our sins—the guilt and the judgment of our sins—upon Himself and bear the punishment for them. God accepted His ideal and perfect sacrifice. Here is the point—Jesus Christ died for our sins—and more. He took our sins off of us—removed them, placed them on Himself and died for them. Therefore we are loosed, cleansed. We stand before God free of sin and acceptable to Him. But you must remember how that happened—by the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. His dying for our sins—frees us from our sins.

Ephesians 1:7 (NKJV)

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Galatians 1:4 (NKJV)

4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Jesus Christ has exalted us.

“and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father”

What does it mean to be made kings and priests? A king has a kingdom. A place, a rule, authority, responsibility, that involves ownership, management, supervision. Believers shall rule and reign with Jesus Christ. We shall oversee and administer the affairs of the universe for Christ throughout eternity! Wow!

Romans 8:16-17 (NKJV)

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Jesus Christ is Coming (v.7)

Revelation 1:7 (NKJV)

7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Jesus is coming back. This is the theme of the book of Revelation. He is coming with justice and judgment.

Revelation Announcements

Revelation 1:4-8

The book of Revelation says His return will be visible (sorry Jehovah's Witnesses, sorry all those who say His return is invisible or spiritual).

What are the clouds? Are these literal white puffy things that float in the sky?

His coming is not only visible—but victorious—all those who pierced him—and all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. This is an allusion to Zechariah

12:10 Zechariah 12:10 (NKJV)

10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

That verse was written over 400 years before Jesus hung on a cross. The second verse alludes to part of the book of Daniel 7:13-14 Daniel 7:13-14 (NLT)

13 As my vision continued that night, I saw someone who looked like a man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence.

14 He was given authority, honor, and royal power over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

Jesus Christ is coming back, his coming will be universal (known by all); historical, visible, physical. At His coming God will judge the nations, the unbelieving kingdoms of man will crumble, a remnant will be saved, God's enemies will be crushed. Unbelievers will be judged. This message to our brothers and sisters suffering cruel persecutions under the wicked Emperor Domitian—is still timeless. It is a message for our brothers and sisters suffering in the Sudan, imprisoned in Eastern Europe, hunted and killed in China and Korea. It is to give hope—and comfort and information on how to survive the end of the world.

Every person who has rejected Jesus Christ will wail, and moan and mourn. Why? Because they rejected Him, cursed Him, ignored Him, rebelled against Him, opposed Him. There are those who do not believe in Jesus, they reject His claim to be the Son of God, that He came down from heaven. Most people accept Jesus as a good man, possibly even the best man, but just a man. They reject His deity, they believe they can be good enough to merit acceptance by God ON THEIR OWN. There fore they reject that Jesus came to the earth to die for their sins. The result will be catastrophic, they will see Jesus, recognize Him for WHO HE IS—but it will be too late.

Matthew 24:30 (NKJV)

30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Revelation Announcements

Revelation 1:4-8

Think about what human beings will be doing when Jesus returns. The Bible tells us the armies of the earth will merge in a vast conflagration to try and set up a last stand against God and his Christ. Human beings will be marching towards a final battle, deceived and motivated by the Beast, the Antichrist and his demon cohorts. All nations and Israel will look up and see the Lord of glory coming in catastrophic judgment.

Jesus Christ is Almighty God (v.8)

Revelation 1:8 (NKJV)

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."

Who is this? Jesus. He is the Alpha and the Omega. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. He is the beginning and the end, He began all things and will end all things. All things find their purpose, meaning, significance in Him. Man, the world, history—no matter how chaotic and disjointed—life may seem all under the control of Jesus Christ. The exhortation is clear; we must put our trust in Jesus Christ, cast our lives upon Him. When we do we receive the great gift of God spoken in verse four. We receive grace for God's care and provision and the great gift of peace, and we become safe and secure for eternity.

John 10:28-29 (NKJV)

28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

Jesus is eternal, unchanging, Jesus like His Father---was and is and who is to come. Almighty. The word 'almighty' is pantokrator—the word means the all-controller, the all ruler, the one who possess all power, he is omnipotent, able to do anything, he controls everything, the universe and every being within the universe. This means if a person belongs to Jesus—no matter how awful the circumstances, no matter how dark or bleak, or horrible—God is causing all things to work together for good.

Isaiah 37:16 (NKJV)

16 "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

Who is this King of Glory?

CONCLUSION

Revelation Announcements

Revelation 1:4-8

The book begins with a blessing. Human beings are offered grace and peace from the triune God. Is it grace that will endure and peace that stand the test of time? Can we put our heads on our pillows knowing that no matter how corrupt the world, we shall be saved?

When our lives seem unbearable, grace and peace are ours, secure.

I heard the story of a missionary in Africa who was walking down a forest path. A few days before a terrible fire had burned out of control. As he walked he came upon the charred ruins of what was once a bird's nest and the burnt remains of a bird. He kicked the ashes, and out from underneath several baby birds took off running. A mother's love covered its chicks in one last desperate attempt to save. That was creature love. But what about Creator love—love that endures—love that washes and liberates and cleanses.

“He breaks the power of canceled sin
And sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

Charles Wesley.