

The Lord Which Is To Come.
Revelation 1:4-8, Advent Sunday I
December 3, 2006

Beloved of the Lord.....**Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.** With these words the apostle John greeted **the seven churches which are in Asia.** These seven churches were seven congregations upon which God's grace rested. This greeting of grace and peace comes not only from John, but also **from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.** These seven Spirits before God's heavenly throne are the One Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who is alive and working in the seven congregations of Asia, by the indwelling of the Spirit in the believing heart. In the book of Revelation, the words of God's Spirit are not only given to these seven congregations which passed out of existence long ago, but these words are given to all Christian congregations today. The message is that the Savior who comes in grace and peace, is yet to come and judge the whole world for its sin.

Of course, He has already been here once. In that little town of Bethlehem, the Almighty and All-powerful God who lived and reigned in the heavens, added to Himself or took on human nature. From heaven above to earth He came as a little, tiny, helpless baby of flesh and blood - just like you and me. Coming out of the womb of His own mother, into His lungs the baby Jesus breathed the air of this earth for the first time as a human child. Away in a manger, before the eyes of Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds, the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head. As He grew and matured into a man, He remained sinless, spotless and undefiled. On the cross He took our sins, the Lord laying upon Him the iniquity of us all. He suffered, died, and was buried, and rose again the third day. He ascended into heaven, and even now sits at the right hand of God, with all power and authority.

But He will come again, and because Jesus is the Lord **which is to come**, Christians throughout the world today celebrate and observe what we call "Advent." While January 1st is the beginning of our calendar year, we who worship Christ our King should remember our Church year begins four Sundays before Christmas, which is today, the first Sunday in Advent.

The word "Advent" means "coming". Indeed the Lord is coming. He will come again, the second time. The Bible says, **Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.** On that day, whether you live in the USA or China, New Zealand or Africa, every eye shall see Christ coming down from the clouds. No man, dead or alive can escape His judgment. Even the dead which died thousands of years ago, will see His return. It doesn't matter whether the dead were buried at sea, cremated, eaten by wild animals, or by worms in the grave. When Christ returns that dead body will arise and see. Job says, "For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall

stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Yes, the Lord Jesus, once born a lowly child, laying in a manger....He will return as the Judge of both the quick and the dead. **Every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.** The Roman soldiers who nailed Jesus to the tree, the Jews who cried out "Crucify Him, crucify Him", ALL shall see Him return. Also those who refused to repent of their sins when they heard the preaching of Noah, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or John the Baptist, they too shall see Christ return. All families and races of this earth that refused to repent will wail and cry out in fear when Christ returns to judge the quick and the dead.

The apostle John speaks as an eyewitness of that day saying, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Because all will be judged according to their works, we have the season of Advent which comes just before Christmas. Its purpose is to prepare souls for the Second Coming of the Lord. For if God does not find us clothed with the garment of faith on that day, if we stand naked before God in our sin having refused to repent..... God's sentence for us will be everlasting death. He will judge us for our evil works. But if we truly confess our sins to God and repent in our heart, and if we look in faith to Jesus Christ to save us from our sin, God will not condemn us. Instead God will say to us "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." God will then take us to heaven.

As we now begin this season of Advent, and as we enter into this super-busy month of December, let us lay aside all the busy-ness of the hectic season. Now that we are in church, let us think of spiritual things; the Lord Jesus Christ, God, and His kingdom. In our hearts let us prepare for His Coming by faith and trust in the forgiveness of sins. For who knows if in a year from now we will still be alive on this earth? Since we do not know the day of our departure, every day we live we must be prepared in faith. The Bible says "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." If you want to die in faith, believe on the Lord Jesus. That is why we have the season of Advent, so that we have faith in Christ TODAY, and not tomorrow. "Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation." 2 Cor. 6:2 Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." God's will is that you believe in Jesus for the remission of sins. The Bible says, "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

In the name of Jesus there is salvation and peace. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Our text today says that Jesus is the Almighty God, an everlasting God. **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.** While these words apply to the entire Trinity, Jesus is a part of the Holy Trinity and so Jesus is the Almighty God, Alpha and Omega. Jesus has no beginning and no end. Jesus once said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am". Jesus was the very God who spoke to Moses at the burning bush. When God said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM, God was revealing to us His eternal existence. He is the God **which is, and which was, and which is to come.** God *IS*, in a sense that nobody else is, for God *IS* in and of Himself: being the Creator of all things, and yet created by none. God is uncreate. God is from eternity. His existence is eternal, His power unlimited. His almighty power and Godhead are so high above us it makes our head spin. Finite man cannot comprehend God's infinite and eternal being.

Not only is the One True God eternal, almighty, and infinite, but His name is holy and sacred. In the Hebrew language He is known as Elohim, Adonai, El Shaddai, or Yawweh. These holy names for God came from the name by which God revealed Himself saying, I AM THAT I AM. God's name is I AM. His English name of Jehovah comes from the transliterated Hebrew word Yawweh, and Yawweh comes from the Hebrew "haw-yaw". But in the original Hebrew language, there are only consonants and no vowels. Thus God's name is more like the letters YHWH, and we don't know how to pronounce that! The Jews themselves considered God's name so holy and sacred that when they read the Scriptures, they would invent different words for "God" based on the vowel points. This is how the word Adonai and Elohim came about.

But what does this mean to us today? While we do not want to be superstitious concerning the name of God, and we are free to speak of Him as Yawweh, Adonai, Elohim, Jehovah, or Lord God Almighty, we should treat His name with respect and reverence, for it is holy. God's name is so holy and sacred that He has commanded us saying, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Like Moses who was commanded to take off his shoes in the Lord's presence, so we should take off and put away the hypocrisy of our hearts by repentance of sins and faith. For what is man's name in comparison to God? We are children of Adam and Eve. If man is to have a name, let that name be MUD. Not only our hands, but our hearts have been corrupted by sin.

Thanks be to God that there is salvation through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! **Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, 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. Truly all glory and honor belong to Jesus. For He is a faithful witness....Jesus is that great Prophet sent by God to bring the joyous news of the Gospel to all men! "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." His witness is true. His Gospel Word carries with it the power to cleanse us from all sin. Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Jn 15:3 Jesus washed us from our sins in His own blood.

Jesus is called the **first begotten of the dead**, because that "Mighty God" went into the grave of death itself. By His death Jesus took the power of death away from the devil. Satan can no longer threaten us with the everlasting death of hell, if we but trust in Christ as our Savior. For Christ our Savior has already crushed Satan under His feet. After defeating Satan by His own suffering and death, He descended into hell, and preached victory to His conquered foe. Jesus rose again on the third day and He wants us to trust in His power over sin, death, and the devil.

Picture now a hospital with sick and dying children. This is a picture of mankind. Jesus walks into this hospital as the Great Physician and He gives us life. He heals us sickly children by giving us the medicine of His grace. He purges us of our sin with His own holy blood. We hear His Gospel Word and believe. He resurrects us from spiritual death, giving us faith, hence spiritual life. His redeeming love for us is so powerful and pure, that He exalts all believers to the status of kings and queens in His spiritual kingdom of faith. He **hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.** We say Amen, because God's Word is true. We assent to His Word for God has convinced our hearts of His wondrous salvation! In the heart of believers throughout the world, there is peace on earth, which is spiritual peace in the heart, by the faith of Jesus Christ.

We glorify Him because of all He has given us. Consider Holy Communion. In Holy Communion He faithfully gives us His own body and blood as a sure sign a new testament of His grace. When the members of our church commune today, they can have the full assurance, that they are receiving the very body and blood of Christ for the remission of sins. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" This body and blood will also help us as believers to amend our sinful ways and do good. God preserves our faith through this Holy Sacrament.

As we therefore continue in this Advent season, up through Christmas and beyond, let us remember that the Lord indeed will come again in all His glory, and all His holy angels with Him. Let us therefore be prepared to meet Him in faith, that we may enjoy life everlasting. Amen.

Pastor Tobin Pederson, 7685 Maple Hill Rd. Corcoran, MN 55340, 763-494-5164, solideogloria96@comcast.net srmn0594