

## Revelation 1:4-6

## THE SALUTATION

**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; 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.* (1:4-5a)**

Unlike modern letters, in which the senders put their names at the end of the letter, ancient letters sensibly named their writers at the beginning. John identifies himself as the writer and names the seven churches (listed in 1:11) which are in the Roman province of Asia (modern Turkey) as the recipients. He greets them with a standard New Testament greeting, “Grace be unto you, and peace.”

The word “from” in verse 4-5a identifies three sources of grace and peace. First, John identifies the source as being “from him which is, and which was, and which is to come.” Here John identifies God the Father. John identifies God in anthropomorphic terms. Terms used by writers of Scripture in which physical characteristics (characteristics that we can understand) are used to explain God. Although God is timeless, John views Him in time dimensions (present, past, and future is John’s order). John gives clarification to this statement in Chapters 1:18 and 4:8.

Second, John identifies the source of grace and peace as being “from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.” All that I have read agree that John in this verse is speaking of the Holy Spirit in all His fullness and splendor. The writer to the Hebrews identifies the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of Grace” (Hebrews 10:29). Paul in Galatians 5:22 said that the fruit of the Spirit is “peace.” Here in our text John identifies the Holy Spirit in all of His fullness at the throne of God.

Third, John identifies the source of grace and peace as being “from Jesus Christ, *who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.*” John presents Jesus Christ also as a source of grace and peace. But John gives greater detail about Jesus than he did God, or the Holy Spirit. This is only fitting because this book is after all, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

John describes Jesus Christ as “the faithful witness.” A faithful witness is one who always speaks the truth and represents the truth. Jesus was a faithful witness in that He witnessed of God. No one had ever witnessed of God in the manner that Jesus did. His witness was unprecedented and unpopular. He witnessed to the nature of sin. He spoke the truth about people and their sin. The religious leaders hated Him for His position on sin. He witnessed for the need of God’s righteousness. He witnessed of judgment to come. He witnessed of the news of salvation. John described Jesus Christ as “the first

begotten of the dead.” John does not mean that Jesus was chronologically the first one to be raised from the dead, because He was not (I Kings 17:17-23; II Kings 4:32-36; 13:20-21; Matthew 9:23-25; Luke 7:11-15; John 11:30-44). However, John does mean that Jesus was the first to die and resurrect and yet is alive today. John is speaking of Jesus’ preeminence over death.

John described Jesus Christ as “the prince of the kings of the earth.” The title actually describes Jesus as the ruler of the kings of the earth. The title depicts Christ as absolutely sovereign over the affairs of this world, to which He holds the title deed (Revelation 17:14; 19:16). The first time Jesus came He was veiled in the form of a child; lived a sinless life; preached a heart shaking message; died a horrible death. The next time Jesus comes all will recognize Him; every eye shall see Him; all the armies of the world will be smitten by the words of His mouth; He will come as Sovereign King and Lord of all.

The work of Christ on behalf of the believer caused John to burst forth in an inspired benediction of praise. Oh my fellow-believer, in the words of **verses 5b-6** we see the heart of the gospel message: (1) He “loved us.” (2) He “washed us from our sins in his own blood.” (3) He “hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.” Therefore, we should burst forth in praise and say as John said, “to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever.”

By: Jerry W. Arnold  
All Rights Reserved