

THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

Revelation 1:1-8

Introduction

*****Purpose: To call people to a better understanding of the power of Christ and of His authority over their lives.**

[From Illy]... WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Tom Boyd, a pastor in Tennessee, tells about a woman who was a member of a church he pastored. She was flamboyant and somewhat eccentric but Boyd was impressed with her intense commitment to the faith. She did not have a self-righteous bone in her body, but her devotion to God was clear and articulate.

One evening at a dinner party in her home, [she and Boyd] were animatedly discussing some theological idea. In the midst of the give and take her teenage daughter, probably frustrated with all of the high-brow discussion of religion, asked, "Mother, why do you talk about religion all the time? Why are you so religious?"

This question brought a hush to the dining table. Her mother paused dramatically, pushed her chair back from the table, stood and responded, "Every morning before you are awake, I rise and walk into the living room. I lift my arms and ask, 'Who's in charge here?' The answer always comes back: 'Not you!' That's why I am religious. Because I am not in charge!"

Boyd then concludes, "Religious life begins with the realization that we are not in charge, and from there we can proceed to align ourselves to the One who is in charge."

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When the apostle Paul surrendered his life to Christ, his first response was a question that would govern his decisions for the rest of his days. He asked, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (See Acts 22:10 – "What shall I do, Lord?") So too, we must seek an answer to that penetrating question—whether it is in the home, in business, in school, in the community, or in politics.

What I hope that you will see this morning is that Jesus Christ is indeed Lord of lords and that his power and authority extend into your life and mine.

Last week we began our study of the book of Revelation with a look at some background information regarding this book of prophecy written by the Apostle John. I also laid out some important considerations to keep in mind as we go through this study. If you were not here last week I would encourage you to find the message on our church website and either listen to it or read through the notes.

We ended last week by looking at the first three verses. Verses 1-3 constitute a prologue to the entire book of Revelation, an explanation of how John came to write this account in the first place.

Just a quick review: Revelation - apocalypse - an unveiling; of Jesus Christ. It came from God the Father to the Son, delivered by an angel to John for the purpose of showing the believers what was to take place in the future, and it came with a promise of blessing for those who would read, study and take to heart the words of this prophecy.

- the time is near - think how much nearer is the time of Christ's coming now than it was when John wrote this account about 1900 years ago. Now let us move on to our text for today, as we look at John's description of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I. Call to Understand God's Nature – vv. 4-5

This entire passage—from v. 4-8—is John's greeting to his readers. But there is a great deal of theology and teaching in these verses as well, and the first thing we see is a call to understand the nature of God in w. 4-5:

In these verses - the Trinity is depicted – v. 4 – God, who is, was, and is to come.

[From Illy]... THE ETERNAL GOD

One writer described God's eternal existence in this way: "It is duration, without beginning or end; existence, without bonds or dimension; present, without past or future. God's eternity is youth, without infancy or old age; life, without birth or death; today, without yesterday or tomorrow."

The seven Spirits of God, and Jesus Christ – there is reference to all three members of the Trinity.

Then, in verse 5 - Jesus described in His three offices:

- A. **Prophet** – “the faithful witness” - to the truth of his deity, his Messiahship, his promises; everything He is. He has borne faithful and true testimony by his ministry, by his miracles, by the shedding of his blood to seal our salvation. He is the faithful witness. Of all prophets, then and now, there is none more faithful, more reliable, more truthful than the Lord Jesus Himself.
- B. **Priest** – “firstborn from the dead” – Quote: (John Gill) “...being the first that rose from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life; for though some few were raised before him, yet not by themselves, nor to live for ever, but to die again. Moreover, he is the firstfruits of the resurrection, the pledge and earnest of it, as well as the efficient cause and exemplar of it. This character supposes that he died, as he did, for the sins of his people; and that he rose again from the dead, as he did, for their justification; and that he rose first as their head and representative, and opened the way of life for them.” – (John Gill's Expositor)
Read Hebrews 10:19-22 – As our great high priest, he has opened up a new and living way, and given us access to the Father.
- C. **King** – “the ruler of the kings of the earth” - that is why He is called the King of kings. This is to be understood “...literally of the kings and princes of this world, over whom Christ is King and Lord, who receive their crowns and kingdoms from him, and rule by him, and are accountable to him, as they one day must be.” (Gill)
 There are men and women who serve as kings or queens or rulers over the nations of the world. But Christ is the King of kings—that is, He is king and ruler over the kings of the earth.

And so Jesus Christ is the One who is, who was and who is to come. He is the One who lives, and always has been and always will be. He is the One who is eternally existent, who lives in the present, without past or future. He is the one who is today, without yesterday or tomorrow.

The second calling we have here is the...

II. Call to Worship and Exalt the Lord Jesus Christ – vv.5b-6

What a magnificent doxology we have in these verses, along with a very important theological statement about the Lord Jesus. **Read vv. 5b-6.** We have three things exhibited for us here again.

- A. **His love for us** - expressed of course in the cross... John spoke much of God's love for us. In his first epistle, as he encourages his readers to love one another, he reminds us of how much God loves us. Listen to these words: **Read 1 John 4:9-10.**
 The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 5:8 – “But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 The second thing John reminds us of, which should lead to worship and exaltation of Christ is...
- B. **Our salvation** - secured for us by his blood... It is the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross at Calvary that has secured our salvation. The writer to the Hebrews tells us: **Read Hebrews 9:11-14, 22.**
 The Apostle Paul tells us in Eph. 1:7 – “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.”
 There is a third truth here that should lead us to worship and exalt Christ. That is...
- C. **Our Calling** - made to be a kingdom and priests to serve God.
1 Peter 2:5 – “...you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, **to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**”
1 Peter 2:9 – “**But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood...**”
 We are called to serve God, because of the ministry of Jesus Christ in our lives.

And of course, the one responsible for all of this is worthy of our praise, our worship and our adoration. I want to read these verses again. Listen as I do so and allow these truths sink in to your mind and your heart. *Read verses 5b-6.*

There we have a call to worship and exalt our blessed Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.

There is a third call in these verses...

III. Call to Watch for Christ's Coming – v.7

Read verse 7. Note the things John says about the coming of Jesus Christ:

- He is coming in judgment – clouds are the symbol of wrath to sinners
 Psalms 18:11 – “He made darkness his covering, his canopy around

him, thick clouds dark with water.”

Isaiah 19:1 – “An oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt; and the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.”

- Every eye will see him – it will be a visible return
“And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”” (Acts 1:9-11 ESV)
As he left, ascending visibly from the Mount of Olives, so he will return visibly to the Mount of Olives.
- Even those who pierced him - Romans and Jews, essentially all of us whose sin pierced Jesus and put him on the cross.
- All tribes of the earth will wail or mourn - a desperate fear at confronting the King of kings and Lord of Lords.

Just a note regarding the second coming of Christ. There are two parts to his coming. First he will come in the air to take his church out of the world. That is what we call the Rapture, and he will be seen only by believers who are caught up to meet Him in the air. Then, following the tribulation period, He will set foot on the Mount of Olives when he will defeat the wicked armies of the world and establish his kingdom of righteousness. That is the Return of Christ.

It behoves every one of us to be prepared, to be waiting and watching for his coming, that we need not "wail on account of him" Rather we ought to say as John did, "Even so! Amen."

Conclusion

Review the calls in this passage:

- to understand the nature of God – trinity and eternity
- to worship and exalt Jesus Christ
- to watch for His coming

In verse 8 John gives us one more picture of the power and the magnificence of our wonderful Lord. It is an image of His nature that we ought never to forget. The Alpha and the Omega – the beginning and the end.

Moses in Psalm 90:2 – “...from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.” He is the eternal present.

Briefly comment on verse 8 – He is the eternal One, the Almighty One...

Christ's power and authority extends from having control over this great universe right down to having authority over your life and mine. Are you willing to bow down before Him and worship Him and surrender your all to Him?