

Revelation to John 1:4b-8

The old Churchman had many reasons to be disturbed, discouraged, sad and even bitter. As a young man John had left his fishing business to follow Jesus the Christ, to respond to his teaching, to witness his death and resurrection and to preach his gospel with vigour. However, as time went on, hostility to Christians grew. John suffered a flogging from the Jews, knew the violent murder of his brother by King Herod, witnessed the persecution, apathy and struggles of young churches in Asia and experienced exile on the rugged island of Patmos in his old age.

But bitter, sad, discouraged and disturbed, John was not. Instead he was greatly encouraged because he had received a vision in the Spirit on the Lord's Day and he was to share this vision with the seven churches of Asia and with churches down through the ages, including us.

Today we will consider only a few verses from its first chapter, Revelation 1:4b-8. It is John's greeting to the seven churches. It is God's greeting and it contains a praise of the Son.

God's greeting to the church 4b-5a, 8

The Father greets us. The Father who is eternal, greets us. He was and is and is to come. He is the God who appeared to Moses in the burning bush when he commissioned him to save Israel from slavery. This God is the LORD. He is the I AM. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.

He is the Almighty One. He is the Creator of the sun, moon, stars, hills, the earth and all that dwell therein. He is the God of the storm, lightning,

Revelation to John 1:4b-8

wind and rain. He is the God of the armies and the God of all the gods of the earth.

The Spirit greets us. He goes from God's throne into all the earth. He is the seven spirits, because he is perfect in all his attributes as he goes about the world. He is also represented as the seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb, who is Christ. He is perfect in knowledge because his eyes see all. He is perfect in power because of his being represented by seven horns. He is perfect in his holiness, knowledge and power.

The Christ greets us. The Christ John represents is Jesus of Nazareth. There had been many who had claimed to be the Christ but Jesus was the faithful witness.

Jesus Christ was the one who spoke the truth and God bore witness to the truth by the signs that he did. He was the one who turned water to wine, healed the official's son, lame man and man born blind, and who fed the five thousand and walked on the Sea of Galilee. He was the One who faithfully bore witness to his Father in heaven, even to the humiliation of the flogging, crucifixion and death.

This Jesus Christ was the one who was first born from the dead. Not only had he raised his friend Lazarus from death after four days, but he, himself, rose from death. His raising, however, was a resurrection with a body that could appear and disappear, that could eat and be handled and yet pass through walls into and from a locked room. He is the head of the new humanity who entrust themselves to him for eternity.

Revelation to John 1:4b-8

This Jesus Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth. He may have appeared before King Herod and the Governor who tried him as representative of the Emperor of Rome, but Jesus was the King of kings. He was the promised King from David's line and Pilate got it right when, in jest, he had the superscription written over him as King of the Jews.

And what is God's greeting to his people? Grace and peace! The Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit greet his people in Asia then and in Australia now with, "Grace". We hear it a thousand times in scripture, "God loves us, God loves us, God loves us, God loves us." And if God loves us, all is well with our soul. We have peace, peace, peace, peace at the very depth of our being".

The Response of God's People v5b-7

Glory be to our Redeemer!

We have sinned. Don't we know it? We have done what we ought not to have done and we have not done what we should have done. Our conscience tells us that and accuses us. However Jesus has paid the ransom price by his death, The Lamb of God has been slain for our sins. The result is that we have been freed from all guilt by his death. Our sins have been removed from us as far away as the East from the West. They are drowned in the depth of the sea! God has forgotten them!

Revelation to John 1:4b-8

Glory be to our Royal Priest!

In Christ we share his reign. In Christ we share his priesthood. As we serve Christ so we reign with him in life. As we share his priesthood so we act as his ambassadors declaring the character of God on the one hand and praying for people as we act as intercessors on the other. We have the word of God as our message and the prayer for the Spirit as our help.

Glory be to our Judge v7

Jesus will come on the clouds with his holy angels to judge all the world. The accountability is all inclusive. Those who are his faithful ones will be vindicated and separated to life. Those who have not been faithful and have refused him, will be shown to be foolish, and will be separated to death and will wail at their folly.

So why was the old man, John, not discouraged despite his circumstances? It was because God loved him and he could rest in God's peace. In fact he could exult in Jesus the Redeemer who freed us from all sin, Jesus the Royal Priest with whom he reigned and to whom he had access and Jesus the Judge who will vindicate him and destroy all evil.