

## ONE STORY | ONE SAVIOR - UNIT 7 | LESSON 25b




Letters – The Promise Explained Through the KING’S Church

### God is a PROMISE Completing God

**JESUS** as the 1) **PROMISED KING** has 2) **RESCUED** His people through His Perfect Law Keeping Life and Sacrificial, Substitutionary Death on the Cross, whereby 3) **DEFEATING** the enemy of sin and death, and is 4) **RESTORING** them to the PLACE OF REST where Heaven and Earth are rejoined and God reigns and abides 5) so that His people shall be with Him forever for their **JOY**.

## “Jesus: The Ruler of the Kings of the Earth” Revelation 1:4-8

Rev. 1:<sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and **the ruler of kings on earth**. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood <sup>6</sup> and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

	<p>THE HEAD - To Know how Jesus is the rightful and absolute ruler over the kings of the earth. Q – Why is knowing <u>Jesus is King</u> is so important in our current circumstances?</p>
	<p>THE HEART - To Choose Jesus over all other “earthly” kings. Q – What are some “other kings” in our present world that oppose King Jesus?</p>
	<p>THE HAND - To Pray for the soon return of our King Jesus. Q – While we wait for His soon return, what are ways we can proclaim the gospel to those around us?</p>

### EMPHASIS

God creates all, controls all, and commands all (cf. Philippians 2:1-18).

The **EMPHASIS** of this lesson is . . .

1. God is right now reclaiming what is rightfully His as Creator and Redeemer through signs and wonders.
2. In the **REVELATION**, God comforts His people by reclaiming all things rightfully His (Rev. 2-19) as Creator (Rev. 4) and Redeemer (Rev. 5). As He pushes His agenda forward, He is reconstituting the Garden for the joy of His people (Rev. 21, 22).
3. Everything happening in our [God’s] world is accomplishing His purpose:
4. This looks [and feels] like TRIBULATION.
5. Yet, God controls the TRIBULATION. [Chaps. 6-20].

6. God is throwing the squatters out and destroying the invasive species.

**The Melodic Line – From Genesis through the Church to the final chapters of Revelation, the *Story of God* comes full circle.**

## LITERARY CONTEXT

Some of the literary information is in the structure of the assigned passage found below.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

“The God in Revelation is the same God who manifests self in the entire Sacred Christian Canon. Through Jesus Christ, this God poured out the Holy Spirit upon John to be both the witness and instrument of God’s voice, signs and wonders. The book’s title is mentioned in the first verse and its main goal is to alert readers to what they will encounter as the narrative unfolds. In theological terms; Revelation refers to an “unveiling,” of a worldview previously hidden from ordinary eyes; especially from the eyes of the oppressed people of Asia Minor. **It is not a secret that Revelation was written to an oppressed group of people who experienced a nightmare from Imperial rule. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus through John summons readers and hearers not to worship Caesar and not to hear imperial propaganda as the final word.**”<sup>1</sup>

“During Imperial Rome the balance of power in higher classes shifted dramatically. A new social class came about that changed the way social classes worked. Imperial domus was a new social class which included the emperor and his family. Emperors controlled all affairs in the empire and were put above all others in society. Emperors were even considered gods until the rise of Christianity.”<sup>2</sup>

“The Imperial cult was inseparable from that of Rome's official deities, whose cult was essential to Rome's survival and whose neglect was therefore treasonous.”<sup>3</sup>

## STRUCTURE

Our primary passage is Revelation 1:4-8. The Lesson’s primary emphasis will be pt. II, The Doxology to Christ (vv. 5b-6). The rest of the structure is provided to show the larger context for the study.

- I. A Blessing from God (vv. 4-5a).
  - A. TO WHOM (v. 4a)
    - a. “The seven churches that are in Asia.”
      - Knowable, not fictional – Real
      - Normal, not exceptional – every church is like these churches
  - B. WHAT (v. 4a)
    - a. “Grace and Peace.”

C. FROM WHOM (v. 4c -5a)

- a. John (v. 4a)
- b. God the Father (“from Him. . .” [v. 4b {“book ends” vv. 4b w/ v. 8}])
- c. From the Seven Spirits (v. 4c)
- d. From Jesus (vv. 5-8)
  - i. Who He is
  - ii. What He did
  - iii. Who we are

**“John’s bracing benediction is immediately followed by a dramatic doxology to Christ the King. In the process of praising Jesus, John uses phrases designed to build our faith and hope.** He “loves us,” present tense, continuative, all the time. He has freed us from our sins by his blood; this is a done deal, in the past. Thus, it is an unshakeable reality of life. And this loving King has made us to be a kingdom and priests. We may feel like unimportant peons under the thumb of the powers that be, but we are, in fact, royalty.”<sup>4</sup>

Whatever else we read in chapters 2 and 3 concerning His church, this thought and theology form the unshakeable underpinnings that no amount of assault by the serpent and his minions can undermine.

II. A Doxology to Christ (vv. 5b-6).

“The rest of verse 5 and all of verse 6 are a doxology (ascribing glory, the Greek *doxa*) to Christ. Jesus is glorified because:

- He loves us (the way Revelation is often read the love of God in Christ can easily be lost);
- He freed or released us from our sins by his blood (in Revelation Jesus is always the slaughtered Lamb who died for us);
- He made us to be a kingdom and priests (that is, he made believers a kingdom, each member is a priest to God; these are ancient privileges of Israel; see Exodus 19:6).”<sup>5</sup>

- a. His Person
  - i. The faithful witness
  - ii. The firstborn of the dead
  - iii. The ruler of the kings of the earth
- b. His Passion
  - i. To Him **who loves** us [this is grace].
- c. His Provision
  - i. To Him **who released** us from our sins by His blood [this is peace].
  - ii. To Him **who has made** us to be a kingdom
  - iii. To Him **who has made** us to be priests to His God

- d. His People ["Who are we?"]
  - i. Released / We have freedom
  - ii. Kingdom / We have identity
  - iii. Priests / We have access

We go from this towering doxology to a welcoming prophecy.

- III. A Prophecy about Christ (v. 7).
- IV. A Mark of the Divine Author (v. 8).

Verses 1 and 8 almost work as bookends attempting to contain the flood waters present in our text.

## JESUS IN THE TEXT

It is through the Son's activity, that His church is redeemed and His creation reclaimed.

Jesus as the fulfillment of the SEED PROMISE completes the BLOOD PICTURE. Our present passage shows and celebrates His work in behalf of His people.

True blessing only comes in and through Jesus' work in behalf of His people.

## APPLICATION

"What then are the lessons of Revelation 1:4-8 and what are readers called to do in terms of appropriation of the message?"

1. **The first lesson is** in verses Revelation 1:5-6 where Jesus is praised for three roles: "Loving, freeing, and made us."

These are not just words but they refer to God's disclosure of love expressed in the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. Revelation is about God's love to all humanity and its entire creation.

2. **The other lesson is** that Christ followers are on a journey and along this journey; they will encounter other Neros (the dragon and beast in the form of cancer, death, hunger, wars, terrorism, and HIV/AIDS) and will be tested with idolatry imageries.

At times they will be tempted to settle for mediocrity or compromise with globalism but with faith and trust in God, the Lamp will lead them into the New Jerusalem -- or a place where God dwells.

3. **Above all,** God is in absolute control of all things and this same God has the first and final word in creation."<sup>6</sup>

## VISUALS | CRAFTS

1. "John Phillips tells the following story, "One of the most stirring pages in English history tells of the conquests and crusades of Richard I, the Lionhearted. While Richard was away trouncing Saladin, his kingdom fell on bad times. His sly and graceless brother, John, usurped all the prerogatives of the king and misruled the realm. The people of England suffered, longing for the

return of the king, and praying that it might be soon. Then one day Richard came. He landed in England and marched straight for his throne. John's castles tumbled like ninepins. Great Richard laid claim to his throne, and none dared stand in his path. The people shouted their delight. They rang peal after peal on the bells. The Lion was back! Long live the king! One day a King greater than Richard will lay claim to a realm greater than England. Those who have abused the earth in His absence, seized His domains, and mismanaged His world will all be swept aside."<sup>7</sup>

2. Hand out 12" rulers and talk about how Jesus is the ruler against which all other things are measured. He is the standard that determines right from wrong.
3. Have plastic clear cups that are marked ahead of time. Have kids pour water to the various marks until the cup is full. Jesus is the means of measuring what is true and what is false. After the cup is filled to a set mark, hand out a small cookie and have them enjoy the drink and the cookie!

## MEMORY VERSE

Rev. 1:<sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood <sup>6</sup>and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

## RESOURCES

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2825](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2825)

<sup>2</sup> <http://apworldromehistory.weebly.com/during-imperial-rule.html>

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial\\_cult\\_\(ancient\\_Rome\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_cult_(ancient_Rome))

<sup>4</sup> [http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-29b/?type=lectionary\\_epistle](http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/proper-29b/?type=lectionary_epistle)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=561](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=561)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=2825](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2825)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.sermonnotebook.org/revelation/Revelation%201\\_4-8.htm](http://www.sermonnotebook.org/revelation/Revelation%201_4-8.htm) Exploring Revelation, rev. ed. [Chicago: Moody, 1987; reprint, Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1991], 22-23