

Salutation (vv. 4-8)

John Greets Churches on behalf of the Trinity (v.4-5a)

VERSE 4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia (Ἰωάννης ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις

ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ: [noun nom.m.s. John + art.w/adj.dat.f.p. hepta seven + noun dat.f.p. ekklesia church (here local) + prep en + art.w/noun loc.f.s. Asia (Roman province in western Turkey) :

Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come [χάρις

ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ἦν καὶ τοῦ ἐρχόμενος [noun f.s. charis grace + pro.dat.2.p. su you + conj kai and + noun nom.f.s. eirene peace; as a greeting like shalom + prep apo +

art.w/pres.act.part.nom. (only place where apo takes the nominative case in the NT) m.s. eimi to

be; “who is” + conj kai + art.nom.m.s. + imperf.act.ind.3m.s. eimi “who was” + conj kai and +

art.w/pres.mid.-depon.part.nom.m.s. erchomai; “who is to come”], **and from the seven**

Spirits who are before His throne [καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου

αὐτοῦ [conj kai + prep apo + art.w/adj.abl.nt.p. hepta seven + noun gen.nt.s. pneuma spirit +

pro.rel.nom.nt.s. hos who + prep enopion before + art.w/noun gen.m.s. thronos throne +

pro.gen.m.s. autos his]),

VERSE 5a and from Jesus Christ (καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, [conj kai + prep apo + noun abl.m.s. Jesus + noun abl.m.s. Christos]),

ANALYSIS: VERSE 4

1. This salutation has elements found in other NT letters/epistles:
 - A. It is addressed to local churches (v.4a; cf. Rom.1:1,7a; 1Cor.1:1-2, et al).
 - B. It has a benediction (blessing bestowed; vv. 4b-5a; as in Rom.1:7b; 1Cor.1:3, et al).
 - C. It has a doxology (e.g., praise; vv. 5b-6; as in Rom.1:7; 1Cor.1:4, et al).
 - D. And, it has a call to worship (GAP the truth herein; vv. 7-8; as in 1Cor.1:10; Gal.1:6ff.).
2. John formally begins recording the book as per direction by Christ in vv. 11, 19.
3. John pens this chapter utilizing his own literary style in contrast to chapters two and three where the record is pure dictation from Jesus Christ to John in the letters to the seven churches.
4. In verse 4 to the end of this chapter John addresses the seven churches.
5. In John’s vision of the exalted Christ he was told to write “the things which you have seen (chap. 1), and the things which are (chaps. 2-3) and the things which will take place after these things (chaps. 6-22)
6. Without undo delay, John was enabled by God the Holy Spirit to record for posterity a perfect record of all these things he saw and heard in his visionary experience.
7. Due to the grammatical anomalies of the Greek text of Revelation, some have suggested that this was because John was so pressed for time that he did not have time to pay attention to standard Greek grammar.

8. This goes against the fact that God the Holy Spirit was with all human authors of Scripture to ensure that the finished product was exactly what as God would have it written.
9. Furthermore, John had ample time to record everything as it had been revealed to him during the time of his visionary transport.
10. He begins by simply identifying himself as “John” suggesting that he was so well known among the churches of Asia that there was no need for any other specification as to his person.
11. While men throughout the centuries have taken issue with Johannine authorship based on the grammatical style of Revelation, in contrast to his four other books, this difference can be explained by: (1) subject matter; (2) dictation; (3) extensive OT allusions affecting a Hebrew style.
12. We know for a fact that there were other churches in geographical region beside the seven local churches specified in this salutation.
13. For example, there was the church at Colossae.
14. A great percentage of the usage of the noun for church in the NT refers to a local assembly (some 80%).
15. The NT presents the autonomous local assembly as the environment and vehicle for the dissemination of Bible teaching.
16. All other vehicles are of man’s creation (like denominations and para-church organizations).
17. The benediction/blessing (“Grace to you, and peace”), as noted above, is quite standard (as in Paul’s letters).
18. Grace is the title and policy of God’s plan.
19. Orientation to grace determines whether or not anyone can come under God’s peace.
20. Phase 1 peace (eternal salvation) is contingent on receiving the grace of God in reconciliation (cf. Rom.5:1).
21. Phase 2 peace between God and the believer-priest is contingent upon participation in GAP (cf. 2Pet.1:2: “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord”).
22. Apart from intake and application of BD a believer lives a life alienated from experiential grace and peace.
23. Believers who are at odds with the directive will of God as articulated by sound teaching are instructed to be reconciled to God (2Cor.5:20...“be reconciled to God.”).
24. Those who enjoy God’s peace, as a result of grace, are at peace with God, and as a consequence have inner peace and live in peace with others.
25. In particular, the blessings of “grace and peace” cannot be yours unless you are utilizing the Rebound technique (cf. 1Pet.1:2 as noted in the phrase “to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood,” followed by the benediction: “May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.”
26. That individual positive believers will come under degrees of this depends upon willingness to apply BD as implied in the phrase “to the fullest measure.”
27. John’s wish for the seven churches residing in the Proconsular Asia (made up of Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia) is that they stay and come under God’s grace and peace.
28. Grace represents the policy of the Plan and peace represents our experience.

29. The eternal God, the source of all grace and peace, is introduced as the One “who is and who was and who is to come.”
30. Because of the references to the Holy Spirit and Christ which follows, this is considered as relating to God the Father.
31. This truth is presented in an unusual grammatical construction which occurs with variations four other times (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5).
32. The concept of present, past, and future (that order) corresponds to the threefold chronological division of the book itself (1:19).
33. While God the Father is the object of the 1st *apo* clause, His name points to the physical manifestation of His person in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ.
34. The participial phrase “from Him who is” looks at the essence of God from the perspective of now or the present moment in time.
35. The unique use of the nominative case with what would strictly be considered an ablative-genitive construction with the preposition *apo* suggests a title or name of God.
36. Interestingly the articular participle ὁ ὢν is the very same construction found in the LXX of Ex.3:14 used to translate the Hebrew in the declaration of God’s name to Moses at the burning bush.
37. This violation of strict grammatical usage directs our attention back of the “I AM” of Ex.3:14.
38. The same God that spoke to Moses is the same God who now greets the seven churches of Asia in this salutation.
39. Yahweh (LORD in our versions) literally means the self-existing one.
40. That God is eternal in essence is reflected in this title.
41. The 2nd phrase “the One who was” (literally) is expressed by the imperfect tense (linear past time) of the ‘to be’ verb (*eimi*), which, along with the verb *ginomai*, corresponds to the Hebrew verb *hayah*.
42. This 2nd phrase claims that God the Father has had continual existence at every point in the past.
43. It is designed to highlight God’s eternal existence from eternity past to any moment in the present.
44. The 3rd phrase “the One who is to come” employs an articular participle with the verb *erchomai*- to become.”
45. This participle denotes that the Father is coming in the Person of His co-eternal and co-equal agent, Jesus Christ.
46. Joining the Father in salutation (repeat *apo*) is “the seven spirits which are before His throne.”
47. This is an example of pleonasm which employs a plural to express an singular concept.
48. This has been seen as an illusion to Isaiah 11:2: “The Spirit of the LORD (#1 deity) will rest on Him (Messiah), the spirit of wisdom (#2) and understanding (#3), the spirit of counsel (#4) and might (#5), the spirit of knowledge (#6) and of the fear (#7) of the LORD.
49. There is a clear reference to the Holy Spirit in verse 10, and contextual evidence indicates the Spirit of God in view here (cf. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).
50. And finally, Zech.4:2-6, 10 shows that the number seven is used to represent God the Holy Spirit.
51. The seven fold separation of the 3rd Person of the Godhead suggests His omnipresent.

52. He is also seen to be subservient to the Father and the Son; hence His procession out from the throne (cf. Jn.7:39; 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).
53. Seven throughout the book is symbolic of absolute perfection (55x).
54. John next (v.5a) introduces the 3rd member of the Godhead from who are blessings flow.
55. It is none other than Jesus Christ, who is the visible member of the Godhead, and who acts as the visible manifestation of the Father, and who is revealed to volition by God the HS.

Celebrityship (v.5b)

VERSE 5b the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings

of the earth (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλέων τῆς γῆς. [*art.w/noun nom.m.s. martus witness; martyr + art.w/nom.m.s. pistos faith (Acts.16:1); believer (1Tim.5:16); faithful, dependable, trustworth (passively of persons, God and things) + adj.nom.m.s. prostotokos firstborn + art.w/adj.abl.m.p. nekros dead) conj kai + art.w/noun nom.m.s. archon ruler + art.w/noun abl.m.p. basileus king + art.w/gen.f.s. ge earth*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 5b

1. This part of the salutation provides three designations with respect to the celebrityship of Jesus Christ.
2. It is He who now takes center stage in the narrative that follows.
3. The “faithful witness” aspect of His celebrityship relates to His character as fulfilled in the role of prophet during the days of His public ministry (cf. Jn.18:37).
4. Jesus made it clear to His contemporaries that He only spoke those things He heard from His Father (Jn.8:26, 28; 15:15)— nothing more, nothing less.
5. It also includes the things He did (Jn.5:17-23, 26, 37) as well.
6. Next He is credited with being “the firstborn from the dead,” that is, the first man to receive an immortal resurrection body (cf. Ps.2:7; cp. Acts 23:33; Col.1:18).
7. As Christ is “the firstborn of every creature” (Col.1:15), indicating He was before all creation, so Christ was first in resurrection.
8. This is sometimes called the doctrine of eternal generation as per Col.1:15; Heb.1:6.
9. He is also designated first-born with respect to His human birth (Lk.2:7; cp. Jn.1:14,18; 3:16, 18; 1Jn.4:9).
10. This title is also reserved for the Royal family (Heb.12:23).
11. His resurrection is *from* the mass of mankind who have died.
12. Compare a similar selective resurrection for the church (Phil.3:11).
13. As Christ is first (1Cor.15:20; cf. “first fruits”) so others are to follow Him in resurrection.
14. Christ and all the believing dead are part of what is called “the first resurrection” (Rev. 20:5-6).
15. The unbelieving dead are raised last, after the millennium (Rev.20:12-13).
16. His witness and resurrection are now past and are the basis of which He is appointed to be “ruler of the kings of the earth.”
17. This of course looks to His 2nd coming when He will be established as such as per the divine decrees (Ps. 2:6-9; Isa.9:6-7; Zech.14:9).

18. Currently He exercises sovereignty over the nations from His place at the right hand of the Father (Dan.2:21; Col.2:10).
19. The triple designation attributes the utmost importance to the One before whom every knee will bow.

Doxology to the Son (vv. 5c-6)

VERSE 5c To Him who loves us and released [or washed] us from our sins by His blood (*art.w/pres.act.part.dat.m.s. agapao love + conj kai + aor.act.part.dat.m.s. luo loose, set free, release + pro.acc.1st pl. ego “us” + prep ek + art.w/noun gen.f.p. hamaria sin (personal) + pro.gen.1st pl. ego “our” + prep en + art.w/noun dat.nt.s. haima blood*) –

VERSE 6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father

(*καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, [conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. poieo make, do + pro.acc.p. ego “us” + noun acc.f.s. basileia kingdom + noun acc.m.p. hierus priest + art.w/dat.m.s. theos God + conj kai + noun dat.m.s. pater father + pro.gen.m.s. autos “His”]*-- **to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever.**

Amen [*αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰώνων]· ἀμήν. [pro.dat.m.s. autos him + art.w/noun f.s. doxa glory + conj kai + noun nom.nt.s. kratos power, dominion + prep eis + art.w/noun acc.m.p. aion era, time + art.w/gen.m.p. aion age; literally, “into the ages of the ages” + part. Amen translated from the Hebrew ‘amen’; sometimes translated into Greek by “genoito” as let it be, truly; here used as a strong affirmation and assent at the end of a doxology as ‘this is indeed true’ as in Rom. 11:36; or at the end of a prayer of thanksgiving meaning “that is the way it should be”; figuratively used of Christ as “the Amen” of God in Rev.3:14]*).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 5c-6

1. Following the triple appellations of Christ’s celebrityship, John now focuses on His redemptive work on our behalf.
2. He does this in the form of a doxology of praise and thus dedicates it to the ultimate celebrity in the Plan.
3. The primary attribute that makes our illustrious place in that plan possible is the attribute of love.
4. Without love as a divine attribute there would be no ‘operation grace.’
5. Since God is no respecter of persons His love has been demonstrated towards all persons.
6. Love is the reason God gave His Son on our behalf (Jn.3:16; 1Jn.4:10).
7. Here it denotes Christ’s love towards those in this dispensation who come to saving faith.
8. The present participle with the article denotes an on going process in which we are the objects of continual and unfailing love.
9. Jesus Christ as God and man keeps on exhibiting love towards us.

10. This love preceded our very existence and continues down to the present moment onward and forever.
11. This love is not an emotional love but rather a love that puts the object above all else.
12. Since He is no respecter of person that love applies to all equally in that salvation was made possible for all.
13. Here it is applied towards those who actually come to saving faith.
14. John's celebration of that love pays tribute to its magnitude.
15. The ultimate proof of His love for us will be realized in Ph3.
16. It is the same kind of love produced by the FHS that we are to exhibit towards one another (1Jn.4:11).
17. Only when we are filled with God the HS and apply BD can we produce this kind of love.
18. In our interpersonal relations with one another we should demonstrate this love as presented in 1Cor. 13.
19. This love is demonstrated in all God's dealings with us; even when we displease Him and come under divine discipline.
20. There is absolutely nothing a believer can do (however stupid and evil) or that anyone can do to us that can separate us from the love John speaks of here (Rom.8:38-39).
21. This love is for all believers as all believers are "in Christ."
22. It is the very same love God has for His perfect Son.
23. With regard to any individual (believer or unbeliever) its overt blessings is based on obedience to the will of God.
24. The epitome of this love, and the basis for all other blessings of grace, is seen in the next phrase "and released us from our sins by His blood."
25. However, there is a textual variant between "released" (*luo*) and "washed" (*louo*).
26. The Byzantine text has the latter (differentiated by only one letter).
27. John never uses "to release" in reference to salvation.
28. He does use "to bathe" in connection with soteriology in Jn.13:10.
29. Furthermore, he uses "the blood" terminology in connection with spiritual cleansing and forgiveness in 1Jn.1:7 and Rev.7:14.
30. Consistency would demand that we go with "washed" even though neither term conflicts with the doctrine of salvation.
31. The verb *luo* is not used anywhere else in the NT of release from pre-salvation sins.
32. John does use this term *luo* ('to release') 5x in this book (5:2; 9:14,15, 20:3,7) and one time in 1 John (3:8) and 6x in his gospel (1:27; 2:19; 5:18; 7:23; 10:35; 11:44).
33. Verses where "washed" is used of Ph 1 salvation: Jn.13:10; Heb.10:22; 2Pet.2:22 (and Rev.1:5).
34. It seems best to go with the alternate reading in this instance.
35. Here and in Rev. 7:14 objects are said to be washed in blood and made clean.
36. In 1Jn.1:7 spiritual cleansing is related to blood and in 1Pet. 1:2 sprinkling of blood is related to sanctification.
37. The imagery points us to the saving work of Christ on the cross towards sins.
38. Here sins refer to our pre-salvation sins since the bath motif is in view.
39. Garments and bodies are normally washed in water to make them clean.
40. This use of blood in these contexts points to the reality behind the spiritual death of Christ on the cross.

41. See doctrine of the blood of Christ to demonstrate that it is not the literal blood of Christ that saves, but rather is the spiritual death of Christ during the three hours of darkness that saves.
42. What we have in the NT when references are made to the blood of Christ is a representative analogy and not a direct analogy.
43. Animals under the sacrificial code of the Law of Moses animals bled to death, and the blood was applied in various ways, to illustrate by shadow the work of Christ toward sin.
44. When a person believes in Jesus Christ all their sins are forgiven and they are cleansed internally.
45. Personal sin makes the believer unclean and simple confession cleanses the believer (1Jn.1:9).
46. This too is made possible by the fact Christ suffered for those sins on the cross.
47. Here John extols Christ for what He did for us to wash us from our pre-salvation sins.
48. The participle is an aorist (in contrast to the previous on that is a present tense) and serves to emphasize the historical accomplishment of the fact (“having washed us”).
49. Since this was done for the immediate recipients of this book (believers in the 7 churches of Asia) within the context of the present dispensation they are “made a kingdom” (aorist ind.).
50. A part from any conditional factors, believers’ saving faith alone has “made us a kingdom [of] priests.”
51. The nature of this kingdom is seen in the next phrase “priests to His God and Father.”
52. While the singular “kingdom” denotes our unity and solidarity with God the Father, the plural “priests” stresses our individual placement into the Plan.
53. Each and every believer in the present age is a priest regardless of gender, age, race, etc.
54. This we call the universal priesthood of believers and is so taught in 1Pet. 2:9 “By you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”
55. Actually, the nature of our royal priesthood is based on the priesthood of Jesus Christ which is after the order of the king-priest Melchizedek (Heb.5:6; 7:1-3).
56. In the age of Israel priesthood was confined to the tribe of Levi and then only qualified males could serve.
57. So via positional sanctification at the point of salvation we share everything Christ inherits (1Pet.2:6,9).
58. The function of our priesthood in time is to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God for this dispensation (Rom.12:1, etc.).
59. Also, we are to represent God before our fellow human beings as ambassadors (2Cor.5:20).
60. This is one of the reasons we are not to address any spiritual leader as “father” (Matt. 23:9 ☹).
61. These wonderful doctrinal realities with respect to what Christ has accomplished on our behalf, illicit the actual words of the doxology: “to Him *be* the glory and dominion into the ages of the ages. Amen.”
62. The sense in which “the glory” is used of Christ is the great admiration, honor, praise and renown He will enjoy before men and angels.

63. The second thing that will be His is “dominion” or “power/strength” that comes to one who holds supremacy over something.
64. He alone is worthy of the glory and power that is His and will be universally recognized at His coming.
65. He will possess the glory and power that He now enjoys in the presence of His Father and the holy angels at His appearing and kingdom.
66. This will be His and ours by grace into the ages of eternity future.
67. It is fully His in heaven and it will so be recognized to the joy or dismay of all humanity.
68. The transliterated interjection “Amen” comes from a Hebrew verb that means that which is supported, established, faithful or certain.
69. The term is a declaration meaning “I believe it” or “It is so!”
70. Only by being a faithful student of the Bible and the Book of Revelation in particular can any believer have the confidence and joy and hope that is intended through a thorough study of this entire prophecy.