



November 21, 2021

Revelation 1:4–8 (EHV) ⁴ John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is, who was, and who is coming, and from the seven spirits that are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his own blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom and priests to God his Father—to him be the glory and the power forever. Amen. ⁷ Look, he is coming with clouds, and every eye will see him, including those who pierced him. And all the nations of the earth will mourn because of him. Yes. Amen. ⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, the one who is, and who was, and who is coming, the Almighty.

Titles play an important role in the lives of royalty. Without a title, they don’t have anything. Here’s a humorous look at a king’s titles and bestowing them on the nobility. [*Show clip*].

That’s funny, but here’s a seriously long list of titles that belonged to Charles V. ***Charles, By the grace of God, Holy Roman Emperor, forever August, King of Germany, King of Italy, King of all Spains, of Castile, Aragon, Leon, Navarre, Grenada, Toledo, Valencia, Galicia, Majorca, Sevilla, Cordova, Murcia, Jaen, Algarve, Algeciras, Gibraltar, the Canary islands, King of two Sicilies, of Sardinia, Corsica, King of Jerusalem, King of the Western and Eastern Indies, Lord of the islands and main ocean sea, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, Barbant, Lorraine, Styria, Carinthia, Carinola, Limburg, Luxembourg, Gerderland, Neopatria, Wurttemberg, landgrave of Alsace, Prince of Swabia, Asturia and Catalonia, Count of Flanders, Habsburg, Tyrol, Goritzia, Barcelona, Artois, Burgundy Palatine, Hainaut, Seeland, Ferrette, Kyburg, Namur, Roussillon, Cerdagne, Zutphen, Margrave of the Holy Roman Empire, Burgau, Oristano and Gocino, Lord of Frisia, the Wendiah March, Pordenone, Biscay, Molin, Salins, Tripoli and Mechelen.***¹

Charles V was a powerful ruler. Many others have claimed different titles, ruled nations, and have come and gone. Is there a king who has more titles and rules better than the rest?

¹ <https://thephotographer.co/2011/04/12/charles-vs-full-title/>

The apostle John says, “Yes!” John’s Revelation is probably one of the most popular books in the Bible because of its apocalyptic nature. When we hear the word “apocalypse,” we usually think of disaster on a massive scale. The Greek word means “uncovering” or “revelation.” It’s the title that Jesus himself gave to this book. Jesus gave this vision to John so he could show no matter how bad things get as the end of the world comes, Jesus always wins.

John introduced the things that he would write just like anyone writing a letter to friends. **“John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia”** (Revelation 1:4 NIV). John let everyone know who was writing the letter. In the gospels, John is one of Jesus’ inner circle. In his gospel he called himself **“the disciple whom Jesus loved”** (John 13:23 NIV). He wrote it for seven different churches: 1) Ephesus; 2) Smyrna; 3) Pergamum; 4) Thyatira; 5) Sardis; 6) Philadelphia; and 7) Laodicea. Each city was an important one in the Roman empire. Each place had a congregation that loved Jesus and his word, but faced struggles, weakness, and even apathy. John’s Revelation was intended to encourage them and get them back on the right track.

Every good letter begins with a greeting. When we write letters today, how do we usually begin?

John didn’t start out by saying “Dear seven churches in Asia,” Instead, he wrote, **“Grace and peace to you”** (Revelation 1:4 NIV). What a beautiful way to start this letter! Grace – I want you to know about love, God’s undeserved love. Peace – I want you to know peace, real peace of heart and mind. That’s why I’m writing this to you! John knew that he would have some difficult things to say, and some harsh words for his fellow believers who had started to follow other paths believing they led to heaven. John also recognized that the visions he saw would not only terrify him, but everyone who would read them, including us 2000 years later. God’s people would need grace and peace to make it through the message and understand what God was trying to say!

John couldn’t give that kind of gift. But our God can! John shared several of God’s kingly titles with us, and we’re going to take a look at each one and see what they mean for us. **“Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is coming”** (Revelation 1:4 EHV). This name is so special that God says it twice – once here in verse 4 and again in verse 8. What does this title tell us about the King?

“The one who is” – He exists! The rest of the gods the world claims to follow do not exist. They are not. Our God is! He is and always will be our God, our King!

“and who was” – Before time began, God was there. He always has been. He is – wait for it – eternal! Without beginning or end.

“and who is coming” – The King is coming! That phrase always brought excitement with it. Think back to our cartoon beginning. The sheriff didn’t dare doubt it. He had to look and see if the king was arriving. We look forward to the arrival of our King because he is coming.

“The Almighty” – Our King’s power is unlimited. Can you think of ways that he has demonstrated his almighty power? I think of creation. The King made everything with just a statement, “There there be...” and there was. I think of Jesus’ miracles. He healed the sick,

made the lame walk and the blind see. He raised the dead. He rose from the dead. Our King is Almighty!

“Grace and peace to you ... from the seven spirits that are before his throne” (Revelation 1:4 NIV). What might this title tell us about the King? To gain some insight, let’s turn to Isaiah 11:2. **“The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD”** (Isaiah 11:2 NIV). The Holy Spirit works in harmony with God the Father to give us grace and peace. The seven spirits before the throne represent these seven gifts of the Spirit that every king needed to rule his subjects. Solomon, when the LORD asked what gifts he desired, said, **“Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?”** (2 Chronicles 1:10 NIV). King Jesus, who is one with the Father and the Spirit, possesses all of these gifts, and gives them to us as he sees fit. The greatest of these is the fear of the LORD – the faith to trust in our King and to revere and honor him. That truly is God’s gift of grace and peace!

“Grace and peace to you ... from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:5 EHV). Three more incredible titles for us to consider!

Jesus is **“The Faithful Witness.”** A witness in a court case faces all kinds of challenges. Memories fail; they become confused; they forget what they really saw. Jesus is the Faithful Witness. He never forgets a detail and always tells the truth. So, when he says, “Grace and peace to you,” we have it!

Jesus is **“The Firstborn from the Dead.”** Jesus is the first among human beings to die and then come back to life again. There’s also a promise in that title for us. If Jesus is the first to rise again and live forever, more are coming. That’s what we heard last week – we will rise to live with Jesus forever!

Jesus is **“The Ruler of the Kings of the Earth.”** Remember all those titles that Charles V had? If we had to recite the list of peoples and areas King Jesus rules, we’d have to list every person and every place across time and history. Jesus is the Ruler of the Kings of the Earth. John saw him later in his vision: **“I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords”** (Revelation 19:11,13,16 NIV). Oh, mighty King Jesus!

Remember when Bugs Bunny said that? That’s the reaction human beings are supposed to have when the king enters a room. Honor, respect, all shown by bowing low to the ground.

Listen to the way John does the same thing: **“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us a kingdom and priests to his God and Father—to him be the glory and the power for ever and ever! Amen”** (Revelation 1:5–6 EHV). Oh, mighty King Jesus! He loves us. John could have stopped there, couldn’t he? Jesus loves us. Can you think of a song that says it any better than this? ***“Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so.***

Little ones to him belong. They are weak but he is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

“He has freed us from our sins by his blood.” That’s what makes King Jesus so special. He was willing not only to come and fight for us. He was willing to die for us. His death set us free, truly free. The sins that haunt us have no power over us. The King has pronounced us free and perfect. Oh, mighty King Jesus!

“He has made us a kingdom and priests to his God and Father.” We belong! We’re in! We’re part of the kingdom! There’s another children’s song that expresses that same truth. It’s called ***“Kids of the Kingdom.” “Kids of the Kingdom, that’s what we are. Kids of the kingdom, that’s what we are. We love Jesus (clap) we love the Lord. We love Jesus (clap) we love the Lord.”***² It’s as simple as that – a childlike faith follows the King without question, without worry, without fear. Kids of the Kingdom – that’s what we are!

Our King is coming. Great news for us, but not for everyone. John said, **“Look, he is coming with clouds, and every eye will see him, including those who pierced him. And all the nations of the earth will mourn because of him. Yes. Amen”** (Revelation 1:7 EHV). John quoted the words of the prophet Zechariah. He predicted that when Jesus returned on the last day, many would not believe in him. That would make the arrival of the King something to mourn, not celebrate. Where does that leave us? With an important mission. The King has called us to **“go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”** (Matthew 28:18–20 NIV). We don’t want anyone to mourn on the day King Jesus comes back. We want them to celebrate the arrival of the King of kings and Lord of lords with us. We need to go and tell others about the King. We work on that every day. We tell by our actions – people can see we are “kids of the Kingdom” by the things that we do. We tell by our words – people can hear our love and reverence for the King in the way we talk about him.

Our King is coming! He holds every title possible because He is **“the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, the one who is, and who was, and who is coming, the Almighty.** (Revelation 1:8 EHV). He is like these two letters from the Greek alphabet - the first one and the last one. He began all things at creation and he will bring it to an end on the Last Day. Don’t forget – the titles are more than titles. They show us who he is, how much he loves us, and everything he has accomplished for us. He truly is the King – our King – who comes to rule forever! Amen!

To God alone the glory! Pastor Jon Brohn

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3daUcPzNVjc>