

# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

by

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## CONTENTS

1. LORD OF GLORY. . . . . Page 1
2. SOVEREIGN OF THE AGES . . . . Page 3
3. MASTER OF DEATH. . . . . Page 5
4. SAVIOR OF SINNERS. . . . . Page 7
5. HEAD OF THE CHURCH. . . . . Page 9

## JESUS CHRIST IS THE LORD OF GLORY

When you open your Bible and turn to its last book, what title meets your eyes? You will read, “The Revelation of Saint John the Divine”. That title is a little misleading. It was added by students of the Word when they saw that the Apostle John had written the book. The title of the book indicates its author, not its contents. The book is not a revelation of John, it is a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Chapter one, verse one, reads, “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel John*”.

The theme of the last book of the Bible is the divine person we call Jesus, the Christ. The book is about Him. It is a “revelation concerning Jesus Christ.”

The term “revelation” means to reveal, to disclose, to draw back the veil. One can expect the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ to make known truths concerning Jesus which were not

known before. The Book of the Revelation, therefore, is more than a prophecy of future events among men and nations. It is an unveiling of the person and work of Jesus, God's Son and man's Savior.

The Book of Revelation is concerned with the work of Jesus Christ after His ascension to heaven. As the gospels recorded His work on earth during His incarnation, the Revelation recorded His work on earth following His ascension. A true study of the Book of the Revelation must look through the prophetic announcements of future happenings on earth in order to see the Lord of History behind the scenes directing the affairs of men to bring the consummation which His sovereign will intends. Read the Book of Revelation once again and examine closely every reference to God. You will discover it is, indeed, an unveiling of the ascended Jesus as the Lord of Glory.

#### JESUS CHRIST, AS THE LORD OF GLORY, IS REVEALED IN THE REVELATION AS CONCERNED WITH HIS CHURCHES ON EARTH.

Chapters one, two, and three picture Jesus in regal splendor. In chapter one, He appears as the Ancient of Days. He is "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last". He walks among golden candlesticks and holds stars in His right hand. He is dressed in glorious garments. His face, and feet, and hair, and voice are of such splendor that none can be before Him without worship. He announces, *"I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death"* (1:17,18).

At last, it is clear! The man we know as Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord of Glory. Though He has ascended back to the majesty of God in heaven, He is still concerned with affairs on earth. He walks in the midst of His churches today (as He was pictured walking in the midst of the golden lampstands in heaven). He holds the messengers of God (the pastors of the churches) in His right hand as His special ambassadors. Jesus Christ is concerned about His churches and personally involved in their day to day affairs.

#### JESUS CHRIST, THE LORD OF GLORY, IS REVEALED IN THE REVELATION AS RECEIVING THE ADORATION OF THE INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN.

Chapters four and five of the Revelation tell what is happening in heaven. There is the throne of God. Indescribable glory radiates from Him who sits thereon. An emerald rainbow circles the throne. All of creation is represented there in the form of living creatures and twenty-four elders. All that is in heaven bows before Him who sits on the throne with these words of adoration: *"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created"* (4:8,11). What a glorious scene!

He who sits upon the throne has a scroll in His hand, sealed with seven seals. Heaven and earth are searched to find one who is worthy to open the seals and reveal the contents of the scroll. None is found. Suddenly, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, a Lamb as it had been slain, walks right up to Him who sits on the throne and takes the scroll from His hand. All the hosts of heaven fall before the Lion-Lamb and sing this song: *"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed unto God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth"* (5:9, 10).

Jesus Christ is now in the presence of God receiving the adoration of the inhabitants of heaven. He is, indeed, the Lord of Glory!

## JESUS CHRIST, THE LORD OF GLORY, IS THE MASTER OF HISTORY.

Chapters six through eighteen of the Book of the Revelation foretell events which will transpire on earth as the end of the age draws near. It is held widely those events are the message written on the scroll which Jesus received in heaven and which seals He broke to reveal its contents.

Nations will rise and fall. Wars will rage. Famines will come. Pestilence will ravage the earth. A world government will arise with a fierce ruler. A world religion will arise with brutal powers to force men to be-come converts. God's very elect people will be threatened with extermination. Fateful days will come.

Above it all stands Jesus Christ as the Master of History. He tells in advance what will happen. He tells how it will end. The Book of the Revelation presents Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, as the Master of History.

## JESUS CHRIST, THE LORD OF GLORY, IS REVEALED IN THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION AS COMING IN GLORY TO OVERTHROW ALL SIN AND TO SET UP THE NEW KINGDOM OF GOD.

Revelation, chapters nineteen through twenty-two, reveals the end of the age and the initiation of the eternal state. It tells of the return of Jesus Christ in clouds and great glory, attended by the hosts of heaven. It describes His overthrow of the devil and his cohorts—the Antichrist and the false prophet. It tells of the institution of the millennial Kingdom of God on earth. It reveals the ultimate end of Satan as he is cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. It describes the dissolving of the present heavens and earth, and the making of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. It describes the bliss of the people of God as they worship in the tabernacle of God, live in the city of God, and fellowship in the garden of God. It concludes with the gracious promise: *“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen”* (22:20, 21).

“Father, we thank you that Jesus Christ our Savior, is crowned as the Lord of Glory and revealed for our worship in Holy Scripture. As we see Him involved with His churches, receiving the adoration of heaven, foretelling events to come among men, and reigning until He has put all enemies under His feet, make us His devout worshippers and His willing servants. For we pray in His name. Amen.”

## JESUS CHRIST IS THE SOVEREIGN OF THE AGES

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the heir of all things, the Creator of the world, the brightness of the glory of God, and the express image of the person of God. All the creation is upheld by His power. He purged our sins by Himself, and is now sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, above all angels and men (Hebrews 1:2-4). He is the Lord of Glory, the Sovereign of the Ages.

He whom we call Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son of God, second person of the Holy Trinity. We can point to a specific place and date of His birth on earth, but we cannot point to a time of His origin in eternity. He has neither beginning nor end; He is the eternal one.

### **Foretell the Future**

The sovereignty of Jesus Christ is indicated by His ability to announce in advance the course of

human history. God spoke these words through His prophet Isaiah, *“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it,”* Isaiah 46:9-11. The Bible is quite emphatic: God plans and performs His will in the history of men and nations. His Son, Jesus Christ, announces in the Book of the Revelation that which the Father will do in the affairs of earth.

Only God can know the mind and purpose of God. He who foretells the work of God must know the plans of God. Jesus, as sovereign deity, knows and announces in the Book of the Revelation that which God is doing and will do in the world.

Revelation 1:1 reads, *“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”* Things not yet done, or not even yet known to men, are known to Jesus and revealed through Him in Holy Scripture. Who but the sovereign Lord of the ages would be able to foretell the future? Indeed, Jesus is the Lord of History

### **Firstborn from the Dead**

Revelation 1:5 describes Jesus as *“the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth”*. Examine that statement “first begotten of the dead”. What does it mean? Weymouth translates it, “the first of the dead to be born to life”. The New Testament in Basic English chooses the words, “the first to come back from the dead”. Beck translates, “the first of the dead to live again”. Each translation suggests the same meaning: Jesus Christ is the first one to rise up from death.

What about other instances in the biblical record where people who were dead were made to live again? Jesus raised to life Lazarus of Beth-any, the son of the widow of Nain, and the daughter of Jairus. Peter restored Dorcas to life. But those restorations were different from the resurrection of Jesus Christ in two ways. (1) Life was restored to those who were dead by a power outside them acting upon them. In other words, some person was used of God to raise them. Jesus laid His life down and took His life up again of His own will and power, John 10:17, 18. (2) Others were restored to normal human life only to die again at a later time. Jesus was restored to immortal life so that He would never die again; death has no more dominion over Him. His resurrection is so uniquely different from other restorations to life in sacred history that it proves Him to be sovereign Lord.

Romans 1:4 reports that Jesus was *“declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”*. His resurrection from death is the last and greatest earthly proof that He is what He is proclaimed to be, the Sovereign Lord of the Ages, eternal Son of God.

### **Ruler of Rulers of Earth**

The sovereignty of Jesus Christ is manifest in the Bible statement that He is *“prince of the kings of the earth”*, Revelation 1:5. A prince is one who has royal authority. He has power of government because he is a member of the royal ruling family. His right to rule cannot be legally challenged, if he is a true prince.

What does it mean, then, that Jesus is “prince of the kings of the earth”? It means He is Ruler over the rulers of earth. He is sovereign over all earthly sovereignty. He has power over all

earthly powers. The apostle Paul wrote of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, saying that He will then be revealed as “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords”, I Timothy 6:15. That is the way it will be. Revelation 19 describes His return. He will ride a white horse, symbolizing His victory. He will wear many crowns, symbolizing His authority. He will have a name written on His vesture and on His thigh, symbolizing His nature. That name will be, “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS”. Christ Jesus will return to manifest His authority as the Sovereign Lord of the Ages.

### **Unchanging and Eternal**

A mark of the finite is its constant change. The young grows old. The new becomes obsolete. The present becomes the past. There is constant change. We finite mortals can well sing, “Change and decay in all around I see”. That is a mark of mortality.

A mark of the infinite is that it never changes. God says, “*I am the Lord, I change not...*”, Malachi 3:6. James declares in his epistle that in God there is “no variableness, neither shadow of turning”, James 1:17. God does not change because He is an eternal, infinite being.

Jesus Christ does not change. Hebrews 13:8 reads, “*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever*”. He does not change because He is deity. He is the unchanging and eternal Sovereign of the Ages.

Consider how Jesus is pictured as eternal deity in the Book of the Revelation. Chapter one, verse four describes God as “...*him which is, and which was, and which is to come...*”. To be one who “is, was, and is to come” indicates eternity. Jesus describes Himself in chapter one, verse eight, in these words: “*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*”. Again, in verse eleven, “*I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*”. And again, in verses seventeen and eighteen, “*I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death*”. The testimony of the Book of the Revelation is that Jesus is Sovereign of the Ages— eternal and never changing deity.

Therein lies the mystery of the incarnation and the miracle of redemption. Imagine Him who is the very essence of deity laying it all aside (except the divine nature) in order to become mortal as man. Imagine His taking the essence of a bondsman, humbling Himself to die, even to die the shameful and painful death of crucifixion on a cross. And, imagine Him doing it for guilty sinners. See the Sovereign of the Ages, God Himself, clothed in a human body for the purpose of the suffering of death that by His grace He might taste death for every man. He deserves to be highly exalted, and given a name above every name. He deserves that at the mention of His name every knee should bow. Personages in heaven, earth, and under the earth should bow in honor and worship before Him: Jesus of Nazareth, Master of destiny, and Sovereign of the Ages.

“Father, we bow before you in worship of your only begotten Son, Jesus. Accept the worship of our hearts and sanctify it to your glory. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.”

## **JESUS CHRIST IS THE MASTER OF DEATH**

The last book of the Christian Bible is called “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:1). This series of studies is looking briefly into that book to discover what it reveals about Jesus, the Savior. The two previous studies have presented Him as the Lord of Glory and the Sovereign of the Ages. Looking into chapter one of the book, let us see Jesus Christ as the Master of Death.

First, what is death? The basic concept of death is “separation”. There are two kinds of death: physical and spiritual. Physical death is the separation of the human spirit from the physical body. Spiritual death is the separation of the human spirit from God. The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is Master of both physical and spiritual death. All separation by death is ended in Him.

### **Born Out Of Death**

Jesus is the “first begotten of the dead”. He is the first person to rise from death into a life where death has no more dominion. Romans 6:9 reads, “*Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him*”. The post-resurrection life which He now lives is beyond the reach or power-of death. That is why He said of Himself, “*I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and of hell,*” 1:18. His resurrection did not merely restore Him to ordinary physical life, a life subject to death. He raised up from the grave with a new and eternal quality of life which is beyond death; it is as if He was born out of death into an eternal quality of life.

Life beyond the reach of death has been God’s promised blessing to His believing children through all the ages. That was “*his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,*” II Timothy 1:9, 10.

The same eternal life which Jesus lives is promised and provided to each person who receives Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. That is why He promised, “*I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand,*” John 10:17. The eternal life which He gives is His own divine life. There shall be no possibility of a Christian perishing or being plucked out of the hand of God, because death is impossible in that new quality of life. What a reason for joy! Each Christian is living the life of God in his human body, a life in which death is impossible, so there will never be any separation between him and his God.

Dear Christian, you have been born out of death. The condition of each person, before he comes to Jesus Christ for salvation, is a condition of spiritual death. You were “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (Ephesians 2:1) because “*death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*” (Romans 5: 12). In that condition of spiritual separation from God, He came and sought you. He sent His Son to redeem you by death. He sent His Spirit to call you by grace. He effected a new birth within you when you trusted Jesus as your personal Savior. You thereby “*passed from death unto life*” (John 5:24)—eternal life—in which you will never perish. Think of it! You have passed from mere mortal existence as a human, to immortal existence as a child of God. You have been born into life out of death.

Salvation is not something God gives apart from Himself. It is God coming in the person of His dear Holy Spirit and taking up permanent residence in the human spirit of the believer. Eternal life is God living the life of eternity in the context of time, the life of God being lived day-by-day in a human body. That is what it means to be saved: “Christ alive! Living in me!”

### **Authority Over Death**

*“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. .. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took*

*part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage,”* Hebrews 2:9, 14, 15.

Jesus has absolute authority over death. He has conquered him who had the power of death. He holds the keys of death and hell. He is the Master of Death.

Jesus had authority over His own death. He was not the helpless victim of plans that went awry. His death was no accident, His sacrificial, atoning, vicarious death had been pictured over and over in the sacrifices offered in the Old Testament dispensation. He came into the world for the purpose of dying for sinners. Listen to His own statement: *“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,”* Mark 10:45. It is evident that He came to give His life unto death.

The time, place, and occasion of the death of Jesus were under His control. He said, *“.. I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father,”* John 10:17, 18. He had absolute authority over His death.

That explains why Jesus died so quickly on the cross. After only six hours on the cross, He cried, *“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit”*. And having said that, he released His spirit and was dead physically (Luke 23:46). He had said to those who arrested, tried, and crucified Him, *“Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above...,”* John 19:11. Power to live and die was in His hands.

Jesus had authority over the physical death of others. On three different occasions, He restored to life one who had been dead. He restored life to a young girl who had been dead no more than an hour or two (Mark 5:22-42). He restored to life a young man who had been dead long enough that the funeral procession was on the way to bury his body (Luke 7:11-16). He restored life to an adult who had been dead for four days (John 11:1-44). It was no problem to Him to give physical life to those whom God had chosen to restore.

Jesus also has power over spiritual death in people. He spoke to the Father of the power conferred upon Him that He could give eternal life to all who came to God by Him (John 17:2). That same power raises you from death into eternal life when you receive Christ. Praise God for such power!

Jesus has power to resurrect all who die from physical death into immortal life. A great day of resurrection is coming. Jesus said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation,”* John 5:25, 28, 29. Resurrection is assured because Jesus lives, having the power over death and the keys of hell. He will raise up every person to stand before God.

Let us worship Jesus, the Master over Death. (1) He was born out of death. (2) He has authority over death. (3) He gives eternal life, which is beyond the reach of death, to all who come to Him in repentance and faith. He is the Giver of Life and the Master of Death to all who receive Him.

*“Father, thank you that through Jesus Christ our Lord you have delivered us from darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of your dear Son. Thank you that being in Jesus Christ, we die no more; death has no more dominion over us. Thank you for your wonderful gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. In His name we praise You. Amen.”*

## JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAVIOR OF SINNERS

We are looking into the book called “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” to see more perfectly Him whom we trust as Savior and serve as Lord. We have seen Him revealed as the Lord of Glory, the Sovereign of the Ages, and the Master of Death. Revelation 1:4-7 adds another dimension to our understanding of Jesus Christ: He is the Savior of sinners. Consider what the passage says about salvation.

*“ . . . Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, unto the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen,”* Revelation 1:4-7

### SAFETY

Is the meaning of salvation. To be saved means “to be made safe”. We speak of a person rescued from a burning building as being “saved” by the firemen. We speak of a person taken from a sinking ship as being “saved” by the Coast Guard. We use the term “saved” to refer to being made safe from the danger which threatens.

Jesus has saved those who believe by making them safe from the dangers of death, hell, and eternal judgment. The Bible is quite specific at these points. (1) A person who is not saved is spiritually dead already. (2) A person who is not saved is headed to an eternity in hell fire. (3) A person who is not saved is in danger of a judgment in which he will be condemned and forever cast away from God without hope of remedy. (4) Those who come to Jesus are made safe from death because He gives eternal life, from hell because he makes them an heir of heaven, and from judgment because He judges and forgives their sins already. Jesus saves by making each believer safe from spiritual danger.

### GRACE

Is the explanation of salvation. What is the condition of man before he comes to God in Jesus Christ? He is lost, without God, condemned. What is his condition after he comes to God in Jesus Christ? He is forgiven, justified, accepted before God. How can God be just and yet justify a guilty sinner? The solution to that problem is grace.

Salvation is offered by grace through faith. Grace means God does good for us when we deserve otherwise. It is God doing for us when we do not deserve it. Not one of us could ever deserve to be saved. Not one could ever merit salvation. But God has offered salvation to the undeserving. That is why Revelation 1:4 begins its salutation with the words, “*Grace be unto you, and peace. . .*” All of the Christian’s relationship with God is based on grace. God met us in grace through Jesus Christ and grace has been the basis of our contact since then. “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast,*” Ephesians 2:8, 9.

### PEACE

Is the effect of salvation. The salutation of Revelation 1:4 reads, “*Grace be unto you, and peace*”. Grace and peace are often related in Holy Scripture. They always occur in the same

order—grace is first, and peace is second because grace and peace are related as cause and effect. Grace is the cause, peace is the effect. Grace is the cause of salvation while peace is the effect of salvation.

To be saved is to enter into a condition of rest, a relationship of peace with God. *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”* Romans 5:1. The gospel of salvation through Jesus is the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15). The preaching concerning Jesus Christ is a preaching of peace (Acts 10:36). Indeed, Jesus is our peace (Ephesians 2:14). Those who trust Him are filled with all joy and peace in believing (Romans 15:13). *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink: but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,”* Romans 14:17.

## **JESUS CHRIST**

Is the person of salvation. Jesus came into the world to be the Savior of sinners. He explained, *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved,”* John 3:17. Again, *“They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,”* Mark 2:17. *“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,”* Luke 19:10.

Jesus is the only Savior. He said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,”* John 14:6. Those who knew Him best have testified, *“Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,”* Acts 4:12. Here is the conclusion of the matter: *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,”* I John 5:11, 12. Yes, Jesus is the only Savior.

## **LOVE**

Is the motive of salvation. “Jesus” loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, (1:5). Divine love, the desire of God for the greatest possible blessing to men, was the motive for our salvation. *“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,”* I John 4:9, 10. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,”* John 3:16. God loves sinners and moves to save them.

## **WASHING**

Is the application of salvation. The Bible uses the symbolism of washing to describe what salvation is like. It pictures our being cleansed from our sins as a garment is cleansed from that which soiled it. The term used in the Greek text of Revelation 1:5 and translated “washed” can also be translated “loosed”. That is what God has done in Jesus Christ: He loosed us from our sins. *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,”* Titus 3:5.

## **BLOOD**

Is the price of redemption. Hear this solemn pronouncement: *“Almost all things are by the law purged with blood: and without shedding of blood is no remission,”* Hebrews 9:22. Here is

the divine principle as stated in Leviticus 17:11, *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul”*. Symbolized by the blood offerings of the Old Testament dispensation, it reached its fulfillment in the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,”* I Peter 1:18, 19. *“. . .The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,”* I John 1:7. “Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

## KINGS AND PRIESTS

Is the lifting of salvation. Man is never the same after he is saved. He is a new creation in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17). He is a child of the sovereign King of the universe, and becomes a king and a priest unto God. What a glorious position to be occupied by one who was lost, dead in his sins, but is now alive through repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. “Father, thank you for what you have provided—salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let every person who hears understand the truth and be found safe in Him through repentance and faith. Thank you for extending the opportunity to be saved to each one of us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

## JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

The church holds a large place in the witness and teaching of early Christians. The Greek term **ekklesia**, which is commonly translated “church”, occurs one hundred and fifteen times in the New Testament. It is significant that the book called “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” should introduce the relationship of Jesus to the church in chapter one, then give chapters two and three to a message from Jesus to individual churches. It proves how important the church is to God.

The term church is widely misunderstood today. It is used in so many different ways as to make it almost necessary to define it when the term is used. (1) “Church” is used in a denominational sense, as when we speak of “the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church”. (2) “Church” is used in an architectural sense, as when you point to a building where the congregation meets and say, “There is my church”. (3) “Church” is used in a geographical sense, as when we speak of “the Church of England” or “the Church of Scotland”. (4) “Church” is used in a universal sense, as when some speak of the church as composing all who are saved. (5) “Church” is used in a local sense, as when we speak of a particular congregation of Christians. No wonder the term is misunderstood today.

The Greek term used for “church” is **ekklesia**. Consider those 115 times it appears in the Greek text of our New Testament. Three times the term is used with a secular meaning of “assembly”, (Acts 19:32, 39, 41). Three times it is generic in its usage and refers to a type of institution (Matthew 16:18; 18:17). Ninety times it refers without doubt to a local congregation of Christians. The congregation is named seventeen times; the term is used in the plural (indicating many congregations separately) thirty-five times; the term is used in a context with a local congregational meaning thirty-eight times. That leaves only nineteen out of one hundred and fifteen usages which could have a meaning of universal church. There is no question, therefore, that the major emphasis of the New Testament is on the local congregation of

Christians. It would be safe to go so far as to say that in every instance in which **ekklesia** (translated “church”) appears in the Greek New Testament, the primary meaning is a local congregation of Christians.

Revelation, chapter one, pictures the glorified Lord Jesus Christ dressed in garments of splendor and walking in the midst of seven golden lamp-stands. He holds seven stars in His right hand. The symbolism of the appearance is explained in this way: The seven golden lampstands represent congregations of Christians located in seven cities in Asia; the seven stars represent the messengers of God to each of those seven churches. What principle lies behind that beautiful picture? (1) Learn that Jesus is so concerned about His churches that He likens them to lampstands made of gold, the most precious metal. (2) Learn that Jesus is so concerned about His churches that He walks among them, beholding their order and sending messages to them. (3) Learn that Jesus is so concerned about His churches that He holds their messengers (whom we understand to be pastors) in His right hand and personally supervises their shepherding His flocks. The beautiful picture is a revelation of the relation of Jesus Christ to His churches.

### **Jesus is in the midst of His churches.**

How dear they are to Him. Ephesians 5:23-33 speaks of the relation of Christ and the church. Here is what it teaches. (1) Christ is the head of the church, v. 23. (2) Christ is the Savior of the church, v. 23. (3) Christ deserves the submission of the church, v. 24. (4) Christ loves the church, v. 25. (5) Christ gave Himself for the church, v. 29. Those things can be said of every congregation which is a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is in the midst of His churches because He established the church as His own special body. There were many assemblies in the world during the ministry of Jesus on earth. He resolved to institute His own particular assembly. He said, “...I will build my church (my **ekklesia**, my assembly, my congregation), and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” Matthew 16:18.

He did not desert His churches after they were established. He sent the Holy Spirit of God to indwell each believer on that first Christian Pentecost. When a person is saved, the Spirit of God moves within his human spirit and never leaves him. Then these individuals, in each of whom the Spirit dwells, are brought together and joined in the fellowship of a congregation of Christians. Each church becomes, therefore, the special place where God’s Spirit dwells and the agency through which Christ manifests Himself and does His work in the world. Jesus Christ is still intimately involved with His churches. He is the Head of each true congregation of Christians.

### **Jesus holds the messengers of God to His churches.**

Revelation one pictured Jesus as holding seven stars in His right hand, representing His relationship to the messengers of God to each congregation of Christians. That beautiful picture should inspire three responses in the hearts of believers.

The ministers of the Word of God in the Christian congregations should be greatly encouraged and humbled. They are held in the hand of Christ. How careful they should be that what they speak is spoken from the mind of God and with the consent of Christ. How confident they should be in declaring the message given them, fearing the face of no man, as the messenger of God.

The members of the Christian congregations should respect those who minister the Word of

God to them, knowing their pastor-teachers are held in the hand of Christ. They should listen with respect. They should respond to the instruction given. They should hear the voice of God through the voice of men.

The members of the Christian congregations should have confidence in the leadership of those whom Christ has assigned as the human leaders of the congregation of Christians. Since they are so intimately related to Christ, the congregation can follow with confidence the leadership of their pastors.

I'm glad God is still involved in the affairs of men. I'm glad Jesus has not left His churches alone. I'm glad both you and I can be assured of His present ministry in our personal lives, and in the congregation of Christians of which we are a part.

Revelation, chapters two and three, record the message sent by Jesus Christ to each of seven congregations of Christians in Asia. Read those two chapters at your convenience and look for this style to follow through the letters. (1) The Lord Jesus will identify Himself in a manner fitting the message He is to deliver to the church. (2) He will compliment the church on any good thing He sees in her. (3) He will condemn the church in those areas where she has failed. (4) He will tell the church what to do to remedy her failure. (5) He will promise a reward for faithful response to His message. The letters to those seven congregations speak a word to Christian congregations today.

Jesus is concerned about your church. He knows all about her—her strengths, her weaknesses, her ambitions, her potentials—everything. He wants to help her become the kind of congregation she should be in order to minister most effectively and radiate the gospel most meaningfully. Let Him speak to your church by inviting Him to speak to you.

Look back over the way we have traveled in these five studies. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" has shown Him to be the Lord of Glory, the Sovereign of the Ages, the Master of Death, the Savior of Sinners, and the Head of the Church. Having seen the Lord in these blessed positions, let us bow before Him in humble reverence and offer ourselves to love and serve Him forever.

"Father, thank you for giving us the fuller understanding of Jesus, Your Son and our Savior. Grant that we will be changed by this revelation so we may be more fruitful than ever before in the work of our God. For Jesus' sake, Amen."