***To the Seven Churches,
From the Seven Spirits of God

RV03-01***

Open your Bibles to the book of the Revelation once more. We now begin the salutation which we find in verses 4 through 6 of the first chapter. This book was given to the apostle John in a vision. It is a vision and a description – a panoramic view of the future of the world which is to climax in the return of Jesus Christ to the earth to rule in His millennial kingdom from Jerusalem.

**Revelation is the Word of God**

John tells us that he has given us an official legal testimony that the Revelation was indeed the Word of God. So we read in verse 2, "Who bore witness (that is, John) of the Word of God. That's the idea that he bore witness of the accuracy of the vision that he is reporting, and that what he is giving to us is the living and powerful Word of God – that which is the anchor point of all Western civilization, and that which is the basis of all the freedoms and liberties that people anywhere in the world enjoy. It's always because they have seen the Bible as indeed the Word of God. That's why freedom is under such great threat in our nation today, because we are living in an era where, increasingly, people do not look upon the Bible as hearing God speaking to them. That, however, is exactly what it is.

So what we have in the Revelation is not some science fiction story, as many liberal Bible teachers would suggest. But we have that which is, in truth, the very Word of God. John says, "I vouch for the fact that I am bringing to you the very words of God."

**Revelation is from Jesus Christ**

Secondly, he goes on to say in verse 2, "And of the testimony of Jesus Christ." John also testified that the Revelation was received by him from Jesus Christ who is the truth? John 14:6 tells us that Jesus is the truth. Truth is always associated with a person. Truth in the universe ultimately is associated with God. So here we have Jesus Christ who is transferring this message from God the Father to the angel who brings it to John. John vouches for the fact that what he has received is the truth. It comes from Jesus Christ. He cannot lie. Therefore, it bears upon it the very stamp of truth.

**Revelation is Authoritative**

Then the last of verse 2 said, "And of all things that he saw." John reported all that he saw in his vision without elaborating. In other words, we have an eyewitness account who gives to us what he saw in panoramic form of the future of human history. This is a book that's hard to beat. That kind of information is hard to come by: that which is God Himself speaking; that which is confirmed by the truth of all the universe, Jesus Christ, the son of God; and, that which is presented by an eyewitness in the form of John who stood there often, I'm sure, with his mouth hanging open over the things that were taking place before his very eyes as he saw future history unfolding before him.

So this is a very authoritative book that we are studying. Isn't it then all the more puzzling that it is a book that is so infrequently taught today, and so generally ignored by preachers and churches? Again, I remind you that the reason for that is because his majesty the devil is seeking to keep this book (which God says is an unveiling) undercover so that it unveils nothing concerning his own final doom and disaster which the book very clearly portrays.

**Happiness**

We also found in verse 3 that the Revelation is a unique book among the books of the Bible because it confers a very special blessing. Verse 3 said, "Blessed is he that reads it." This word "blessed" is the Greek word "makarios." If you were to find a lexicon and research this word, you would find that in classical Greek, this word was used by the Greeks to mean a condition free of daily cares and of worries. We would say, "A state of peace." In classical Greek, when the word "makarios" came up, it meant free of daily cares and a condition of peace, which of course, we would equate with the concept of happiness.

In the Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew Bible, which is called the Septuagint in translation, this word was used to translate the Hebrew words which mean "happiness" or "well-being." When they came to translating the Hebrew, they used this word "makarios" to convey the idea of happiness. In the New Testament Scriptures, this word is used several times, and it is used to denote the state of bliss – the idea of spiritual prosperity. So it is indeed a word which is associated with the idea of happiness.

I recognize that our English word is structured on the concepts of happenstance: what happens; what happens makes you happy; and, what happens doesn't make you happy. However, the Greek word here is referring to that quality of inner happiness, which is a totally different kind of happiness. This is a happiness which is not structured on people, places, or things. So there is a happiness within the soul of the believer that is genuinely that. It's a joy. When we are blessed by God, the result is that we're happy. Nobody is ever unhappy when he is blessed by God. It is true that you may be in a crises in your life, and yet God will bless you in that moment. Perhaps you're in a moment of bereavement. God will bring blessing into your life. He will comfort you at that point, and there will be a condition of peace in your soul. Peace means happiness. You're not over-joyful over, perhaps, your loss of a loved one at that moment. But nevertheless, there is within your soul what this word connotes: spiritual prosperity. So when he says "blessed" here in verse three, he is promising to us just that: spiritual prosperity. And when you are spiritually prosperous, you are, in the nature of the case, also happy.

So spiritual prosperity or well-being is promised to him who reads Revelation to the assembly of listeners. In our day, we might make that comparable to what we are doing right now, where the pastor-teacher instructs. He, in effect, reads the word through to the congregation by explaining what the language means and what this book is saying.

Furthermore, verse 3 says that there is a particular special blessing (spiritual prosperity) for them that hear the words of this prophecy. That, of course, refers to those who listen to the words of the Revelation – the congregation which is being taught.

Then he adds, "They that keep those things which are written in it." So there is also a blessing upon hearers who respond with positive volition to the contents of the prophecy. You can be blessed by what comes into your directive mind. Your mind functions in two ways. It has a perceptive function, which we may call the perceptive mind. That's where information comes in and you learn things. That's what you're sitting here doing. You're learning things. You may not have any positive or negative response to it. You're just learning it. And the Word of God says that learning the information of this book in itself will bring a quality of spiritual prosperity into your soul. But the other part of our mentality (the function of the mind) is the directive side (the directive mind) that results in certain actions.

So what he is talking about is this perceptive side that those who, on the one hand, listen as the book is explained (they listen to the exposition), and that brings blessing. On the other hand, those who go one step more and then act upon that book (who respond to this information), they too have an added blessing. So here is a triple compound blessing which God promises relative to those who study and respond to this book.

**The Tribulation**

Of course, the part about obeying what you learn in this book will be much more pertinent to the people who are actually living in the tribulation era. They will be able to read this book, and it will certainly be that morning's newspaper to them. They will know the timetable. Those who are believers will be able to put the information together, and they will see before their very eyes what is taking place. They'll really know what is coming next. It will indeed, for them, be a book of prophecy in a very unique way that it cannot really be to us this side of the rapture. It is speaking about these two functions: learning; and, performing. Both of them bring individual special blessings.

The last part of verse 3 says, "For the time is at hand." God is bringing these blessings because the segment of time when all of these things will be fulfilled is near. That is the segment of time which we call the tribulation period.

**The Salutation**

We begin here with that introduction at verse 4, with what we may call the salutation. That is what we would term "the greeting" of this book. The very first thing which was characteristic of New Testament letters was that the writer introduced himself, and he does. He introduces himself as John. In the Greek, his name is "ioannes." He gives no further identification of himself, because at this time that he is writing, he is already a very old man. He is up in his 90s, and he is the only surviving apostle of the 12. So he is well-known within the Christian community. When he says, "John," there is only "the John" who is now "the elder" at this time in the church's history. So he needs no other introduction than simply to give his name.

**John**

We do know from Scriptures that he was the son of a man named Zebedee. We find this in Matthew 4:21: "And going on from there, he saw two other brethren: James, the son of Zebedee; and, John, his brother, in a boat with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets, and he called them."

Mark 1:19: "And when he had gone a little farther, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who also were in the boat mending their net."

Luke 5:10" "So were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who are partners with Simon. Jesus said unto Simon, 'Fear not. From henceforth you shall catch men."

We also find that he had a brother, James, who was also an apostle, as we have indicated to us in Matthew 10:2: "Now the names of the 12 apostles are these: the first, Simon, who is called Peter; Andrew, his brother; James, the son of Zebedee; and John, his brother.

Matthew 17:1: "And after 6 days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John, his brother, and brought them up into a high mountain privately."

This is the John who wrote the gospel of John; who wrote the small epistles of John – 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John; as well as this book of Revelation. So this man was used to write five books of the Bible – quite a number of letters, not quite as many as Paul, but a substantial amount. In Revelation, John, who is the sole survivor and well-known, proceeds to inform the church on some information that he has vouched to as being directly from God, and being confirmed by the truth character of Jesus Christ.

**To the Seven Churches**

The usual way, as I say, to begin a New Testament letter is just this way: "John." Then it say, "To the seven churches." The word "seven" is the Greek word "hepta" which means "seven." He is writing to seven churches. The word "church" is "ekklesia." We have studied this word before, and we won't go into a lot of detail. "Ekklesia," if we were to break down the etymology of this word, means "a called out group." The concept of the church is that it is a group of people called out from the mass of humanity. Sometimes the word "church" (this word "ekklesia" is used of the body of Christ, the universal body of believers – that which makes up the body of Christ is called "the church," and it's made up of believers all over the world, crossing all denominational lines.

However, the word "ekklesia" is also used in the New Testament Scriptures in terms of individual local congregations (that is, the organization). When it is using the universal sense, it's talking about the organism – the living body of Christ. When it is used in the local sense, it's talking about the organization – the structure whereby a group of believers gather together and function in a local ministry. So this is the way this word is used here. It's used in terms of local congregations – in terms of local church ministries.

He is writing, he says, specifically to seven churches. These seven churches are a very specific group of churches, as we are going to see as we study the particular comments to each church. These seven churches represented all of the problems historically that are going to arise in local church operations. We have problems in local churches. Local churches are made up of people who are born again, hopefully. But nevertheless, they have old sin natures. So these old sin nature natures are always arising in one way or another to create problems within the local church. As you know, some people always become part of a problem. Other people become part of the solution of a problem. But as we study these seven letters, you will recognize very often (bells will ring as you recognize) a problem that you have seen in a local church, and maybe that you yourself were involved in.

So we not only hope that people within the local church are born again believers, and we do our best to ensure that. We not only hope that they will be in temporal fellowship, and we do our best to alert people that that is important – to maintain their temple fellowship with Jesus Christ. That will minimize friction. But we also hope that, at least, we'll have compatible old sin natures. That's why when you marry somebody, you should try to marry someone whose old sin nature is compatible with yours. It will reduce a lot of conflicts and friction if you both have the same kind of sin patterns. That smooths things out in itself. However, we should not have the function in a local church on the old sin natures.

Of course, one of the things about the old sin nature is that when you are functioning on the old sin nature, you are in carnality. And you remember that when we studied that subject, we associated the word "stupid" with carnality, and we associated the word "smart" with spirituality. When you are in a state of temporal fellowship (with all known sins confessed), you're smart. When you're in a state of carnality, where you are rebelling against God and you are indulging your old sin nature in some sin that the Holy Spirit is condemning, you're not very smart. One of the dumb things that the old sin nature does is that it likes to sound off to other people. It likes to rally sides. It likes to get causes going in opposition to something, or usually to promote some hidden motives or some hidden ambition of the individual who is feeling people out in order to create a division within the local assembly.

One of the reasons that that's stupid is that, inevitably, the word comes back through the grapevine to me, so that I know currently all the people who are saying bad things. They're not saying them about me, but about some of you. I get all the scuttlebutt, and I get all the information. Sooner or later, somebody comes to me. It comes right back. So I know all this. So that's why I'm well-versed in the fact that I know what some of you are saying; I know what some of your attitudes are; and, I know some of the particular axes that you're trying to grind at the moment, and the people that you're trying to hack with them.

Well, these are not new problems. As we go through these seven letters, you're going to find it hard to believe that these conditions could have existed right there in the New Testament church in the very glow of the presence of Jesus Christ who had just gone to heaven, and who just, within that very century, moved off the scene. By the end of the first century, the old sin natures within the believers at that time began to run just as rampant as they are today.

So John says, "I'm writing to these churches." This word for "seven churches" has the definite article: "the" seven churches. The reason that that is important is because it is indicating that it has a specific selection. It is not just a selection of any churches. It is a selection of very specific churches, because each of these taught a lesson that God the Spirit wanted to convey to us today. And from these churches, He is going to instruct us on what the conditions are at present that we may expect in local churches, and what Jesus Christ thinks about it. That's the important thing. It's not going to come as any surprise to us that these conditions exist, but it may come as a surprise to some of us as to how severe the Lord is in his dealing with these things, and how He loathes them.

John apparently exercised apostolic authority over these seven churches. They were, we are told, in Asia. The word "Asia" looks pretty much like it does English. It's "asia." This is not the Asia that we know today. This is a particular part of the world that, in geography in school, we are taught under the title Asia Minor. What he is talking about is a particular area that is east of Italy and Greece, and sort of surrounded by the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea. This is where the apostle Paul came over from Asia to Philippi and thus entered the European area and brought the gospel to Europe. He's talking about this western part of Asia Minor. These seven churches actually were in the Roman proconsular province of Asia. It was the Roman province of Asia. It was not the larger modern day Asia that we talk of today. It is what covers part of what is known today as modern Turkey... He says they were made up of seven churches.

These are the churches that he is referring to. The letters are written in a circle route, such as John perhaps would have followed in visiting these churches over which he apparently had apostolic authority. Remember that an apostle is an office and a gift which we do not have today. An apostle was a supreme spiritual authority over a group of churches – not just one church, but over a group of churches. The churches that each apostle had been instrumental in founding were under his care and under his responsibility. Today we do not have apostles. Instead, we have the pastor-teacher gift. However, the pastor-teacher, while he is an authority, once he has been appointed by the congregation to that office, he is an authority only within the local church. He is the quarterback on that team only, and he is expected to act as the executive head – the president of that organization and the guiding person within that local church, but he has no influence and no relationships to the churches down the street or across town. The pastor-teacher is related to only one church. For the apostle, there were many churches.

**The Seven Churches**

John apparently came, in the latter part of his life, to Asia Minor, and to the Roman province of Asia, and established a base of operation at Ephesus. These letters, that we are going to study, go in just that order. They go first from Ephesus to Smyrna; to Pergamos; to Thyatira; to Sardis; to Philadelphia; and, to Laodicea. They make that circle route, just as he would have visited them.

When John was writing to these seven churches which were under his shepherding care, he was out in a little spot in the Aegean Sea called the island of Patmos. That's where he was at the time that he had this vision of where history is moving. And part of what God revealed to him, and part of the information that was given to him through the angel, was specific information to each of these seven churches. They reveal to us not only general problem conditions that exist in the church in any age, and in any generation, but they also indicate the things that God blesses, and the things that He commends. It also indicates a kind of a general pattern of church history. Each of these churches, interestingly enough, moves through a cycle (a characteristic condition) that was characteristic of a period of church history. We'll get into that a little more as we go along.

So John is writing to these specific seven churches in the Roman province of Asia. He proceeds to greet them, as is so often the case with the biblical letters, with the word "grace." That is the Greek word "charis." Grace is the principle by which God deals with us all during the dispensation of the church. This is the title of God's plan, whereby he takes a human being from a lost sinner headed for the lake of fire to a super grace saint headed for the riches of heaven. This plan of grace takes us from the new birth to our physical death, or to the rapture. Everything in the plan of grace is perfect. Everything has been provided.

Many times we fight the plan. Many times we resist God. When we find that there are times in our lives that we might describe as disappointments; we find ourselves in times when we have put scars upon our lives; when we have been spiritual failures; when we find that we are not really happy; and, when we don't seem to be fulfilling anything significant with our lives, it is not because of God's grace plan. It is because we are violating the plan of grace someplace along the line. But because it is grace, it means that it is something that God is doing. Remember that grace always means what God does alone. It never means something that you and I help God to do. That's why the Bible says that salvation is by grace. We don't do anything to be saved; to help ourselves get saved; or, to help God along in providing salvation. It's entirely a grace provision. The matter of our growth in spiritual maturity, and learning to get our minds off of human viewpoint and onto God's divine viewpoint is a grace provision of the Word of God.

Furthermore, it's a grace system of perception. That is, that learning the Bible is not dependent upon your IQ level. Learning the Bible does not mean that those with higher IQs are going to be able to go on into greater maturity in their spiritual lives, or into greater blessings with God. That is not so because grace enables us all to be on equal footing. All you have to do is have enough brains to find yourself a church that is explaining the Word of God; to be there regularly; to take the time to think over what you've been taught; to start functioning on it; and, to be positive toward it. The grace of God is going to take it from there.

When we do fail, I'm happy to say that grace also takes care of that. It is the purpose of God to make us victorious in the Christian life. Some of us are going to get beaten around a little bit by the Lord before we respond to His grace plan. Some of us are going to go to the pig pen a few times. But eventually God is going to bring us along. The ultimate purpose of grace is that He's going to take us to where He puts us into the image of Jesus Christ. That is the goal of grace, and it will not be frustrated.

So with that understanding of what this word means, it is one of the finest things that one Christian can wish to another – for the grace of God to function freely in his life. That's exactly what John is doing here. When he says, "Grace be unto you," he is expressing to these believers the greatest thing that one Christian can wish upon another – that God's grace would function in his life. That means that God's grace would be free to function, because if it is, then whatever the problems are (and you will have difficulties, and the satanic conflict will heat up for you), nevertheless, there will be a sense of peace; a sense of happiness; and, a sense of productivity, and there will be genuine divine good production. So grace is the thing that we must preserve in every way in our lives. It is the thing, again, which Satan wants to destroy.

I need not stop here to remind you how many times and how many ways churches violate the principle of grace. Those of you who attend here, and have attended for many years, you begin to lose your frame of reference for the beauties of grace, because you're not out there where preachers are putting the pressures on people: putting the pressures on people to serve; putting the pressures on people to give their money; putting the pressures on people to react with some emotional expression; or, putting the pressure on for this and for that. All of that is a violation of the grace of God and the principle by which He works. So we sometimes lose our appreciation for this quality. This is the way God works. You should esteem it; you should value it; and, you should protect it. Guard it.

"Grace unto you." That is, to the believers. The word "be" is not there. There is no verb. That makes it very emphatic. That's an emphatic way of speaking.

Then he wishes them a second thing. That is "eirene" (peace). This refers to the personal happiness of the believer. It is directly the result of the grace of God being free to function in our lives. The grace of God provides everything we need to live every day of our lives. The result, when we are positive toward that grace, is that we move forward in building a spiritual maturity structure in the soul. When we do that, one facet of that spiritual maturity structure is inner happiness. That's what this word, "eirene," refers to. It refers to that quality of inner happiness.

We each have a pentagon in our soul – the spiritual maturity structure. That's the thing in which we are all going from babyhood to super grace living. That's the idea. And one of the qualities in it is inner happiness. That is one of the things which is developed in our soul. It is the grace of God that enables us to do that through the intake of the Word of God.

So these are two great things that Christians can wish one another. I wish upon you the grace of God, and I wish upon you, consequently, the resulting inner happiness – the peace of God in your life.

He identifies this greeting as being from the Triune God. You know that the Bible teaches us that God is one in essence, but the Bible is very clear, that God is three in persons. God is three persons functioning with one identical essence. We're not going to study the essence of God here, but I do want to stress to you now that John (under the guidance of the Holy Spirit) is making a very deliberate emphasis upon the fact that he is greeting them in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here he greets them in the name of Father, Holy Spirit, and Son, in that differentiated order. The reason he's making the stress upon the Triune God is to remind us that we are dealing with a personal God. We are not dealing with a force. We are not dealing with some inspiration. John doesn't want you to think that he's just another Shakespeare who's writing a book that has come to him out of some literary inspiration. He is stressing the fact that God is a person.

This is the balance that the Scripture so beautifully makes. The Eastern cults all go over to thinking of deity in terms of impersonal essence. It's just essence. That's all they thought about. On the other side, the Western mythological civilizations thought about gods in terms of being mere human beings with limitations. What we are dealing with here, in John's case, is the fact that he's talking about a God who has combined both these things. The mystical part is there. His essence is there. But He is also a personal God who has functioned in time and space. *He has entered history*, and that is the critical thing.

An unbeliever is always staggered when he has to face the fact that God has come into history, and that there was actually a time 2,000 years ago in the city of Jerusalem when the Roman soldiers erected a cross, and a man named Jesus of Nazareth hung on that cross and had the flesh torn in His hands as they put that cross in an upright position and dropped it in the hole. We have to face the fact that there was an actual time in history when you could walk up to that cross, and if you rubbed your hand on it, you could get a splinter in your fingers. It was a real historical situation. That's what John is conveying to us, that he is talking from a personal god. He's not just talking from some impersonal force out there. He's talking from a God who has personality; who has will; who has emotions; who has mentality; and, who can consequently speak to us. This is from the ultimate source.

He says, "This is from," and that's the Greek word "apo", which indicates from the exterior of a thing, or from the ultimate source. The object is here from God the Father. "John, to the seven churches which are in Asia. Grace, be unto you, and peace from." Now, first of all, he deals with the Father: "From Him who is." The word "is" is that familiar Greek word "eimi." It's present tense, which means He is now. It's active. This is God himself. It's participle. It's a statement of fact.

The second thing he describes about God the Father is, not only who is, but he says, "From Him who is," and then, "Who was." It again uses that word, "eimi," but this time it uses it in the past tense (imperfect): "Who was in the past," and the imperfect means repeatedly in the past. Again, it is active – the quality of existence.

Here is an interesting thing. One of the attacks upon the book of John is that John used bad grammar when he was writing this book. That indicates that God the Holy Spirit would not have used bad grammar. Let me go one step more here and I'll show you what I mean. The third quality about God the Father: "He who is, who was, and who is to come." This is a different Greek word. This is the word "erchomai." That is future here, meaning "to come." This word is a participle. The first "is" is a participle. And this is a participle. And that's what you're supposed to have in this particular case in the Greek grammar. You are supposed to use participles if you're using good grammar. But when he gets to "was," he doesn't use a participle. He uses the indicative.

The critics used to like to point to this and say, "You see, here's what they call a finite verb with a relative pronoun. And when you use a relative pronoun, you're supposed to use a participle, not a finite verb. This indicative case is wrong." Then they discovered, in the remains of Koine Greek writings, that anytime a person was going to use this imperfect tense (and remember that that's what we have here), that the imperfect tense doesn't have a participle. So, lo and behold, in the writings of the New Testament Greeks, anytime they wanted to use the imperfect tense, they had to use the indicative in this condition, with this particular relative pronoun again. They couldn't use a participle. They didn't have that form. So here again, wonder of wonders, the relative pronoun with the imperfect indicative was really good Greek grammar, just exactly the way God the Holy Spirit would have done it using this language. That is the way it was supposed to be done. Again, the critics were humiliated, and they were silenced.

John does this several times, but every time, it has been discovered that when John does something that seems like bad grammar, they later discover that John knew exactly what he was doing, and that in spite of the fact that he was just an ordinary common fisherman.

You understand that he spoke Greek. Somebody last time didn't understand that. Somebody last time thought he wrote Revelation in Hebrew. He wrote it in Greek. That was the trade language. Everybody taught Greek. Even though he was just a common ordinary fisherman, he did know Greek, and he obviously knew it well.

So, "Who is to come" ("erchomai") is, of course, the last part. This is the future condition that this is what is now before us. This triple compound expression then describes the eternity of God. This is just a way of being able to say that God never had a beginning, and God never had an ending. That is, that He is the eternal one. It is the equivalent to the Old Testament name "Jehovah." The word "Jehovah" means the self-existing one. Exodus 3:14 defines the meaning of Jehovah as, "I am that I am:" "God said unto Moses, 'I am that I am.' He said, thus shall you say unto the children of Israel: I am has sent me unto you.'"

The Bible struggles to put into words that we human beings can understand what God is in His essence. You and I can grasp the fact that something has no end. However, you will drive yourself up the wall trying to think of a person who had no beginning. And the more you think about it, the battier you think you're going to get. That is a concept that just eludes us. Yet this is what deity is – no beginning, and no ending. To try to put that in terms of language that can be conveyed to us is what John is doing here. The Holy Spirit says, "First of all, you bring this message from the person of God the Father. God the Father is the eternal one." So He is described as the One who is; the One who was; and, the One who is to come – the One who is eternal.

Then secondly, he brings greetings from God the Holy Spirit. This is described as, "From the seven Spirits who are before His throne." With the phrase "seven Spirits," again, we have the word "seven," as we've had before: "hepta." We again have "from," which is the Greek word "apo." "Apo," again, is one of the things that John has been attacked on. Previously, we have already pointed out, he used the word "apo" in what was considered a wrong grammatical form. So they said, "You see, the man was ignorant of grammar." However, in this particular case, (again, we won't go into the technicalities), if you know Greek grammar, you will discover that he uses this one in normal, perfectly good, Greek grammar. If you look at the other case, there was a reason that he had to use "apo" with "the wrong case." We would say "the wrong case." It wasn't the wrong case. It was just one of those unique conditions that now, they have discovered, that's exactly the way they would use that word in New Testament times.

John is speaking from the source of the seven Spirits. The word "Spirits" here is "pneuma." And the seven Spirits is a description of God the Holy Spirit. And here's one of those examples of having to look elsewhere in the Bible to see how a symbol is used in order for us to have a clue as to what is meant here. The writer, God the Holy Spirit, was perfectly aware of the fact of how He had used symbols in the Scriptures. Therefore, He would use them in the same way when He came to describe them someplace else.

**The Seven Spirits of God**

So if you'll turn to Isaiah 11:2, you'll read, "And the Spirit of the LORD (God the Holy Spirit) shall be upon Him (Jesus Christ) – the Spirit of wisdom; understanding; counsel; might; knowledge; and, the fear of the Lord. There are exactly seven here. Number one is the Spirit of the Lord. You will notice that in our English Bible, the word "LORD" is in all capital letters. That means that in the Hebrew, it's the word "Jehovah" – the sacred Tetragrammaton, the most secret name of God. This is the four-letter Hebrew word. This represents deity. That is what is meant. So here, first of all, the Spirit of God (God the Holy Spirit), empowering Jesus Christ in His ruling authority in the millennium, will empower Him first as Jehovah God (deity): then with wisdom; with understanding; with council; with might; with knowledge; and, with a fear of the respect of the Lord. The seven qualities are seven expressions of the Spirit of God.

Verse 3 says, "And shall make Him (Jesus Christ) a quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes." Notice governmental authority being exercised: "Neither reproved after the hearing of His ears." Do you have the picture? This is Jesus Christ, under the authority here of God the Holy Spirit. In the millennium, which is what Isaiah is talking about, the Spirit of God is going to be upon Jesus Christ in the sevenfold expression of power. That's exactly what he means here. The word in Revelation says that these seven Spirits are "before" His throne. "Before" means "in the face of" – opposite – face-to-face. It's the Greek word "enopion" again. It is before His throne (His "tronos") which indicates a seat of authority. What's he referring to? Well, he's referring to the throne of God the Father who is in heaven.

If you'll drop over to Revelation 4:5, you'll see that that's exactly the case. Out of the throne (that is, the throne of God in heaven) proceeded lightnings and thunderclaps and voices, and there were some seven lamps of fire burning before His throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. So here again, you have got the Holy Spirit presented in the plenitude (in the maximum expression) of His power in these specific ways, here, described (this time) as the seven lamps.

The next greeting is one that we're going to go into a little more extensively, because, obviously, we have had greetings, first from God the Father; then greetings from God the Holy Spirit; and, then John proceeds in verse 5 to bring greetings from Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is placed last because He is the key subject of this book, and therefore, He is put in the place of maximum emphasis by being placed here third in line, though that is not the normal place in the way the Scriptures usually speak about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We will proceed next time with the greeting from the Son, and the description then of what Jesus Christ is to us.

After John describes the Son, you can just see the emotion that breaks out, because at the end of verse 6, John stops and he sings. He sings the doxology – an expression of praise. He is so captivated by this first reference to Jesus Christ and bringing the greetings from Him.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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