***The Lord Jesus Christ

RV03-02***

We are looking now at Revelation 1:4-6. This is the salutation. This is the second in the series on that subject. Those verses before us read: "John, to the seven churches which are in Asia. Grace be unto you and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come. And from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is a faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, and unto Him that loves us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And has made us a kingdom, priests unto God and His father. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

We see that the apostle John is directing his written record of his vision on the isle of Patmos to seven specific churches in Asia Minor. Asia Minor is that part of the world on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, which is occupied by the modern country known as Turkey. These churches, to which John is addressing this letter, were all in a Roman province called Asia. The official name of it was Proconsular Asia, and it was an official area of the Roman Empire. These churches, as we showed you, form a circuit in John's apostolic ministry. These seven churches, apparently, were among those that John, as an apostle, had authority over, and which he visited periodically in his ministry.

Also, as we shall see in the chapters which follow, for we shall go into details on specific segments of this letter written to specific churches, these churches contain a variety of problems. They had certain strengths, and they had certain spiritual weaknesses which are inherent in local church organizations in our day. So over the centuries, these letters have been an instruction concerning what God expects of local church organizations. So while we are going to look at history to come (we are going to look at the future), we are also very definitely going to find some very pertinent and current instruction concerning what a local church should be: what God despises in a local church; and, what He loves in a local church. It will be of great enlightenment to us on that score alone.

**The Trinity**

John greets his leaders by wishing upon them the blessings of the grace of God and its consequent personal peace or happiness. This greeting that John is bringing is in the name of the Triune God. That is the Trinity. The Trinity is a very important doctrine. The Trinity indicates a very specific thing. It indicates that the God of Christianity is a person. The God of Christianity is not some impersonal force. The God of Christianity is not some mere super human with weaknesses and frailties, such as the mythological gods of the Greek and Romans. The Godhead, viewed as the Trinity, means that there was an interpersonal relationship within the Godhead. That is very important because that indicates what the Bible claims for God – that He is complete, and that nothing is necessary to Him. He is complete and supreme in all that has been described as His essence.

If God were not a trinity, there would be certain relationships which could not be expressed. We would almost have to say that God needed to create man to be able to express those areas; to be able to express certain emotions; and, to be able to express certain relationships. But it was not necessary that God had man in order to complete Himself. The Godhead, formed of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is a complete entity, and it is an expression of the fact that God is a person. The relationships that are described here are the relationships of beings who have personality.

**God the Father**

So first of all, he brings this greeting in the name of God the Father, as the first member of the Trinity. God the Father is described in the attribute of eternity; that is, life without beginning or ending. He is described as the one who now exists; who has always existed; and, who always will exist. That very significantly identifies God the Father. Remember that God the Father is the author of the plan of history – the plan of the ages. Remember that God the Father is the author of the plan of salvation for sinners – the plan of grace.

**God the Holy Spirit**

Then the second member of the Trinity is God the Holy Spirit. He is described here in His sevenfold ministry as the executor of the Godhead. It is God the Holy Spirit who executes the plan of the Father. So the Holy Spirit is presented under various ministries and various facets of his expression; that is, as deity; as wisdom; as understanding; as counsel; as might; as knowledge; and, as the fear of the Lord. The Holy Spirit is seen as ministering in heaven before the Father's throne. The Holy Spirit, in these facets of enlightenment, is symbolized under the form of seven burning lamps.

**Jesus Christ, the Son of God**

That brings us to the third person in the Trinity. Actually, it's the second person, but it comes third in order here. That is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we begin at verse 5, which says, "And from Jesus Christ." The word "and" introduces the last person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, the Son. "From" is the Greek word "apo." "Apo" indicates source. This is the third source of this greeting with which he began of grace and peace which he wished upon his readers. It comes from who is specifically identified as Jesus Christ. The word "Jesus" is the Greek Jesus "iesous." "Iesous" is simply a transliteration of the Hebrew word "jeshua." "Iesous" begins with this Hebrew word, "jeshua," and it goes into the Greek, which is "iesous," and it comes out in the English, again, simply transliterated. This is simply taking Greek letter or English letter, and putting them into English, and we get the name "Jesus." Actually, "jeshua" in the Hebrew is the name "Joshua." The word Joshua is a significant thing. That's why Jesus was given this name by the angel. He was given this name because the name "Joshua" means "Jehovah is salvation," or "Jehovah is the Savior." So the angel told Mary, the mother of Jesus, to name this boy specifically "Jesus," which is the Greek "iesous," and the Hebrew "jeshua." This is the personal name of the Lord Jesus Christ given by the angel messenger in Matthew 1:21.

Then the second part of His name, "Christ," is the Greek word "christos." "Christos" in the Greek means "the anointed one." The phrase in the Bible, "the anointed one," both in the Old Testament and New Testament, refer to the one who is coming who is going to be Israel's king at the time when Israel would be ruling the nations of the world. This is the situation which is going to exist during the whole millennial period of the 1,000-year reign here on the earth. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew word for "messiah." The "christos" in the Hebrew was "Messiah." That is, Messiah means, again, "the anointed one."

There is a significance when the name comes in the order of "Jesus Christ." Sometimes the Bible puts it the other way around, "Christ Jesus." When the name comes in this order, "Jesus Christ," it is looking at the person of the Lord as the one who is despised; the one who is rejected; or, the one who is glorified. It stresses His humanity. It stresses the resurrection feature of His experience. Therefore, this greeting actually comes from the God-man who is now in heaven who died on Calvary for the sins of the world. The name order "Jesus Christ" is associated regularly in Scripture with His resurrection. It is associated with His position as the resurrected one who is in heaven. That's very important to us, because we're going to be immediately getting a great deal of information, including a direct appearance of the person of Jesus Christ. It is important for us to realize, and to always remember, that there is a human being who is in heaven. That is the only way that you and I know that we someday will be in heaven. We who are sinners will actually be able to be in God's heaven.

We are learning on Sunday mornings in Romans why that's possible, because God has given us an absolute righteousness which was made available by the Son of God, and which we receive through faith in Him, and through faith in this sacrifice that He provided. So the name Jesus Christ represents the one who is salvation, and the one who has been anointed to be the ruler of the world. In Revelation, we're going to see how Jesus Christ indeed is going to return to be the ruler of the world. We're going to see the final tragic moments to which the world is going to descend, and then how this person, this God-man, is going to leave His place in heaven, where He shares the Father's throne, and come to this earth to take over the governments of the world.

**Jesus Christ is Trustworthy**

The Son here is described as, "The one who is," which is not in the Greek. You'll see that that's in italics. This verse simply does not have a verb. That, again, is the Greek way of being very emphatic. Actually, all the Greek has is the words "Faithful witness." This tells us what Jesus Christ was in the past. The word "faithful" comes again from that same root which we've been studying in Romans, where we have seen that salvation is structured upon the word "faith," and upon the word "believing." Here it is again "pistos." The word "faith" is "pistis;" and, the word "to believe" is "pisteuo." Here it is "pistos" which is an adjective, and it is translated as "trustworthy" or "reliable."

So first of all, the Lord Jesus Christ is presented as the person who is trustworthy. That is, He is the reliable one, because He is the one that we are asked to place the destiny of our eternal soul upon. We are asked to place our eternal destiny in His hands. You can think of many people that you have a great deal of confidence in – people whose judgment and opinions and character you would trust in one way or another. But I don't think you'd ever find anybody to whom you'd be willing to commit your eternal destiny. I don't think you'd ever find anybody that you could trust so completely – that where your soul goes (whether heaven or hell) would be placed into that person's hand.

Well, this is the first thing that is said about the Lord Jesus Christ – that He is the trustworthy one. He is the reliable one. He is trustworthy and reliable in a very specific way, and that is as a witness. Here is our word "martus" that we've had before. This is that legal term out of the Greek world – the one who testifies in a court of law as to what he has seen; what he heard; and, what he knows. The eyewitness is called the "martus." He's under oath.

The Lord Jesus Christ is described as a person whose word you can trust. He is the one who is telling us what God expects of us. He is the one who is telling us what is our problem with God. He is the one who is telling us about our old sin nature, and about the fact that nothing but evil comes of it, and that we are not capable of meeting God's standard of absolute righteousness. He is the one who is telling us that He has come voluntarily as the Lamb of God to bear the sins of the world in order to make it possible for a holy God not to sin in taking sinners into His heaven. The price of their sin and their guilt has been paid for and has been removed. They have been justified.

The Lord Jesus Christ, when He came into the world, came into this world to fulfill this role of being the faithful witness. We read in John 7:7: "The world cannot hate you, but Me it hated because I testify of it that its works are evil." One of the reasons Jesus Christ was hated by the people of His day was because he was a faithful witness. People resented this. Because He spoke to them with such authority and with such absolute truth, they despised Him, and they rejected Him.

John 18:37: "Pilate therefore said unto Him, 'Are you a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. To this end I was born. And for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears My voice." So anybody who is out to respond to the truth will listen to what the Word of God has to say, and will listen to what Jesus Christ says through the Word of God, and you will respond to it. You will believe it, because Jesus Christ is the truth. He came into the world to give us the truth. Immediately, as John gives his greeting, one of the first things he wants to make clear is that the book of the Revelation comes from a trustworthy witness. It would seem to me that that suggests that we ought to know what's in this book. We ought to have a great reservation toward Bible teachers who suggest that this is a book that we cannot understand, because it is a book which contains the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself – a trustworthy testimony.

1 Timothy 6:13: "I command you, in the sight of God, who makes all things alive, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." Jesus Christ again, as we read, declared before Pontius Pilate that which was indeed the truth.

This principle is to be found in the Old Testament as well. In Deuteronomy 18:15, we read Moses' prophetic declaration concerning the prophet, Jesus Christ, who was to come. These verses speak about Christ: "The Lord your God will raise up onto you a prophet from your midst, of your brethren like me. Unto Him you shall hearken, according to all that you desire for the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God. Neither let me see this great fire anymore so that I won't die.' And the Lord said unto me, 'They have well-spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise up a prophet from among their brethren like you, and I'll put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him. But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. If you say in your heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not follow or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, but the Prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you shall not be afraid of him.'"

So even back here in the time of Moses, Moses was warning the people that there were going to be a lot of folks coming who were saying, "I'm God's witness. And you will discover that they are false witnesses." So today we are surrounded by people who say they are God's witnesses, but they are false witnesses. How do we know that a preacher (a Bible teacher) is not a false witness? You must go back to the tradition of the early Bereans. You must look to the Word of God and see whether the Bible teacher (the preacher) is telling you that which is confirmed by Scripture. You must be willing to receive that which Scripture confirms. The only basis of truth that we have is the truth of the Word of God itself, because in this book, we secure the mind of Christ.

**Jesus Christ is the First in Line of the Dead**

So John, from the very beginning, says, "I'm bringing you this message and I bring you this greeting in the name of the second person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man who has been raised from the dead, and who is now seated in heaven: "He who is the faithful witness and." Again, that word "and" is not in the Greek. It just adds another description of Jesus Christ: "The first begotten of the dead." The word "first begotten" is identifying for us what Jesus Christ is in the present. The previous expression, "the faithful witness," told us what He has been in the past. Now John says, in the present, that, "He is the first begotten from the dead." The word "first begotten" is the Greek word "prototokos." This word "prototokos" means "first in line," among that of many others. Here it refers to those human beings (believers) who will experience a physical resurrection unto eternal life. This expression tells us that Jesus Christ is the first in line of a series of people who are going to be raised as He was raised. That is, He was raised from the dead, never to die again, totally incapable of ever sinning, completely prepared to be transformed into the image of the righteousness of God. So the Lord Jesus Christ is the "prototokos." He is the first in line.

He is the first in line of what? Of the dead. The word for dead is "nekros." That word is a noun, and it refers to the physically dead Jesus Christ in heaven. He is now the one who has once been dead, but now He is alive. Many times the Bible makes reference to this. The Lord Jesus Christ testifies to the fact that He would be raised again. But the unbelieving world; the liberal world; and, the liberal theological world say that Jesus Christ never really rose from the dead. But Colossians 1:15 says, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him were all things created that are in heaven or that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. For He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have preeminence." And it has pleased God the Father to give His Son the preeminence of being first in line of those who have been resurrected to eternal life from the dead.

Romans 8:29: "For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Then, in the Old Testament, again, this very fact of Christ being raised first in line was declared. Psalm 89:27: "And I will make Him, My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." So the one who is presently the firstborn from the dead is going to become the head of all the earth as well.

So in the past, John describes Jesus Christ as the faithful and the trustworthy witness. In the present, He is described as the first of a new species of humanity which is to be glorified physically as He was glorified physically. He is the first begotten from the dead.

**Jesus Christ is the Ruler of the Kings of the Earth**

Then John tells us what Jesus Christ is going to be in the future, with the expression, "The Prince of the Kings of the earth." The word "prince" is the Greek word "archon." "Archon" denotes a ruler over a kingdom. So "Prince" is really not a good translation here. It would be better to call Him just exactly that: the *ruler* of the kings of the earth. "The kings of the earth" is the Greek word "basileus." "Basileus" denotes civil authority – people of the highest ranks. So the rulers of the kings of the planet earth are simply the government officials. Jesus Christ, in the future, is to be the ruler over the heads of all the governments. When we get to chapter 19 of this book, we're going to see how He returns to do just exactly that – how He returns in majestic splendor, with everybody seeing Him coming in outer space in order to take over in the future this role of being the "archon" of the "basileus," the ruler of the kings of the earth. He is not just a king among other kings, but He is going to be *the* King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Along with this, the Old Testament was very clear that this is what God had in mind for His Son. Psalm 2:1-3: "Why do the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." They are attacking God the Father and His anointed one, Jesus Christ.

In Revelation 6:12, we have, again, a further description of this very thing during the tribulation that describes the anarchy that is going to come upon world governments: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal and low, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs when she is shaken by a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places, and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every slave, and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the place of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb. For the great day of His wrath is come. Who shall be able to stand?'"

So when John says that He is the prince, and He is the ruler of the kings of the earth, he is describing this which Psalm 2 described, and then which we see fulfilled here in the description of Revelation 6. All the other kings and all the other heads of governments around the world are going to bow in fear before Jesus Christ as He approaches, taking over this role in the future. In His past, He was the faithful witness; in His presence, He was the firstborn of the dead; and, in His future, He will be the ruler of the kings of the earth.

**The Doxology**

Then in the latter part of verse 5, John bursts out in what we call a doxology. We usually begin a service with the singing of the Doxology. A doxology is an expression of praise. It's an expression of expressing glory to God. So, John, at this point, having presented greetings in the name of the Triune God, then breaks out with the doxology beginning in the last part of the fifth verse, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

First of all, let's look at the object of this praise: "Unto Him that loved us." There is our old word "agapao". "Agapao" is the word that the Bible uses to describe a mental attitude love. This is a love which is an attitude of mind, free from bitterness, and free from mental attitude hatreds. There is nobody and there is no sinner toward whom Jesus Christ has any bitterness. There is no person, no matter how vile he is, or no matter how destructive he has been to all sense of morality, that Jesus Christ has any ill feelings toward. The normal attitude of God is that He is a God of love. He has no ill feelings, and no mental bitterness. That's important because some people do not like Revelation because it describes such things that are going to be done to humanity that a Hollywood horror movie would find it hard to compete with the things that are described in the Revelation that God is going to do to the human beings on this earth.

The lake of fire is, in itself, a horrible enough concept for people to spend eternity. But people are going to get plenty of warning. This is the mercy of God. This is the grace of God, that He will literally, in the tribulation period, give them a taste of hell on earth. They will get that very effective experiential warning as to what is coming. Why? Because John wants to make it clear, before he starts telling us these terrible things, that he is reporting, what a God who is in an "agapao" God, with no attitude of bitterness in His being, is going to do to all of humanity.

Furthermore, I want to point out that this is in the present tense in the Greek. This is a constant present attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is active voice which means it is the personal choice of the Son of God Himself. This is His attitude toward all of humanity. It is in a participle mood which is stating a principle. So such love for us is free to be expressed now because of the cross. "Us," of course, is the believers.

So we would translate this: "To Him who loves us." Then it says he did something else. He not only loves us, but it says, "And He washed us." That is the Greek word "luo." "Luo" does not mean "to wash." It means "loose." It means "to deliver from." The idea is to set free. It is in the aorist tense, which means that at a point in time, in the past, when a person believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, he is set loose from his sin. It is not that he's washed, but that he's actually freed. The Lord Jesus Christ does this. It's in the active voice. He personally has released us. From what? We're going to see in a moment that what He released us from was the slave market of sin. It is a participle because a principle is stated. "Who loosed (or released) us (we Christians) from." The word "from" is this Greek preposition "ek." That means out from. That is, here is the slave market of sin. Everybody is born in this slave market. What Jesus Christ did was He came in here and He stormed the walls, broken them down, and He released us out of that slave market. He made it possible for us to be removed from that enslavement – literally "Out from within." It's not just out from, like it's away from the side of it. It's out from the inside. That's what this preposition means.

It's out from the inside, he tells us, "Of sin." The Greek word is "hamartia." This is the word that is used in archery. You shoot an arrow, and you miss the mark. Every one of those shots is a sin. That's what the Bible means by the word "hamartia." It means "missing the mark." You did not strike the mark. The mark of what? The mark of God's standard for going to heaven, which is absolute righteousness. So the word here means the individual believer is confronted with a slavery problem, by birth, to the old sin nature. And it is plural, so it is speaking about all those different individual sins that we perform. Jesus Christ has freed us from having to sin.

**The Old Sin Nature**

If you are not a Christian, you have within you this old sin nature. This old sin nature will produce things that are sins. It will also produce things that are human good. But it makes no difference whether it is sins or human good, because both of these flow together to form what God calls evil. So out from within you, there is nothing flowing but evil, and so you are indeed a slave to sin. If you are not a Christian, you cannot spend one second of a day in which you are doing that which is not sin. No matter what you think, it flows from within the old sin nature, and God says, "That thought is a sin. I don't care if it's the finest expression of human good that you could come up with. It's sin." No matter what you intend to do, and no matter what you do, it is sin. All day long, it is sin, and you are walking around with a ball and chain of sin hung on you; strapped to you; and, impossible for you to release yourself from. Most of the times, when you are not watching, it expresses itself in the most horrendous ways.

So what John is talking about here is that Jesus Christ, to whom he is now ascribing this expression of praise in this doxology, is speaking to the one who loves us now, and who has loosed us from our (plural) sins – our necessity to be enslaved to the expressions of the old sin nature.

It says, "He did this by His own blood." The word "blood" here stands for the death of Jesus Christ on the cross as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. In 1 Peter 2:24, we have that expressed in just that: "Who, His own self, bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes we were healed." This involved the spiritual death of Jesus Christ for our sins, as they were represented by the Old Testament animal sacrifices. Jesus Christ had to die for us spiritually on the cross. This could not be demonstrated with an Old Testament animal. The only way they could demonstrate the concept of death with an Old Testament animal was to cut a vital artery and permit the blood to flow out. It was quite clear that his life was attached to his blood. When the blood was spilled, the life was gone.

So the idea of the Old Testament (these types) was to picture the fact that Jesus Christ was going to have to give life for the sins of the world. He was to give his spiritual life, which He did, for He died spiritually on the cross when God the Father and God the Holy Spirit turned from Him. And He had to give his physical life. He was actually the one who went through death, and came back in resurrection, demonstrating that which would happen to us. So 1 Peter says, "In His own body, on that tree (that is, the cross) He experienced death for us," and the blood of Christ represents this concept of death as a payment by the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. That death was both spiritual and physical. With this death spoken here by the expression "the blood of Christ," He released us from the slavery of sin. He made it possible for you to spend literally hours of your day without doing a single thing wrong, either in your mind or overtly.

Of course, you see that all of this is a very great offense against human viewpoint. People despise the concept of the blood of Christ as being necessary for our sins – His death in our behalf. This concept is very definitively rejected.

Then verse 6 adds another thing. It says, "And He has done something else." "He has made." The Greek word made is "poieo." "Poieo" means "constituted." "He has constituted us" something very wonderful. What? We who are in the church age – he has constituted us a kingdom. Here we have a related word to the one we had previously. This is "basileia." This word meant sovereign authority. It actually promoted the idea of royal power. So it came from that symbolic meaning of royal power to the actual concrete meaning of a kingdom. So it refers to a territory, or a people over whom a king rules. The believers in the church age are God's royalty. You and I are God's royalty.

Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Colossians 1:13: "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His Dear Son."

1 Corinthians 4:20: "For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." We have been constituted a royal people by the Lord Jesus Christ. He has made us kings.

The reason He is bringing this into the picture is because he is going to later on inform us that we believers, when He returns at the Second Coming, are going to come with Him. When people all over the world see Christ coming to take over the governments of the world, they will also see you there. You will be in that party. You will be coming, not as just a spectator. You will be coming as the official cabinet of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. You will be coming as His staff. You'll be coming indeed as those who are going to act as kings. You are going to exercise royal authority over this earth. So John is pointing out that this letter is being written to Christians in the church age who have been constituted a kingdom. Furthermore, as the kingdom of God, which is going to exercise authority on this earth, they have been made priests. Christians, as a royal company, a kingdom unto God, have also been constituted in this age priests after the Order of Melchizedek.

**Our Spiritual Sacrifices**

1 Peter 2:5: "You also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." What does a priest do? Well, a priest offers sacrifices. Do you have sacrifices to offer? Yes, you do. Remember that we studied the sacrifice of self. None of God's work can be done without your body. That's why it is a terrible thing for a local church to become apathetic – for a group of people to have been the beneficiaries of a ministry of a lot of dedicated Christians, who have so thoroughly enjoyed it, that they lean back, and all they want to do is enjoy. They don't ever want to take up the battle themselves. It is the sacrifice of our bodies which stands in the way of accomplishing the Lord's work on this earth more than anything else. There just aren't the bodies to do the job.

Then we studied the sacrifice of praise – the times when we thank God. Remember that praise was connected with thanksgiving. Every time you thank Him for something He has done, you have offered up a spiritual sacrifice. Every time you sit and sing in church a hymn of phrase (a doxology, perhaps), you have offered up the sacrifice of praise. Every time you offer that sacrifice of praise, there's credit accrued to you for reward in heaven.

We looked at the sacrifice of substance – the giving of our financial means in order to sustain God's word. There are many, many people who have had ample funds for everything under the sun except God's Word. Someday they get to heaven, and they discover, lo and behold, they've left it all behind to somebody, and usually to somebody that is going to abuse it. What they could have taken with them in the form of reward, they have squandered, because they were not faithful stewards with their money to support the Lord's work.

You want to be very careful, especially if you're a young person who has grown up around a place like Berean, and you're off on your own with your own career and with your own finances. You may still be depending on your parents to finance the Lord's work. You want to wake up to the fact that one of your richest rewards in heaven is going to be for those dollars that you put in that offering box to sustain the Lord's work. All you have to do is listen to these letters we get from tapers that we get from all over every place, to be aware of the fact that God's money is performing monumental, divine good production, and you are the beneficiaries of the rewards that will come for such service.

There is one other sacrifice, which is one of the very important ones is the sacrifice of divine good works which we hear about in Hebrews 13:16: "But do not forget to do good and to share. For with such sacrifices, God is well-pleased." God expects of us the sacrifice of divine good production. That means knowing your spiritual gift, and that means functioning upon it. These are all spiritual sacrifices which God has given us, as believers, to perform, and we have faithfully performed that.

1 Peter 2:9 says, "But you are a chosen generation, a holy priesthood, a holy nation, a people of His own, that you should show forth the praises of Him that called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

So John closes verse 6 by saying, "God has made us a kingdom, priests unto God." That is *the* God; that is, the Father. And he adds to that, "To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever." The word "glory" is the Greek word "doxa." "Doxa," interestingly enough, in classical Greek, meant "opinion." The New Testament never uses it like that. We get a lot of English words from that. We get "orthodox," for example. That means "straight in doctrine." And we get "heterodox," which means "crooked doctrine." We get many words that have this "dox" portion involved, which means "opinion." But the New Testament doesn't use it like that. But it did come from the fact that God was looked upon as a straight person. Therefore this word "doxa" first meant that, in the opinion of the people, God was straight, and because God was so straight, and His essence (His absolute righteousness) was so perfect, that the result was praise and honor to God.

The word "glory" in the Scripture means "praise." Here, particularly, it is due to the God-man because He's straight, and because He is absolute righteousness. There is no deviation from perfection in Him. So to Him is to be this praise because of what He is.

Also dominion: The word "dominion" is "kratos." This means "manifest power" – power which is evident. Of course, here it connotes the ruling power of Jesus Christ as King of Kings. And He is to do it forever. Literally, this word "forever" is "unto the ages." In the Greek this is "eis eion." "Eion" is the Greek word for "ages." This is the word that the Greeks used for an indefinite period of time. So he says, "Unto the ages," and then he adds the word "eion" again: "Of the ages." That is the way the Bible tries to convey the idea of eternity: "Unto the ages of the ages" – an expanse of time that never ends. We say, "Forever and ever."

John is saying, after he has expressed this doxology, this expression of praise, "This is for a person who has done that for us; a person who has loosed us from our enslavement to sin; a person who loves us now; a person who has made us a kingdom which is going to be a kingdom of rulers; and, a person who has made us priests unto God, and that that priesthood is private." But we do have sacrifices of a spiritual nature which we offer. And all of this is done to people who did not deserve it. So it is natural for John just to break out, and to confirm it with the word, "Amen." Indeed, we can add with John, "Unto Him be glory and glory for all eternity, and to Him be the ruling power for all eternity. That's the way it's going to be. You and I are going to be part of sharing that if you are in the family of God, and we can add our own "Amen" to that.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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