***The Second Coming of Christ

RV04-02***

We continue in Revelation 1:4-8. We are looking at the salutation. Thus far we have 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 the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince (the ruler) of the kings of the earth, unto Him that loved 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."

John, who is the human author of this book, is directing his writing to seven specific local churches which reside at this time in the Roman province of Asia. John, as we see here, greets his readers in the name of the Trinity, in the name of the Triune God. The Trinity always stresses to us the fact that God is personal. He is a person. He is not an impersonal force. He is not merely a pantheistic God. He is a real personality: three in person; one in essence.

He names the Father, and brings his greetings in the name of the Father in terms of the Father's eternity. The Father is the author of the plan of the godhead for the ages. He brings greetings in the name of God the Holy Spirit in terms of the sevenfold ministry – the enabling work of the Spirit of God upon the governing rule of Christ over the earth. The Holy Spirit is the executor of the Godhead's plan. Then he names Jesus Christ as the reliable witness from God – the first of the human resurrection, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Jesus Christ is the agent of the Godhead's plan.

John closes this salutation with a doxology of praise to the Lord Jesus Christ. He calls Him the one who loves us now. He calls Him the one who has loosed us from our sins by His sacrifice of Himself on the cross. He calls Jesus Christ the one who has made us a royal kingdom of believers. He calls Him the one who has made us priests in the church age. Then he ascribes glory to Jesus Christ, and manifest power forever.

**The Second Coming of Christ**

In verse 7 and 8, John concludes this salutation with the announcement of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth as God the Son. These first verses, the salutation in verse 4 through 8, are a tremendous expression of Scripture concerning the Godhead, and concerning Jesus Christ. This in itself, if John wrote nothing else, would have been a tremendous contribution to our understanding of God, and to the revelation which He has given us.

So beginning in verse 7, we read: "Behold, He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." Let's take a look, first of all, at the exegesis. What is in the actual Greek bible behind verse 7? It begins with the word "behold." This is the Greek word "idou." "Idou" is what we call a demonstrative particle. It is like a finger which is pointing, and this finger is indicating that our eyes should focus on a certain point out here. John is calling the attention of the readers to a future turning point in the world's history. That's why he uses this word "idou" (behold). John says, "Pay attention. I'm going to refer to a high point in history. It's actually going to be a turning point in history. It's actually out yet in front of us."

"Behold, He comes." The word "comes" is the Greek word "erchomai." This word refers to the arrival of a person. Here, it refers specifically to the arrival of Jesus Christ. This arrival of Jesus Christ is particularly the arrival that we refer to as the Second Coming. At this point, John is not speaking about the arrival of Christ in the rapture, where He comes to take the believers out of the world at the beginning of the tribulation period. This "erchomai" arrival is an arrival after the period of the tribulation. So, in other words, he is talking about something which is future, obviously, from the time that John wrote, and will even be future to the time of the rapture of the church.

However, one thing that's interesting is that this is in the present tense in the Greek Bible. We wouldn't expect this to be present tense. We would expect this to be future. But when a writer of the Bible, under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit, wanted to emphasize that something was very certain, relative to what was going to happen in the future, he would actually do just this. Instead of using the future tense, "That He shall come," as we might expect here, it just says, "Behold he comes," literally in terms of the fact that He has come. It is here. It is a finished thing. We call this a futuristic present. The present tense is used because, as far as the writer is concerned, this thing is already done. The Second Coming of Christ is already an accomplished fact. As far as he's concerned, Jesus Christ, in all practical effect, has already returned here to earth.

The liberal theologian (the liberal Bible student), of course, thoroughly rejects the fact that Jesus Christ is ever going to return to this scene: our lower hemisphere; our part of the universe; or, our material contained in here, or that He is actually ever going to break into this life of ours again. They are not sure that He really broke into it in the first place, but certainly they're confident that He's not going to come a second time. But the writer, John, is very confident. There is no doubt in his mind, under the leading of God the Holy Spirit, that this is exactly what's going to happen. So he presents it in the Greek Bible in a way that is very emphatic. He just puts it in the present tense instead of the future, because it's a certain event.

Then it is in the active voice. Active voice means that Jesus Christ, the resurrected God-man Himself, does the coming, and that He comes just as He promised He would. He said, "Here I am in a physical body; resurrected; and, glorified. This is the way you see me leaving. This is the way you'll see me come back." Therefore, it is active voice because Jesus himself is going to do that returning. It's indicative because this is a simple statement of fact.

This coming takes place at the end of the tribulation period. It is not a reference to the rapture which takes place before the tribulation, but a reference to the actual Second Coming where Christ comes and His feet touch down upon this earth – the Bible tells us specifically on the Mount of Olives.

He comes with a certain accompaniment of clouds. The word "with" is the Greek word "meta." The root meaning of this word "meta" is "in the midst of." So the idea is that Jesus Christ, when He returns, is going to return in the midst of clouds. This word "meta" is used in this way in Matthew 1:23, which very ably exemplifies it, where we read, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel," which, being interpreted, is "God 'meta' us" – God in the midst of us. That's the same idea here.

Jesus is going to come in the midst of clouds. The word "clouds" is "nephele." "Nephele" here actually refers to the literal billows of condensed moisture floating up in the atmosphere that we normally refer to as clouds. Sometimes the bible uses this word "clouds" in a symbolic way. We won't go into that here, but here it is using it in the actual literal sense of clouds. In Matthew 24:30, we read about the return of Jesus Christ that John is referring to here: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 26:64 also says, "Jesus said unto him, 'Nevertheless, I say unto you. Hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'" So these white billowy things (condensed water) floating in the atmosphere are going to be surrounding Jesus Christ when He returns in the clouds. It will be a very majestic kind of appearance.

Of course, we were told this (that He would return this way), on the occasion that He left. In Acts 1:9, we read, concerning the departure of Jesus Christ: "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." For a while, as Jesus began floating upward to heaven, they were able to watch Him. They were able to follow Him with their eyes. Then He reached a certain level in the atmosphere, and a literal cloud floated under Him, and blocked Him out of their sight. And that is the last they saw of Him. So, in effect, He departed on a cloud, and He will return in the midst of a cloud.

John says that when this happens, "Every eye shall see Him." The word "every" is this Greek word "pas." That is put in there to indicate that all humanity is involved here. The word "eye" is the Greek word "ophthalmos." You can see that we get the word "ophthalmist" from this, our English word which refers to an eye doctor. The "ophthalmos" here is the literal organ of sight. That's what he's referring to.

At the end of the tribulation period, the entire human race is going to observe the return of Jesus Christ from heaven, where He had, up to that point, been seated next to His Father, sharing the Father's throne. All of humanity will see Him returning, surrounded by clouds. He will be in the midst of these clouds, and He will be slowly descending to the earth. The people on the earth are going to see Him with their literal eyes. Just as you sit and look around this room now, and your eyes take in sights (information), so too they, with those literal physical eyes, will observe His return. That's the word that we have here.

"Every eye shall see." The world "see" is that particular Greek word "horao." "Horao" is the Greek word for a panoramic view. It is not that other Greek word "blepo" which means to look at something and focus your eye in detail on something. It just means to look at a panoramic expanse. Well, this is a very fitting word indeed, because that's exactly what the return of Jesus Christ to this earth is going to be like. It's going to be every mortal who's living on the earth, at the end of the tribulation, viewing the majestic return of Jesus Christ. It will not simply be Christ returning in the midst of those clouds. It's going to be all the church. You and I, literally, will be on view at this point in history when He returns. The people who are on earth will see us. They will see all the church returning as the bride of Christ.

The full details of this we shall study later in the Revelation. But let's just jump ahead to Revelation 19, and read what this panoramic view is exactly going to contain. Revelation 19:11: "And I saw heaven opened, and, behold, a white horse, and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True." There are those identifying characteristics of Jesus Christ again. "And in righteousness (that is, absolute righteousness), He does judge and make war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. And He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies that were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with the rod of iron. And He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

I have on occasion seen artists who have tried to conceive this scene, and they have drawn pictures, and sometimes very impressively, with Jesus Christ surrounded by glory and the clouds, and behind Him are a vast host of human beings literally coming with Him. And not only human beings come with Him, but the angelic beings (the elect angels). All of them are descending from heaven as, indeed, a mighty army of God. The people on earth are going to see this, and it's going to be a "horao" view, a panoramic view, and their eyes are going to be wide open. They're going to be looking in awestruck amazement as they sweep from one expanse of heaven to the other. They see this mighty army of God descending. You and I are going to be part of it. This is going to happen – the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

**Darkness**

It is interesting that we remember from Scripture that there is a certain condition that the Bible tells us that is going to exist all over the planet earth. For example, Mark 13:24 refers to this condition: "But in those days after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon (of course, consequently) shall not give its light. And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He shall send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." So here in the gospel of Mark, this very same incident of Christ returning in the majesty of the clouds and the army from heaven, we are told that a condition will exists upon the earth, namely that the earth will be blanketed with total darkness. There will be a solid covering of darkness upon the earth. The sun will be darkened. Consequently, the moon will be darkened. The stars will be falling (or they will be shielded). There will be upon this earth darkness – pitch black darkness.

Of course, this is reminiscent of the condition which existed when Jesus Christ actually bore the sins of the world from high noon to 3:00 in the afternoon on Calvary's cross. At that time, there was also a blanket of darkness so that, in effect, the humiliation of the Son of God was, in part, hidden from the view of humanity whose sins He was bearing. In any case, a repeat condition is in store for the world. It will be that kind of total, solid, hard darkness such as we describe as not being able to see your hand in front of your face.

Luke 21:25 also refers to this condition: "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth, distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring." Luke gives us a little bit of information about how people are going to be feeling at this time: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." This is describing the identical situation in a little different words and from a little different frame of reference. It adds just what we might expect: that people are going to be in stark terror – just absolute stark terror. The earth is covered with darkness at a time when it should not be covered in darkness. That phenomena will be broadcast all over the world, and it will cause an intense terror, because these people have already been through living hell for the seven years of the tribulation period. This is way down at the end. This is the very finale.

Then verse 27 says, "And then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draws nigh." This is spoken specifically, of course, to tribulation saints.

**The Day of the Lord**

This picture of an earth covered with a blanket of darkness when Jesus Christ returns, was, as a matter of fact, predicted even in the Old Testament by the prophets. For example, Isaiah 13:9-10 alludes to this: "Behold, the day of the Lord." Remember that the expression "The Day of the Lord" includes the tribulation and the millennial period. The day of the Lord begins with a frightful period – the tribulation. Then it goes into the happy period of the millennium. Both of those segments are in this expression, "The day of the Lord." He is, of course, here looking at it in terms of its opening parts: the horror part – the tribulation period: "Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate. And He shall destroy the sinners out of it, for the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light. The sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine." He is referring to the identical condition that the gospel writers refer to of a blanket of darkness surrounding the earth at the arrival of Jesus Christ in the Second Coming.

We also have this in one of the minor prophets in Joel 2:10-11: "The earth shall quake before them, the heavens shall tremble, the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army, for His camp is very great, for He is strong, who executes His Word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it?" Then in Joel 3:15, "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." There are other passages in the Old Testament. We won't pursue those here, but they're all on this same principle, declaring that at the time that Jesus Christ does return in the midst of those clouds, preparatory to landing on the Mount of Olives, the whole world is sheathed in a total blanket of darkness.

That being the condition, can you see how the majestic appearance of Jesus Christ will be tremendously enhanced because the world is in utter darkness, and suddenly there bursts out across the outer space (the interstellar spaces) the majestic glory of God the Son returning with the glory of the hosts of heaven: angels; and, church, and all of outer space illuminated by their appearance. It will not be hard to see Him. He will stand out there like a jewel – like a diamond on a velvet background. He will indeed be visible to every eye, just as the Scriptures say. It will be visible in such a way that, because of the contrast with the blanket of darkness on the earth, it will just add to the terror of those who are upon the earth at that time. So the return of Christ in His full brightness of glory will be all the more brought to a focal point with every human eye, because everything else around them is going to be total darkness.

**The Jews Who Pierced Him**

However, the Bible adds another very awesome phrase here in verse 7: "Every eye shall see Him," and then it breaks down just who those eyes are going to be: "And they also who pierced Him." The word "they who" is the Greek word "hostis." This is what we call a relative pronoun, but it's an indefinite reference. So the idea is people who are of such a kind. "Hostis" means "of such a kind" – anyone of this particular type. What particular type? A particular type who was responsible for doing something to Jesus Christ, namely to have "pierced Him." The Greek word is "ekkenteo." "Ekkenteo" is a word that is referring to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. That's how they pierced Him. It's in the aorist tense. Therefore, it is looking back to the past to that time when, on the cross at Calvary's hill, they actually nailed Him to the cross. They actually pierced His body. Of course, the word "pierced" is a euphemism for the fact that they murdered Him. They put him to death. It is active. This refers specifically to those who pierced Him – basically, the Jews. Though, of course, the Romans were involved. The gentiles were to that extent involved. They had approved the execution, but it was basically the Jews who were pursuing this.

If you will turn back to Matthew 27:22 for just a moment, I think you'll see why. Basically, this is upon the Jews: "Pilate said unto them." He has Jesus before them. The crowd is there. He's trying to get them to agree to release Jesus on this Passover holiday. They say, "No, we'll take the murderer, Barabbas." "Pilate said unto them, 'What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said unto him, 'Let Him be crucified.'" Who is "they?" The Jews. The mob which was standing in front of him. They demanded the execution of Jesus Christ.

Pilate, weak that he was; wishy washy that he was; and, self-seeking that he was, yet could not bring himself to agree to do this, because he knew something very clearly true about Jesus Christ – that He was not guilty of a capital crime. He had not done anything that deserved execution. Therefore, Pilate had enough conscience that he just could not bring himself to say, "Oh, well, go ahead and kill Him." Instead, verse 23 tells us what Pilate did: "And the governor said, 'Why? What evil has he done?'" What's the capital crime? They didn't answer. They just said, "Kill Him." They rioted more and more.

Pilate, being a politician, did not want a bad report to go back to Rome concerning his exercise of his authority here in this area of the Roman Empire. So he decided in verse 24 to officially absolve himself of this murder: "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous person. See to that yourselves.'" Pilate said, "I am officially declaring by this ritualistic ceremonial act that I recognize that this man is innocent, and I am innocent of His blood and innocent of His death. If you want to kill Him, you've got my permission, but you see to it. Do not ask me to act officially in my capacity as governor to do this. I'm only tolerating and allowing you to do it because of your rioting."

Matthew 27:25 then makes that horrendous declaration that the Jews have for centuries regretted that they ever made: "Then answered all the people and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.'" And by his blood, they meant His death. In fact, it was His murder. The Jews accepted responsibility for the death of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, they included their posterity. That is, they included the nation of Israel that exists to this day. The Jewish people to this day have upon them the responsibility for the execution of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. He was executed because the Jewish nation insisted that this be done. This is "the piercing of Jesus Christ" by the Jews that is referred to here in Revelation.

It is interesting how the old sin nature reveals that ultimately it is a blinded clown, because just for a moment in passing, notice Acts 5:28. After Jesus had ascended to heaven, and the apostles began their preaching and teaching ministry in the city of Jerusalem, they were naturally centering upon who Jesus was; what He had come to do; the credentials; the authentication of what He claimed to be; who He claimed to be as the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel, and the Savior of the world; and, what had been done to Him by their own people, mainly by the authority and leadership of the Jewish authorities, the Jewish religious leaders. So the disciples were going all over Jerusalem saying, "We killed Him. For centuries, we asked God to send us the Messiah. For centuries we looked for the savior. For centuries, the hope of womanhood was centered on, 'I might be the mother of the Messiah,' and every Jewish girl hoped that she might be the mother. Finally, one became the mother. And what did we do? We took the Lord of Glory, and we killed Him. We murdered Him. That's what we did to Him." They were just repeating this message again and again.

Notice what the Jewish authorities, many of them whose fingers were dripping with the blood of Christ, in truth, said. Acts 5:28: "Saying, did not we strictly command you that you should not teach in His name? And, behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us?" They had stood there only a short time before, and had screamed out to Pilate, "It's okay. It's only been a month-and-a-half or two months. It's okay. Kill Him. We'll be responsible for his death. His blood is on us. In fact, we'll be so responsible that we'll put it upon our posterity – all of our children down through the ages. We will put upon all of us the guilt and the responsibility for this murder."

Yet here they see that people are being struck to heart. When you got up and preached like this, 3,000 people stormed the gates of heaven and entered the kingdom of God that day. These Jewish leaders were looking around and saying, "Well, wait a minute. What is this?" They were aware of the fact that the thing that was bringing conviction to the hearts of the Jewish common folks who were listening was the fact that they had murdered a Man who did not deserve to be murdered, and a Man who, by his birth, and by every credential that you could ask for, had been identified beyond the shadow of a doubt as being indeed the Messiah sent from God – the One they had been looking for. So they were convicted. The Holy Spirit was mightily convicting these people.

Well, the Jewish leaders naturally looked bad because they were the ones who were in the forefront yelling, "Kill Him, and we'll take the responsibility for it." So here they are trying to cover their tracks and say, "What's the matter with you people? You're talking as if it was our fault that He was killed. You're trying to make us responsible for His blood." The truth is, that's exactly what they were.

So this is the background of this word "pierced" ("ekkenteo") in Revelation. It's in the indicative which is a statement of fact. "Him," of course, is Jesus Christ. Specifically, let's read it again. It says that part of the people who were going to actually see Jesus Christ returning from outer space in this very majestic way are going to be those who pierced Him. You might say, "Well, who does that include? Who is it that's actually involved here in this word "pierced Him?" Well, we get part of the answer in Zachariah 12:10, where we read, "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications. They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." We have identified here that it's going to be upon the house of David. That's the Jewish people. It's going to be specifically identified with those who are in Jerusalem, which is the city of David, which is the capital of Israel. So very clearly, part of the people who are going to be grieved, and part of the people who are going to look upon Him are those who are alive at the time of the Second Coming. Many of these people are probably alive today.

**The Jews in Hades**

But I think that we can go even further than this. I think we can include probably quite literally the very people who in Acts 5 were saying, "You're trying to bring the blood of this man down on us." I think that probably we can include the people who are in Hades who actually were literally responsible for executing Jesus Christ – the people upon whose hands His blood really does directly reside. Jesus Christ entered Hades after His resurrection and announced the proclamation of His conquest over sin. He announced the fact that justification had now been provided so that God could give absolute righteousness to anybody willing to receive it. The saints who were in the same part of Hades, the Paradise part, were now to be released and taken with Him back to heaven. The rest (the unbelievers), those with the very blood of Christ on their hands, were to be left there in the Torments section of Hades. I think that as they received information from Christ concerning the conclusion; the confirmation; and, the provision of salvation through the cross, that these people probably will also, by God's supernatural means be able to look up, and sitting there in Hades, see the return of Jesus Christ with this majestic, mighty army.

Won't that be a night of terror for them? Won't that be a horrible sight to be sitting in a place that is simply a weigh station for them on the way to the lake of fire? They're sitting in a place where they're only waiting for the second resurrection when the bodies of unbelievers are raised, and when they can face shortly the great white throne judgments. And they will hear pronounced against them their moral guilt, then to be sent, actually and physically, into the lake of fire. They're all sitting in Hades for now.

Suddenly here they are, actually seeing Jesus Christ returning. I think that this ideas is not really far-fetched, but is really confirmed for us in Matthew 26:63. Jesus is standing before the high priest Caiaphas. He is being examined preparatory to His crucifixion. Notice what he says to Caiaphas the high priest: "But Jesus held His peace." He did not respond to the interrogation of Caiaphas. "And the high priest answered, and said unto Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." He says, "I'm putting you on oath before God. Now tell me, are you the Messiah God of Israel?"

Jesus said unto him, "You have said, (or, 'That's right. I am.') Nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Now, that's what He's telling Caiaphas. He says, "All those of you who are here interrogating Me, and bringing condemnation upon Me, are going to see me coming in the clouds of heaven." So I think we have indeed a very specific declaration there that the people in Hades are going to see this return.

Let's look at one more verse, John 19:37. Again, another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him, whom they have pierced." Who is they who look upon Him whom they have pierced? Most directly, and literally, and first of all, it is the people who are actually there conducting the trial of Jesus Christ, and who actually insisted before Pilate that Jesus be executed. So that's going to be an impressive sight. For people all over the world, "Every eye shall see Him." Then breaking that every eye down, it is those who pierced Him. This is probably referring to the Jews who are in Hades, who actually did cause His death, as well as their posterity, who are alive at the time in the tribulation.

Then, furthermore, there is another category. It adds the word "and," and it says, "All the kindreds of the earth," "All," again is referring to every person. The word "kindreds" is the Greek word "phule." "Phule" really means "tribe." Or we would say "nation." This means all the nations of the world. So what we have referred to here are the gentiles who are alive at the Second Advent. Again, we may compare this back once more to Matthew 24:30. We read, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes (all the 'phules' – all the nations) of the earth mourn. And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory." Where He is going to come is specifically to the earth. This is the Greek word "ge." That refers to planet earth.

**Wailing**

When they see Him, they're going to have a reaction. These Jews see Him, and the gentiles see Him, and they mutually have a reaction. That is that they shall wail. The word "wail" is "kopto." This word is future because this is ahead for this group of humanity. It's in the middle voice because the middle voice connotes a certain specific kind of wailing. It meant beating the breast or beating the head in mourning. In certain cultures, when people die, they actually have hired mourners, and they hire these people to do this: to "kopto" – to bewail, or to mourn the loss of this person. They literally bewail. They scream; they cry; they moan; and they agonize. The oriental is particularly prone to this.

This is what this word means. These people are literally going to be screaming, "God, how wrong we were" is what they're going to realize. There He is. We killed Him. We rejected him. We refused to listen when He was trying to punch through in order to communicate to us in our sphere. Instead, we ignored Him." Now, He's punching through again. And this time we cannot ignore Him. This time we can't stick a plug up there and say, "I don't want to listen to your Bible. I don't want to listen to conscience – the image of God in me. I don't want to listen to Jesus Christ. I don't want to listen to what creation tells me." This time He's punching through into our sphere, and we have to listen. What a tragedy to think that there are many people who are alive on the earth today who will in all likelihood experience this bewailing moment in their lives.

Why will they be doing this? Why would they be crying out with such wails of agony? It says, "Because of Him." The word "because" is the Greek word "epi," and it really means "on account of Him;" that is, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the point of issue between God and every person. He was the point of issue between the Jews who executed Him. He has been the point of issue between God and every human being that has ever lived. He is the point of issue, and anybody who rejects Him is going to be in this company of bewailing mourners.

Let me read to you again that haunting question of Pilate's which has come down through the centuries to us, that we have in Matthew 27:22: "Pilate said unto them, 'What shall I do then with Jesus who is called the Christ?'" And that's the question. And to you, God poses that same question. You must ask yourself, what will I do with Jesus, who is indeed called the anointed one, the Christ, the sent One from God to be the Savior of the world – the One who came to execute this mission?

Well, now, this is a sad picture. It is a very gruesome picture in some respects. Probably, if all of us were honest with ourselves, who are on this side of salvation, who are safe at the foot of the cross because we have accepted God's offer of absolute righteousness without human doing and by faith, there is also a sense of relief. That shows up in the apostle John himself in the last two words of verse 7, because he just breaks out with these two words: "Oh, even so. Amen." Just look what comes before that. "Behold, he comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him. They also who pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall bewail because of Him, Jesus Christ." What does John say? "Even so." The word "even" is the Greek word "nai." It's just a little particle of affirmation that means "verily, yea." It's a solemn expression of concurrence. Then he says "Amen" which means "so be it."

This is through John's eyes on the glory return. John's mind leaped to the things that our minds leap to. We regret those who have turned against Christ. We regret the lot of those who are going to be bewailing and moaning. But at the same time, we look forward and say, "You know, I'm going to be in that company. When that panorama view is made, I'm going to be there. The fact is, I have to think it over. Do I want to ride a horse? Or would I rather walk? I think maybe I'll walk it down." You can kind of think it over and see whether you want to ride a horse or walk it down. Most of you, being from Texas, we should have a good number of you riding horses anyhow. But you've never ridden a horse on a cloud either. So that's not too bad to do. So in the meantime, you say, "What are you thinking?" Well, you're thinking of the greatness, the glory of the fantastic thing that's before you. It's hard for us to get hung up on those who are negative, because God has given everybody a chance. And John knows it. Someday they too will know it.

Well, let's tie it up. He closes the salutation and says, "I am Alpha." This is a very emphatic "I." Generally we don't have the word "I" by itself in Greek. It's the Greek word "ego." In this case, it happens to be separated from the verb. Usually it just say "eimi" – "I am." Here it says "ego eimi." "I, indeed, Myself, am." He is emphasizing who He is. And who is He? He says, "I am alpha and omega." All of you know that the word "alpha" refers to the first letter of the Greek alphabet. Omega refers to the last letter of the Greek alphabet. In English, we would say, "From A to Z," and Jesus Christ says, "I am A to Z." In the alpha, He is the beginning of all things. Colossians 1:16-17 and Romans 11:36 tell that there is nothing without Him. He is the beginning of everything. Without Him, nothing would exist, and nothing would continue to exist. He is the beginning.

Furthermore, He is the omega. He is the last word. He is the final word on all things. So everything in the universe begins and it ends with Jesus Christ. Incidentally, the text really says, "'I am Alpha and Omega,' says the Lord God." The Greek has the word God, emphasizing the deity of Jesus Christ. The word "Lord," as you know, stands for "kurios." That stands for deity. Jehovah God is the idea here: "I am the beginning and the end." Who is speaking? Jehovah God. Jesus Christ is eternity, just as much as the Father is eternal. This is the same description as up in verse 4 for the Father. And then it adds this word "pantokrator." Literally, "pantokrator" is "ruler of all." It is a word which God the Holy Spirit restrains to a very sacred use. This word is never used in the New Testament for anyone else except God Himself. Only God is called "pantokrator." God is ruler of all. God is the Almighty.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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