

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, January 15, 2023

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.” (Revelation 1:4b-5a)

These words, which fall into a category of a salutation from the author introducing his writing, will be the focus of our next section in examining the book of The Revelation. It is a familiar expression among the writings of the Apostles to the budding collection of churches as the world transitioned to the New Testament Church dispensation. Paul used the same or similar language in nearly all of his writings (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; and Philemon 1:3). Peter does so in his two epistles (1 Peter 1:2 and 2 Peter 1:2), John does so in his second epistle (2 John 1:3), and while Jude does not specifically entreat for grace in his salutation, he does mercy, peace, and love (Jude 1:2). These salutations – so commonly made part of this divinely inspired work in the canon – are too frequently read and passed over as *only* salutations, I fear. I know that for my part this has been true in the way that I have consumed the work of these men who, as we’re told in the scriptures ***“spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21)***. When the elders come to stand in front of this body, we frequently offer salutations to our beloved friends before we drop into the content of our sermons. A sincere bit of expression, but not commonly received (I suspect) as on par with the content of our work. In common vernacular among the society, a more banal and even vain protocol of salutation is used as various gatherings are brought into order to begin the conduct of some business or other.

But our hearts here are, as the type of the Savior expresses so affectionately, ***“inditing a good matter: [We] speak of the things which [we] have made touching the king” (Psalms 45:1)***. These gatherings of this little body of called out saints are for an eternal purpose. In these gatherings, we’re placing our hearts, minds, and spirits upon things that have ***“promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Timothy 4:8)***, those things that respect that ***“building of God ... eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1)***. In that arena, the salutations that are brought forth are as critical to the feeding of this flock as is the body of doctrinal or practical messaging that follows. And if that is a true saying – for the treading of the path of righteousness in the spiritual generations through centuries and millennia of providence within the New Testament dispensation – how critical is it when introducing the Day of the Lord? John the Revelator, in these salutatory words – ***“grace be unto you, and peace”*** – is not speaking to the whole world! He is speaking to the saints who will live what he was given to see. As the expositor John Seiss aptly identifies in this place, ***“it is not the ordinary prosperity of the world which is here bespoken, but something infinitely higher.”*** Indeed! It is the humble entreaty to the singular generation of saints who will face a raging world, a raging Satan, and a returning Christ! How would you think his trembling spirit would want to speak to those souls? Grace and peace ... and the foundation underlying the promise.

Grace

In my second sermon on this grand book of The Revelation, preached on April 1, 2018, I did a bit of a look at the Covenant of Grace. There, the context was demonstrating that event in eternity when Christ received this, His Revelation, as part of the Trinity entering into a grand covenant with respect to the mystery of the gospel as relates to the human creation. That is, before the created existence in which we presently have physical and intellectual and spiritual participation, the Trinity determined the grand scope and elements – setting for each member of the new human race, ***“the bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17:26)***. I will here make reference to that blessed covenant as it relates to the recipient of undeserved goodness, blessings, favor, beauty,

pleasantness, and kindness – words that are used to describe “**grace**”. The term is foundational and is sewn into our language such that we use it unwittingly. That is, we use the term with less precision than I think is best for our spiritual edification. Certainly, as we look upon John’s expressions in this grand subject of Christ’s Revelation – and the people who he sees in prophecy engaged upon those days – it would be good to have a crisp and precise and comprehensive grasp of the term. I offer up that it is best to consume this term in two categories as it is presented in scripture: Temporal grace and eternal grace

“Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” (Psalm 45:2)

The underlined portion of this passage is instructive to our examination. Psalm 45 is a beautiful description of the coming Messiah – in His return and taking of His kingdom. In that context, as the passage describes the glorious nature of that returning Monarch, one of the descriptions is that “**grace is poured into thy [i.e., Christ’s] lips**”. As the expositor Matthew Poole articulates it: “*God hath plentifully poured into [Christ’s] mind and tongue the gift of speaking with admirable grace, i.e. most wisely and eloquently, and therefore most acceptably, so as to find grace with and work grace in thy hearers. This was in the same sort true of Solomon, but far more eminently and effectually in Christ.... The former clause [of the verse] noted [Christ’s] inward perfections, and this [clause] signifies [Christ’s] ability and readiness to communicate them to others [i.e., the recipients of that grace].*” Integral to the relationship we have in Jesus, our Messiah, is that He bestows situational and continual graces – goodly and pleasant things, blessed things, favorable things and outcomes, events and parts of the creation that strike our eyes as breathtakingly beautiful and pleasant. Kind friends, kind words (even from those who hate Him and His commandments).

When we have afflictions, He gives us graces of the spirit to carry us through them and then mercifully delivers us from them. When we have distresses, he brings us patience and reminds us of our dependence upon Him for helps ... and then unties that visceral knot that is vexing us. When we have need of the basics for this life, He miraculously supplies them despite our own ignorance and impatience and thanklessness. When we have a heart that backslides, He chastens us and compels our parched spirits to return to the Fountain rather than rely upon “**broken cisterns, that can hold no water**” (Jeremiah 2:13). When our sins in this life have boxed us into impossible situations – as Paul richly describes the war in our members – we uniquely in the world have the remedy to go “**boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**” (Hebrews 4:16). And we deserve none of it. We have worked for and earned none of it.

This is the pattern that we witness in Scripture. When the destruction of Sodom was determined, the vexed and weary Lot joyfully declared “**thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy**” (Genesis 19:19) by delivering him out of the city. When Joseph’s brothers left him to the Ishmaelites, they sold him into Egyptian bondage. But by the mercies of the Lord, “**Joseph found grace in his [master’s] sight**” (Genesis 39:4) so he made him overseer of his house. [We dare not convince ourselves that it is by our hand that we are promoted to any place in this life.] A review of Exodus chapters 33-34 repeatedly displays the driving energy behind the deliverance of the Jewish nation – as a type of God’s elect – out of Egypt is that they collectively, and Moses specifically, received grace in His sight (Exodus 33:12, 13, 16, 17 & 34:9). This temporal grace is credited for Gideon being given a sign to know God was with him in smiting the Midianites (Judges 6:17), Ruth seeking and finding grace from Boaz, a type of the Church seeking and finding grace from our Redeemer (Ruth 2:2, 10), David’s special favor in the eyes of King Saul’s son Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:3), and Esther obtaining favor of the Persian king Ahasuerus (Esther 2:17). These are sample types in human affairs, where temporal – either between humans or from God toward humans in their temporal existences – grace is provided to God’s chosen.

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:44-45)

As Christ makes clear, there is also unmerited temporal favor granted to the evil and unjust sons of men – though it is not with any affection for their eternal souls. But rather that in those blessings and mercies while they live, they collect ***“coals of fire upon [their] head”*** (Proverbs 25:22) for their obstinate hatred of that grace and the God that grants it. In providence, the LORD has made it so. And, while the overwhelming majority of these special intimacies among humans have no direct impact or involvement of the saints, it is undeniable that each one is part of that amazing work of God when He promises ***“that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”*** (Romans 8:28).

When I speak of the eternal expression of grace, it is of course related to that sovereign determination before the foundation of the world that some would receive salvation for no reason other than ***“it seemed good in [God’s] sight”*** (Matthew 11:26).

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” (Ephesians 2:4-5)

That is to say, the perfect and comprehensive attribute of God’s mercy flows richly toward those who have been made objects of God’s perfect and comprehensive love. That gracious act alone established that we would be in Christ when He obediently went into His great suffering and death – then was again filled with life and rose. So while the raging waves of hatred, affliction, sin and the shadow of death crash all about us and threaten to overwhelm us, we have everlasting grace – like an ark to keep us safe from that horrible end that awaits those to whom His grace does not extend. Look at what the expositor Trapp says on grace (at Gen. 6:8): ***“[Grace flows to those] in covenant with God; [though we are children] of wrath, and saved by grace only, ... The mercy seat [in the holy of holies] was no larger than the ark; to show that the grace of God extends no further than the covenant. As all out of the ark [of Noah] were drowned, so all out of the covenant are damned.”*** What a perfect double metaphor that ark – whether referring to the ark of Noah or the ark of the covenant within the holy of holies. They reflect God’s eternal power and prerogative to call out a people, supernaturally sustain them, and give them His holy Word and Salvation for this life and that which is to come. This is a discriminatory grace, like the ark of Noah discriminated between the eight and the rest of the antediluvian world. Like the ark in the holy of holies discriminated between the people of the Jews (a type of the elect of God), and the nations round about that were (and are) the inveterate enemies of God and His people.

And this eternal grace – after we are brought through our days that are ***“few and full of trouble”*** (Job 14:1) – then puts us into possession of that ***“inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven”*** (1 Peter 1:4). So while temporal expressions of the kindness, mercy, favor, beauty, and beneficence of God is displayed for all of the children of men who are given existence in the earth, it is both temporal and eternal grace that is poured out upon the heads of the elect through this life and into eternity. Even our chastisements are evidence of our being the children of God because they are designed not to harden us and make us obstinate and hateful toward God, but rather to break our pride and make our hearts tender toward Him and toward our co-elect. Nothing other than that could be meant in Peter’s daisy chain of attributes being built one upon the next:

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Peter 1:5-7)

It is through afflictions, and a proper knowledge of their value (i.e., ***“peaceable fruit of righteousness”*** – Hebrews 12:11), that we receive these advanced blessings of grace that teach temperance and patience and godliness and brotherly kindness and finally charity. These things make us prepared to be a compact and complete body of saints who dwell in charity and patience and faith. ...

And peace. ***“Grace be unto you, and peace”***. That is, quietness of spirit. Rest in your spirit.

True, we desire not to be in active warfare like this world absolutely adores. True, we do not have any attraction to the instruments of that war among men – skills, tactics, strategy, munitions. True, that we desire to ***“follow peace with all men”*** as well as ***“holiness”*** (Hebrews 12:14). And we know there are now – and most certainly will be in the times to which John the Beloved looks with his prophecy – an endless supply of such militaristic engagements toward us. And while I have every confidence that John had many urgings in his spirit regarding the intensity of the labor to come upon that humble body of saints, I still don’t see that as the primary thrust of this blessing offered up in John’s salutation. Seiss writes the following about the subject, after making comment on how common a salutation it is among the generations of men to obligingly say things like David the King sent to that arrogant Nabal, ***“Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.” (1 Samuel 25:6)***:

Seiss: *“John wishes the Churches “peace” indeed, but a peace preceded by, and rooted in “Grace.” No one, in his right mind, will despise the comforts and blessings of this life. They are all good and precious gifts of God, which are to be thankfully received and devoutly appropriated. But, what is all this world’s prosperity if there be no peace with God, and no spiritual consolation in the conscience?”* What indeed? John’s salutation to that church that will usher in the Day of the Lord is that each of those souls will have – grounded in that grace from the council halls of eternity – a *“state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is”*, as the Greek/English definition of the word *“eirene”* (“i-ray’-nay”) articulates. That captures it pretty well, so we will find our resolve in those simple words.

While we have already in this discussion made clear that this grace and peace being petitioned by John has its origins in the perfect good will of the sovereign God – and beautifully wrought out in the Covenant of Grace by the members of the trinity – the passage under consideration is more defined than that. John hinges his petition for grace and peace on this description: ***“from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.”***

Remembering here that our discussion is within the language of John in his introduction of the subject of Christ’s Revelation. It is John the man, writing an introduction and explanation for his letters to the churches that were then part of the budding New Testament Church dispensation. He is not here articulating what he saw when he (as he later articulates) ***“was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” (Revelation 1:10)***. He moves into that aspect of his writing shortly, but first he is bringing the readers’ focus on the importance and relevance and prophetic significance of what is soon coming. When Paul wrote his salutations to the various churches and their elders,

he didn't have the same focus or energy with which John writes here. While he clearly wrote of eschatology (2 Peter 3:15-16), his letters were chiefly for the doctrinal and practical edification of the church members' daily walk *during* the New Testament Church dispensation. There must be a distinction made, because in Peter's profound words of caution, he is clearly making a distinction in the "time" focus:

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Peter 3:11-12)

Peter here is eschatology-focused, as John clearly is in his words currently under consideration. As it is important for that body of elect to have a significantly different lens in preparation of facing a dying world being prepared for Christ's second advent – so should we have a more focused lens on the attributes of our God ... our Holy Ghost ... our Christ. John is pulling our proverbial hearts and minds to that distinct presentation of our Trinity as he is given to understand it is needed for that particular body of believers. So, let us consider what is laid out as the foundation for this petition of grace and peace with this particular frame of analysis so that we might have that edification – and the attendant grace and peace – John sought for us here.

God the Father: ***"him which is, and which was, and which is to come"***

God the Holy Ghost: ***"the seven Spirits which are before his throne"***

God the Son, Jesus Christ: ***"the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth"***

This description of God the Father addresses His eternity – or as our brother Jon articulated in a sermon on November 7, 2021, *The Infinity of God*. There he properly explains that God *"is unbounded and unlimited, unmeasurable or immense, unsearchable and not to be comprehended. This attribute mainly respects and includes the 'omnipresence' and 'eternity' of God"*. God is. God always was. God always will be. He is not restricted in His essential power and glory by time, events, or any other created thing. He precedes it, He is the spring source of it all, and He will continue in existence when all things else pass away. This attribute is efficiently articulated regarding the other member of the Trinity (Christ) in Job's famed profession of faith:

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:" (Job 19:25)

The word there in the King James Version ***"day"*** is interpolated, and the expositor Caryl explains how the context of the words Job articulates does not require the word, because the primary thrust of his confidence is that Jesus Christ – as one with God – is eternal and that means that when all else falls, He stands. He, like the Father, is eternal ... infinite ... omnipresent. He is, He was, He is to come. I invite each of you to revisit that sermon by Jon, because it is a blessedly simple statement about God's infinity. And, for any soul to put proper grip upon that truth – at any time in any generation of man – is a great foundation to your faith. It is part of our duty to be rooted and grounded in our understanding of the Trinity to saturate ourselves in an understanding of this attribute of God. When the ground seems to be moving under you, the ability to take hold of something so fundamental is how you keep from falling.

But to see this beauty in God the Father doesn't quite answer the question of why is *that* the attribute upon which John the Beloved places his petition for our grace and our peace when the Revelation of Jesus Christ is ready to unfold? John is asking for that church – uniquely – to be thus grounded. He could have sent us to the attribute of Omnipotence, Wisdom, Sovereignty, Love, Mercy, Longsuffering, Goodness, Anger, Hatred, Joy,

Holiness, Righteousness, Veracity, Faithfulness, Sufficiency, Blessedness, or Unity. But he brought forth His Infinity as the attribute to ground his request for our grace and peace. It may seem to be an unnecessary inquiry, but consider what the prophet Isaiah said:

“Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.” (Isaiah 50:10)

That is, when the strength and rage of Satan comes down upon you – because God has chosen to put you in a walk that is for a season dark, with no light – the remedy is to identify that ***“name of the LORD”*** or attribute of God that gives you the necessary strength and help to stand still through that darkness until God removes it. What attribute of God will do that for you at this and that hour? Is it His Faithfulness that will help you see that the promises He has made to His saints will be fully and effectually kept at the appointed hour? Is it His Righteousness that instructs your heart that you are guilty of the worst sins, and therefore deserving of that affliction and when He determines He has caused you to be exercised by it, it will be removed? So, again, when John hinges his salutation upon God’s infinity, what should we see and understand in that?

“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” (Matthew 24:42-44)

In this passage, the Savior is discussing the very eschatological events about which John’s book is written. This warning, in parable, is about the inability of the unwashed ... the unsaved ... the reprobate to know when the Savior will return and the resulting exposure to destruction. When the conditions found under the seven seals break forth, will anyone on the earth know what is happening and what needs to be said about it? How will that knowledge be gained? When the little church of saints comes to that hour, is not the greatest of all dangers the ability (or inability) to know and consequently to speak boldly? The spirits under the alter (under the fifth seal) are ***“slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held” (Revelation 6:9)*** ... but how will they testify if they do not know what to say, where to say it, when it is necessary to speak?

What comfort, then, is it to consider that the God that wrote the script is engaged for your grace and peace at that hour? The eternal God that governs the providence – that gave the eternal decrees respecting this amazing work in the second coming of the Redeemer and all the engagements of all the creation related to that advent ... the Day of the Lord – is brought forth as the divine foundation for that little body. Indeed when Mark is recording Christ’s words regarding this same coming period, and the engagements of that blessed body of saints at that hour, he cautions them prophetically ***“take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye” (Mark 13:11)***. Every sentence of those coming conversations and engagements – and the knowledge base of the saints of the inevitable coming of Christ that underpins them – is already established by the eternal, infinite King. Oh what comfort is found in that truth? Can there be a more relevant keystone attribute to be stood upon in that hour? No. I suggest not. Because He is ... He was ... and He is to come. He is eternal.

The description of the Holy Ghost – ***“the seven Spirits which are before his throne”*** – is equal in the beauty of the words and intent. As I was talking with my wife, about the presentation of the attribute of God (His eternity), and how it is so perfect for the helps to the little church in knowing what to do and say, one of her first responses was to remind me that it is the work of the Holy Ghost to place impressions onto the hearts of the saints. That

is, while the essence of the Father here implored is His eternity, the execution of that essence through the movement on the human heart and mind of the saints is the work of the Holy Ghost. This passage underscores it:

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (John 14:26)

This passage – about which our friend and elder Ben has given attention in one of his sermons on Christ’s Farewell Discourse (June 27, 2021) reminding us *“that the whole Trinity is united and active in our salvation”* – reflects that the role of the Holy Ghost is to teach and to bring things to the remembrance of the saints respecting all of the work of Christ in the Redemption of His saints. The passage I quoted earlier, from Mark 13:11, where we are informed that the saints facing the Day of the Lord will be required to testify before that angry generation, specifically includes that ***“it is not [those besieged saints] that speak, but the Holy Ghost”***. This office of the Trinity is the effectuating energy. That is to say, as the triune God is known in Scripture, the role of the Holy Ghost is to energize the saints to know and to do and to say.

And this effectuating energy is presented in John’s salutation as wholly (as in *“seven”*) present and engaged before the throne of God in the work of bringing to pass the work of the saints in the Day of the Lord. There is no question that what the eternal God has purposed for the saints to know ... to do ... and to say ... will be effectuated by the Holy Ghost. Do they need to ***“discern the signs of the times” (Matthew 16:3)***? The Holy Ghost will move in them to do so. Do they need to know the import of Christ’s parabolic warnings? ***“it is given unto [them] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 13:11)***. The Spirit is present ... the Spirit is actively engaged ... the Spirit is committed to the execution of every piece of the everlasting covenant of grace as it involves the guiding of those tender souls in every step of their warfare with the people of the earth under the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet until that day comes when those souls will be taken up to Christ (Gentiles) or will be established in the earthly kingdom of Christ (Jews). John’s salutation makes full recognition of that blessed truth.

The third member of the Trinity is called upon under three descriptors: ***“(1) the faithful witness, and (2) the first begotten of the dead, and (3) the prince of the kings of the earth.”*** Each of these titles are necessary to the work bound up in the petition for grace and peace to be bestowed upon that little ***“flock of slaughter.” (Zechariah 11:7)***. Again, we want to examine not only the attribute, but the blessed relevance of that attribute to the work that is before them. For any office of the Trinity to have perfections is deserving of knowledge and necessary to give glory to Them all for all things. But to understand the Revelation, the work is to see the beauties of each attribute brought forward in the Book to be better prepared ... as the hymnal states ... to *face a frowning world*.

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against [the Day of the Lord].” (2 Timothy 1:8-12)

Jesus the Christ testified that He came into the world to fulfill the Covenant of Grace by obeying the terms of that covenant and giving Himself to suffer and die for the sins of those whom God gave unto Him. If that testimony was not faithful – if Jesus Christ could not be trusted in His testimony – then as Paul put it, **“we are of all men most miserable” (1 Corinthians 15:19)** ... part of a beautiful passage about the resurrection of the human body from the grave at the second coming of Christ. If Christ is not a faithful witness, then the battle that is formed in the Day of the Lord will be unsuccessful for the saints. If Christ is not a faithful witness, the seals will not be removed from the Book of Redemption and there will not be a record of those who were given eternal life from before the foundation of the world. But He is:

“Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”. (Revelation 5:9)

And what makes Him **“worthy to take the book”**, etc. is not only that He **“wast slain”**, but that he then rose again!

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)” (Ephesians 4:7-10)

Christ the Lord is risen! He made Himself **“the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:18)**. Those who were loved by God in the Covenant of Grace were **“predestinated to be conformed to the image of [Jesus Christ], that [Jesus Christ] might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29)** He went first into the grave – in the sense that he was the Head of the body of the called-out saints. He was the first, then, to rise from that grave and thereby secure His right to redeem those souls at His second advent.

And He is King! Not He *will be* King, but as one of the Trinity that has the attribute of eternity ... of infinity ... it is an absolute and eternal and infinite truth that He **“hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:16)**. That King rides now. That King has been riding since before the world began! When Paul addresses Timothy on this blessed doctrine, he does not say that Christ’s coming is when he will be that King ... but that it will then be revealed at that time:

“I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” (1 Timothy 6:13-16)

John is not petitioning a powerless, irrelevant source for grace and peace. He knows that the Father is infinite – that the Holy Ghost is ever present – that Christ is already in possession of the Kingdom of this world! The matter is already resolved! The humble saints are as certain to receive grace and peace in the unfolding events of this earth’s transition from the New Testament dispensation to the millennial reign of Jesus Christ – as if it has already happened. This is the energy in that humble servant’s words in salutation to the Church of Revelation. I love you all. Amen.