

Jesus Christ, Our Eternal Contemporary: Exposition of Rev. 1:8

⁷*Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, amen. ⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “Who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” (Rev. 1:7-8)*

⁷Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. ¹³For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. ¹⁶Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. ¹⁷How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! ¹⁸If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You. (See Ps. 139:1-18)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. On January 1, 2001, Revelation 1:16-17 set my family on a journey to our calling to this spiritual family in Kansas City.
- B. The Daniel lifestyle and message marked me as a young man in the Lord, and I have not turned back from it since I took the English name, Daniel, in 1993.
- C. Daniel was given understanding of the rise and fall of global powers and global shakings in his own period of history and at the end of the age. Daniel’s inner and outward life in God remained vibrant through the period of turbulence and change that he lived in. We live in a time of great shakings!
- D. Daniel was given insight into the relationship between his life of prayer and fasting and the spiritual warfare that had been raging between angels and powers of wickedness. He was given insight into the dynamics of the rage of Satan against his people and the justice of God that will rule in favor of the saints at the end of age. We need understanding of our spiritual authority to stand against the rage of Satan.
- E. My family and I responded to God’s calling and, by faith, we saw the hand of the Lord perform exceedingly abundantly above all we could ask or think. Jesus is our eternal contemporary. He is always in our sphere of time. We just need to make sure we are in sync with Jesus’ *kairos* and *kronos*.

II. THE CONTEXT OF REVELATION CHAPTER 1 – THE OPENING OF THE APOCALYPSE

- A. A comparison between the Apocalypse of Daniel and the Apocalypse of John
 1. Daniel was asked to seal up the prophecy until the end of time, while John encouraged the reading of his prophecy “for the time is near” (Dan. 12:4; Rev. 1:3).
 2. Daniel lived through the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the first temple in 586BC and the exile of his people, while John lived through the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the second temple and the enslavement and death of more than one million Jews in AD70 (Dan. 9:1-27; Mt. 24:1-51).

3. Daniel was given the prophecy of the rebuilding of the second temple and the coming of the Messiah, while John was shown the eternal temple, the eternal city of the New Jerusalem, and the second coming of the Messiah (Dan. 7:9-14; 9:24-27; Rev. 21-22).
 4. Daniel saw the Son of Man coming before the Ancient of Days, the sufferings and martyrdom of the saints under the beast with ten horns, and the final inheritance of the saints. John was shown similar messages with different imagery. However, John first had the witness of the Messiah coming in the flesh, His death, and His resurrection. John received clear teaching from the Messiah pertaining to His kingdom and His second coming (Dan. 7:1-28; Jn. 1-21).
 5. Both Daniel and John received similar affectionate titles: “beloved of the Lord” or “beloved disciple” (Dan. 10:19; Jn. 19:26; 21:7, 20).
 6. Both Daniel and John lived through times of great change in Jerusalem and Israel and lived until old age, thus serving as faithful witnesses of God’s fulfillment of prophecy.
 7. Both Daniel and John were prophets entrusted with a clear vision of the consummation of the kingdom of God and the final triumph of Christ and His saints (Dan. 7:26-27; Rev. 11:15-19; 19-22).
- B. The book of Revelation is about the revelation of the person, the words, and the works of Jesus Christ, with particular focus on the period of the revelation of “Jesus, who is to come.”
- C. John received revelation from an angelic messenger so that he could be a witness of all the things he had seen. The time is near, blessed is he who read this prophecy and keeps it (see Rev. 1:3).
- D. John was given specific messages to seven churches in Asia in light of the literal, visible, and physical second coming of Jesus Christ.
- E. John heard a voice while he was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day. The voice introduced Himself: **“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:10-11).**

III. JESUS, THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

Jesus introduced Himself five times in Revelation 1, using variations of this title (see Rev. 1: 4, 8, 11, 17, 18). *Alpha* is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and *omega* is the last. In calling Himself “the first and the last,” Jesus was declaring Himself as preeminent over all things and as the consummation of all things. Jesus’ preeminence over all things is established at the beginning of John’s gospel.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him.” (Jn. 1:1-3)

On Mars Hill, Paul declares Jesus’ intimate involvement with His creation—“for in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28)—and then wrote to the church in Corinth about Jesus being the consummation of all things.

²⁴Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under his is excepted. (1 Cor. 15:24-27)

IV. JESUS WHO IS

Jesus is seated at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven, ever interceding for us. He dwells within us by His Spirit and His power fills us daily. After the death and resurrection of Jesus, more than five hundred disciples saw Him (1 Cor. 15:6). He spent time with His disciples before His ascension, teaching them about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Stephen saw Jesus before he was stoned to death (Acts 7:55). Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-8) and Jesus later confirmed to Paul that he must witness in Rome (Acts 21). In a vision, John saw Jesus walking among the seven golden lampstand (Rev. 1:12-13).

V. JESUS WHO WAS

In John 17:5, Jesus prayed that the Father might glorify Him with the glory they shared before the world began. The Jesus of history must be known for His preincarnate nature and glory, for His theophanies (visible manifestations) in the Old Testament, and for His glorious incarnation as Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the son of Mary, the son of David. Jesus’ prayers, works, words, and the way He lived—“full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14)—are precious revelations of the Jesus who was.

VI. JESUS WHO IS TO COME

Paul prayed for the church at Ephesus, that they might be filled with the Spirit of wisdom and revelation of God. This prayer echoed the desire of Jesus that through the Holy Spirit the knowledge of Christ might be declared to the disciples in successive generations.

¹⁷...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. (Eph. 1:17-19; see also Jn. 14-17)

The Jesus who will come in power and glory in a cloud is foreign to many of His disciples. Jesus taught at great length and in great detail about His second coming, so that we might understand what will take place at the end of the age.

VII. KNOWING JESUS THROUGH REVELATION: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

It is essential for us to have revelation of Jesus in the past, present, and future—to understand that He is building on the foundation he laid in the past, as we anticipate encountering Jesus, the One who is to come. The apostle Paul wrote:

¹If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and

your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Col. 3:1-4)

VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. Eschatology is an essential aspect of Christology. Eschatology must be Christo-centric or it will result in studies of events and personalities apart from the glorious, eternal, redemptive story line of God. Christology must cover the epithet of Jesus Christ as the One who is, who was, and who is to come. Liberal theologians often portray the historical Jesus separate from the Jesus of faith. Some evangelical theologians limit the study of the life and ministry of Jesus to the Jesus who was (the historical Jesus Christ of Nazareth, applying principles from His life and ministry to our present circumstances. The Jesus who is and who is to come has not been a core part of the study of Christ. There is no emphasis on Jesus as our eternal contemporary. There is often a gulf between our theology and experience in the field of Christology. The Christ of the Scripture is the Christ that we walk with every moment (Jn. 5:39-40; 14:7-18).
- B. Eschatology provides the necessary “end vision” for missiology. Without proper biblical eschatology, missiology falls short of the true finish line (Mt. 24:14; Rom. 11; 1 Cor. 15:22-28).
- C. Eschatology is about the kingdom of God coming on earth in fullness, the transitioning of the kingdom of this world to the kingdom of our Lord. Therefore, the gospel of the kingdom of God must include main and plain eschatology. This is the neglected part of the gospel. (Mt. 24:14)
- D. Eschatology highlights the eternal nature of the Church and her government and is thus indispensable in ecclesiology. An ecclesiology that is temporal, strategic, and earthly-minded has not locked into the reality of a Christ who holds the keys of Hades and who has overcome the world. (Rom. 8; Eph. 5:25-30; Rev. 19:7-10; 21-22)
- E. Eschatology is intricately tied to the work of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) in the nations. The prophecies of Joel 2:28-32 and Ezekiel 36 indicate that the Holy Spirit will be poured out on all flesh in the last days. The Holy Spirit’s ministry in the Church and in the nations is critical to the testimony of Jesus Christ until the end (Acts 1:6-8; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 12-14; Mt. 28:18-20).
- F. Only with biblical eschatology does the irrevocable calling of Israel through the Abrahamic covenant make sense within the context of the restoration of all things (Acts 3:20-21) and the salvation of the remnant of Israel (Rom. 11:26; Rev. 7; 14:1).
- G. Eschatology provides a biblical framework for day-and-night prayer and works of justice (Lk. 18:1-8; Mt. 24; Rev. 4-22).