

July 31, 2022 - Revelation 1:4 -11 - "Christ's Messages to the Churches"

Introduction:

William Miller was a Baptist preacher and founder of the Millerites. He became convinced that Christ would return for the church on April 3, 1843. When Miller announced April 3rd as the day, some of his church members went to mountaintops, hoping for a head start to heaven. Others were gathered in graveyards, planning to go on to heaven in reunions with their departed loved ones. April 3rd came and went, the Millerites were disillusioned. Their leader had predicted again a range of dates for Christ's return, October 22, 1844 as the final one. They all obviously, have passed. In our time just over 10 years ago

Harold Camping an American Christian radio host stated that the end of the world would take place on May 21, 2011 and five months later on October 21, 2011 Judgment Day would take place. He uprooted people's lives and followers quit their jobs, given up their houses and their savings to support Camping's prediction... Of course both days came and passed and the neither rapture nor judgment day occurred. On March 2012, Camping' "humbly acknowledged" in a letter to Family Radio listeners that he had been mistaken, that the attempt to predict a date was "sinful", and that critics had been right in pointing to the bible text "of Mark 13:32, 33: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is ".

Folks, many secular predictions claimed that we would not last as a civilization past the year 2000. In fact many had the world coming to an end along with computers meltdowns and nuclear destruction. Today the so called woke and green minority claim we have six years left and yet the book of Revelation predicts a seven year tribulation that is yet to come. God will be proven correct of course and we need to look no further than His description of the 7 church ages. They have all come to pass according the bible; history records it as so!

I. The Recipients of the Message vv. 4a

1. John addresses the seven churches in Asia (modern day western Turkey). These Churches exist all within thirty or forty miles of each other. We look at verse 11 and find a listing of these Seven Churches. They were the direct earthly recipients of this letter. And we'll study those seven cities and those seven churches in detail as we get into chapters 2 and 3. Their names are descriptive of the kind of churches that exist but also relate to the different ages of the church of Jesus Christ for almost 2000 years. Jesus speaks of the characteristics of theses churches both commendation and condemnation... He then is...

II. The Source of the Message vv. 4b-6

1. The greeting comes from the Triune God, call it a Trinitarian benediction. (I am) is described by the phrase "which is"... He is eternal, He was, He is, He is to come, looking at the past, the present, and the future. This title is used many times. Look at verse 8, again God is described as the One who is, who was and who is to come, the Almighty. Next is the Holy Spirit described as

the seven spirits. Seven spirits is a puzzling phrase found in the New Testament only in Revelation. Some believe this is John's special way of referring to the Holy Spirit. Many translators have suggested "Sevenfold Spirit" emphasizing the completeness of the Spirit of God. The idea of the seven Spirits quotes from the Old Testament. Isaiah 11:2 describes seven aspects of the Holy Spirit.

2) In vv. 5 We can make no mistake who it is that will come again. It is He who redeemed us from our sins Jesus Christ. John says He is the faithful witness, Isaiah 55:4 prophesied that the Messiah would be a witness to the people. A faithful witness is one who always speaks the truth and Christ always speaks the truth, always the faithful witness, never deviates from what is true.

a) In fact, in chapter 3 verse 14 He is called the Amen, the faithful and true witness. He is a faithful witness to the Godhead...look at Colossians 1:15-17.

b) The second title John gives Him is "the firstborn of the dead." This doesn't mean He's the first one ever to be raised from the dead....no, others had been raised in time before Him. But it means of all those who were raised from the dead that He is the preeminent one. Firstborn, prototokos, means preeminent. That of all who have ever been raised before or after, He is the preeminent one. Again look at Philippians 2:9-11

c) And then he gives Him a third title, "the prince of the kings of the earth." The word "prince" is "archon", it chief ruler. He will make Him the ruler of the kings of the earth. In fact in Revelation 19:16 He will be King of kings and Lord of lords.

2. In this wonderful letter the trinity gives us a benediction that steers us to a last observation. This last observation is a glorious doxology. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, He loves us, has freed us, and made us to be a kingdom and priests. He loves us and in the past, at the cross, released us from our sins by His blood. Blood here is a term referring to His entire atoning work. When you see the reference to the blood of Christ in Scripture, it is a reference to His full atonement. His atoning work on the cross released us from our sins...I Peter 2:5-9

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven. Colossian 1:20

3. He made us Kings, the word is leaders of the people. We who believe are all in this realm of God's rule through Christ. We will be administrators in that kingdom of Jesus Christ. ...and then John said, "He made us priests to His God and Father. Having been released from our sins we have become a kingdom, a part of a kingdom we've entered by faith, we're under His rule. We have also become priests.

What does that mean? We now have direct access to God, do we not? A priest is one who had the right to enter God's presence. In Israel the priest and the priest alone could go into the holy place. Only once a year the high priest into the holy of holies where God was. We now are all priests that is why we say we believe in the priesthood of believers, we all enter into the holy place. We all have access to God who are saved true born again children of the Father.

III. The Objective of the Message vv.7- 11

1. His doxology is followed with a declaration concerning the Lord's coming, and a description of who Jesus is in verse 8. All of history is moving to a focal point. One day Jesus will break through the clouds and all creation will change. The church has always lived in the anticipation of this event. His coming will impact everything in the world. He will restore the world to its original intent.

I Thess. chapter four speaks of the Rapture but this refers to the latter part of His second coming as described in Daniel 7:13-14.

2. All people's will witness this profound scene at once...today technology we can do this, those that pierced Him refers to the Jewish nation and all people will mourn. Zec. 12:10

3. Before John describes his first vision or scene he records the sovereign words of the Lord God who will bring it all to pass. He is the Alpha and Omega, the A to Z, the one in control from before the beginning of time until after the end. His eternity is noted in the phrase, who is, and who was, and who is to come. Finally, His power is seen in the title the Almighty, the one whom none can resist. 9 of the 10 times this term appears in the New Testament are in Revelation.

4. John is here on earth when he tells us he is exiled on the isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. This was a rugged and bare, deserted island where Roman prisoners were sent. The island of Patmos was a like an Alcatraz Island in the Roman Empire. It was used as a prison island and functioned as a jail without bars. The Apostle John was banished to this island because of his faith in Jesus (95- 96 A.D. by the Roman emperor Domitian. He was the first Roman emperor to demand that the entire empire honor him as "Lord and God." Great persecution resulted.

The Greek word "Patmos" is translated to mean "my killing." John spent 18 months working the mines and he was near 90 years old before he was released.

a) I'm convinced that, many times, the only way God can get through to us.... the only way we can receive a true, first-hand revelation from God is to be somewhere secluded, alone; with no one to bother or distract us from His glory! We gain the greatest knowledge of God through the deepest suffering. And so, we hear about John himself and about the circumstances.

3. John was placed in the privilege position to see the Lord's Day... John says I was supernaturally transported out of the fleshly world and I was in the Spirit. Awake, not sleeping, this is not a dream. But his senses were empowered with clarity to perceive revelation from God. Verse #10 could also be a reference to the Sabbath /Sunday although seems a better reference to that great and notable day of the Lord come? - Acts 2:16

Conclusion:

However, something exciting is about to happen on this rocky, desolate, six by ten mile island in the Aegean Sea. God is about to reveal to Him the Glory of Christ to come and the end of all things. What a blessed privilege.