

Title: THE TRIUMPH OF THE GOSPEL, REVELATION 1:4 – 8
(Chatham, NJ; 11/22/15, AM) [E – Exegesis, Question and Answer]

Theme: John introduces themes in his salutation that are founded upon a note of triumph.

Purpose: To instill confidence in the victory of the Gospel.

Introduction:

1. This is a greeting.
2. Nothing in this is symbolic like the rest of Revelation; some of the terms may be metaphors, but we don't face the problem of interpreting the strange symbols of dragons, beasts, and the number 666.
3. Verses 4 & 8 identify the source: He who was, is, and is to come, the Alpha and Omega; the changeless one revealed to Abraham, Moses, and in Christ (John 1:18).
4. Written to a church facing an uncertain future.
5. Yet each item in this greeting sounds a note of triumph that is the hallmark of the entire book; listen for the Gospel's victory in the answer to these questions.

I. Who Is Jesus Christ? (5)

A. The Faithful Witness

1. Martyr has come to mean one who dies as a witness for his faith, but it originally meant simply a witness
2. Not a usual designation for Jesus
3. Normally we think of a witness to Jesus
4. Revelation 11:3 & 11 tell us about witnesses
5. Yet Jesus bears witness to eternal truths which are the foundation of redemption: nature of God, sin, repentance, forgiveness, etc.
6. That he is faithful suggests triumph: he did not fail

B. Firstborn from the dead

1. Not unusual at all to designate Jesus in this way
2. Colossians 1:18 calls him this and emphasizes his preeminence over all things by his resurrection from the grave
3. This may not imply triumph but it certainly makes him captain of the winning team
4. The Resurrection assures us that death has been conquered

C. Ruler of the Kings of the earth

1. Echoes of Psalm 2
2. His authority is one of the foundation facts of our faith: Mt. 28, Eph. 1:20-21, 1 Peter 3:22, all things subject to him
3. Hebrews 2:8, the process of establishing his rule is ongoing
4. The Herod's of the world will always resist threats to their puny little kingdoms

II. What Did He Do? (5b-6)

A. Freed us from sin

1. His blood atones for our sins
2. A sacrifice was necessary for this
3. The tree of life is restored to us, Revelation 22
4. He breaks the chains of guilt, shame, and self-deception by cleansing our consciences
5. Realizing our slavery to sin is the first step to freedom, John 8:34
6. It is a step of victory as well

B. Made us a kingdom

1. Not a place in this world but a spiritual realm where God rules in our hearts
2. A rival kingdom to the kingdoms of the world under Satan's control
3. Jesus resists Satan's temptation to participate in the worldly kingdoms, Mt. 4:9
4. Satan's last attempt to prevent Jesus from carrying out God's plan was to tempt Jesus to switch sides
5. He failed and Jesus established another whole kingdom
6. Colossians 1:12-14 contrasts darkness with light
7. Like the mountain in Daniel 2 God's kingdom blows away the rest: it conquers

III. What Next? (7)

- A. He is coming and all will see him
 1. Though people may deny him, his life is not a secret
 2. No one will miss his second coming: with the clouds in glory
 3. This vision anticipates a great victory

- B. Tribes of all nations will wail
 1. They are given ample opportunity to hear and believe
 2. God's patience has seen to that
 3. Ancient prophetic witnesses demonstrated God's persistence: Wednesday night discussion
 4. Today we have persistent witnesses: beauty queens, pizza store owners, bakers, and town clerks
 5. I see victory in their witness
 6. Those hostile to God (Col. 1:21) can be reconciled
 7. Those who refuse will wail because of their choice
 8. Their defeat is certain just as our victory is assured

Conclusions:

1. Triumph is promised to all those who "conquer."
2. This is the message to every one of the churches in Revelation.
3. The result of conquering is victory.
4. Be a winner!
5. Accept who Christ is, what he did, and what comes next.
6. Repentance, faith, baptism, and a life of faithful witness are the keys to victory.