



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 1:4-8

"The Authentic Emperor"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning for our Scripture reading to Revelation chapter 1 verse 4 through verse 8. And beginning with the 4th verse the apostle writes,

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: 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."

Now, as you know I'm reading from the Authorized Version. And this next statement is one in which we have two changes that we need to make, the Authorized Version, I'll read it first and then comment on the changes. If you have other versions, many of you do, I know you will note them as I read this version.

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Now, that is very true and good theology but it's more likely that the apostle wrote for, the generally better regarded manuscripts support this, it's much more likely that he

wrote, "Unto him that loveth," (present tense) "loveth us, and loosed," (loosed in the sense of let loose, released) "loosed us from our sins in his own blood."

Now, you could see easily why this should be loosed and not washed. The Greek word for washed is *louo* and the Greek word for loosed is *luo*. Did you notice any difference? Well you wouldn't notice any difference. One of the words, the word for wash, has an "o" omicron in addition to the upsilon, and it is not heard in translation. That probably is the reason how the variant reading arose, that is a scribe heard one thing when John intended something else. So we'll expound it as, "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins in his own blood." But of course he loved us and he did wash us from our sins, as well, in his own blood.

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him," (John says) "be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

The word translated "kindreds" is the common word for "tribes" and no doubt some of you have in your version, "all tribes of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," and that little expression the beginning and the ending probably does not have a strong enough manuscript authority. We probably should eliminate it. Those of you that have it a New American Standard Bible you'll notice it's not in your version so we will expound this, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we are grateful for the privilege of approaching thee through the word Jesus Christ who loves us, and who loved us, and who washed us from our sins, has loosed us from our sins, and given us the freedom of the redemption that we possess in the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank thee that, therefore, we have access to thee because he has made us kings and priests. And we bring our petitions to thee with the assurance that thouest hear them Lord.

We pray thy blessing upon each one of the ones present here and upon the members of their family. We commit them to thee. And we ask Lord that the needs that we have, and we all have so many needs, may be met in accordance with thy will. We pray especially for the sick. We commit them to thee, we ask that thou would undertake for them. For those that minister to them, family, and friends, and the physicians, give them wisdom and guidance as they prescribe and minister as well.

We thank thee for the whole church of Jesus Christ and pray for the entire body today wherever it may be, and for each individual member. Strengthen us all Lord. Edify us through the ministry of the word of God. Bring us on the way to the maturity that is our ultimate goal in Christ.

We thank thee that we should be conformed to the image of the Son of God. We look forward to that day. We thank thee to Lord for the great hope the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. We look for him. O' God may the hope of the Second Advent be such a vital hope to us that our thoughts may not only go out horizontally but also vertically, upward toward heaven, looking for the son of God who is to come in crown, clouds, and great glory.

We thank thee Lord for Believers Chapel, its ministries. Bless them. And for those who labor here in the office and for those who labor in the tape ministry and other forms of outreach we bring them to thee. Strengthen them and bless them and give them fruit.

And for our elders and deacons, we hold them up before thee as well. Bless them and through them us. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today as we continue our exposition of the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ is "The Authentic Emperor". Our life this week has been filled with emperors and heads of state. As you all know who read your newspapers this was the week that Emperor Hirohito was buried in Tokyo. And there our president met with the heads of states of a number of the important countries around the world. This chapter and this section brings before us, by John the Apostle and the revelation given to him, God's chosen and authentic world ruler. Those men, regardless of how we may appreciate them, and enjoy them, and perhaps not enjoy a good number of them, are chosen by men. But the emperor who is set forth here is one who has been chosen by God, an authentic world ruler.

The sketch that John gives us in Revelation chapter 1 through chapter 22 is a sketch not of Messiah's early life in Palestine but his ascended life in heaven and then ultimately again upon the new heavens and the new earth. One is the continuation of the other, however, for as you well know Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Looking broadly at the Book of Revelation, it's plain that John presents our Lord as the overseer of the local church. In chapters 2 and 3 when the letters to the seven churches are given it's quite evident that he is the one who has absolute authority over the local church. He holds the seven stars in his right hand.

Now, that is John's way of affirming that which Paul affirmed, that Jesus Christ is the head over the church. Then in chapter 4 through chapter, well really almost through the remainder of the book, what we have is picture of our Lord Jesus Christ as the supervisor of human affairs generally. Not simply head of the church, but the head over all of human affairs. As he himself claimed before he ascended to the right hand of the father, "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

And finally, near the end of the book in chapter 20, the Lord Jesus, the trinity, is presented as the ultimate judge of men. Again, the Apostle Paul affirmed that in his ministry. For when he was in Athens as he came near the conclusion of his message there he told the Athenians that, "God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained whereof he hath given assurance in that he hath raised him from the dead." So the Lord Jesus is the ultimate judge of all men.

When John and Peter were called to the Apostolic, as Mark records it, John and his brother were called "sons of Boanerges". Peter, you remember was called, "Petras," a rock. But John was called Boanerges, "sons of thunder".

Now we know, or course, how Peter's name has come to be realized in his ministry. Perhaps, and I can only say perhaps, when our Lord spoke of the sons of Zebedee as being Boanerges, he was referring to the fact that the Apostle John would be the one through whom this great revelation of future judgment, the outpoured judgments from heaven would be given to men. At any rate he is surely a "son of thunder" in this book through the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to the son who in turn has given it to us by the hand of the Apostle John.

The section that we read this morning is a very impressive cameo of the real emperor of the whole earth. Now he's not recognized, we recognize him, and he is not now visibly ruling and reigning but you can be sure that all things upon this earth are within his providential control. John tells us in this brief section that we've read who he is, what he has done, and what he shall do. And we look at it in that way turning first to who he is.

He writes, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia". Now that's a very interesting statement for this reason, that there were, we know, other churches in Asia Minor at this time. You'll remember there was a church in Troes, for example. We know that Ignatius wrote to the Magnesians, for example, a church in Asia Minor. We know

that there was a church in Laodicea as we have here, but we know other churches in other words which are not mentioned among the seven letters to the churches. We, therefore gather, and particularly in the light of the fact that there are seven letters and remember that seven is the number of perfection and completeness. We'll see a lot of it in the Book of Revelation. And remember we said last time that John has told us that what he is going to give us is something that has been signified to us as he says, "he sent and signified this Apocalypse through his angel unto his servant John. So we'll look at some of the symbols as we go along.

So I would like to underline the fact that he says to the seven churches which are in Asia and suggest that by that we are to understand all of the churches. Of course, he will give us specifically messages to seven specific churches. We don't deny that, we just suggest that the seven are designed to signify the whole church of Christ and will tell us certain characteristics about the whole body. So the seven churches are addressed symbolic of all churches but nevertheless real churches.

Now John says, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come." A benediction from the father, the first person of the trinity. That's a very strange way to write isn't it? Grace "and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come." And if you could read Greek and you looked at this in the original language you would think it was even stranger because certain grammatically rules, or at least practices, are violated by the author. I'd like to just translate it literally so you'll understand something of the irregularity of it. He says, "Grace be unto you, and peace from the one who is, and the he was."

Now you wouldn't normally speak of people as the "he was." And in the first place you would also have a particular case after the from, which is also not given us in the first statement. So the "he was" from the one who is and the "he was" and the coming one is mostly likely then a title. And so John is saying, like we would say the constitution is written to "we the people". We wouldn't say that but that's the way we would say it if

we wanted to take "we the people" as a kind of title to "we the people". We'd say "Us the people" is correct but to "We the people" we might say it and we would understand what that means. Those words are quoted out of it. So we're taking this as title, "him which is, and which was, and which is to come."

It's very interesting that this statement about the person of the father reminds us of Exodus chapter 3 verse 14 where Moses was speaking to the Lord and he asked the Lord what his name was and he said, "I am that I am." Later on that is built up in the book of Isaiah to these statements, "the beginning and the end, the first and the last" and even the expressions, "I am." And in the Talmud, the Jewish paraphrase of the Books of Moses. In Deuteronomy chapter 32 and verse 39, the writer of the Talmud there adds a word of explanation, it's a paraphrase, but he adds a word of explanation and refers to the deity as, "the one who is, and who was, and is to come." So this we say is a title, "from him which is, and which was, and which is to come." So then we are dealing with the eternal father.

And then he goes on to say, "And from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;" a benediction from the spirit. But again the language is derived from the Old Testament, probably from Isaiah chapter 11 where the Prophet Isaiah, speaking of the Messiah who is to come, describes him in the great 11th chapter in this way, " And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, and the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;" aspects of the spirit of the Messiah. You'll notice there are only six there in Isaiah eleven two, but in the Greek translation of this there are seven. So it is likely then that John has derived that also from the Old Testament when he speaks of the seven spirits, which are before his throne.

But you might say, "Well, I only know of one spirit in heaven, the Holy Spirit, and particularly sense we have the father and then we're going to have the son is not this a references to the Holy Spirit?" Well it is, but it's a reference that touches the

functions or the powers of the spirit. We'll call it then the operations of the third person of the trinity. From the seven spirits, which are before his throne, he operates in all of these areas: wisdom, knowledge, power. So John all ready is giving us some of the symbolism that was given him from the Lord Jesus in the message that the father gave to the Son.

And finally, he says, "From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth," this tells us specifically who the son is. In the past, a "faithful witness". We remember that Moses prophesied that there would come after him a Prophet to whom Israel would finally listen. Don't there was any Prophet to whom Israel really gave perfect heed ever. And surely as you read Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hoshiah, all of those great Prophets, you find them complaining that Israel, the people of God are not really listening to Yahweh. But Deuteronomy chapter 18 and verse 18 states, as Moses puts it, that God was going to put his words in the mouth of this great Prophet who is to come. The New Testament lets us know citing that passage that this great Prophet is the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the one who will speak the truth. As he said to Pilot, he will speak the truth. In fact, as he said in the Upper Room Discourse, "He is the truth, the way, the truth, and the light."

So he is then the great Prophet. He's the true, the faithful witness. If you think of our Lord's ministry you can see how true that is. When he gave the Sermon on the Mount he reminded those listeners right in the middle of the opening words in verse 17 of Matthew chapter 5, that he was an individual who was fulfilling the word of God. He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." So we can say that he is the Lord of history. Later on he give the great Prophetic Discourse on Mount Olivet in Matthew chapter 24 and verse 25, and we can add he is not simply the Lord of history, he is the Lord of prophecy. In fact, he is a Prophet who knows everything that is going to come to pass and knows it perfectly.

There is only one other individual who ever gave a perfect prophecy and gave us some advice that was absolutely infallible and that was Will Rogers [Laughter]. Will Rogers once gave some advice to individuals who wanted to play the stock market. He said that he had an absolutely foolproof method for making money in the stock market. He said, "Take all of your savings and buy some good stock and then hold it until it goes up. Then sell it." And he add, "If it don't go up, don't buy it." That's absolutely foolproof advice, however, it's the kind of advice we humans cannot take. But our Lord is the Lord of history, he is the Lord of prophecy. And in the Upper Room Discourse when Jesus spoke to the apostle he reminded us that he was the Lord of the church. How great the Lord Jesus Christ is. Even men said about him, "never man spake like this man."

There's a great statement about our Lord that Mr. Watson made one time that I have always enjoyed reading. I think I'll read it again to you right now. Watson said these words about Jesus Christ. I hope I can find those words, here they are. I'd like to read them to you. He said, "No one has yet discovered the word Jesus ought to have said. No one suggested the better word he might have said. No action of his has shocked our moral sense. None has fallen short of the ideal. He is full of surprises and they're all the surprises of perfection. You're never amazed one day by his greatness, the next by his littleness. You are quite amazed that he incomparably better than you could have expected. He is tender without being weak, strong without begin coarse, lowly without being servile." It is pronounced servile you know? Not servile. That is that's the preferable rendering.

If you've been saying servile that's okay, that's secondary, but I always like to use the pronunciation that's given first. Don't you? So servile. "He has conviction without intolerance." If you don't learn anything today you have learned how to pronounce, I started to say servile [Laughter], but servile. "He is tender without being weak, strong without being coarse, lowly without being servile. He has conviction without intolerance, enthusiasm without fanaticism, holiness without pharaohism, passion without prejudice,

this man alone never made a false step, never struck a jarring note. His life alone moved on those high levels where local limitations are transcended and the absolute law of moral beauty prevails. It was life at its highest."

He, as John has said, is the "faithful witness". He's the first begotten from the dead, that is he's the first one to be resurrected. In fact, today he is still the only person who has ever been resurrected. Perhaps you say, "Well there are individual who've been restored to life." Yes, there have been those. Lazarus was one, for example, but Lazarus then died again. No one to this present moment has been resurrected but our Lord, that is raised from the dead with a glorified body. He's the first fruits of the whole body of believers who shall be raised. So he's the first begotten from the dead. And Paul tells us because he is that he's supreme over the faithful in the church of Jesus Christ. And finally he says he's "the ruler of the kings of the earth."

Emperor Hirohito had his day. Many of the Japanese thought he was a god, some still do so we are told. And around the country others have made claims that are similar, but there is only one real ruler. It is the Lord Jesus Christ and as he says he's "the ruler of the kings of the earth." There are kings of the earth and, in fact, the Bible says some rather uncomplimentary things about the kings of the earth. For example, in Psalm two in the Old Testament, that great messianic Psalm, the kings of the earth are those who plot against the Lord's Messiah,

"Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against the Messiah, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

Oh how the world would love to do that. Cast away the bonds of heaven, but they cannot do it.

And finally, in this very book, the book of the revelation in the 6th chapter when the Son of God comes John describes what takes place in this way,

"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

He's the ruler of kings of the earth. Now, having said that, John tells us what he has done. He says, beginning in the middle of the 5th verse, "Unto him that loved us," (or loveth us we're going to expound) "and loosed us from our sins in his own blood."

Now, isn't it interesting, here is the apostle who has hardly begun his great revelation but the mention of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and who he is has all ready fired his heart so that now he has to express a benediction to the Lord, "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins in his own blood." One of the great commentators has said, "That's an apostolic disease," that is you mention the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and they are suddenly praising him. Well, that is what he does. And what does he say? He says, "Unto him that loveth us", "Unto him," here is a man a firsthand knowledge of the Lord.

In other words, he's not speaking about someone who's a religious myth. He's not talking about someone who is a character upon a piece of paper. He's not talking about someone who is simply an historic personage who lived almost two thousand years ago. He's talking about a living person. "Unto him that loveth us." And incidentally he doesn't say unto the love of God either or unto the doctrine of the love of God. We know how important doctrine is, but doctrine is most important when it points us infallibly to the person who stands behind the doctrine of the word of God. "Those that know they name shall put their trust in thee," the psalmist says. And to truly trust our Lord, one will infallibly do that if he really comes to know him as he is, for that knowledge is the knowledge communicated by the Holy Spirit to his own whom he plans to bring to he knowledge of the Son of God and salvation.

Now, what has he done in the present? He says, "Unto him that loveth us." Notice the present tense. Not "loved us", thought that's true. Paul says that Galatians chapter 2 for example, "He loved us and gave himself for us," that's perfectly all right. It's good theology. He loved us in the cross of Christ, but "Unto him that loveth us," that is the love us Christ does not reach is culmination in the cross but standing upon the cross continues eternally for his own, "Unto him that loveth us."

Samuel Predo Tregulus was brought up among the friends in England. He was born, as I remember, in Falmouth, and Tregulus being born among the friends was exposed to people that did not believe in the kind of education that others did. So he never went to one of the universities, but he became a teacher. He was a self-taught man. Not only became a self-taught man in a Christian, he was a strong Christian man, but he also began a lifelong interesting in the text of the New Testament, that is the Greek text. He knew the languages. He taught himself, became a true scholar. And furthermore devoting himself to the text, helped by B.W. Newton, another Christian friend who had some money as well as being a Bible teacher himself, Mr. Tregulus worked for years on the Greek text of the New Testament and did something very few people are able to do. He actually edited a Greek New Testament in the 19th Century, which was highly regarded and still is recognized as a step along the way to the understanding of the textual history of our New Testament.

Now, I'm leading up to what Mr. Tregulus said. He said in all of his textual studies, and he devoted many, many hours to it, he said when he came to Revelation chapter 1 and verse 5 and read in what he considered the better the Greek manuscripts, "Unto him that loveth us," rather than, "Unto him that loved us," as the Authorized Version had it and realized that John probably wrote, "Unto him that loveth us." And recognizing that this was the only place in the New Testament where this verb is used in the present tense of God's love to us, "Unto him that loveth us," continually, constantly, duratively, for that's the sense of the tense. He said, "All of my studies on the text were worth if I had

only discovered this one thing, 'Unto him that loveth us,' not simply loved us, loveth us, continues to love us."

I remember the story of Mr. Spurgeon who went out and visited a man. And he looked up at the top of the man's house and there was weather vein up there and he had written on it "God is love". And Mr. Spurgeon in his own inevitable way said, "Well, I see you believe that the love of God is changeable, as the wind blows God's love changes." He said, "No, Mr. Spurgeon, what I mean by that is whatever the wind blows, God is still love." [Laughter] So Spurgeon got his lesson in the love of God that day [laughter] which he told others about. So in the present he loveth us, in the past he loosed us from our sins in his own precious blood.

One of the commentators that I read when I was still in business in Alabama said, "The loosing is once for all, the loving goes on forever." Perhaps he should have put it a little differently, he should have said, "The loosing is an event of the past, the love continues on forever." So in the present he loves us, in the past he loosed us from our sins, gave us the freedom of the forgiveness of sins. And then in the past, present, and future, we read, "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." We are part of a royal priesthood.

Now, that's not a great deal to anyone who had a background in Israel. In the temple, for example, there was the court of the gentiles. Men could go in the court of the gentiles and women could. And then next the court of the women. And the men could enter through the court of the women and the women could, as well. But the next of the court was the court of the Israelites. The women were unable to go that far, the men could go that far. And finally, beyond that was the court of the priests and only priest could go there, symbolic of the fact that in the Old Testament times, nearness to God was limited, limited to all of Israel. And as you well know on the Day of Atonement only the high priest could perform the necessary ritual within the holy of holies. But here and says, "hath made us kings and priests." We have access to God.

The protestant church has always believed in the universal priesthood of believers. We are all priests. What a blessing that is to be able to enter the presence of God, bring our petitions to him, our gifts to him, and minister as a priest of our great God in heaven. So he has made us kings and priests, royal priests because we are going to rule and reign, as John will point out in the 5th chapter, upon the earth.

Now then, in the past, the present, and the future, a royal priesthood. I'd like for you to notice that John's in no doubt about these things. He does not say, "Unto him that we hope has loved us." He doesn't say, "Unto him that we humbly trust has loosed us from our sins, that we sometimes believe has made us kings and priests to God." But he puts it in the most affirmative way possible.

And finally, in verses 7 and 8 he tells us what he shall do. Adoration awaits expectation, and we can turn it around, expectation awakens adoration. But now he says, "Behold, he cometh with clouds;" some call this the theme of the whole book. "Behold, he cometh with clouds;" Daniel 7 verse 13, the next part of the citation is from Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10 and following. So John in this revelation that he has given to us has put together two texts from the Old Testament. Daniel seven thirteen which has to do with the Second Advent of the Messiah to the earth and then Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10 which records the way in which the nation Israel, when he comes, shall be astonished by the fact that the one whom they have rejected for these countless centuries is truly, after all, the Messiah of biblical expectation.

I love the way he begins it. He says, "Behold." Now that's biblical language. We'd say today in our more cheapened way of saying it, "Hey look, he cometh." You notice that? You cannot be an athlete today if you cannot say, "Hey look." And you know, you know that's right don't you? You know? In fact, you can usually tell how good an athlete is by how many, "you knows" he can put in one sentence. And if he can put five or ten, and there are a number of them who can do that, and throw in a look, and a "hey" look,

and particularly a naked "hey" without the look following [Laughter] then you really, you really have a star. But the biblical language is look, behold.

Now, in some of our old books, man used to have when they would print the books they wanted your to read something, they would put a hand in the margin, print a hand like this. You're supposed to look at this, pay attention to this. You can scan the rest but be sure and look at this. And you know a lot of people used the expression N.B., it's a Latin abbreviation for *nota bene*, note well. I use that. If you look at my books you will find them filled with N.B.'s, and I want to tell you if you start doing it you can do it too much too. But anyway, I do that. Well this is the N.B. of Scripture, "Behold, he cometh with clouds." And incidentally it's put in the present tense. It's a futuristic present. In other words the coming, which is future, is put in a present as if he's on the way. It's so vivid, the whole he comes. It's almost as if you look and you're gonna see him. It's that vivid and vital. John says, "Behold, he comes with clouds." This is not then only a prophecy, it's a vivid picture. No perhaps about it, no dallying, Dagwood, late for work, but the Lord Jesus dwells in the leisure of eternity and the serenity of omnipotence, as Mr. Spurgeon puts it. And he will come in the sovereign will of God. When God the father intends for the Messianic son to come, he will come. "Behold, he cometh with clouds;"

The majesty and might of the coming of our Lord and his Second Advent is vividly stated. We have lost this. I hope that in our studies of Revelation if we don't learn a whole lot we'll learn the vital significance of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. All of us ought to have this as a vital hope before us. It will make a great difference in our Christian life and in our Christian witness.

John goes on to say, " And they also which pierced him will see him. Every eye shall see him," (and specifically those that pierced him) "and all tribes of the earth shall wail because of him." The stress rests upon the nation Israel who rejected him as Zechariah points out, but all, for all of us have a hand in the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was not simply crucified by the Romans at the instigation of Israel, but he was

crucified by the gentiles and the Jews. All men are guilty of the death of the Son of God. And so all shall see him when he comes, specifically those who pierced him, but all of the kindreds of the earth or tribes of the earth "shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

And finally, if you need any authentication for this, if you have any doubt about this coming to pass, notice the last statement in verse 8. "I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord, which is, which was, which is to come, the Almighty." This is the authentication of the message and it comes from the Alpha and Omega, the one who is the beginning and the end. The Alpha, the Omega, who is, the he was, and the coming one. This is his signature. It's like three Old Testament titles. It has a signature. Alpha and Omega, the Lord which is, and was, and is to come, and thirdly the Almighty One. That word pantokrator in the Greek language suggests the one who has his hand upon everything. In other words, all the affairs of the earth are within the control of the almighty one.

Archimedes, the Syracuse mathematician and scientist said once, "Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth." This is where I stand and I hope it's where you stand. The ruler of the kings of the earth, with this fulcrum, the earth can be moved and shall be moved.

Well let me conclude by first a word to unbelievers. The coming is glorious for the people of God but it's a tragedy for unbelievers. Oh the horror of our Lord's second coming for those who are outside of Christ, the despairing cry of the lost. We may now, incidentally, if we do not know our Lord we may thrust him from our minds, we may spurn his loving appeals, we may do everything we possibly can to detour around the gatherings of the people of the Lord, but every eye shall ultimately see him in his Second Advent and every knee shall bow to him. That's a horror, a horror for men outside of Christ, a horrible thing to reflect how important it is that we make this message known. John said, "To him be glory."

Well may God enable you, if you're outside of Christ, to give him the glory of trusting in him. No better time than right at this moment to bow your head and heart in his

presence. Acknowledge him as the ruler of the kings of the earth and the one who has loved us and loosed us from our sins in his own precious blood, to acknowledge you lost condition, and to lean upon him for eternal salvation. Do it now.

And I have one final word for you who are believers. Why is it necessary for a preacher to appeal to you to give yourself to such a king as this? You know him. You know the greatness of the Son of God. You know who he is. You have come to trust him. Why do we have to appeal to you? Why does someone have to appeal to me to give myself to him? Ought he not to have all of the hosannas and the hallelujahs and the worshipful obedience of every one of us?

Many years ago there was young man by the name of Arthur Scott. He had a relative who was very rich. And when the time came for Arthur to enter into his majority, his father and his family had a particular celebration for him and there was a big party. And all were invited and Arthur was looking forward to a very handsome check from one of his relatives. It was his uncle. And he said, "The party had gathered," and, incidentally, Harold Singen later came to know Arthur Scott as a Christian man and tells the story:

"When the time came for the party everybody was gathered in the home and the uncle had not come. And after the party had been going the uncle, with a chauffeur, drove up in front of the house and gave someone two envelopes. And he said, 'Give these to Arthur,' and he drove off. And he said, 'Oh by the way, one of them may be opened now,' he pointed to it, 'the other can only be opened later.' So when Arthur got them, as the party was over, he was real happy. He thought he was going to get a very handsome check. And so he opened up the first envelope, which he could open up, and sure enough there it was a very handsome check there. Then he wondered what the second letter had. His mind imagined and even greater amount of money might be his or something else. Well he opened it up and his uncle had written the words in it, 'To me, to live is' and then a line. It was blank.

He puzzled for a moment about it. And knowing his uncle's Christian testimony and having some background in Holy Scripture there came to him the text, 'To me, to live is Christ.' And he recognized that his uncle was giving him a challenge. 'To me, to live,' how shall I fill that in? To get on in business? To get Mary Jane to be my wife? To be chosen on a certain football team and have my pictures in the papers? Or let's put it in this way, 'To me, to live' is to be popular with the boys. Or 'To me, to live' is to be a great pulpiteer, many a preacher has looked forward to that. Or to me 'To me to live' is to join the junior league? Or 'To me, to live' is to make my debut? Or 'To me, to live' is to be a great barren in the land of energy and oil? After thinking things over Arthur realized that the challenge that his uncle had put to him was one that he could only possibly answer, 'To me, to live is Christ.'"

That's what life is really all about. To use the language of the day, that's what life, is all about, "To me, to live is Christ."

There are two decisions that we must make. One of them is essentially this, is it heaven or is it hell, and we are talking about our destiny. The second decision that we must make is, is it heaven or earth? In other words, as a believer shall we live for this earth or shall we live for heaven? May God help you and may God help me to truly fill in the blank with, "To me, to live is Christ." That's my message to you believers. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to thee for these magnificent words. Only our triune God in heaven could author such a revelation. How grateful we are Lord. O God, by the power of the seven spirits before the throne, enable us to give ourselves as we should give ourselves to thee. And if there are those here Lord who have never given themselves to our Lord and made the decision for heaven rather than hell, may at this very moment they lift their hearts to thee and give thee thanks for the blood shed on Calvary's cross for sinners. And may they claim by thy grace their inheritance in that blood, for Jesus sake. Amen.

