

**CHRIST IS COMING  
REVELATION 1:7**

It was early in November that I saw my first sign of Christmas. There on someone's Facebook video was a Christmas tree in the background — two weeks before Thanksgiving! It was shortly after that Raye Jeanne and I began noticing that Christmas lights started appearing on houses — earlier than normal. In a year complicated by COVID, political contentiousness, and all the standard problems of financial struggles, relational difficulties, illness, and death, it seems that people are looking for something joyful.

And it's hard to find joy right now. The secular Christmas tunes like "It's the Most Wonderful Time of Year," "Silver Bells," "A Holly, Jolly Christmas," "Here Comes Santa Claus," and "Feliz Navidad" fall just a little flat this year. Even some of our biblical Christmas hymns are difficult to sing — "A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices." I don't actually see much genuine rejoicing this year. Amid the twinkling lights, I still see despondent hearts and people missing Christmas. I do not want to miss what so many others are missing.

So over three messages, we are being reminded of Christ's greatness and supremacy through a passage that is not a "Christmas passage," but a passage that exalts our Savior — **Revelation 1:4-8**. Last time we were exhorted to delight in Christ because of His infinite uniqueness demonstrated at His Advent. This morning we are compelled to worship Christ because of His authority and victory in His second coming —

**DELIGHT IN CHRIST BECAUSE HE HAS COME AND IS COMING IN VICTORIOUS AUTHORITY.**

I admit that Revelation, the second coming of Christ, and eschatology are not typical themes for Christmas messages. But His first coming is completed through His second coming. The hope that was made certain in His first advent and the cross is realized at the cross. For those of us who are weary and burdened and discouraged and despondent, the second coming is the event for which we are living. The second coming is our goal. The first advent (Christmas) finds its fulfillment in the second coming. Just as Christmas doesn't mean anything without Easter, so Christmas doesn't mean anything without second coming of Christ.

So in this passage, John gives us **four reminders** of the greatness of the Christ who is coming again —

1. **The Christ Who Came is COMING with AUTHORITY (v. 7a)**
2. **The Christ Who Came is Coming INESCAPABLY (v. 7b)**
3. **The Christ Who Came is Coming with JUDGMENT (v. 7c)**
4. **The Christ Who Came is Coming — TRULY (v. 7d)**

## 1. The Christ Who Came is COMING with AUTHORITY (v. 7a)

- Last time I noted that multiple commentators have called this chapter one of the most Christological in Scripture. And in this chapter, it has been suggested that verse 7 is the theme/keynote of the book.
- It is the pivot verse from the first advent of Christ (vv. 4-6) to all the benefits that come through His second coming. The promises made in v. 6 particularly, are realized through His return in v. 7.
- We might understand the word **Behold** to mean something like, “Look...pay attention...” But this was also an OT quotation and the OT often uses “behold” to introduce an oracle — a divine declaration about His will. So John wants us to pay attention, but even more, John is introducing God’s revelation.
- The declaration of God is that **He** (Christ/Messiah) **is coming**; this is a quotation from Daniel 7:13-14.
  - ✓ The verb is a present tense, but it is being used as a future to emphasize the certainty of the promise. This is real and while it is in the future, the return has been initiated and “is happening.” There is an imminent sense to Christ’s return; because it is possible at any moment we should be preoccupied in anticipating Jesus breaking through the clouds to return.
  - ✓ The return of Christ is one of the key themes in this book; it’s how it begins (here) and it’s how the book ends — cf. **22:7, 12, 20**. John was imprisoned in Patmos as he penned this as an encouragement to himself and his readers; we should find similar confidence in it. We are not alone and we are not abandoned; He will come, just as surely as He left.
  - ✓ Yes, Jesus ascended to Heaven, but He did not go there to stay there; He left here and *is coming back*.
- To emphasize the certainty of Christ’s return, John said that He is coming **with the clouds**.
  - ✓ This also comes from **Daniel 7:13-14** — one of the great prophetic sections of Scripture.
    - In that passage, **the Son of Man** has access to the heavenly throne of God (v. 13).
    - The Father gives Him dominion, glory, and a kingdom that demands the worship of all people
    - The kingdom is eternal and indestructible (v. 14).
    - John would have us understand from Daniel 7 that there is authority and power in Jesus.
  - ✓ To say that He is returning with the clouds is also a reminder of His departure: **Acts 1:9-11**. He left in the clouds and He is returning in the clouds. Notice also that in Acts 1, the clouds obscured Christ from sight, while these clouds reveal Christ (so that “every eye will see Him...”).
  - ✓ And to say that He is **coming with the clouds** also indicates that He is coming in heavenly power, since clouds in Scripture indicate more than just the sky — clouds are often identified with God’s revelation and His heavenly majesty (e.g., **Ex. 13:21; 16:10**; Mt. 24:30-31; **1 Thess. 4:17**; **Rev. 14:14**).

- So Christ is coming again. We might expect that He comes in similar ways; just as we typically follow the same patterns when we go home, we might think that He will return in the same way. There are significant contrasts in His comings:

First Coming	Second Coming
lowly	glorious
private, few saw	public, all will see
some pierced/rejected him	those who reject him are judged
rejoicing over his defeat	mourning about his victory over them

- ✓ Both His advents were with authority; His second advent will particularly demonstrate His authoritative *judgment* power — His authority in judging all men will be apparent to *all*.
- Of what benefit is this return of Christ to us? G. K. Chesterton said, “It’s never been enough to say that God is in his heaven and all is right with the world; God has left his heaven to set it right.” And from this verse, we can also add, “And He will leave His Heaven *again* to set it right *finally* and *fully*.”
  - ✓ Whatever the pressures and burdens of these days, and there are many — as there always have been — we are confident in the reality that just as Christ came once, He will come again.
  - ✓ The first advent, “Christmas,” has set the table for the second and final (permanent) advent.
  - ✓ When He comes again He will come authoritatively, powerfully, and righteously.

## 2. The Christ Who Came is Coming **INESCAPABLY** (v. 7b)

- About His coming John said, ***every eye will see Him***. At His first coming, just a select few saw Him — Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, Simeon and Anna shortly after, and the magi a few weeks later. At His second coming *all* will see Him.
  - ✓ This does not necessarily mean that everyone will see Him at the same moment nor that everyone will physically see His arrival. But it is to say that everyone — believer and unbeliever alike — will see and understand His arrival. They will be compelled to affirm His greatness and authority.
  - ✓ At His first coming, some (many) refused to acknowledge Him (**Jn. 1:11**).
  - ✓ At His second coming, *all* will have to affirm Him. Even ***those who pierced Him*** will acknowledge His coming and His authority.
    - Those who ***pierced*** Him doesn’t just refer to those who physically crucified Him. It refers to all sinners who were guilty of His death.
    - When He came the first time, it appeared that some rebelled and escaped His wrath. When He returns the second time, it will be immediately apparent there is no escaping Him (**Phil. 2:10**).
- One of my first semesters in college, I had a science class that I took a little less seriously than I should have. The professor was boring, it was Spring, and I lived in FL, a couple of miles from the Atlantic Ocean. Who wanted to be in class?

- One day I walked into class and there was no normal bantering and talking; everyone was quiet. “Why is everyone so quiet today? What’s going on?” “We’re reviewing our notes for today’s exam?” “Exam? What exam? When did he announce an exam?” “Last class.” (I’d taken a day to go to the beach that day.) I remember exactly what I said: “I’m outa here; see you next week...” And I left, hoping I’d escaped the notice of the professor who hadn’t shown up yet.
  - ✓ I might have tried to escape the professor and the exam that day. (I didn’t — there was a makeup exam later in the semester and a C in a class where I should have gotten an A.)
  - ✓ There is no pretense of escaping Christ. He has gone, but He is not unaware. He is in Heaven, but He is not disconnected from what is happening on earth. Other kings are giving pretense to having authority, but when He comes, everyone will acknowledge His great, final, and supreme authority.
- This reality is a comfort to us, but it is a great warning to those who reject Christ. He will not be avoided and escaped. All men will have to deal with Him (**Heb. 4:13**).

...they shall not escape [Him]. They must each and all some day confront him, and meet his all-penetrating gaze. From the wretched man who betrayed him, down to the soldier who pierced his side, and all who have made common cause with them in wronging, persecuting, wounding and insulting that meek Lamb of God, shall then be compelled to face his judgment-seat, and to look upon him whom they have pierced. [Seiss, 31.]

### 3. The Christ Who Came is Coming with **JUDGMENT** (v. 7c)

- John emphasizes that everyone in all the world will see Christ in His return when he says ***all the tribes of the earth*** — John is referring to all people groups; we might understand it as all nations & cultures.
  - ✓ There is no one anywhere who will escape the coming of Christ. I say that intentionally. It is not just that He is coming, but His coming is to do a work that many seek to escape and cannot.
  - ✓ He is coming *in judgment*. They will seek to escape it and will not be able to escape. His first advent was as sovereign Savior; His second advent will be as Sovereign Ruler and Judge.
  - ✓ We see an attempt to escape from God in Revelation 6 — God has opened the seal judgments and they are terrifying to the people of the earth so that they long to die — and they cannot (**6:15-17**).
  - ✓ His judgment is against *all* who rebel against Him and is inescapable.
- So the people, John says, ***will mourn over Him***.
  - ✓ We might read that and say, “they are grieved over their sin and they are repentant.”
  - ✓ That is not what John intends us to understand. They are lamenting but they are not lamenting to the point of repentance. Their sorrow is a worldly sorrow that doesn’t move to repentance.
  - ✓ These mourners are beating their chests in lament and sorrow for the loss of their sin and, unbelievably, in continued rebellion against God.

- ✓ How can I say that? Because that is not only the general pattern of all sinners, but it is the pattern we see in this book. A kind of grief that does not lead to repentance is not unusual.
  - ✓ When God begins pouring out His wrath during the Tribulation, in one judgment, one fourth of the world will die (Rev. 6:7-8). In another judgment, another third of the world will die (9:15), resulting in the death of one-half of the world's population in those two plagues. Yet, the ungodly will be resolute in their rebellion and commitment not to repent — 9:20-21. They would rather have their murder, witchcraft, sexual immorality, and more, rather than turn to the One who might redeem them from their sin. And the same thing is repeated at the end of the Tribulation judgments (16:9, 11, 21). These grieve the loss of their sin and their loss of life, but not the loss of salvation. Revelation 1:8 is a mourning of terror, not a lament that leads to repentance and faith in Christ.
  - ✓ Here is a strong warning against hardened and dead consciences. God is patient, giving time to repent (Rev. 2:21). We dare not take that silent patience to mean that He doesn't care about sin. He does care. He will judge and He will be unrelenting in pouring out His wrath. His patience for sinners *is not* eternal, but His judgement against sinners *is* eternal.
- Do not disconnect the “harmless” baby of Christmas from this righteously angry, omnipotent authority in Heaven. They are one in the same. And when Christ comes next, He will come in judgment and it will be inescapable. I say it is inescapable, but there is one means of escape; you must trust Christ.
    - ✓ In the later part of this verse, John is quoting from Zech. 12:10. That passage is a promise of God's protection of Israel even though Israel is attacked by the nations. God will use Israel to destroy the nations (12:2-3); the Lord will save Judah (12:7) and defend Jerusalem (12:8). He will pour out His grace on David's house (12:10), and the fountain of God's blessing will be poured out on Israel for her sin (13:1). Both leaders and people of Israel who need cleansing will receive it.
    - ✓ There is a way out of sin and judgment; it is to believe in the God-Man who is provided by God for our cleansing salvation. You must believe that He is God (able to absorb God's wrath against your sin) and that He is perfect Man (able to righteously substitute Himself for you and your sin). And you must believe that He is worth living for and following. He is better than your sin. He is a better King than you, or anything else is. You must believe. If you don't believe, there is no better time to begin believing than at the remembrance of His coming as both man and King.

#### 4. The Christ Who Came is Coming — TRULY (v. 7d)

- The phrase ***So it is to be. Amen.*** is literally, “Yes. Amen (OT, ‘truly’).”
  - ✓ This is an emphatic and vigorous way for John to say, “this is the way it *will* be.”
  - ✓ God through Christ is victorious and authoritative. And there is a sense in which that should be solemn and sobering —

“Brethren, it does seem to me, when I look at the Scriptures on this subject, that even the best of us are not half awake. May God arouse us by his Spirit, and not permit us to sleep till the thunders and terrors of the great day are upon us!” [Seiss, 32.]

- ✓ But there is also a reality in which — for the believer — Christ’s return is joyful. As harsh and terrible as God’s judgment will be to the wicked, it is God’s exclamation point that He not only is intolerant of unrighteousness and sin, but that there is no sin that will escape right judgment. He will deal the right way with all things and we do not have to be troubled, anxious, or fearful that some sin somewhere will escape His notice. None will. He will truly address all sin.
  - ✓ Many have questioned how governments and businesses have responded to COVID, questioning the motives of leaders. Every sinful COVID action will be addressed and reconciled.
  - ✓ Many in our country have questioned *our* governmental authorities and cultural influencers for many reasons beyond COVID — and every single sin will be truly (righteously) addressed by God.
  - ✓ Many have questioned their own sufferings and trials — broken relationships, weariness of body and soul, pressures of responsibilities, constant battles with temptation, and illness and death. Where is the Christ of Heaven? I’ll tell you where He is — He is in Heaven, ruling, accomplishing His will, and preparing for His immanent return. He came, and He is coming again — soon.
- Christ came. Christ lived the only righteous life ever lived. Christ died for sinners. Christ ascended to Heaven where He has taken a seat next to the Father, ruling as a Kingly Priest whose work is finished. This “babe” who came in humility the first time is truly coming again to establish His judgment and set up His eternal Kingdom. We can trust that and rest in that reality.

**CONCLUSION:** Several years I noticed that many Christmas hymns don’t stop with the birth of Christ; they end with the cross of Christ and His victory. This week I looked at those hymns again; some don’t stop with Christ’s death, but the culminate with His exalted position in Heaven and His expected return:

At his feet the six-winged seraph, Cherubim, with sleepless eye,  
Veil their faces to the presence, As with ceaseless voice they cry:  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Lord Most High! (“Let All Mortal Flesh”)

Who is he that from the grave comes to heal and help and save?  
Who is he that from his throne rules thro' all the world alone? (“Who is He in Yonder Stall?”)

Of the Father's love begotten 'ere the worlds began to be, He is Alpha and Omega,  
He the Source, the Ending He, of the things that are, that have been,  
and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore! (“Of the Father's Love Begotten”)

Though an Infant now we view Him, He shall fill His Father's throne,  
Gather all the nations to Him; Every knee shall then bow down:  
All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son,  
Evermore your voices raising To th'eternal Three in One. ("Angels From the Realms of Glory")

And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His own redeeming love;  
For that child so dear and gentle, Is our Lord in heaven above,  
And He leads His children on, To the place where He is gone.  
Not in that poor lowly stable, With the oxen standing by,  
We shall see Him, but in heaven, Set at God's right hand on high;  
When like stars His children crowned, All in white shall be around. ("Once in Royal David's City")

When heaven's arches shall ring, and her choirs shall sing At Thy coming to victory,  
Let Thy voice call me up, saying, "Yet there is room, There is room at My side for thee!"  
And my heart shall rejoice, Lord Jesus! When Thou comest and callest for me.  
("Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne")

Oh friends, be confident. Christ has come. And yes, He ascended back into Heaven for a season. But He is making preparations for our arrival and for His soon return. Christ came. And Christ is coming. And He will never leave us and we will never leave Him. That is our confidence and joy this Christmas.

**BENEDICTION: Revelation 5:9-10**