

Series: The Glory of God in the Person of Christ #1230

Title: Jesus Is

Revelation 1.5-7

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. Yesterday I left you with a little assignment, some homework as it were. Were you able to do it? I said that we will be exploring Ten Facts about Jesus Christ in verses 5-7 of Revelation 1 and I asked you to read ahead and see if you could find them. I'll draw them out of the text for you in a moment, but first let me read Revelation 1, verses 5-7. I hope that you will give great attention to the Word of God with me.

"...from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—⁶ and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen."

That was the first chapter of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, verses 5-7, and here are the Ten Facts that are true about Jesus found therein:

Fact #1: Jesus is the **"faithful witness"**

Fact #2: Jesus is the **"firstborn of the dead"**

Fact #3: Jesus is the **"ruler of the kings of the earth"**

Fact #4: Jesus **"loves us"**

Fact #5: Jesus **"released us from our sin by His blood"**

I am giving you Ten Facts that are true about Jesus Christ from Revelation 1, and here is the sixth:

Fact #6: Jesus made His followers **"to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father"**

Fact #7: to Jesus belongs **"the glory and dominion forever and ever"**

Fact #8: Jesus is **"coming with the clouds"**

Fact #9: **"Every eye will see Jesus (even those who pierced Him)"**

And fact #10: **"The tribes of the earth will mourn over [Jesus]"**

Did you have these? They are as clear as a cloudless sky if you simply do the reading. Revelation 1, verses 5-7. And now what we will do together is to simply go fact by fact so that I can tell you what all of these mean. And we will break these into three groups. The first group is facts 1 through 3. The second group is facts 4 through 7. And the last group is facts 8 through 10. You can outline this very simply in your Bible or on a piece of paper. Should you take notes on your device: phone, tablet, iPad, what have you – now is a great time to jot these down.

We are taking these ten facts and putting them into three groups. The first group is facts 1 through 3. The second group is facts 4 through 7. And the last group is facts 8 through 10. And I'll explain why I am doing it this way as we move along, but let's drop right into the first group and the first fact: Jesus is the **"faithful witness."** Revelation 1, verse 5 says, **"...from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness..."**

What does it mean that Jesus is the faithful witness? The faithful witness of Christ means that one, Jesus always tells us the truth about God, and two, because He told us the truth about God it cost Him His life!

I'll repeat that: the faithful witness of Christ means that one, Jesus always tells us the truth about God, and two, because He told us the truth about God it cost Him His life! Listen to the Lord in John chapter 18 and verse 37 as He speaks to Pilate: "**...For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth...**" This is Jesus' mission: to tell the truth about God. John 18:37. If you want to know who God is, then read Jesus, listen to Jesus, and learn from Jesus. He tells us *exactly, precisely* who God is!

This is why in this ministry, dedicated to understanding who God is, we constantly look to Jesus. Over in John's Gospel and the third chapter, John the Apostle and author of the Book is describing for us why John the Baptist believes his ministry is subordinate to Christ's and in verses 31-32 John the Baptist says this. I am reading the Gospel of John, chapter 3, verses 31-32. "³¹ ... **[[Jesus] who comes from heaven is above all.** ³² **What He has seen and heard, of that [[Jesus] testifies...**"

Jesus knows what is true about God, because Jesus is God and He comes from God telling us everything we need to know about God the Father. You must understand this about Jesus: He is the faithful witness. And it is John the Apostle who receives this Revelation from Jesus Christ, via the angel, here in Revelation 1. So what John writes about Jesus in John 3 is the same that he writes about Jesus in Revelation 1. The Bible is very consistent, because truth is consistent.

Second, Jesus tells us the truth about God and it cost Him His life! The Lord Jesus was killed, because He told us who God is. There is a very interesting Greek word we need to know when we read Revelation 1, verse 5 and it is the word *martus* (**pronounced mar-toos**). The text reads: "**Jesus Christ, the faithful martus (pronounced mar-toos).** And what English word does this sound like? Yes, martyr. In the Greek the word witness is **mar-toos** (martyr). And martyr means one who suffers death for allegiance to a cause. And this is exactly what happened to Jesus. He was martyred, murdered for God. This is what being a faithful witness means to Jesus Christ. He faced the death penalty, because He dared to declare the *truth*.

Now remember the *who* when we talk about the Revelation. Who originally received this? It was the Christians in the churches to whom John writes, and they were faced with severe persecution. Many of them will also be martyred for their faith in Christ and their bold proclamation of who He is. So Jesus, in His revelation, emphasizes that He was a faithful witness to encourage them to also stand firm in the face of harsh conditions for believers in this season of fierce aggression against Christ's people. Jesus is saying, "I have served as an example for you. Prepare yourself to do as I did: give up your life for me, as I gave up my life for *you*." Powerful application.

These words of Christ to the churches will prove to be very valuable to them, as you see if you continue to read the Book of the Revelation. Read for example what Jesus said to the church at Smyrna in chapter 2. Here is a little flavor of His words, "**to the angel of the church in Smyrna write...Do not fear what you are about to suffer...Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life...**" The Christians at Smyrna needed this affirmation from the Lord because at least some of them were to be martyred as Christ was martyred for being faithful witnesses.

Now, on this point, many of us may let out a sigh of relief. "Well, I am sure glad we are not being persecuted like that around here for our faith!" Ah, but are we being faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ? I am not suggesting that martyrdom awaits you wherever you may be listening to me. But just try being a faithful witness for God today in your neighborhood. At a minimum you and I are likely to face stiff resistance, to be shamed, and rejected. But, if we push it, we can be bullied, harassed, certainly portrayed as bigoted, too hateful, and prideful. "Who are you to tell someone else how to live," you might hear. It is never easy to be like Christ; to be a faithful witness. But are you willing? Christ commands that we witness for Him! As a Christian, this is our great commission. How are we doing in this regard?

Jesus is the faithful witness. This is the first fact about Jesus found in these verses, and now we come to the second. Fact #2: Jesus is the **“firstborn of the dead.”** This is written in verse 5. And what does it mean that Jesus is **“firstborn of the dead”**? Well, as the sovereignty of God would have it, this fact follows right on the heels of the one before it. Since fact number one declares that Jesus was killed for His witness, fact number two declares that Jesus rose from the dead. He did not stay dead, but rather sprang back to life. The firstborn of the dead speaks of resurrection! So too, those faithful witnesses for Christ, if martyred, will be brought back to life, as will all of us who love the Lord.

Firstborn does not mean Jesus was the first person on a timeline of world history to be resurrected from the dead. For example, Jesus Himself brought his friend Lazarus back to life. But these words are saying Jesus is firstborn in the sense of Jesus being the greatest, the superior One to be resurrected! God the Father declares of Jesus in Psalm 89 and verse 27: **“I also shall make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.”** Of all the people who have been resurrected by the power of God, and who will be resurrected in the future, Jesus is *the greatest*. Psalm 89, verse 27.

We will pick up here again when you join us on Monday because God Is!

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