

Rev. Luke C. Werre  
Peace, Sun Prairie  
November 24, 2024  
Christ the King

## Revelation 1:4b-8

### LOOK! HE IS COMING!

The miserable crowd of refugees sat huddled filling a large pier that jutted out into the sea. They had grabbed what they could carry from their homes. As night fell, the boat master ferried the first load away to safety. He promised he'd be back for the rest, but it was getting long.

Already, shelling had begun from surrounding forces, blasting homes and businesses throughout the town, sometimes sending debris high into the air which then came raining down on them. To make matters worse, as night fell dark clouds began to shower them with actual rain.

There they huddled - drenched, shivering, hungry, fatigued, exposed, scared. Where was the refugee boat? That was their only hope of escape. They waited hour after excruciating hour through the darkness. They began to get desperate. Some talk was bandied about whether they should try to make a run for it on foot.

Then as the first rays of the morning sun began to break over the horizon, one of them shouted, "Look! There he is! The boat master is coming!" A shining dot on the distant ocean surface grew until it became a large clean sea craft with ample room for all of them and it docked alongside the pier. Salvation.

Fellow refugees, today's reading from Revelation chapter 1 is for you. "Look! He is coming! He is coming with the clouds!" it says. Your night of waiting is over!

The book of Revelation was written by the Apostle John, the last living apostle, around 90 AD while he had been exiled as a prisoner on the island of Patmos. It was a time of persecution against the Church by the Roman government. It was also a time of religious confusion as John had to combat a popular false teaching called Gnosticism. Today, anytime you hear discussion about personhood or being your authentic self or that even though biologically I might have the body of a male but that's not who I really am – this is all a rehash of that ancient heresy Gnosticism. Satan is not so good at coming up with new lies. Then again, the human race keeps falling for the old ones. Gnosticism caused as much confusion and grief for Christians back then as it does today.

The purpose of the entire book of Revelation is to lift up the eyes and the spirits of beleaguered believers who are waiting to be delivered from this war-torn, desolate world. Jesus is coming!

Who is this Jesus? He is the King who even now rules everything in this world. John's greeting in Revelation opens this way: *Grace and peace to you from him who is and who was and who is to come and from the seven spirits before his throne and from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.* We do not place our hopes in a dead Savior, but one who conquered death and lives and rules over all things - including over all the nations of the earth. Forty days after His Resurrection Jesus ascended into heaven, but this does not mean He has detached Himself from this world. It does not mean He is unaware or indifferent to what is happening here. It does not mean the world is in a free-for-all. Whether the name is Trump or Trudeau or Putin or Xi or Ali Khamenei or Maduro or Hichilema or even Governor Evers or Mayor Esser, Psalm 2 warns the kings of the earth that the One enthroned in heaven laughs. They should be careful because His wrath can flare up in a moment.

Even as we Christians may feel exposed, vulnerable, outnumbered and fatigued with apprehension as we await our eternal deliverance, every worldly power, influence, trend or movement that threatens us is subject to Christ. Satan would be inciting the world to swallow us whole, but Christ the King prevents it.

Secondly, the One who is coming for you is coming for you because He redeemed you for Himself. Revelation chapter one continues with this doxology, *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father – to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.*

Perhaps as we sit huddled together here, you might feel it's not just the world that's a shambles, it's also your personal life. Perhaps it's not cold that makes us shiver but things we feel guilty about, things we are even ashamed of. As we brace to step off the pier and into the boat might the Boat Master stop us and say, "I didn't come for your type?"

But Revelation 1 says this Boat Master loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood. The very One who comes to save your life sacrificed His own to atone for everything you feel guilty about. He spilled His blood on the cross to set us free with God's announcement of all sins forgiven.

He redeemed you from whatever it is that has owned you – guilt and burning desires, fears and anxieties, failures and deflating embarrassments.

He has ransomed you free from these, and from death and from God's disapproval and from judgment and from hell and from the devil and from this world. You belong to Him now. He paid with His blood. Only He has rightful ownership of you. He loves you and He has every intention of taking you onto His refugee boat and whisking you away to safety.

Thirdly, the One who is coming for you will come as a clear and decisive victor. In the Gospel Lesson today, Jesus didn't look victorious. He appeared weak, at the mercy of the local governor. It seemed almost silly when Pilate, attempting to get to the bottom of what this

quarrel was all about, stated, “You are a king then!” Jesus looked nothing like a king. He died in horror and disgrace.

And though He brought about a great salvation by His resurrection, since that time He has always worked in a hidden way, behind the scenes as it were, winning hearts through His Gospel to be sure, multiplying His Kingdom by His Spirit – but in ways that go unnoticed or despised by the world. And like Christ, His true Church has always appeared downtrodden like refugees. Few displays of earthly success or power.

But when Christ returns all that will be reversed. Listen again to Revelation 1: *Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.* All the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him, but not you. You won’t mourn. Jesus said that His believers are not of the earth any more than He is of the earth.

As Christ is King, He makes His believers to be kings and queens alongside Him to rule with Him for all eternity. We won’t barely squeak our way out of this world’s grip. We’ll storm our way out. This world will be destroyed with fire and all who are not with Christ will be cast into hell’s abyss. Believers will be caught up to meet Christ in the air not in a boat but in the clouds. We will be everlasting victors in glory.

And just so you can be assured that nothing about this message has changed in the last 2000 years, that Christ has not changed His mind, nor has He lost His power to do it, He adds this: *I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.*

Therefore, dear Christian refugees, even though the night of our suffering is growing long, keep your heads up. Keep looking for your deliverer. The first rays of light are breaking over the horizon. Keep scanning, not the seas but the skies, for your King. He is coming. He is coming for you. He is coming for your rescue.