

Session 4 Jesus: The Faithful Witness, Firstborn and Ruler (Rev. 1:5)

I. JESUS FULFILLS THREE MESSIANIC TITLES FROM PSALM 89

- A. In Rev. 1:5, Jesus is referred to by three messianic titles that were used in Ps. 89. They give insight into the covenant that God made with David in 2 Sam. 7:8-16. These titles will be expressed on earth most after Jesus' second coming as He rules all the nations in the Millennium.
- ⁵ Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father... (Rev. 1:5-6)***
- B. The background to Ps. 89 is God's covenant with David concerning Jesus ruling the earth.
- ¹² I will set up your seed (Jesus) after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever...16 Your house and...throne shall be established forever. (2 Sam. 7:12-16)***
- C. The angel Gabriel told Mary that her son Jesus would sit on the throne of David forever.
- ³² The Lord will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 He will reign...forever. (Lk. 1:32-33)***
- D. The fullness of these three titles will not be totally fulfilled on earth until Jesus reigns as the King of kings on the throne of David forever, starting in the Millennium.
- ²⁷ I will make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth...³⁵ I have sworn by My holiness...³⁶ His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me; ³⁷ It shall be established forever like the moon, even like the faithful witness in the sky." (Ps. 89:27-37)***
- E. It is commonly agreed that Rev. 1:5 is based on Ps. 89 because the titles the "faithful witness," "firstborn," and "ruler of the kings" all occur there and are all dependent on one another.
1. ***Jesus' love of truth***: Jesus' reign shall be a faithful witness before God even as the sun and moon are. They are reliable to continue forever and to give light in the darkness.
- ¹⁰ All deception...because they did not receive the love of the truth. (2 Thes. 2:10)***
2. ***Jesus' unique favor with God***: He is God's firstborn and God's heir who inherits the promises given to David. The NT writers expand this by calling Jesus the firstborn "from the dead". David and his descendants were God's firstborn servants in their generation.
 3. ***Jesus' unique authority over men***: Jesus is to be the highest of the kings on earth. John expands this promise to include Jesus ruling over all the kings of earth (Rev. 1:5).
- F. Many Jewish scholars interpreted Ps. 89 messianically. Then Rev. 1:5 used it to summarize Jesus' ministry: prophetic teaching (faithful witness), death (washed us from our sins), His resurrection as the firstborn to be the supreme ruler of the earth, and His great love which demands that we be exalted in His grace to rule with Him (made us to be kings and priests).

II. JESUS AS THE FAITHFUL WITNESS: LOVER OF THE TRUTH

- A. Jesus has been the faithful and true witness from His earthly ministry (Rev. 1:5; 3:7, 14; 19:11). John emphasized Jesus as a witness of God's truth (Jn 3:11; 5:31-32; 8:13-14; 8:18, 23; 18:37).
³⁷ *For this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. (Jn. 18:37)*
¹⁴ *These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness... (Rev. 3:14)*
- B. A witness is a person who speaks what they have seen from firsthand knowledge. Jesus revealed the truth and stood for it regardless of the cost. Jesus' faithful witnessing resulted in His death. A faithful witness implies obedience to what He proclaimed.
²⁰ *I kept back nothing that was helpful...²⁶ I testify to you that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷ I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God....³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone...with tears. (Acts 20:20-31)*
- C. Jesus did not hold back the negative (rebukes or declarations of judgment) or exaggerate the positive (affirmations or promises). He spoke without regard to the criticism He was sure to receive. Most only preach or prophesy positive things to please people so that they do not lose their position, honor or financial opportunities. Jesus never exaggerates or flatters or rebukes in bitterness. His extravagant eternal promises are reliable.

III. WE ARE TO BE FAITHFUL WITNESSES

- A. The concept of the faithful witness is also based on Isa. 43:10-12.
¹⁰ *You are My witnesses...and My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He...¹¹ I am the LORD and besides Me there is no savior. ¹² I have declared and saved...therefore you are My witnesses. (Isa. 43:10-12)*
¹⁴ *This gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Mt. 24:14)*
- B. **Personal salvation**: We speak the glorious good news of Jesus to all who will freely receive it.
- C. **Eschatological understanding**: We explain God's judgments to help people overcome their offense at Jesus and their fears and confusion so they trust Jesus' leadership and mature in love.
⁶ *And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me. (Mt. 1 1:6)*
- D. **Exposing lies**: We expose the popular ideas that deceive and seduce people into error.
¹⁷ *Beware lest you fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error... (2 Pet. 3:17)*
- E. **Prophetic warning**: We warn the unrighteous of judgment so that they have opportunity to repent. Jesus does everything in perfect justice, even in His judgment of the wicked.
⁷ *Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His...prophets. (Amos 3:7)*

IV. BEING A FAITHFUL WITNESS

- A. God's justice requires that the wicked receive a warning, even if they refuse it. Regardless of whether men receive our testimony, we must give it that Jesus may return to earth in justice.
- ³ When he (the watchman) sees the sword coming...if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, ⁴ then whoever heard...and does not take warning...his blood shall be on his own head...⁵ But he who takes warning will save his life...⁸ When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. (Ezek. 33:3-8)*
- B. Our witness of the truth must be:
1. **Biblical:** We must stay within the boundaries of Scripture in all that we say.
 2. **Clear:** We must speak in a straightforward and precise way.
 3. **Bold:** We must not be intimidated by rejection or by false sentimentality.
 4. **Tender:** We speak without bitterness or anger as we seek the benefit of our enemies.
 5. **Humble:** We must not be motivated by a personal agenda or to seek to win an argument.
- C. **A-R-K:** We apply the truths about Jesus in Revelation to our lives in three ways:
1. **Agreement:** Make declarations of agreement to Jesus as the faithful witness. Pray, "Jesus, You are the faithful witness. You took as stand with courage and love. I believe You".
 2. **Revelation:** "Reveal Yourself to me and show me Your glory as the faithful witness."
 3. **Keep the prophecy:** By responding in faith and obedience to the specific truth of Jesus as the faithful witness. Pray, "I will stand for truth regardless what it costs me. Help me".

V. JESUS IS THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD: UNIQUE FAVOR WITH GOD

- A. Jesus is God's firstborn or pre-eminent one who inherits God's promises given to David. John expanded the promise in Ps. 89:27 by calling Jesus the firstborn "from the dead".
- ⁵ From Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead... (Rev. 1:5)*
- B. The Greek word prototokos is translated "first-born" and emphasizes that Jesus is the first man with a resurrected body and is in the position of the firstborn son as the unique heir of God. He is the uncreated God like the Father. He became the firstborn from the dead at His resurrection.

- C. He occupies the first place of authority and honor as the firstborn of creation. This does not mean He was the first one created, but rather that He is the “first” in cause and authority. In other words, the power over all creation “begins” with Him. He is first in authority over it.

¹⁵ ***He is...the firstborn over all creation. 16 By Him all things were created...18 is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Col. 1:15-18)***

- D. He is the firstborn from the dead and the firstfruits of those who have died. The saints will be raised from the dead, but Jesus is the firstfruits (1 Cor. 15:23).

²⁰ ***Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (died)...23 Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. (1 Cor. 15:20-23)***

- E. Begotten means “to cause or to bring forth” someone or something. Some see the act of begetting the Son as the incarnation, but most see it as Jesus’ resurrection. Begotten expresses the idea of Jesus’ uniqueness to the Father (Jn. 3:16; Heb. 11:17; 1 Jn. 4:9).

- F. Begotten is used of the Father's act in making Christ His Son, saying, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You" (Ps. 2:7). Paul quoted this in Acts 13 connecting the resurrection as that which declared Jesus to be God’s Son. Jesus’ sonship was openly manifest in history at that time.

³³ ***He has raised up Jesus. As it is written... "You are My Son, today I have begotten You." (Acts 13:33)***

⁴ ***Declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom 1:4)***

- G. **A-R-K**: We apply the truths about Jesus in Revelation to our lives in three ways:

1. **Agreement**: Make declarations of agreement to Jesus as the firstborn with affection. For example, pray, “Jesus, You are the firstborn. I rejoice in Your preeminence over all”.
2. **Revelation**: “Reveal Yourself to me and show me Your glory as the firstborn.”
3. **Keep the prophecy**: By responding in faith and obedience to the specific truth of Jesus as the firstborn. For example, pray, “I commit to proclaim who You are as the One who is over all. I will obey and submit to Your great leadership. Empower me to obey You.”

VI. JESUS AS THE RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH

- A. Jesus is to be the highest of the kings on earth or the most exalted king on earth (Ps. 89:27). Many Jewish scholars have seen Ps. 89:27 as a description of the Messiah. John expands this promise to include Jesus ruling over all the kings of earth (Rev. 1:5).

⁵ ***Jesus...the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. (Rev. 1:5)***

²⁷ ***I will make him (messiah) My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. (Ps. 89:27)***

- B. The theme of the book of Revelation is Jesus returning to earth to rule all the nations as King.
¹⁶ *On His robe...a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**. (Rev. 19:16)*
³ *They sing..., "Great and marvelous are Your works...**O King of the saints!**" (Rev. 15:3)*
- C. At the time of the rapture, Jesus will replace all the evil governments with His government.
¹⁵ *The seventh angel sounded: There were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the **kingdoms of...Christ**, and He shall reign forever!" (Rev. 11:15)*
- D. Jesus as King of kings will personally govern a worldwide kingdom from Jerusalem.
¹⁷ ***Jerusalem** shall be called the **Throne of the LORD**, and **all the nations** shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to **Jerusalem**. (Jer. 3:17)*
- E. At this time the kingdom of God will be openly manifest worldwide affecting every sphere of life including political, social, agricultural, economic, spiritual, educational, law enforcement, family, media, arts, technology, and social institutions, etc. (Rev. 20:1-6; Isa. 2:1-4; 9:6-9; 11:1-16; 51:1-8; 60-62; 65:17-25; Ps. 2:6-12; 110:1-7; Mt. 17:11; 19:28; 28:19; Acts 1:6; 3:21).
- F. Daniel saw the heavenly coronation of Jesus as the eternal King over all the nations of the earth.
¹³ *One like the **Son of Man** (Jesus)...came to the Ancient of Days (Father)...¹⁴ **To Him** (Jesus) was given...a kingdom, that **all peoples, nations, and languages** should serve Him...²⁷ **His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve Him.** (Dan. 7:13-14, 27)*
- G. Jesus quoted Dan. 7:27 concerning His rule over all the nations of the earth.
³¹ *When the **Son of Man** comes in His glory...then He will sit on the **Throne of His glory**. ³² **All the nations** will be gathered before Him... (Mt. 25:31-32)*
- H. In the Millennium, all the kings of the earth will be saved and worship Jesus (Ps. 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Isa. 62:2; Rev. 21:24) and base their national governments on God's Word.
¹¹ ***All kings** shall fall down before Him; **all nations** shall serve Him. (Ps. 72:11)*
- I. This will result in the resurrection of the earth (Rom. 11:15; 1 Cor. 15:21). Once Satan is cast into prison, God will renew the conditions of Eden on earth and He will call forth the New Jerusalem to descend to the millennial earth (Rev. 20:1-10; 21:2, 10).
- J. The devil offered Jesus the leadership of all nations without needing to suffer death on the cross.
⁵ *Then the devil...showed Him **all the kingdoms** of the world...⁶ The devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ Therefore, if You will worship before me, **all will be Yours**." (Lk. 4:5-7)*

- K. **A-R-K**: We apply the truths about Jesus in Revelation to our lives in three ways:
1. **Agreement**: Make declarations of agreement to Jesus as the ruler or King of the nations. For example, pray, “Jesus, You are the ruler of the kings of the earth. All the kings on earth and through history will soon bow before You. I love Your greatness”.
 2. **Revelation**: “Reveal Yourself to me and show me Your glory as the King of kings”.
 3. **Keep the prophecy**: By responding in faith and obedience to the specific truth of Jesus as the King of kings. For example, pray, “I commit to proclaim who You are as the One who rules the nations. I will obey Your leadership. Help me to walk this out”.

VII. JESUS AS THE ONE WHO LOVED US AND MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS

- A. John views Jesus as the ideal eschatological Davidic king, whose death and resurrection resulted in His eternal kingship and in the kingship of His "beloved" saints.
⁵ ***To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever. (Rev. 1:5-6)***
- B. God loves us in the way that God loves God. The Father feels the same intensity of love for us as He feels for Jesus. The Father has delighted in Jesus from all eternity. This foundational truth equips us to enjoy God as our primary reward is to know and feel His affection for us.
⁹ ***As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. (Jn. 15:9)***
- C. Do you know the way you move God’s heart? When we know the King loves us, we are unmoved even when others overlook or mistreat us. Our great reward is to walk in the anointing to understand and feel God’s love.
- D. Jesus will govern the earth in partnership with resurrected saints (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Rom. 8:17).
⁴ ***I saw thrones, and they sat on them...and reigned with Christ for 1000 years...6 They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him 1000 years. (Rev. 20:4-6)***
- E. **A-R-K**: We apply the truths about Jesus in Revelation to our lives in three ways:
1. **Agreement**: Make declarations of agreement to Jesus as one who loves you. For example, pray, “Jesus, You are the one who loves me. I trust Your heart”.
 2. **Revelation**: “Reveal Yourself to me and show me Your glory as the one who loves me”.
 3. **Keep the prophecy**: By responding in faith to the truth of Jesus as one who loves me. Pray, “I receive Your love and return it because You love me like the Father loves You”.