

Grace and peace from the 7 spirits

Revelation 1:4

Peter Michell

Introduction

This is the blessing: *'Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne.'* Revelation 1:4

Sometimes you read a passage and 'see' something you haven't noticed before – this is a case in point for me. What do we know about these 7 spirits adding their blessing to the blessing of Jesus?

We get a lot of teaching and writing about Jesus – the One who was and who is and who is to come, and that is abundantly right. This study is about the little considered blessing of the 7 spirits who are with Jesus, before His throne.

Before the throne of Jesus are 7 spirits – each one reflecting and showing the very character of our Lord. This is Jesus who is coming, He is the beginning and the end, every eye will see Him when He comes in the clouds.

He comes to set up His Kingdom, He comes to rule on the earth.

The seven spirits give us an indication of aspects and character of His rulership when He comes.

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Chapter 1

Starting the search - Finding wisdom, pillars and spirits

To find wisdom we turn to Proverbs, written by Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel.

Solomon declares that *'wisdom is the principal thing,'* in chapter 4 verse 7. *'Therefore get wisdom and in all your getting get understanding.'* So this is a good place to start.

When Solomon became King of Israel he asked the Lord for an understanding heart so that he could judge God's people. The Lord was pleased that Solomon's request was not for things for himself. So, *'God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart, like the sand on the seashore.'* 1 Kings 3:9 and 4:29

We read of some examples of the wisdom of Solomon – probably the best known being found in Chapter 3 verses 16-28.

Two women dispute the motherhood of a child in unusual circumstances. These are two women, both of whom are harlots, who live together in the same house. Both women give birth 3 days apart. The child of the second to give birth dies in the night. The woman swaps the children over making it look like her child survived.

Unable to know which was the true mother Solomon orders the child to be cut in two and half given to each woman. However the true mother speaks out, *'O Lord give her the living child'* whilst the other woman said divide the child in two. Recognizing that the true mother cared for the life of her child Solomon awards the child to her. Solomon's wise judgement gave the child to the right mother. All Israel heard of the judgement and recognized that God was with Solomon to administer justice.

Wisdom builds her house

Proverbs chapter 9 tells us that wisdom has built her house with seven pillars. So in the next chapter we will consider the meaning of the seven pillars and the promises of wisdom to all who seek her.

(Solomon had great wisdom, however it seems that he didn't always apply that wisdom to his own life. We read in 1 Kings 11 that his many foreign wives turned his heart away from the Lord. Solomon built them 'high' places so they could worship foreign gods and he himself went after Ashtoreth and Milcom and more. Solomon did this even though God had instructed the Israelites not to intermarry with foreign women as they would surely turn their hearts away to foreign gods. Solomon disobeyed - not wise! So the message for us must be get wisdom and apply it to our lives!)

Turning to Isaiah, he tells us of 7 Spirits that rest upon Jesus the Branch in chapter 11:

'There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding. The Spirit of counsel and might. The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.' (verses 1-4)

From this passage we can identify the following spiritual characteristics:

Wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, fear of the Lord, judgement and righteousness

We are going to see how wisdom, pillars and spirits carry a common theme which will bring us the blessing of grace and peace.

In this and the following chapters the Hebrew and Greek is given along with the Strong's number.

Chapter 2

Wisdom and its 7 pillars

Remember the context of our study - wisdom is blessing us with grace and peace.

As wisdom is the principal thing it seems a good place to start our detailed study.

Hebrew 'chokmah' 2451 wisdom in a good sense.
Greek 'sophia' 4678 wisdom

We need a definition of wisdom. The Oxford English dictionary has, 'the quality of being wise.' Wise meaning, 'having or showing experience, knowledge and good judgement.'

Bullinger's Critical Greek English Lexicon has 'cleverness, skill, a right application of knowledge.' In Greek it is 'sophia' from which we get the girl's name Sophie.

We won't doubt that all the above definitions are good and true but I wasn't completely satisfied so I asked the Lord, 'What is the meaning of the word wisdom?' Sometimes one's prayers are quickly answered. The quick reply was, 'Wisdom is what I, the Lord, think is right.' With some knowledge of the Lord's character this seemed to me to be unquestionably and abundantly right.

Listen for wisdom

In Proverbs chapter 2 and verse 2 we have, *'Incline your ear to wisdom.'*

So we are being urged to listen in to the Lord. Jesus repeated this concept as recorded in Matthew 4. He was being tempted by the devil in the wilderness. Having fasted 40 days He was hungry, The devil challenged Him – *'if you are the Son of God, command these stones that they become bread.'* But Jesus was not compliant to the demand of the devil. He replied, *'It is written man shall not live on bread alone but on every word proceeding from the mouth of God.'*

(This is the rhema word of God - that is the word God is speaking now - present tense.)

It could be looked upon as one way of saying that the wise thing to do is to listen to God and do what He says.

Pray for wisdom

Then James urges us – *'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith (that is trusting), with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.'* (chapter 1 verses 5-6)

Pray and don't doubt - we can trust the scriptures

which invite and instruct us to pray. Our Lord God is good - it is His goodness that leads us to repentance. (Romans 2:4)

The earth was founded by wisdom.

The Lord possessed wisdom from the very beginning (Proverbs 8:22). By wisdom the Lord founded the earth (Proverbs 3:19). Everything we see in creation speaks of the wisdom of God.

We see Jesus in creation because, *'all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made,'* John 1:3

Paul, in Romans chapter 1 says that unbelievers have no excuse for not believing in God because, *'since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse.'* (verse 20) This is God's wisdom.

The promise of wisdom

'Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than profits of silver, and her gain more than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.

Length of days is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her.'
Proverbs 3:13-18.

Wisdom has been partnered with understanding and with knowledge which we will consider in following chapters.

For the moment we see in Proverbs 9 that wisdom has 7 pillars – so let's examine these for more enlightenment.

'Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars.' Proverbs 9:1

The dwelling place of wisdom (her house with 7 pillars)

Back to chapter 8 to find out about these 7 pillars that dwell with wisdom.

| Verse | Pillar | |
|-------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12 | 1 | 'I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge and discretion.' |
| 13 | 2 | 'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil' |
| 14 | 3 | 'Counsel is mine.' |
| | 4 | 'I am understanding' |
| | 5 | 'I have strength' (Might) |
| 20 | 6 | 'I traverse the ways of righteousness |
| 20 | 7 | 'in the midst of the paths of justice.' |

When we look at Isaiah we see a very similar outcome in Chapter 11.

Verse 2 has the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Verse 4 has righteousness and justice.

Having established that wisdom is the principal thing from Proverbs, and one of the 7 spirits from Isaiah, we can from these two accounts produce a list for the next 6 chapters.

We remember that the purpose of the study is to gain understanding of these 7 spirits who are sending their blessing and greeting along with our Lord and Saviour.

Wisdom, now discussed we will move on to.....

Counsel, then

Understanding

Righteousness

Justice

Might

Knowledge and fear of the Lord.

The spirit of wisdom is urging us on with her blessing of grace and peace.

Chapter 3

Counsel

Definition: Counsel in Isaiah 11:2 is 'etsah' with the meaning of, to advise, consult. Strong's 6098 (Greek equivalent is 'sumbouleuo' 4823 to give or take advice jointly.)

Jesus shows us the way.

He always took the advice of His Father. On His own admission He did what He saw the Father doing – He wasn't acting alone on His own initiative.

When counseled by the devil in Matthew 4 to do certain things to demonstrate that He is the Son of God and to receive kingdoms – that was to change stones to bread, cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and to receive all the kingdoms of the world by bowing to the devil in worship – Jesus response was, 'get behind me satan.' Jesus would not take counsel from the devil.

Really good lesson for us!

Our safe place is to take counsel from the Lord so that we can, like Jesus, do the works of the Father. And to refuse counsel from our enemy, the devil who would like to rob from us all the blessing the Lord intends for us.

Even in the very beginning when we get the account of creation we find God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit working together. Genesis 1:1 has *'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'* And the following verse has the Spirit of God hovering over the waters. In the middle of verse 1 are the Hebrew letters 'aleph' and 'tav' which have not been translated. In Greek that would be 'alpha' and 'omega,' One of the descriptions of Jesus. So although the Hebrew letters are not translated nevertheless there is Jesus right in the very centre of the creation account.

Colossians 1:16 confirms that all things were created by and for Jesus. John 1 verse 3 which also confirms the Jesus did the creating has already been quoted. So we see the trinity working together from the beginning.

Proverbs 11:14 *'Where there is no counsel the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.'* For the born again believer the 1st call should be to the Lord who promises that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth – that applies to every situation we find ourselves in. His counsel is far above every human offering!

'When the Spirit of truth has come He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me for He will take of what is mine and declare it to you.' John 16:13-14

When we saw wisdom and its 7 pillars, wisdom declared 'counsel is mine.'

Seeking counsel from others both believers and unbelievers requires discernment - sometimes people advise from their own thinking rather than from the leading of the Spirit.

False counsel

It is wise to seek good counsel from the Lord.

1 Kings 22 contains the account of King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah considering going to war with Syria.

Ahab is counselled by 400 'prophets,' who advise success. But Jehoshaphat is not convinced and asks for a prophet of the Lord so that they could enquire of Him. Micaiah is called and he advises Ahab that he will fall at Ramoth Gilead.

Jehosophat and Ahab follow the advice of the 400 false prophets. The word of the Lord through Micaiah comes to pass and Ahab died - such is the folly of following false counsel.

Seeking counsel

The issue of seeking counsel is to be undertaken with care.

First we seek the Lord Himself. Then there may be no need for further counsel.

Then, if the issue is still unclear, we can ask the Lord to show us where to seek counsel.

We should generally avoid worldly counsel as the objectives of the world are ungodly, not being of the same spirit.

All counsel we receive should pass the test of inner peace. (Not necessarily mental peace as counsel can sometimes be challenging.)

'Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.' Rule meaning being the decision maker. Colossians 3:15

No peace no do!

Let's remember the blessing - *'Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne.'*

Revelation 1:4

Seeking expertise

We are differentiating between counsel - that is wisdom, and gaining expertise, which we could call training. Everyone following a career trains in the specific skills required - usually in secular institutions - to acquire secular qualifications. That is right. Over and above secular training the Lord is able to bring to us specific understanding when we pray - even to the extent of revealing things no expert knows. I testify to having experienced this in my professional life.

Grace and peace from the spirit of counsel

The spirit of counsel sends his blessing along with the Lord Himself and the other 6 spirits -
Revelation 1:4

Counsel will bring us God's grace - that is expressly shown in Hebrews 4:16, '*come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*' When we seek God's counsel at His throne He will give mercy and grace.

Receiving mercy and grace will bring peace into whatever need we were experiencing.

The spirit of counsel is urging us on with his blessing.

Chapter 4

Understanding

Hebrew 'biynah' 998 from a root - to separate mentally, to distinguish.

Greek 'sunesis' 4097 to put together, to understand

Definition:

Oxford English Dictionary - 'perceive the intended meaning of words, perceive the significance, perceive the explanation.'

Bullingers English Greek concordance - 'intelligence, insight, cleverness as shown in quickness of apprehension, mental perception, reflective consciousness preceding an action.'

Solomon's advice was to '*incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding.*' Proverbs 2:2

He goes on to link understanding with discernment - '*Yes if you cry out for discernment*' (verse 3)

Applying one's heart

Apply is from the Hebrew 'natah' a prime root with the basic meaning to stretch out.

How do we stretch out our heart (the human heart referring to the human soul and human spirit together.) ?

The Apostle Paul gives us the answer when writing his second letter to Timothy:

'be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.' (2:15) and ...

'All scripture is given by inspiration of God (is God breathed) and is profitable for reproof, for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.' (3:16-17)

We stretch out our understanding by studying the scriptures. As we study we ask the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth. He does.

Aligning our understanding with the Lord

Jesus led the way – Jesus is the 'logos,' He is the full revelation of the Godhead in bodily form.

(Colossians 2:9) He knew the scripture inside out. He believed the scripture. He promised that the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth.

Bible study is very important. The bible covers all of time – showing how the Lord God manages His earth through every stage from beginning to end. His management, if you like what He expects of man, does vary over time. It varies greatly between the Law (Old Covenant) and the New Covenant – hence the need to rightly divide the word.

As we stretch out our understanding we take care to be rightly dividing the word – thus applying to ourselves the New Covenant in Jesus blood.

Now, in the New Covenant we don't apply jot and tittle of the Law because there is no justification in relying on keeping the Law rather - *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind and your neighbor as yourself.'* Do this Jesus says and in effect you keep the whole law.

The more we learn from bible study the more we will understand the ways of the Lord and His purposes.

Bible study can be a bit difficult at times - however we can call on the Holy Spirit to teach us the truth when we study.

As Paul said to Timothy in the scripture quoted above – the objective is that we should become fully equipped for every good work.

As Solomon said in Proverbs 2:3-6 – *'If you cry out for discernment and lift up your voice for understanding. If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.'*

The spirit of understanding blesses us with grace and peace and urges us on.

Chapter 5

Righteousness

Hebrew 'tsdaqah' - 6666 rightness.

Greek 'dikaiosune' - 1343 the character or quality of being right or just.

Righteousness is closely associated with belief – *'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'* Romans 4:3 The free gift of righteousness stands in complete opposition to the concept of being justified by our works.

Righteousness, that is right standing with the Lord, is His gift to us when we first believe in Him – when we are born again. We did not earn it, we did nothing to deserve it. None of our past actions in any way qualified us for the free gift. Neither did they disqualify us, for every sin of man is forgiven in the cleansing power of Jesus' blood. When we first believe we are put into right standing with the Lord.

From then on there is the constant work of the Holy Spirit changing us from one degree of glory to another so that our actions and our character become more and more conformed to His image. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Transferred

Right standing with God means we have been transferred from the position of not being in right standing. The scripture puts it like this:

'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life.' John 5:24

'But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.' 1 Peter 2:9

Wrong standing with God is death and darkness, right standing is life and light - we have been transferred, that is the gift of righteousness.

Faith - that is our trust, our belief in the effective sacrifice of Christ at Calvary - has brought us justification and put us into right standing with God. And so we stand in grace and enjoy peace with God.

'Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace, in which we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.'

Romans 5:1-2

Our right standing with God means we are welcome at His throne of grace to obtain mercy and to find grace to help in time of need. Our peace with God need not be disturbed by our circumstances!

One effect of being in right standing with the Lord, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is that bit by bit we find ourselves desiring more and more holiness in our thoughts, our desires, and our actions.

The spirit of righteousness blesses us with grace and peace and urges us on.

'Be holy for I am holy.' 1 Peter 1:16

Chapter 6

Justice, judgement

Hebrew 4941 'mishpat' - verdict, decree (Also a translation of 'tsdaqah' which we saw in the previous chapter.)

Greek 2919 'krino' -to distinguish judicially that which is right.

Justice is the fruit of right judgement. Jesus did not come to judge the world, but to save it. (John 12:47) Nevertheless when judgement was required He said,

'I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear I judge, and My judgement is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.' John 5:30.

No judgement for the believer

'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life.' John 5:24.

The judgement that should have fallen upon us fell instead on Jesus who took the penalty of all our sin. But this does not exempt unbelievers from judgement. Like us their sin was dealt with on the cross - making the way to salvation open.

But salvation depends on believing and trusting in the finished work of Jesus. The Holy Spirit witnesses the fact to all who will hear. Creation itself shows God's invisible attributes such that there is no excuse. Men prefer darkness because their deed are evil – righteous judgement must follow.

The final judgement is found in Revelation 20 where we see the great white throne in verses 11-15. All unbelievers are resurrected – death gives up all its captives. The books are opened and the dead judged according to their works – which are inadequate for salvation. These people are not entered in the book of life and their destiny is the lake of fire.

It may seem harsh to our human thinking – but every opportunity has been given. In effect every unbeliever has blasphemed, refused and spoken against the witness of the Holy Spirit who has been constantly witnessing. This is the unforgivable sin – judgement follows. Mark 3:28-9

Paul to Timothy puts it like this: 'Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal; The Lord knows those who are His, and let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honour and some for dishonour. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.'

1 Timothy 2:19-21

The spirit of justice blesses us with grace and peace because we have believed in Jesus and been born again. Jesus has taken the judgement that should have fallen on us and gifted us righteousness – right standing with God.

'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life.' John 5:24

For believers only their works come under judgement. Works done in the flesh - that is under our own steam are destroyed with fire. Works done in the Spirit of God endure the fire and we receive reward – read Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians chapter 3.

The spirit of justice urges us on knowing that we have been judged already, found guilty, and forgiven. We do not come under judgement again.

Chapter 7

Might

Isaiah 11:2 and Proverbs 8:14 (Strength)

Hebrew 1369 'g^ebuwrah ' force, mastery, might, strength, power.

Greek 1410 'dunamis' miraculous power, might, strength.

This is Jesus, - 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honour and glory and blessing.' Revelation 5:12

This is might – Paul's prayer: 'that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.' Ephesians 1:17-23

This might is the might with which the spirit of might adds his blessing to us. When we come into full revelation thereof we have grace and peace in abundance.

Paul has just told the Ephesians this is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us. And in chapter 3 verses 14 to 21 Paul is praying for them (and us) that we might be able, with all the saints, to comprehend these things. Paul concludes with this statement, *'Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.'*

A key element is Paul saying *'according to the power that works in us.'* The indwelling Holy Spirit is the power of God within – He has unlimited power which is released by faith.

'He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.'
1 John 4:4

Faith, we understand, comes by hearing God speak to us and not by us trying to generate it ourselves. When God speaks all the power of heaven is there ready to fulfill His word. *'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the (spoken or quickened) word of God.'*

Romans 10:17.

Faith comes no other way!

The might with which we are blessed enables us to stand in spiritual warfare, enables us to resist and overcome the evil forces arrayed against us, and empowers us to resist the devil and see him flee.

So the spirit of might sends his blessing of grace and peace, along with Jesus, urging us to go on in the strength and might of the Lord.

Chapter 8

Knowledge and fear of the Lord, conclusion, what it means for us.

Hebrew 'yirah' 3374 fear, reverence.

Greek "phobeo' 5399 fear, revere, reverence.

The conclusion

We could say the knowledge and fear of the Lord is to know who He is and to be in awe of Him.

When we consider all that has gone before we see a Lord and Master whose 7 spirits show us His eternal qualities:

Wisdom

Advice and counsel

Understanding

Righteousness

Judgement and justice

Might

All culminate in the seventh, the spirit of the knowledge and fear (awesome reverence) of the Lord.

Again Jesus shows us the way – when we read the gospels we see Jesus holding the Father in all reverence, not doing anything other than that which He saw the Father doing. Jesus would have preferred not to be crucified but such was His reverence for His Father He was able to say, *‘Not My will, but Yours be done.’* (Luke 22:42)

What it means for us

These 7 spirits who send their blessing of grace and peace are continually before Jesus throne. The context of Revelation 1:4 has Jesus and these 7 spirits sending their blessing of grace and peace to the 7 representative gatherings (ekklesia – churches) in Asia.

Clearly, and especially as the gatherings were not all the gatherings at that time but were representatives, this blessing of grace and peace is intended for the body of Christ for all time.

For us to live and work in the fruit of this blessing the attributes we will exhibit will be:

Wisdom

Advice and counsel

Understanding

Righteousness

Judgement and justice

Might

And the knowledge and fear of the Lord.

All these are ours and in increasing measure as the Holy Spirit continues His work of changing us from one degree of glory to another. 2 Corinthians 3:18

The very good news is that we can and should ask for more. We saw James saying *'if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given him.'* There is no doubt on God's part!

Our destiny

Our destiny is to become more and more like Jesus. Paul states - *'For whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.'* (Romans 8:29)

This too is the blessing of the 7 spirits - urging us to receive all these attributes of Jesus Christ for ourselves in increasing measure.

The more we abound in these characteristics the more we will enjoy God's grace and peace.

Jesus said, *'I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly.'* (John 10:10 - Jesus is speaking of His sheep - us, and contrasting His work for us to that of the thief.)

This is the blessing: *'Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne.'* Revelation 1:4

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