

# Prayer - Revelation 1:5, 6, Part 2

by A.W. Pink

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*The sermon emphasizes the love of Christ for His people, the appropriating nature of saving faith, and the exalted positions and privileges of Christians.*

**Scripture:** Revelation 1:5

**Topics:** "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "The Love of Christ"

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## Description

A.W. Pink emphasizes the profound love of Christ for His people, illustrated through His cleansing of sins by His blood and the dignities He bestows upon them. He highlights the essential role of the Holy Spirit, who regenerates believers and imparts faith, enabling them to truly appreciate Christ's love. Pink explains that saving faith is not based on feelings but on the objective truth of the Gospel, which assures believers of their standing before God. He also discusses the royal and priestly privileges of Christians, affirming that all believers share in these dignities and are called to exercise moral dominion over sin. Ultimately, Pink concludes with a doxology, ascribing glory and dominion to Christ for His redemptive work.

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## Transcript

Two evidences of the love of Christ for His people are mentioned in this prayer: His cleansing of them from their sins by His own blood, and His enriching of them by the dignities He bestows upon them. But there is also a third expression and manifestation of His love that, though not distinctly expressed, is necessarily implied here, namely, His provision for them. As the result of the work that His love prompted Him to perform on their behalf, He meritoriously secured the Holy Spirit for His people (Acts 2:33). Christ therefore sends the Holy Spirit to regenerate them, to take of the things of Christ and show the same to them (John 16:14, 15), to impart an experiential and saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and to produce faith in their hearts so that they believe on Him to everlasting life. I say that all of this is necessarily implied, for only by these realities are they enabled truly and feelingly to exclaim "unto him that loved us," yea, so that each of them may aver that this Christ the Son of God "loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). This is the quintessence of real blessedness: to be assured by the Spirit from the Word that I am an object of Christ's infinite and immutable love. The knowledge thereof makes Him "altogether lovely" in my esteem (Song. of Solomon 5:16), rejoices my soul, and sanctifies my affections.

By Saving Faith, One Looks Outside Oneself to Christ

See here the appropriating nature of saving faith. It takes hold of Christ and His sacrifice for sinners as made known in the Word of truth. It says, Here is a love letter from heaven about the glorious Gospel of

the Son of God, which gives an account of Christ's love and the strongest and greatest possible proofs thereof. I see that this letter is for me, for it is addressed to sinners, yea, to the very chief of sinners. It both invites and commands me to receive this Divine Lover to myself and to believe unfeignedly in the sufficiency of His atoning blood for my sins. Therefore I take Him as He is freely proffered by the Gospel, and rely on His own word: "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). This faith comes not by feelings of my love to Christ, but by the hearing of His love for sinners (Rom. 5:8; 10:17). True, the Holy Spirit, in the day of His power, makes impressions on the heart by the Word. Yet the ground of faith is not those impressions, but the Gospel itself. The Object of faith is not Christ working on the heart and softening it, but rather Christ as He is presented to our acceptance in the Word. What we are called upon to hear is not Christ speaking secretly within us, but Christ speaking openly, objectively, without us.

### The Blessed Fruits of Saving Faith

A most dreadful curse is pronounced upon all who "love not the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 16:22). Solemn indeed is it to realize that that curse rests upon the vast majority of our fellows, even in those countries that are reputed to be Christian. But why does any sinner love Christ? One can only do so because he believes in the love of Christ toward sinners. He perceives the wonder and preciousness thereof; for "faith... worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6), even by the love of Christ manifested toward us. It receives or takes His love to the heart. Then it works peace in the conscience, gives conscious access to God (Eph. 3:12), stirs up joy in Him, and promotes communion with and conformity to Him. That faith, implanted by the Holy Spirit, that works by love--the reflex of our apprehension and appropriation of Christ's love--slays our enmity against God, and causes us to delight in His Law (Rom. 7:22). Such faith knows, on the authority of the Word of God, that our sins--which were the cause of our separation and alienation from Him--have been washed away by the atoning blood of Christ. How inexpressibly blessed it is to know that in the fullness of time Christ appeared "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26) and that God says of all believers, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10:17).

On our trust in the Divine testimonies of the Gospel depends, to a large extent, both our practical holiness and our comfort. Our love to Christ and adoration of Him will grow or diminish in proportion to our faith in the Person and work of Christ. Where there is a personal assurance of His love, there cannot but be a joining with the saints in heaven in praising Christ for washing us from our sins (Rev. 5:9, 10). But many will object, "I still have so much sin in me; and it so often gets the mastery over me, that I dare not cherish the assurance that Christ has washed me from my sins." If that be your case, I ask, Do you mourn over your corruptions, and earnestly desire to be forever rid of them? If so, that is proof that you are entitled to rejoice in Christ's atoning blood. God sees fit to leave sin in you, that in this life you may be kept humble before Him and marvel the more at His longsuffering. It is His appointment that the Lamb should now be eaten "with bitter herbs" (Ex. 12:8). This world is not the place of your rest. God suffers you to be harassed by your lusts, that you may look forward more eagerly to the deliverance and rest awaiting you. Though Romans 7:14-25 accurately describes your present experience, Romans 8:1 also declares, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"!

### The Exalted Positions and Privileges Enjoyed by Christians by Virtue of Union with Christ

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." Here is the third inspiring reason for the ascription that follows. Having owned the indebtedness of the saints to the Savior's love and sacrifice, the Apostle John now celebrates, in the language of "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Rev. 5:10; Heb. 5:10), the high dignities that He has conferred upon them. We who are children of the most High, in due

measure, are made partakers of the honors of Him who is both the King of kings and our great High Priest; and the apprehension of this fact evokes a song of praise to Him. As we realize that the Lord Jesus shares His own honors with His redeemed, conferring upon them both regal dignity and priestly nearness to God, we cannot but exultantly exclaim, "To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." We were virtually made kings and priests when He contracted to fulfill the terms of the everlasting covenant, for by that engagement we were constituted such. By purchase we were made kings and priests when He paid the price of our redemption, for it was by His merits that He purchased these privileges for us. Federally we were made so when He ascended on high (Eph. 4:8; 2:6) and entered within the veil as our Forerunner (Heb. 6:19, 20). Actually we were made so at our regeneration, when we became participants in His anointing.

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God." Here we have the Redeemer exalting and ennobling His redeemed. This presupposes and follows upon our pardon, and is the positive result of Christ's meritorious obedience to God's Law (without which He could not have died in the place of sinners). The One who loved us has not only removed our defilements but has also restored us to the Divine favor and fellowship. Furthermore, he has secured for us a glorious reward; He took our place that we might share His. In order that we may be protected from certain insidious errors, which have brought not a few of God's children into bondage, it is important to perceive that these designations belong not merely to a very select and advanced class of Christians, but equally to all believers. It is also necessary, lest we be robbed by Dispensationalism, that we realize that these dignities pertain to us now. They are not postponed until our arrival in heaven, and still less till the dawn of the millennium. Every saint has these two honors conferred on him at once: he is a regal priest, and a priestly monarch. Herein we see the dignity and nobility of the Lord's people. The world looks upon us as mean and contemptible, but He speaks of us as "the excellent, in whom is all my delight" (Ps. 16:3).

When Paul states in 2 Corinthians 1:21 that God "stablisheth us... in Christ, and hath anointed us," (ital. mine) he is implying that God has made us kings and priests; for the word anointed is expressive of dignity. Kings and priests were anointed when inaugurated in their offices. Therefore when it is said that God has anointed all who are in Christ Jesus, it intimates that He has qualified and authorized them to the discharge of these high offices. In drawing a sharp contrast between true believers and false brethren and false teachers, the Apostle John says, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One. ...But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you" (1 John 2:20, 27). We have a participation in Christ's anointing (Acts 10:38), receiving the same Spirit wherewith He was anointed (a beautiful type of Christ's anointing is set forth in Ps. 133:2). The blessedness of the elect appears in that they are made both kings and priests by virtue of the Name in which they are presented before God. They who "receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17, ital. mine). Though in all things Christ has the preeminence, being "the King of kings"--for He has been "anointed... with the oil of gladness above thy [His] fellows" (Ps. 45:7, ital. and brackets mine)--yet His companions are invested with royalty; and "as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17, ital. mine). Oh, for faith to appropriate that fact, and for grace to conduct ourselves accordingly!

Apparently there is a designed contrast between the two expressions, "the kings of the earth" and "hath made us kings and priests unto God." They are kings naturally, we spiritually; they unto men, we unto God. They are merely kings, but we are both kings and priests. The dominion of earthly monarchs is but fleeting; their regal glory quickly fades. Even the glory of Solomon, which surpassed that of all the kings of the earth, was but of brief duration. But we shall be co-regents with a King the foundation of whose throne

(Rev. 3:2 1) is indestructible, whose scepter is everlasting, and whose dominion is universal (Matthew 28:18; Rev. 21:7). We shall be clothed with immortality and vested with a glory that shall never be dimmed. Believers are kings, not in the sense that they take any part in heaven's rule over the earth, but as sharers in their Lord's triumph over Satan, sin, and the world. In that Christians are also distinguished from the angels. For they are not kings, nor will they ever reign, for they are not anointed. They have no union with the incarnate Son of God, and therefore they are not "joint-heirs with Christ" as the redeemed are (Rom. 8:17). So far from it, they are all "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). A subordinate place and a subservient task is theirs!

#### The Moral Dominion Exercised by the Christian

Christ has not only done a great work for His people, but He accomplishes a grand work in them. He not only washes them from their sins, which He hates, but He also transforms by His power their persons, which He loves. He does not leave them as He first finds them--under the dominion of Satan, sin, and the world. No, but He makes them kings. A king is one who is called to rule, who is invested with authority, and who exercises dominion; and so do believers over their enemies. True, some of the subjects we are called to rule are both strong and turbulent, yet we are "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). The Christian is "a king, against whom there is no rising up" (Prov. 30:31). Though he may often be overcome in his person, yet he shall never be overcome in his cause. There is still a law in his members warring against the law of his mind (Rom. 8:23), yet sin shall not have dominion over him (Rom. 6:14). Once the world kept him in bondage, presuming to dictate his conduct, so that he was afraid to defy its customs and ashamed to ignore its maxims. But "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). By God's gracious gift of faith, we are enabled to seek our portion and enjoyment in things above. Note well the words of Thomas Manton on this subject:

King is a name of honour, power, and ample possession. Here we reign spiritually, as we vanquish the devil, the world, and the flesh in any measure. It is a princely thing to be above those inferior things and to trample them under our feet in a holy and heavenly pride. A heathen could say, "He is a king that fears nothing and desires nothing." He that is above the hopes and fears of the world, he that hath his heart in heaven and is above temporal trifles, the ups and downs of the world, the world beneath his affections; this man is of a kingly spirit. Christ's kingdom is not of this world, neither is a believer's. "Thou... hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10), namely, in a spiritual way. It is a beastly thing to serve our lusts, but kingly to have our conversation in heaven and vanquish the world--to live up to our faith and love with a noble spirit. Hereafter we shall reign visibly and gloriously when we shall sit upon thrones with Christ.

The saints will yet judge the world, yea, and angels also (1 Cor. 6:2, 3).

#### The Superiority of Self-Government over Secular Rule

The work that is assigned to the Christian as a king is to govern himself. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32, ital. mine). As a king the Christian is called on to mortify his own flesh, to resist the devil, to discipline his temper, to subdue his lusts, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). That is a lifelong task. Nor can the Christian accomplish it in his own strength. It is his duty to seek enablement from above, and to draw upon the fullness of grace that is available for him in Christ. The heart is his kingdom (Prov.

4:23); and it is his responsibility to make reason and conscience, both formed by God's Word, to govern his desires so that his will is subject to God. He is required to be the master of his appetites and the regulator of his affections, to deny ungodly and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. He is to be "temperate in all things" (1 Cor. 9:25). He is to subdue his impetuosity and impatience, to refuse to take revenge when others wrong him, to bridle his passions, to "overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21), and to have such control of himself that he "rejoice[s] with trembling" (Ps. 2:11, brackets mine). He is to learn contentment in every state or condition of life that God in His wise and good providence may be pleased to put him (Phil. 4:11).

Some earthly monarchs have not a few faithless and unruly subjects who envy and hate them, who chafe under their scepter, and who want to depose them. Nevertheless, they still maintain their thrones. In like manner, the Christian king has many rebellious lusts and traitorous dispositions that oppose and continually resist his rule, yet he must seek grace to restrain them. Instead of expecting defeat, it is his privilege to be assured, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). The Apostle Paul was exercising his royal office when he declared, "all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. 6:12). Therein he has left us an example (1 Cor. 11:1). He was also conducting himself as a king when he said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. 9:27). Yet, like everything else in this life, the exercise of our regal office is very imperfect. Not yet have we fully entered into our royal honors or acted out our royal dignity. Not yet have we received the crown, or sat down with Christ on His throne, which ceremonies of coronation are essential for the complete manifestation of our kingship. Yet the crown is laid up for us, a mansion (infinitely surpassing Buckingham Palace) is being prepared for us, and this promise is ours: "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20).

#### The Sacerdotal Privileges and Duties of the Believer

Following my usual custom, I have endeavored to supply the most help where the commentators and other expositors afford the least. Having sought to explain at some length the kingly office of the believer, less needs to be said upon the sacerdotal office. A priest is one who is given a place of nearness to God, who has access to Him, who holds holy intercourse with Him. It is his privilege to be admitted into the Father's presence and to be given special tokens of His favor. He has a Divine service to perform. His office is one of high honor and dignity (Heb. 5:4, 5). However, it pertains to no ecclesiastical hierarchy, but is common to all believers. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." Christians are "an holy priesthood" ordained "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5, 9). They are worshipers of the Divine majesty, and bring with them a sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15). "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth" (Mal. 2:7). As priests they are to be intercessors for all men, especially for kings and for all that are in authority (1 Tim. 2:1, 2). But the full and perfect exercise of our priesthood lies in the future, when, rid of sin and carnal fears, we shall see God face to face and worship Him uninterruptedly.

#### A Fitting Doxology Based on Who Christ Is and What He Has Done

"To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." This is an act of worship, an ascription of praise, a breathing of adoration to the Redeemer from the hearts of the redeemed. Christians vary a great deal in their capacities and attainments, and they differ in many minor views and practices. But they all unite with the apostle in this. All Christians have substantially the same views of Christ and the same love for Him.. Wherever the Gospel has been savingly apprehended, it cannot but produce this effect. First there is a

devout acknowledgment of what the Lord Jesus has done for us, and then a doxology rendered to Him. As we contemplate who it was that loved us--not a fellow mortal, but the everlasting God-- we cannot but prostrate ourselves before Him in worship. As we consider what He did for us--shed His precious blood--our hearts are drawn out in love to Him. As we realize how He has bestowed such marvelous dignities upon us--made us kings and priests--we cannot but cast our crowns at His feet (Rev. 4:10). Where such sentiments truly possess the soul, Christ will be accorded the throne of our hearts. Our deepest longing will be to please Him and to live to His glory.

"To him be glory." This is a word that signifies (1) visible brightness or splendor, or (2) an excellence of character that places a person (or thing) in a position of good reputation, honor, and praise. The "glory of God" denotes primarily the excellence of the Divine being and the perfections of His character. The "glory of Christ" comprehends His essential Deity, the moral perfections of His humanity, and the high worth of all His offices. Secondly, the physical manifestations of the glory of Jehovah (Ex. 3:2-6; 13:2 1, 22) and of His Anointed (Matthew 17:1-9) are derived from the great holiness of the triune God (Ex. 20:18, 19; 33:17-23; Judges 13:22; 1 Tim. 6:16). Christ has an intrinsic glory as God the Son (John 17:5). He has an official glory as the God-man Mediator (Heb. 2:9). He has a merited glory as the reward of His work, and this He shares with His redeemed (John 17:5). In our text glory is ascribed to Him for each of the following reasons. Christ is here magnified both for the underived excellence of His Person that exalts Him infinitely above all creatures and for His acquired glory that will yet be displayed before an assembled universe. There is a glory that exalts Him infinitely above all creatures and for His acquired glory as the Redeemer that will yet be displayed before an assembled universe. There is a glory pertaining to Him as God incarnate, and this was proclaimed by the angels over the plains of Bethlehem (Luke 2:14). There is a glory belonging to Him in consequence of His mediatorial office and work, and that can be appropriately celebrated only by the redeemed.

"And dominion." This, too, belongs to Him first by right as the eternal God. As such Christ's dominion is underived and supreme. As such He has absolute sovereignty over all creatures, the devil himself being under His sway. Furthermore, universal dominion is also His by merit. God has made "that same Jesus," whom men crucified, "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). All authority is given to Him both in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18). It was promised Him in the everlasting covenant as the reward of His great undertaking. The mediatorial kingdom of Christ is founded upon His sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection. These dignities of His are "for ever and ever," for "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:7; cf. Dan. 7:13, 14). By a faithful "Amen" let us set our seal to the truthfulness of God's declaration.

How blessed is this, that before any announcement is made of the awful judgments described in the Apocalypse, before a trumpet of doom is sounded, before a vial of God's wrath is poured on the earth, the saints (by John's inspired benediction) are first heard lauding in song the Lamb:

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests [not unto ourselves, but] unto God and his Father [for his honor]; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!

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