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COMING: THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CONSUMMATION IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

SEIZO WAGATSUMA
Chair, Theology Department
Saniku Gakuin College
Japan

Christians, especially Adventists, tend to be Christocentric and neglect the theocentric. They emphasize the work of Christ and His second coming, but often forget or never think of those of God the Father. In fact, the role of Christ was to be the messenger or mediator of the covenant between God and His people (Mal 3:1; Heb. 8:6), and to lead every one to God, His “Father and their Father” (John 17:6; 20:17), as well as to Himself (John 12:32; 14:6; cf. Matt 11:28).

Most commentators on the book of Revelation lose sight of its theocentricity. The thinking of most Christians today tends to stop merely at Jesus Christ, but He tries to lead people’s minds toward the Father also.

In studying the book of Revelation, we need to think of the roles of both Christ and His Father, and see the relationship that exists between the theocentric and the Christocentric. The meaning of the name, Jesus, which Joseph was told in a dream by an angel of the Lord to give to the Christ child, is that the Lord saves His people from their sins. Sin means a separation of men from God the Creator, while salvation means reconciliation, the restoration and sealing of the relationship between men and God. At the eschaton God will at last be worshiped by all of His creatures, especially by men whom He created in His image. The blotting out of sins from the universe and the reestablishment of the relationship between God the Creator and human beings are far more important matters on which to focus than various eschatological events or other matters, such as the signs of the last days or even the second coming of Jesus.

The purpose of this paper is to give theological consideration, by means of an exegesis of Rev 1:4-8, to the coming of God the Father as the eschatological consummation presented in the book of Revelation.

The One Who Is to Come—*Ho Erchomenos*

Exegesis of Rev 1:4,8 Focusing on *Ho Erchomenos*

The Greek phrase, *ho erchomenos*, is a part of the descriptive title, “him who is, and who was, and who is to come,” which is found only in the book of Revelation (1:4,8; 4:8).¹ From the context of Rev 1:4,5, it seems evident that this phrase refers to God the Father, for in the following clauses the divine Spirit and Jesus Christ are pointed out successively as persons distinct from this One. In Rev 1:8, this phrase, paralleled with “the Almighty,” *ho pantocrator*, is used in apposition with “the Lord God” (NIV), *kurios ho theos*. In Rev 4:8, the phrase is in apposition to “the Lord God Almighty” (NIV), *ho theos ho pantocrator*. Therefore, this phrase is a special description of God the Father in the book of Revelation. *Ho erchomenos* is part of the name for God the Father who sits on the throne in heaven, while Jesus Christ is described as the Lamb who had been slain and stands beside the throne.

The phrase “who is to come” (*ho erchomenos*) is used in an unusual way, not only in its grammatical usage related to *apo*, but also in its attribution to God, being compared with its idiomatic usage. Grammatically, the expression “who is to come” has not been found as a description of God in Jewish or Greek literature. *Ho erchomenos*, literally “the one who is coming,” is a futuristic use of the present participle, because the previous two phrases of the series, “who is, and who was,” clearly point to the present tense and the past, respectively.

The description of God as he “who is, and who was, and who is to come” is considered by some scholars to be an adaptation of the name of God made known to Moses at the burning bush in Exod 3:14. The LXX there renders “I am who I am” as “I am who is” (*egō eimi ho ōn*). According to G. R. Beasley-Murray, the Jerusalem Targum “expanded this to ‘I am he who is and who will be’; but in its comment on Deut 32:29 it is reproduced as ‘I am he who is, and who was, and I am who will be.’”² Similar definitions of God in terms of time were known in the ancient Greek world. Robert Mounce informs us that the shrine of Minerva at Sais provides the inscription, “I am all that hath been and is and shall be.”³ We may also

¹This title is normally rendered in this paper according to the New International Version rendition of 1:4,8. The first two elements are reversed in 4:8.

²G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, softback ed., New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1981), 54.

³Plutarch *De Isid.* 9, quoted in Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 68.

read in the song of the doves at Dodona of "Zeus who was, Zeus who is, and Zeus who will be."¹ Therefore, a reader with a background in Jewish or Greek concepts of God might expect the third element of the title "who is and who was and who is to come" to be "who will be." God, in the book of Revelation, however, is not simply One who will *be* but One who will *come*.

The writer of Revelation deliberately modifies the divine name "with a definite reference to the contexts of the Book," to His eternal existence, and especially "to the coming."² Instead of defining God in simple terms of time, John gives a twist to the name which no Jew apparently thought of and no Greek was capable of imagining. Such a paraphrase of the divine name could be done only by the heavenly creatures who praise God day and night saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come" (Rev 4:8 RSV), or by such a person as John, who vividly saw God and received "things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1). God not only transcends the ages and is an eternal immanence, especially as seen in Immanuel (Matt 1:23; cf. John 1:14), but also He will come to us.

Ho Erchomenos and Its Theological Meaning

As we have seen, in Rev 1:4,8; 4:8, God the Father is called the One who is coming. According to these texts it seems that not merely Jesus Christ, but also God the Father, will come at the eschatological time. In the declaration, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, . . . and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God," Rev 21:3 provides even more convincing evidence that the Father is coming. Regarding the holy city in the new earth, 22:3 adds, "But the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it." Thus, God the Father, as well as the Lamb, will come to earth after the millennium described in chap. 20.

Some may say that God's coming is spiritual. In a sense this is true until His throne is literally established in the new earth. God has always been abiding in the past and present with His people, as implied by the words in 4:8 (NIV), "who was and is." His existence is eternal. He is the transcendent and yet immanent God. This is especially true in Jesus Christ, who was called "Immanuel," "God with us" (Matt 12:3). Jesus Himself declared to Philip, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9; cf. 12:45). In the life of Jesus Christ we continually see the Father spiritually. Thus God has come to us in Jesus Christ.

In the eschatological time, however, God's existence with His people will be fully realized in His actual coming, since He is called *ho erchomenos*, the One who is to come. The evidence of the usage of *ho erchomenos* indicates that John uses

¹Pausanias 10.12, quoted in Mounce, 68.

²R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920), 1:10.

it with a definite reference to the contents of the book,¹ and especially to the eschatological coming of God.

In order to fit with NT theology, the writer modifies the traditional name of God used in the OT and in other cultures. Thus, the physical reality of God will be consummated with God's actual coming to and dwelling with His people, so that in a real sense God will be worshiped at last as the source of every blessing. In fact, His people "shall see his face" (Rev 22:4). Indeed, His name expresses not merely His eternity but His coming.

It is of interest in this connection to notice Rev 11:17. In this passage, God is called, "Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was" (NIV). In almost all Greek manuscripts, *ho erchomenos* does not appear. This is no doubt because God's coming is no longer in the future:² "Thou hast taken thy great power and begun to reign" (v. 17 RSV). Thus, in the eschatological time, God's existence with His people will be fully realized in His actual coming to reign in their midst.

Theocentric and Christocentric Teaching in the New Testament

Many commentators on the book of Revelation lose sight of its theocentricity, and the thinking of many Christians today tends to stop merely at Jesus Christ, while Christ tries to lead people's minds toward both Himself and the Father. In studying the book, we need to think of the roles of both Christ and God Himself, seeing the relationship that exists between the theocentric and Christocentric.

In the Books Attributed to John

The book of Revelation was given by God to Jesus Christ (1:1). All the information given in the book originated with God Himself. It was given to Christ, so that He might show His servants what must shortly happen. Jesus gave the message to John as a revelation by sending His angel (1:1).

The role of Christ is central in the book of Revelation. Rev 1:1 says that the book is "the revelation of Jesus Christ," so the importance of its Christocentrism cannot be denied. However, what should be noted in this book is that the authority of God the Father can always be observed behind Jesus Christ. It is God the Father who sits on the throne³ and is called "the Almighty."⁴ The ultimate source of "the revelation of Jesus Christ" is God.

God's activity in the Revelation is remarkably pictured. The word "God," which clearly denotes God the Father, is used 98 times in the book, while the

¹Charles, 1:10.

²Cf. Charles, 1:295.

³Rev 1:4; 4:2,9-10; 5:1,7,13; 6:16; 7:10,15; 12:5; 14:5; 19:4; 21:5; 22:1,3.

⁴Rev 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7,14; 19:6,15; 21:22.

words which denote Jesus are used only half as many times—49 times: “Jesus” is used 7 times; “the Son,” 3 times; “Christ,” 4 times; “Jesus Christ,” 7 times; and “the Lamb,” 28 times. Though Jesus Christ carries out the primary active role in the history of salvation, the central issue is to worship God (19:10; 22:3,9; cf. 14:7). Christ’s redemptive work has the goal of bringing this world back to God, who is to be the center of worship for all creatures. Rev 14:6-7 calls all to worship God as the source or all things:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

The “new song” for Jesus Christ in 5:9-10 also indicates the theocentric focus of redemption:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Jesus Christ is praised because He has redeemed us to God by His blood and has made us kings and priests unto our God. The role of Christ was to lead people to God, His Father and their Father (cf. John 20:17). This portrayal in anthem form may be compared with statements in Jesus’ prayer recorded in John 17, where Christ repeatedly mentioned His earthly role with respect to His Father: “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (v. 4); “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me” (v. 6); “I have given them thy word” (v. 14); and “I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it” (v. 26).

Jesus took a place of subordination to God the Father (John 14:28).¹ He came to reveal the Father by doing the Father’s will, working the Father’s works, and speaking the Father’s words (John 5:19-23,30,36; 6:38; 7:16; 8:29; 12:49; 14:9-10,24,31; 15:10; 17:4,26). Christ’s subordinate role highlights the theocentricity of NT theology.

There are further references to Christ’s role in the Fourth Gospel. Jesus declares to the Samaritan woman in 4:23, “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” Thus, in the Fourth Gospel we see that Jesus always shifts the emphasis from Himself to His Father. This can be further noticed in the following passages:

¹Cf. 1 Cor 15:24-28; Phil 2:5-7; Heb 2:9.

1. John 3:16-17 (RSV): "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. . . . For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." God's supreme love in sending Jesus Christ and saving the world is here emphasized.

2. John 12:44-45: "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me." Jesus directs people's attention to the Father.

3. John 16:23: "Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Jesus Christ also guided His disciples to pray to the Father, not to Him.

4. John 16:26b-27 (RSV): "I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loves you." Jesus emphasized that prayers are answered not merely because of Christ's petition but because of the Father's own love.

5. John 20:17: "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Even after His resurrection, Christ pointed His disciples to the Father.

As seen above, Jesus Christ was continually showing the Father to His disciples (cf. 14:7-11). Thus, Jesus taught that believers should not confine their thinking to Himself alone. Rather their thinking should proceed on to the Father, who sent Him.

However, the theocentricity of Revelation cannot be realized apart from its Christocentricity. Christ is the only being "worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof" (Rev 5:2). The fact that Christ "prevailed to open the book" (v. 5) means that He is the conqueror in the controversy with evil. He alone is worthy to open the scroll of destiny, and both to reveal and to carry out the final dissolution of all forces set in opposition to the eternal kingdom of God.¹ He is thus the key Person to carry out God's plan of salvation.

Christ and the Father are one (John 10:30). He was sent by the Father (17:18), and He speaks the words and does the works of the Father (14:10). Indeed, God the Father "has given all things into his hand" (3:35 RSV). All power is given to Him by the Father (17:2; cf. Matt 28:18). "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them," even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (5:21-22). Jesus glorified the Father and asked to be glorified by Him (17:4-5). He went to the Father to prepare a place for His disciples (14:2-3,12). He is the only One who truly knows the Father. No one comes to the Father but by Him (14:6). To know Him is to know the Father (14:7). He is in fact the only-begotten Son, who stands in a unique relationship to the Father (1:18; 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10).

Because of this special relationship to the Father, Jesus Christ is glorified by John. In Rev 1:5-6, John says in his greeting to the seven churches,

¹See Mounce, 144.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The praising voices of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, were heard in John's vision saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (5:12).

The glory of Christ is repeatedly revealed in the Revelation: in the exalted vision of Jesus (1:13-20); in John's greeting to the seven churches (1:5-6); and in the vision of the Lamb "as though it had been slain" (5:6 [RSV], 9-13). But it is very important to note that this emphasis on Christ does not stop with Him. Rather it proceeds on to praise God as well. Christocentricity is one facet of theocentricity.

In the Chiastic Structure of the Book of Revelation

The chiastic structure of the book of Revelation, which is suggested by Kenneth A. Strand¹ and modified somewhat in this paper, vividly reveals the relationship between theocentricity and Christocentricity (see figure 1). In the prologue, both God (1:4,8) and Christ (1:7) are denoted as coming Ones. God is the ultimate source of everything; however, it is through Christ that one receives "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants" (1:1).

In the A section of figure 1, "Church in Present Earth," the account starts with the vision of Jesus Christ walking among His churches on earth in 1:9-20, and ends with a foretaste of the throne in heaven (3:21). At the same time that Jesus reveals Himself as walking among the churches on earth (2:1), He claims to sit on the throne with the Father (3:21), who is ruling as the creator of the whole universe (4:8-11).

Then, in section B, God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ (chaps. 4-5) is shown to end with God's wiping away every tear (7:17).

The following two sections, C(a)+C(b) and C(a)'+C(b)', start with visions of the heavenly sanctuary (8:3-5 and 15:5-8) where Jesus Christ, as the High Priest, serves before the throne, and ends with the bringing of glory to God the Almighty by the saints as they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb (15:3-4 and 19:1-8).

¹Kenneth A. Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation: Hermeneutical Guidelines, with Brief Introduction to Literary Analysis*, 2d ed. (Naples, FL: Ann Arbor, 1979), 51-52.

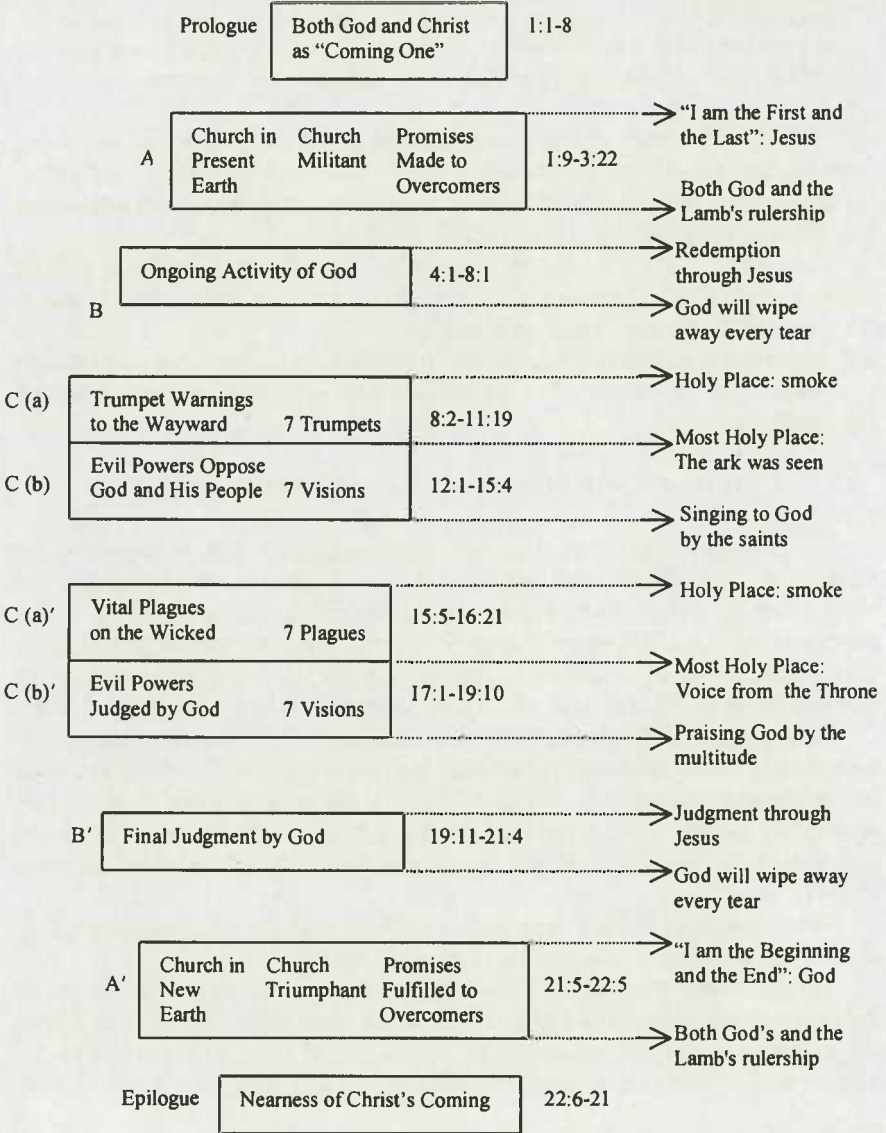


Fig. 1. Chiasmatic structure of the book of Revelation. See Strand, 52. In this chart there are several suggested modifications with respect to chapters and verses.

God, who works through Jesus Christ, is praised by all as the final outcome of salvation history.

The next section, B', starts with the judgment through Jesus (19:11-16) and results in God's wiping away every tear (21:1-4), parallel to section B (5:1-8:1).

Next, in section A', we can hear the voice of God say, "Behold, I make all things new"; "Write: for these words are true and faithful"; "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (21:5,6). It is interesting to note that in the parallel section, A, Jesus Christ, not God the Father, appears and says, "I am the First and the Last"; "I hold the keys of death and Hades"; "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now, and what will take place later" (1:17,18,19 NIV). While section A ends with reference to the sovereign rulership of God the Father on His throne, with Christ seated with Him (3:21), in section A', God's sovereignty is more clearly depicted and actualized (22:3-4). Thus, in the eschatological time, the Father's sovereign rulership will be ultimately and fully revealed.

In section A', God Himself declares, "it is done" (21:6); the final establishment of the kingdom of God is accomplished and the new Jerusalem in the New Earth, that is, "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb" (21:9 RSV), is well depicted. This kingdom is called the kingdom "of our Lord" and, at the same time, "of his Christ" (11:15). "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it" (22:3). Therefore, in the closing vision, God and the Lamb are united as co-rulers of their kingdom and the source of its blessings. It is especially noteworthy that John depicts the throne of God and the Lamb as the source of the river of the water of life in the city, thereby conveying the notion of a single throne, a single rule (cf. 3:21), and a single source of life. He adds, "His servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads" (22:3-4 RSV).

Beasley-Murray points out that in this context it is difficult to interpret the pronoun "his" as meaning anything other than "God and the Lamb as the unity."¹ This notion is very interesting, but there should still be a careful attitude in order to understand well this unity and singleness.²

"Worship God," said the angel who was sent to give the message of the revelation to John (Rev 19:10; 22:9). We need to know that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as the eternal, incarnated Savior, wants us to worship God the Father. If we give homage to Christ, we naturally worship the Father. Especially, in the end, we, together with our Lord Jesus Christ, will be bound to God the Father in unity. In fact, both God and the Lamb are repeatedly praised in the book of Revelation (5:13; 7:9-11; 11:15; 12:10; 14:4; cf. 15:3), but the worship is called for only for

¹Beasley-Murray, 25.

²According to 1 Cor 15:24-28, at the end, when all things shall be subdued unto Jesus Christ—Christocentricity—"then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him"; He then "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father," "that God may be all in all"—theocentricity.

God, though in this calling for the worship of God, Christ's role is indispensable. Thus, through Christocentricity, theocentricity is realized at the end of salvation history, at His coming.

In Other New Testament Passages

It should be noticed that every NT writer expresses theocentric teaching. The apostle Peter, for example, says, "your faith and hope are in God" (1 Pet 1:21). It is God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Acts 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 1 Pet 1:3) and sent Him to us to bless us in turning every one of us from our wickedness (Acts 3:20,26). God anointed Jesus (12:38), glorified Him (3:13), exalted Him (5:31), and ordained Him to be judge (10:42). God's authority is indeed behind Christ Jesus in everything.

In writing that God "glorified his servant Jesus" (3:13; cf. v. 26; 4:27), Peter even dares to call Jesus God's "servant." The parables of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), the wicked tenants (Matt 21:33-44; Mark 12:1-12), or the wedding garment (Matt 22:1-14) are also good illustrations of theocentric teaching. The father or the key figure in those parables represents God the Father.

The apostle Paul, who wrote more than half of the NT, also strongly supports theocentricity. In several places in his letters he ascribes glory to God through Jesus Christ (Rom 16:27; Eph 3:21; Phil 2:11; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16). For Paul, God is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (1 Tim 6:15-16), while the same title is used for Jesus in Revelation (Rev 19:16; cf. 1:5; 17:14). Of course, it is God that glorified Jesus (Phil 2:8-9), raised Him from the dead (Acts 13:30; Rom 4:24; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; Col 2:12), sent him "in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin" (Rom 8:3 RSV), fixed a day of judgment, and appointed Jesus to be judge (Acts 17:31). We are predestined by God to be conformed to the image of Christ, and we cry "Abba, Father" by the Spirit of God (Rom 8:29,14-16). God leads us to repent and to put Jesus forward as the reconciling sacrifice (Rom 3:25; cf. 8:3; Eph 5:8). Through the death of Christ, God showed His love for us (Rom 5:8). So Paul says, "If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with him?" (Rom 8:31-32 RSV).

In harmony with Pauline theocentricity, we return to the passage that sets forth a most interesting conclusion:

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. . . . When all things are subjected to him then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one. (1 Cor 15:24-28 RSV)

It is necessary for Christ to reign until the complete subjugation of all God's enemies. We can see that Christ has not yet subjugated all (cf. Heb 2:8). Now is

the time of Christ; He must reign now. We need to see Christ as central now, but at the same time we need to note that Christ reigns under the Father's mandate. In other words, even Christocentricity is under theocentricity. According to the passage just quoted, theocentricity will be fully established at the consummation of salvation history (1 Cor 15:28).

Wilhelm Mundle points out that "the idea of coming has a fundamental theological significance in relation to the coming of Christ, and the coming of God and His kingdom" in the NT.¹ The process of redemption and the establishment of the sovereignty of God constitute an indivisible whole. The coming of Christ for redemption is a prelude to the coming of the kingdom of God in its fullness.

Conclusion

The theme of the "coming" is peculiar in the book of Revelation. We may observe an emphasis of this theme in the last phrase of the series, "who is, and who was, and who is to come," because the last phrase substitutes for the usage of the future tense, "who will be."

As we have seen, God is referred to three times in this book by this descriptive title. The first two parts indicate that God is present from eternity to eternity. Through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, God the Father spiritually reveals Himself, comes to, and abides among us even now. However, in Revelation, there seems also to be an emphasis on His eschatological coming—not only His spiritual coming as the One "who is, and who was," but also His actual coming, as the One "who is to come." At the ultimate eschatological time, God Himself, as well as Jesus Christ, will come to the new earth and there establish their eternal kingdom (Rev 21:3; 22:3).

It has been proposed by some that the phrase *ho erchomenos* refers to the second coming of Christ.² The interpretation, however, while verbally possible, does not agree with the context, which shows that this was hardly in the mind of the writer of Revelation.

Even though the role of Christ is significant in Revelation, and the importance of Christocentricity should never be denied, what should be noted is that the authority of God always has to be observed behind or with Jesus Christ. It is God the Father in Revelation that is "the Almighty" and is portrayed as the One who is seated on the throne, reigning. Though Jesus Christ is also the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (22:13), He sits down with the Father on His throne (3:21) and receives worship with the Father (22:3), never independently.

¹Wilhelm Mundle, "Come," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-78), 1:322.

²"Which Is to Come" [Rev 1:4], *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1953-57), 7:732. (This source reports but does not support that view.)

Thus, it is essential to understand both the theocentricity and the Christocentricity of the theology of the book of Revelation. Now is the time of Christocentricity. God the Father wants us to be subjugated to Jesus. But at the same time we have to remember that the role of Christ is to lead His people to their God and His Father, a theocentric emphasis. This is the ultimate aim of salvation through Jesus Christ. So at this end time we need to focus on this ultimate goal: God at last will be worshiped by His people when He comes.

Ellen G. White vividly describes the consummate occasion of all salvation history, at the Coming:

Christ took with Him to the heavenly courts His glorified humanity. To those who receive Him, He gives power to become the sons of God, that at last God may receive them as His, to dwell with Him throughout eternity. If, during this life, they are loyal to God, they will at last “see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.” And what is the happiness of heaven but to see God? What greater joy could come to the sinner saved by the grace of Christ than to look upon the face of God, and know Him as Father?¹

¹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1904), 8:268.