

(Revelation - Part 4): To the Seven Churches

by A.W. Tozer

The Book of Revelation reveals Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, the Life of the Church, and the Fulness of Him that Filleth All in the Foundation, and emphasizes the importance of being in the Spirit and holding the light of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 53:58

Topics: "Book Of Revelation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker skips over chapters two and three of the book of Revelation and focuses on chapter four. The speaker emphasizes the presence of Jesus in the midst of believers and encourages listeners to pray for God's chastisement in love. The speaker highlights the powerful voice of Jesus, which has the ability to create, resurrect the dead, and bring judgment. The speaker acknowledges the existence of false teachings and urges listeners to stand firm in the truth of John's teachings in the book of Revelation.

Transcript

Turn to chapter 1, verse 9, and following. I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia, and to Ephesus, and unto Shmyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters.

And he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. And his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength. When I saw him, I fell down, and his feet as dead.

And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead. Behold, I am alive forevermore.

Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. And the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Let's pray. O God, we grieve because there is not found any man worthy to open this book or to expound it. We grieve because in our blindness we see only the men as trees walking.

Who is sufficient for these things? O God, certainly not thy poor servant who knows only a little. And the vast sea of truth lies luminous before us. We can only tonight point to it and say, Behold, and then we pray that thou wilt open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

Help, Lord, where we are blind, give us sight. Where we are deaf, make us to hear. Where we are low, raise us up.

Where we are high, bring us down. And may truth triumph, and may thy word run and be glorified. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

The revelation of Jesus Christ which God sent and signified to his servant John said, John, who wrote the book of revelations? says the critic. John to the seven churches which are in Asia says, John, who wrote the book of revelations? says the critic. I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation says, John, who wrote the book of revelations? says the critic.

There are two ways to be ignorant, brothers and sisters. One way is to not go to school at all, and the other way is to go too long. I have met both kinds of ignorant people, those who never went, and I can understand them.

Then I have met those who went too long, and the longer they went, the more ignorant they got. John wrote the book of revelations. He says so three times here in the first chapter.

If I wrote you a letter and signed it three times, then you would say, Who wrote that letter? I'd figure that you had that good examination of your head coming, because there it is in clean sight, my old scrawly signature on it three times. I, John, says John, and the critic says, Who could have written the book of revelations? Who killed Cock Robin? Well, my brother and sister, John wrote the book of revelations, and as I said in the opening sermon, and all you have to do is compare it with John's other writings and you will see that it is that way, that it is like John. He wrote that thing.

He wrote this book. John says, I, John, who am your brother, and notice the humility of this man, I am your brother, and I am your companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ and the word of God and the testimony of our Lord.

Now, what did all this add up to? I repeat again that I'd like to be able to preach sermons 100 percent positive. I'd like to get up sometime and not have in mind that fellow looking over my shoulder preaching something else. I'd like to get up sometime and be able to preach 100 percent positive and not be bothered at all by people who teach wrong things.

But you can't be realistic and stand up like a little statue of St. Francis with your head off on one side and a meek gentle look on your face, as though these enemies of the gospel didn't exist, they do exist, and you've got to deal with them. And we've got to deal with those who teach otherwise than what John teaches here, this man who is a companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, and who is a witness to the word of God and the testimony of our Lord. Now, all this, what did it add up to for John? Big contracts, that's what I hear now.

You give your heart to the Lord and get born again, and if you're a businessman, your contracts will get larger immediately. You will have bigger business. If you run a store, you'll have more customers.

Whatever you are, you will have more. And is it promotion, this kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus and the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ? Did it add up to winning at sports? It's a wonder somebody hasn't, and I suppose they have written to Maris, telling him that if he'll only be born again, he'll be able to break Babe's Ruth record, no doubt, because Babe wasn't born again when he hit 60 home runs. And they'll tell us, if you want to win at sports, get born again.

And if you want to get big contracts, get born again. And if you want your cows to give more milk, get born again. And if you want to have good grades at school, get born again.

Believe on Jesus Christ and accept him, and there it all works. What did it add up to for John? Well, for John it added up to, I was in the isle that is called Patmos. What were you doing there, John? You were Bishop of Ephesus.

You should have been back home standing up with a long robe on, presiding over your congregation. You were born again, weren't you, John? Haven't you accepted Jesus, John? Yes, I accepted Jesus, and what it got me was, I was in the isle that is called Patmos. Well, now, if the modern doctrine were true, John wouldn't have been in Patmos.

John would have had his reward back home. He'd have had peace of mind, prosperity and the friendship of the great. But there would have been no book of revelation.

I'm glad John was on the isle of Patmos. I'm glad for that. If John had been like some of us modern fundamentalists, there would have been no book of revelation, because we are not producing the kind of men that can see visions and dream dreams and write books of revelation.

We are producing men that can barely understand a book of revelation after somebody else writes it. But peace of mind and prosperity and the friendship of the great, I suppose that John would have been back home. He would have played golf with Caesar, but he would never have seen the door opened in heaven and never would have seen a throne with a rainbow around it.

Never! But I'm glad that John took the hard way, brothers and sisters. I'm glad he took the hard way. He would have got off the hook if he had wanted to, if he had just blown through his nose learnedly and compromised the truth a little bit and stood up and looked saintly.

They would have said, Well, this man is doing good in the community. And they would never have sent him to the isle of Patmos. But John knew who he believed and knew what he believed, and he said, I'm your brother and your companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patient of Jesus Christ.

And I was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. All you have to do is take the heat off of your testimony and the world will take its heat off of you. But you give your testimony and the world will turn the heat on.

John must have given a mighty strong testimony because they had him in the isle of Patmos. And they told me he was in a coal mine, salt mine, though as I said before, I don't know whether that's true or not. He was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

Now, right here we could get ourselves off into a little eddy and get clear out of the stream of truth, and we could go around and around like a toy boat in the eddy and imagine we had been somewhere and we had never been away from one little spot. We could talk for half an hour on what it means to be in the Spirit, in the sense that John wrote it. Then we could talk for another half an hour on what the Lord's day means Sabbath or means Sunday or means that it was the prophetic period known as the day of the Lord.

I'm not going to get into any little eddy at all so far as I can. I'm going to stay in the mainstream and not get snagged on these two nails. I would assume that the man John was in the Spirit, that is, he was caught up into a kind of a prophetic trance, and the time he remembered was on the first day of the week.

He said, I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet. This isn't part of the sermon, but it's rather significant to notice how many people there are that have heard the Lord speaking behind them, because we're usually facing the wrong way. If you were facing toward the Lord, you would hear him speaking ahead of you, but because we turn our back on the Lord, he has to speak behind us.

Isaiah said the day would come when we should hear a voice behind us, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. Why didn't he hear a voice saying ahead of him, Come on, this is the way? Because Isaiah, whoever he was talking about, had gotten off the main highway, so the Lord back on the highway was behind the fellow, and he said, Come, turn back. So he turned back.

I heard behind me a great voice, and John turned to see, and what he saw was seven golden candlesticks. Those candlesticks were lampstands, some other translations have it, and I could take another 20 minutes explaining the difference between lampstands and candlesticks, but when we were finished, all I would have done would be bore you or give you a notion you knew something you didn't know, which would be bad for both of us. So we'll pass that candlestick deal up entirely and point out only that they had candles in those days, and they stuck them in a candlestick, and if you were capable of it and you had lots of money, you made golden candlesticks, and they stuck a candle in a candlestick and lighted it, and they had light in the house.

Those candlesticks didn't shine, I want you to notice. They were made of gold, but they weren't shining. What was shining was the candle.

These seven golden candlesticks, Jesus explained, were the seven churches of Asia, and they were meant to stand for all the churches of all time. I say they didn't shine, but they were the receptacle of all shining truth. It is the purpose of God that his churches, and here's the plural used here, churches, it's the purpose of God that his churches should not be themselves the shining light, but that they should be the containers and the receptacles of the shining light.

Just as the candlestick didn't shine, if you put the candle out, the gold candlestick didn't shine, but it held the light that did shine. So that the church ought not to be a group of people who, because of their social

position, shine in society. We ought not to conceive of the church as a group of people who, because of the learning of its members, shine in society.

Why don't you know that church is the most learned church, there are more college professors go to that church, and more retired college Presidents go to that church, and more atomic scientists go there than any other church in the whole dominion? Oh, I suppose so, but it doesn't impress me. You'll excuse me if I'm not impressed by their shining. They're just trying to shine.

If I get up here and try to shine, be learned, quote Shakespeare and show what a shining intellect I have, I'll be a candlestick trying to shine. But that's not my business to do that, and it's not the business of this church to shine. It's not the business of this church to gather in so many Senators and MPs, that's Mounted Police, isn't it? Members of Parliament, I mean.

Members and all that, but everybody will say, that church there has very high social standing. I'd rather go along with that first church that didn't have very good social standing, but had a tremendous lot of power. Peter didn't have any degrees that I know of, but Peter said, silver and gold I have none, and he didn't have much money.

But he did say to a man, I say unto you, get up. And the fellow got up. Got up because the man without any money and without any prestige may have now what they call a status symbol.

Was a day when the number of servants you had in your home was your status symbol, I heard a fellow say last night. But now it's your car that's your status symbol. And how many of them you have, that's your status symbol.

I remember back to the days of the horse and buggy, and when the first automobiles that came into the neighborhood, the great high-wheeled fellows that were built to run over the muddy roads. And if one man in the whole what they called county, if one man in the whole county got himself an automobile, he had a status symbol there, boy. And everybody thought unquestionably that he was somebody.

He was a big wig with accent on wig. But that was a status symbol, and we can have those status symbols now. I believe in clean churches, but I hope this nice new paint doesn't become a status symbol for having you were old.

I hope that we'll remember that you can just be as humble in the dirty church as you can in a clean one, and versa, but yet I'm for this. I'm glad for a nice clean job here, and I'm even agitating to get some rugs on the aisle so that when you walk down the aisle you won't hear you down at the corner of Bloor. But if that becomes a status symbol, then it's too bad for all of us, brethren.

There's only one thing that ought to make a church glad, and that is that there is somebody walking in the midst whose eyes are like a flame of fire. And no matter how low and poor they may be, there's still a people walking, simple people among whom the Lord walks. I went to a church in this city, my good friend Finley, McKay and I went down there.

They were simple people, the people most of whom could not speak good standard English. But there was something about them that warmed my heart, and I got up there and spoke to them, and they were so blessed and by it all that they had a prayer meeting afterward, and I've felt good ever since. They didn't have one lonely claim to anything, but the Lord was in the midst.

I'd rather have that than anything else I know in all the wide world. Yet I think that if we're going to serve the Lord, and we're an assembled company and there's enough of us to do it, that we ought to see to it that the place where we meet is nice and worthy of our prayers and worthy of our worship. That's why I like to see a church fixed up looking nice.

That doesn't make us spiritual. I don't mind seeing a man preaching in a robe. I have preached in robes before now, and with square hats on, although I always took those monkey hats off before I'd preach.

I don't care, you can put two or three robes on me, if it isn't too warm, I'll preach in a robe. It makes little difference to me in or out of the robe, but it makes an awful lot of difference to me whether I'm in the Spirit or out of the Spirit. Well, John saw the seven golden candlesticks which would stand for all of the churches, and these churches which themselves do not shine, but which are the receptacles for all shining truth.

And in the midst of the candlesticks I saw one. In the midst of the candlesticks I saw one. Now, who would you expect if you knew that the candlesticks stood for the church and all the churches? Who would you expect to find standing in the midst of the seven churches, that is, being in each church? Who would you expect to be there? St. Paul? No, St. Paul died.

I think St. Paul may even have been dead when this was written. Who would you expect there? Who was it that said, "Two of you, three of you are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst." Didn't he say that? Isn't that the one you'd expect to see there? Didn't he say, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and I will be with you unto the end of the world?" Wouldn't you expect the one to be standing in the midst of the church, of whom it is said that he is the head of the church, the fulness of him that filleth all in the foundation upon which the church is built, the life of the church? Wouldn't you expect him? Well, that's just where he was. He was there, and he was like unto the Son of Man." Hear that again.

This was not a spirit in the church, but one like unto the Son of Man, a Son of Man, the Son of Man, Jesus Christ our Lord, and he was clothed with a garment down to the foot. Here's what dear old brother W. T. MacArthur called the only authentic portrait of Jesus Christ. Here it is, the only one.

All of these weak pictures that Italian artists and Dutch artists have painted with Christ, you can have them all. I don't want to get a concept fixed in my mind borrowed from an artist. I want the Holy Ghost to paint the picture of Jesus Christ across my heart.

I want to read it out of the Bible, and I want the Holy Ghost to dip his brush in the paint of the blood and fire and paint the picture of the Son of God across the canvas of my soul, so that when I go there in his presence I'll not be disappointed. Some people will be disappointed when they see Jesus, because they've been raised on Solomon and Hoffman's heads of Christ, and they'll expect to see what he isn't at all. Here he is, here's what he is, the only authentic portrait of Jesus Christ.

He was clothed with a garment down to the foot, and there is the priest's garment. The priest in the midst of the church, where else should a priest be? In the old days of Israel, where were the priests? They were in the midst of Israel. The temple was in the midst of the camp, and the holy place was in the midst of the temple, and the priests were there moving in and out, and the high priest was in the holy place, so in the midst of Israel.

So here's the man clothed with a garment down to the foot. We have a priest. I believe in the priesthood.

I believe it. I believe in it two ways. I believe in the priesthood of believers.

I believe that you and I are priests and that we have access to the throne of God, to our high priest who has gone in before us. But I believe in the final, ultimate priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the high priest in the presence of God. And there he is, standing with the garment clothed down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle.

There's the insignia of royalty. Around his chest was a broad band made of pure gold, and it held up the garment that went down to his feet. There we see him, but there was a man there, not a spirit, not an angel, not a cherubim, but a man, a real man.

And you could have gone to that man and touched him. Jesus said, Handle me and see. A spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have.

And he ate fish before them, after he had risen from the dead and was glorified. So this one that we have there is a true man, and he's girt about the breasts with a golden girdle, the insignia of royalty. So we have not only a priest, but we have a royal priest, a priest who is both king and priest, prophet, priest, and king, they said in the early days of the Christian and missionary alliance, before we got out onto the jingle bells and began following the backslidden church over the cliff, they used to talk about the prophet, priest, and king, that Jesus Christ was all of these, and I believe that.

I believe that he's the prophet, I believe he's a priest, and I believe he's a king. And I see him here combined, a kingly priest standing in the midst of the church. And you know that's why churches exist and why churches don't fall apart, with all the pressure the devil puts on the church.

How can a church exist at all? I don't wonder that churches backslide, the wonder is that they don't. I don't wonder that churches hold together, or do not hold together, the wonder is that they hold together. If it were not for the invisible presence of our Lord in the midst, a priest to stand before God for us and a king to rule, there would be no church.

And it says he's head and hair white as wool and white as snow. Now, there are two views of this, and I don't see why both of them can't be true. That's one way that I like to believe.

When I run onto a passage where there are opposing views, I don't accept one or reject the other, I believe both. You get more that way and it's more comfortable, and you don't have to argue with anybody. Some say that Jesus Christ's pure whiteness means holiness, that it's the utter holiness of our Lord that makes his hair to be whiter than wool.

But others say, no, that couldn't be it, because that means ripe knowledge and solid judgment. It's talking about the Ancient of Days, because he is the Ancient of Days, dating back to time out of time, and therefore we see him as white-haired. Well, maybe both of those are true, but on the other hand, I can't quite believe that our Lord is gray-headed.

I believe that the Lord has white hair, but it's not the white hair that came as a result of age, it's white hair that came there because he wanted to show us the utter holiness of the Lord. Do you know, friends, that we have lived with unholiness to a point where we are almost incapable of appreciating holiness? We are all but incapable of knowing what holiness is. But here he is, white as wool, white as snow.

That's why I can't go along with those who excuse sin. That's why I can't go along with the pastor who nurses a cigarette and then prays for the sick, shuffles his pack around and gets a New Testament, reads the passage and prays for the sick. I can't go along with him, but somebody says, Well, I don't believe in Methodist morality.

I don't either, but I believe in New Testament morality. And I believe that if the Methodists took up New Testament morality, then good for them, and I'm glad, and more power to them. But this holiness, God's people ought to be a holy people.

I tell you that I could only pray that God would help me to preach so that you would sweat. I don't want you to go away feeling good. This idea that the Church is a place where you go to get a tranquilizer, if you feel all bad, come to Church and we'll sing soft songs and preach pussycat sermons to you and purr and purr until you feel better.

Why don't you go down to the drugstore and ask for a tranquilizer, if that's what you want? If you only want to feel relaxed, take a hot bath and a tranquilizer. That will relax you, relax you and let you go to hell in your relaxation. That's not what the Church is for, to relax sinners.

The Church is to make sinners sweat, and the Church is to make backslidden Christians sweat. And if I can bring the bubbly sweat out over you while I preach, I'll only thank God with all my heart, no matter what you think of me. Because this Lord is a holy Lord, and his head and his hair were white as wool.

And it's in his presence that we're going to live, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, seeing through. You and I see, but he sees through. There's the difference.

Fire sees through. The eyes of our Lord are like x-ray eyes, and you can't hide anything from our Lord. He's got those eyes, so there isn't any use to clear your throat and swell out your chest and claim you're somebody.

No, you're nobody, and we might as well get together on that now. Neither am I, so there's no difference in our standing. You're nobody, I'm nobody, and if we had our desserts, we'd all perish alike.

And he knows that, and he sees through it. Some churches get so self-righteous as the Pharisees were, and they walk around trying to be the incarnated sum of all that's respectable. But they've got no spirituality and no garment of righteousness to hide them from the flaming eyes of Jesus.

I'd rather be exactly what I am, and stand right out and be exactly what I am. I tell the preachers, I quit preaching anymore to writers. I've quit that.

They won't do it anymore, no use. They won't do what you tell them anyhow, and I think that I'm going to give up preaching to preachers one of these days, because they don't pay much attention to you either. But I tell them that there isn't any use to try to pretend to be somebody, because the preacher is nobody either.

He's just an animated clothespin walking around on his two legs, and he snores just like other people when he goes to sleep, and he'll die one of these days and be lugged out and buried just like everybody else, and the fact that he was a Reverend D.D. won't make a bit of difference to God. Not a bit of difference to God. They called me doctor long before I got doctor's degrees, but I don't know why, I just do, you know.

But I wasn't conscious of any step-up in my preaching ability, none whatsoever, when they stuck some square hats on my head a couple times, nothing to make a bit of difference. Just to be a simple, plain person standing before God, you've got to be that, completely that, for Jesus Christ sees through. He knows, he knows even now, if while I'm talking to you, if my very claim to humility is only another form of pride, he knows that.

He knows everything, and I'm glad he does. I'd hate to think that after I go to bed at night or go down to Chicago, the devil could come around and tell God something about me. As soon as the Viscount takes off, the devil comes around and says, you know that fellow that preaches down Avenue Road, God, if you know about him what I know, oh, he knows all about it.

Nobody's going to hunt up Jesus and whisper back at his hand and say, have you heard about Tozer? Jesus, my Lord, knows all about him, knows his weakness and knows his strength, and knows that the only thing about him that harms him is his strength, not his weakness. You can never get too weak for the Lord to use you, but you can get too strong. You never can get too ignorant for the Lord to use you, but you can get too wise.

You never can get too little for the Lord to use you, but you can get too big. And yet these days we say, oh, if we only had big, wise men in our pulpits and places of Christian leadership, why, we'd be all right. My friend, the Church of Christ wouldn't be one whit better off if every preacher in Toronto was a Ph.D., not one whit better off.

It might easily be worse off. Somebody else says, if we only had money, money that we need. I've been toying with the idea one of these times of writing an editorial, magazine goes to 110 countries, they tell me, and I suppose that the preachers would gang up on me and write me off.

But I was going to write it anyhow, I think. Here's what it is. Money isn't enough.

And point out that more money wouldn't mean a thing. This Church we're endowed with \$100,000 a day after tomorrow. And our Prager climbed a sunbeam with delight, as he would in spite of it.

This Church wouldn't be one whit better off, because all you can buy with money is material things. You can't buy spirituality. You can't buy humility.

You can't buy purity. You can't buy godliness. You can't buy holiness.

You need enough money, and I hope you'll keep that in mind, and pray about it, and give. Loose your purse strings and get rid of some of that money. Turn it over to the Church.

But when you've done it, remember that mere money can't bail you out. Mere money won't do it. More education won't do it, more money won't do it.

The Lord sees through all of that. I, for my part, don't know why the preachers can't see through it. Well, he had a feet like unto fine brass.

Now, why did he have feet like unto fine brass? Because he was to be the judge. Here was the judge, to judge what his eyes had just seen. The Church that isn't judged is not the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ at all.

There are congregations, I have no doubt of it, congregations that meet every Sunday, carry on their programs that are not true churches of Jesus Christ at all, for two reasons. The Spirit is not in the midst of them, and the Lord is not the center of their interest. They carry on, and they call themselves churches, but the true Church is going to be a disciplined Church, and our priest in the midst of us who knows all about us and loves us anyhow is going to judge us.

Never pray that the Lord shouldn't judge you, never. Pray like the man David prayed, and if it's turned around and rightly translated, "Chastise me, O Lord, but not in thy wrath," says King James. Do not in thy wrath chastise me.' It leaves the impression that the man was not wanting to be chastised.

He was praying that the Lord would chastise him, but he didn't want the Lord to do it in anger, he wanted him to do it in love. Then this one who stood in the midst of the candlesticks and stands in the midst of the candlesticks tonight had a voice as the sound of many waters. This warms my heart and gives me a sense of something I can't explain or express, the voice as the sound of many waters, the strong, majestic and deep.

What that voice had done, that voice had called the world into being. In the day when there was nothing, that voice called something, and it sprang into being. In the day when Lazarus was dead, that voice said, Come forth, Lazarus, and he came forth.

That mighty voice, that voice that said, It's finished! And the strong, bold soldiers of Caesar fell down and said, This was the Son of God. That voice that shall someday come and wake the dead, that voice is the sound of many waters. You know the sound of many waters is a musical sound.

There is something musical about water. The poets say that the brooks babble. I could have wished that a poet could have thought of something else sometime, but except babble.

Oh, they have ripple and pearl. I forgot those two words, pearling brooks and rippling brooks and babbling brooks. Those are the only three things books are allowed to do by the poets.

But did you ever sit by a little stream on a quiet day with a cow standing over there in the shade and maybe two or three sheep wandering around and hear the liquid pearling of that water? I have, and I've enjoyed it tremendously. But as it gets larger and become great waterfalls or great oceans, the sound, while it's still musical, it becomes powerful. I told you about Jenny Lynn, the great Swedish soprano.

They called her the Swedish nightingale, Barnum. Brought her over here, Phineas P. Barnum brought her over to this continent and took her around as the greatest singer. They say she was one of the greatest singers of all time.

She entered any place to sing. They packed to the rafters and hung out the windows to hear the Swedish nightingale. Suddenly she disappeared from the scene and retired.

Somebody went, some newspaper man, and they poked their nose into everything. So they went to hunt up Jenny Lynn. They went over to Sweden, and they found Jenny sitting somewhere, whether in Sweden, I don't know, but in Europe.

They found Jenny sitting with an open Bible in her lap, sitting on a rock, looking out over the ocean, listening to the roar of the breakers as they beat over the rocks. They said to her, Jenny, the world was at your feet. You're at the peak of your artistic powers.

Why did you suddenly run out on us? She said, I found that the praise I got from the public, I found that it made me forget this and this. She pointed to her Bible and the ocean where she had been brought up. The roar of the ocean has something in it, the roar of the ocean.

We used to, not the ocean, but one of the great lakes. We used to go over to Beulah Beach on northern part of Ohio where on Lake Erie. The wind would rise in the night and the lake would begin to roar, great long drawn trumpet blasts.

The next day maybe would be a time when they were to baptize people. Always they baptized once or twice during the period. And the lake would be coming in and breakers as high as a man or higher than a man.

I suppose it wasn't nice to smile, but I've stood there and smiled a few times while they baptized somebody. Instead of dipping him down in, they just held him up. And the breakers went over him and led him from head to foot.

He got baptized without going down into the water at all. Now I suppose that I shouldn't have smiled, but being a young fellow I did. Watching them baptize people and getting the help of the old sea itself.

As she roared, her breakers roared over the candidate. Well, Jesus Christ our Lord will drown out every voice. We're hearing some big voices now, aren't we? Every once in a while, a cruchet climbs up like a rooster on a fence post and flaps his wings and booms out something, some terrible thing.

I'm waiting around for him to have a heart attack, because no man can blow his top as regularly and as high as he does and not suffer from high blood pressure. You get it one of these times he doesn't want to. That's why you dear Westerners here on this blessed continent, don't take him too seriously, because I don't want you to blow yours too.

Keep calm. There is a voice that will make all of those banty roosters sound like the roosters they are. When that booming voice that sounds like the voice of many waters sounds out over the world, what will cruchet for Mount Tooth or any of the rest of them? In his hand, seven stars.

In his hand, seven stars. I don't know whether there are any missionaries here or not. I had a nice thing happen here in the church this morning.

A nice, pretty little lady came down the aisle. She will excuse me if she's back tonight if I say that she's not young anymore. She's not old, but she certainly isn't a girl.

She said, I am so and so. I have been a missionary in such and such a place for 37 years. I enjoyed your sermon.

She handed me a bill. She said, this goes to the building. That's to help clean up the mess and make the church look decent.

I thanked her and gave it to one of the board members to put in the treasure. Well, there's a missionary. Maybe there are missionaries here tonight.

Maybe there are pastors here tonight. Let me say to you, in his hand were the seven stars. Here they are, the seven stars.

Who are they? They are the messengers of the churches. They are those who go forth, messengers, the angels of the churches. Messenger and angel is the same word.

They're held in the hand of the Lord Jesus. I believe that. Isn't it too bad the church is divided on the question of the security of believers? Some scream against it and some scream in favor of it.

I stand in the middle and thank God I'm in his hand. I'm not going to argue and write books one side or the other, but I'm going to say I'm in his hand. He holds his messengers in his hand.

If you're a messenger, you're held in his hand. Out of his mouth went a sharp sword. All other words will melt.

They'll melt like butter in the sunshine. But the words of the Lord, the sharp sword of the Lord. I wish that I had known years back what the Lord has taught me lately, to give more place to the word itself.

I used to preach a lot and use science and all the rest and psychology, but the Lord got me away from that. Because long before science and psychology ever reared their head, the word of the Lord was coming out of the mouth of the man in the midst and it was like a sharp sword. We'd better by all means stay by the sharp sword.

I believe in the church that preaches the word, the sharp sword. I believe in the missionary society of the denomination that's dedicated to the word. Not perfect, certainly.

Take the word s off of the word sword and what do you have? You have word. For the word of the Lord is like a sharp sword dividing even to the narrow. His face is the sun shining in its full strength.

How can I comment on that? How can any man comment on that? There was once a picture of Jesus that I can understand better than this. Here's a picture of Jesus that I can understand better. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently.

He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. As many were astonished at thee, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. I can understand that better.

The marred visage and the form that was marred and bruised worse than that of any man, beaten and bruised by the fists and the whips of men, and the face all torn as they pulled out his beard and spat in his holy face. I can understand that. But now I am asked to see that face again.

I am asked to see that same face that once had spittle upon it. I am asked to see that face shining brighter than the sun in its full strength. If you want to see how strong the sun is, go look into the sky of a noon day.

You never, never can face the sun. They say the eagle looks into the sun and flies into the sun. The scientists who study the eagle say that the eagle has a thin film, like you do out on the highway on a sunny day.

You put on blue glasses, dark glasses, to cut the vigor of the sun so that you don't get blind from the sunlight. And the eagle, when she flies and screams into the sun, wheels and banks and turns yonder, high above the mountaintop, she's got her glasses pulled down. God built them in, put them there so she can look at the sun.

You try it without your glasses. I don't know how to explain this, but I know this face that shines like the sun in its full strength. The sun, they tell us, gives not only heat and light and warmth, but the sun also gives vitamins to the earth.

The sun buries away its warmth and its heat and its energy in the bowels of the earth, and men dig them up and put them in combustion chambers and run their airplanes and their furnaces everywhere and send their ships across the ocean and their trains across continents because the sun's energy once was buried and came out as oil or coal. And here we have the man who made it all. You say, the man who made it all? Do you mean that man made it all? A woman came to me one time, very much wrought up.

She said, Mr. Trozer, you said that Jesus, that Jesus created everything that there is. You said Jesus created everything there is. And I said, yes, I said that.

And she couldn't believe it, but here's what the scripture says. Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature? For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things and by him and all things consist.

So this one, whose face shines as the sun, you say then if he's in the midst and he's like this, why don't we see him? That's the terrible part. That's the terrible part. He's in the midst and we don't see him.

But I mustn't pass up this other thing that he said about himself. The effect that it had upon John, John fell at his feet as dead. And that's why I keep insisting and suppose I shall continue to exist, that any real knowledge of Jesus Christ will knock all the pride out of you.

It will bring you down in lowliness before his feet. That's why I don't believe in this erotic approach to Jesus Christ, this love song stuff. He's my lover.

I'm his sweetheart. I don't believe in that kind of stuff at all. That started in Hollywood and go back there and then they'll all go to hell together.

When you see the man in the midst, the awful man, the glorious man, the highly exalted man who is also God, who made the very midst in which he walks, this one has an effect upon us. John said, when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. A man who has never fallen at the feet of Jesus in astonished wonder has never been able to get up and move a congregation by preaching about Jesus.

But John was. And immediately he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.

Dead three days and alive forevermore. Fear not, I am the first and the last. Amen.

I have the keys of hell and of death. Where did they ever get the idea that Peter's got the keys? He must have given them back to Jesus if he ever had them. Because here I see Jesus Christ standing in the midst of his church, and I see him swinging a set of keys, iron keys and golden keys.

And iron keys will unlock the brazen gates of hell, and the golden keys will unlock the glorious gates of heaven. And he alone has those keys. I don't believe anybody else has them.

And I'm not going to look around for them, because I know where they are. They are on the key ring of the man who was dead three days and is alive forevermore, Jesus Christ our Lord. You can see, can't you, my

friends, that this is the most important thing about this church.

This one is in the midst of the church. He's here to see and to judge, he's here to keep, he's here to represent us to God and to us, he's here to speak to us and reprove us and encourage us. Why do we not see him? How terrible it is to play in his presence, dream in his presence, sleep in his presence, sin in his presence.

How terrible. He's coming again in glory. In the meantime, he's holding his church together, getting his church ready.

That's what we're here for. We're to get ready. I've had in my ministry many a wedding, many a wedding.

We had one room, nicely done room in knotty pine, all fixed up. It was used for many purposes, but it had one specific purpose. The bride got ready in that room.

It was understood that when there was a wedding coming up within the next half hour, no male, no matter who he was, ever stuck his nose in there. The bride was in there getting ready. The bride's mother fussing, the bride's maid fussing, everybody fussing, trying to get the bride ready.

They secreted her. They didn't let the bridegroom see her. Secret her and bring her up another way.

They began to play the proper music, out from here, properly, where he belonged, secondary, came the bridegroom. Down the aisle after a while came the bride, leaning upon her father's arm. But when once they stood up together, the father dropped back and said, I do.

That's all part he had. I always told him, you don't amount to anything, you just say, I do, and sit down. He said, I do.

But there was a place for the bride to get ready. This place where we're getting ready isn't done in knotty pine with nice, shiny tile floors. This place where we get ready is a battlefield, a place where there is sin and woe, and the church has to get ready and the bride has to get ready in the midst of her warfare and her labors.

But she must get ready. That's why we're here. That's why you weren't immediately transferred to heaven when you were born again.

You were saved, you got a new nature, and that nature belongs with God, and you were not taken to God because you weren't ready. He's getting you ready. There's a people getting ready, a bride getting ready, purified people getting ready.

Don't you let anybody talk you out of that. That's true. As the book develops, it tells us about future events, and we're going to skip over chapters two and three, seven letters to the churches.

We're going to skip that purposely and deliberately, because everybody preaches about it. We're going to go on over into the fourth chapter, when for the next time I speak, when John saw heaven open, he saw the throne. Now, my friends, Jesus our Lord is in the midst of us.

He's here. Are we worthy to look in his face? Will you bow your heads in prayer?

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