

(Through the Bible) Revelation 1

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon on Revelation 1 emphasizes the unveiling of Jesus Christ and the prophetic insights into His return and eternal nature.

Duration: 49:32

Scripture: Matthew 22:37, Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 12:1, Revelation 1:3-4, Revelation 1:7, Revelation 1:19

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the structure and divisions of the book of Revelation. He explains that the book can be divided into three sections: the things which John has seen, the things which are currently happening in the church, and the things which will happen in the future. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding these divisions in order to interpret the book correctly. He also highlights the sense of urgency and the expectation of the return of Jesus Christ that has always been present in the church. The sermon concludes with a greeting from John to the seven churches in Asia, symbolizing completeness and perfection.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles now to the book of Revelation chapter 1. The revelation of Jesus Christ, the Greek word apocalypse, is literally the unveiling. So, in the very first phrase you have what the book is all about, it is the unveiling of Jesus Christ, the lifting of the wraps. When I was a child, I lived in Ventura, went to elementary school in Ventura, I played in the school orchestra, and the city had next, or in front of the city hall, had a sculpture make a sculpture of Father Juan Aparo Sierra who had established the mission there in Ventura.

And so the day came for the unveiling of the statue, and among other things for entertainment, they had our school orchestra there play. So I was sitting there in the violin section, and the mayor made his speech, and the county supervisors made their speeches and all, and the Catholic priest made his speech, and then finally the crane that was there, they had a ring in the top of the canvas that was covering this large statue, and so, you know, they began to crank up the canvas, and finally we could see what was under the canvas, the statue of Father Juan Aparo Sierra. It was the unveiling, it was the apocalypse, the unveiling of this statue, and we could finally see what was behind the wraps.

Now, there is a common misconception concerning the book of Revelation, and a lot of people will say, oh, I never deal with the book of Revelation. That's a sealed book. Exactly the opposite.

Rather than a sealed book, it's an unveiling. It's taking the wraps off. It's taking the seals off.

It's allowing you to see what the future holds as far as Jesus Christ is concerned. So, it is the revelation or the unveiling of Jesus Christ as far as the future, which God gave to him to show to his servants the things which must shortly come to pass, and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. So, for the most part in the angel speaking to John and revealing to him the things that were revealed to him by Jesus Christ.

So, he sent this revelation by the angel to John, and there are times when the angel appears to John. There are times when John sees the Lord himself. There are times when the elder is explaining aspects of this revelation to John, but the basic format was the revelation of Jesus Christ given to him by God to show to his servants, and it was sent to John signified by the angel, which is a messenger, who bore record of the word of God, and that is, of course, John's declaration in his gospel and in his epistles, that he was just a recorder, a recorder of the things which he had seen, of which he had heard, and his job was just to record these things, and so he bore record, and he said, we know that our record is true, our witness is true, who bore record of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ of all of the things that he saw.

Now, the most of this revelation came to John by way of visions, and a vision is really insight into the spirit world. Now, there is a spirit world that exists about us. We cannot see it with our natural eyes, but God can open our eyes to the realm of the spirit, and the capacity of being able to see the spirit realm is called a vision.

Now, the spirit realm is the eternal realm, so in a vision you can spiritually see things either past, present, or future, because the eternal realm is a timeless realm, and so John, a little further down, is going to say that on the Lord's day he was in the spirit unto the day of the Lord, that is, he saw the things that are going to yet transpire in the future. He saw things that have not yet taken place. Time hasn't yet caught up with it.

Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy. So, it is a easy book for me to plunge into, because I know you're going to be blessed even though I may not say anything worthwhile, because we're going to be reading the word of this prophecy and hearing the word of this prophecy, and so there is a built-in promised blessing for you. You can't escape it.

It's there promised to you by the Lord, those that read and those that hear. So, I'm going to be blessed, and if you'll keep up with your reading, you'll be blessed. You'll be blessed as you hear.

Not only hearing, though, but also keeping those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand. There has always been in the church the sense of urgency and immediacy as far as the return of Jesus Christ. The time is short, we are told in verse one.

Here in verse three, the time is at hand, and there is a sense in which that is perennially true. Time is always short for each of us. We don't know how much time we do have.

If we live to be a hundred years, time is short. Such a short time, especially in comparison to eternity. So, now the greeting of John, beginning with verse four.

John to the seven churches which are in Asia. We know that seven is a number that is symbolically used in the Scripture often. The number of completeness, it's called the number of perfection, but the Greek

word perfection and its use is different from our use of the word perfection.

We think of something without flaw. The idea in the Greek is literally fully matured or of full age or complete. So, we find that there are in many things that have a seven as a completion.

For instance, there are seven days in the week. So, you have a complete week, seven days. Seven notes on the scale, then you start over again.

Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti, Do. And you have to go to Do, Re, Mi again. So, the seven makes the complete scale.

The seven churches. There were more churches than this in Asia. There were some very prominent churches in Asia.

For instance, the Church of Galatia, also established by Paul. The Church of Colossae, which Paul wrote to. Not really far from the Church of Ephesus.

So, why seven churches? It's to give you the complete picture of the church. Grace be unto you and peace from him which is and which was and which is to come and from the seven spirits which are before his throne. The first, of course, is a description of God.

From him which is, which was, and which is to come. And this is a way of describing the eternal nature of God. He is, He was, He is to come, but He is all of that at the same and time.

You see, there is no past or future with God. It is all now for He dwells in the eternal. I am that I am.

Only God can declare that because He is in the eternal. I am, I may say that, but then I was. Because I said I am a moment ago.

But God dwells in the eternal. I am that I am. The eternally present one.

So, in describing the eternal character of God. He is, He was, He is to come. All at once and the same.

The seven spirits which are before His throne. Again, the completeness of the work of the Holy Spirit. The seven being the number of symbolism again of completeness and from Jesus Christ.

And now when He comes to Jesus Christ, He has quite a bit to say. Who is the faithful witness? The word witness in the Greek is martis. And it is the word from which we get our word martyr.

Which has come to mean one who dies for his faith. But originally the idea is one who has a faith so strong that he would die for it. And so Jesus is the faithful witness.

What does that mean? He is the faithful witness of what God is. Do you want to know what God is? You can look at Jesus Christ and know exactly what God is. No man has seen the Father at any time, but the only begotten Son who was in the bosom of the Father.

He hath manifested and made Him known. So that when Philip said to Him, Lord just show us the Father and we'll be satisfied. He said, haven't I been so long a time with you and haven't you seen me Philip? Don't you realize that he who has seen me hath seen the Father? The faithful witness of what God is.

Now we are called to be witnesses for Jesus Christ. That is, it should be that people could look at you and know exactly what Jesus is like. That's God's intent and purpose for your life.

That is what the Spirit is seeking to accomplish in conforming you into the image of Christ. So that as the Spirit's work is complete in me, I will respond as He responds. I will love as He loves.

I'll forgive as He forgave. I will be His representative. I will be His true and faithful witness.

The witness of what He is, even as He was the true and faithful witness of what God is. And so unto Jesus Christ, the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead. That is the first of this whole hope that we have of eternal life through Him and the prince of the kings of the earth, king of kings and lord of lords.

We will be proclaiming Him in a few weeks as we get to chapter 19. Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, the redemption that is ours through Jesus Christ. More than that, He has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.

And to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. So the work of Jesus Christ, He was the faithful witness.

He is the first begotten from among the dead. He is the prince of the kings of the earth, but He loved you and He redeemed you with His blood in order that He might make you a kingdom of priests unto God in order that He might receive glory and dominion forever. Behold, He cometh with clouds, probably a reference to the church that is coming with Him in the 11th chapter of the book of Hebrews that tells us of all of these Old Testament saints who, through faith, made their mark upon the world.

And then chapter 12 begins, seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, the multitudes of people. Behold, He cometh with clouds, the multitudes of people that will be returning with Him, the church. And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.

Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him. Contrary to what the Jehovah Witnesses teach, that He came privately in 1914 into the secret chamber, and only those with spiritual eyes could see Him. And He now rules the world in the kingdom age from this secret chamber.

Satan is bound, cast into the abyssal. Well, they left a chain too long, and he's got too much freedom to suit me. Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him at His second coming.

We are told that Jesus came as far as Bethany with His disciples there in the Mount of Olives, and then He ascended up into heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were standing there, two men stood by them in white apparel and said, You men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing into heaven? For this same Jesus is going to come again in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven. Every eye shall see Him.

He's going to come. It'll be a public coming. Jesus is coming in the flesh to establish God's kingdom upon the earth.

Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him shall mourn. There is a prophecy in Psalm 22 concerning Jesus Christ, and it said, They pierced His hands and His feet. They that pierced Him shall see Him.

In Zechariah, another prophecy concerning Jesus Christ, And they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced. And again in Zechariah, And they shall say unto Him in that day, What are the meaning of these wounds in your hands? They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced. And all of the families of the earth shall wail because of Him.

Even so, Amen. The recognition, finally, that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the longed for Messiah that the nation of Israel has waited for and sought, that recognition will come, but only after Jeremiah's prophecy is fulfilled and Jacob has gone through a time of great trouble and great sorrow, but they will look upon Him whom they have pierced. Even so, Amen.

Now, Jesus addresses John directly and declares, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty. Now, whether or not this is Jesus or God, it really is immaterial because Jesus addresses John in a moment in verse 11, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what you see right in a book. Now, if God declares of Himself, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, and Jesus declares, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning of the ending.

You know, I used to take geometry back in the ancient days, and there was something about equal angles and equal sides, you know, make an isosceles triangle or something, you know. They are equal, your angles are equal, sides are equal, then they become equal. Now, if God says, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, and Jesus says, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, then it makes them the same.

In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God, and all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made, and the Word was made flesh, and He dwelt among us. The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending. So now, John gives you a little background to the vision.

He said, I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and the patience of Jesus Christ, was in the island that is called Patmos, for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Now, at this time, all of the rest of the Apostles had all been martyred, all been put to death by the Roman government. John is the only one of the original left.

He's well into his 90s. It is estimated that this was written in 96 AD, and it is estimated that John was probably approximately the same age as Jesus. So, John is probably close to 96 years old at the writing of this book.

He's in a little rocky crag out in the Mediterranean, offshore a little bit from the area of Ephesus, and he's there for the Word of God and the testimony that he has, exiled to the island of Patmos. According to Eusebius, in his book on church history, as he records the violent death of all of the other Apostles, he says concerning John that there was the attempt to boil him in oil, but he survived the experience of being boiled in oil. And so, they exiled him to the island of Patmos.

God wasn't through with John yet. God had one final word for man. The book of Revelation needed to be written, and John was the one that it was eminently qualified to write the book.

And so, there on the island of Patmos, the aged John received this vision of the future. And I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Now, there's two possible ways to interpret this.

One, that on Sunday, he went into a spiritual trance and had this vision. Another possible translation of this same Greek text would be, I was in the Spirit unto the day of the Lord. I prefer that translation myself.

For I believe that John was taken in the Spirit through a time machine, if you please, which, of course, is the transition from the natural into the spiritual world. That's a time machine because you enter into the timelessness of eternity. Something that will take place when you die.

You're going to enter into the timelessness of eternity. Time is only relative to our planet Earth because of its rotation on its axis and its revolution around the sun. So, we count time here, but time is relative.

John was in the Spirit unto the day of the Lord, and he heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet. Later on, he's going to hear a voice as of a trumpet calling him up into heaven, come up hither, I'll show you things which must be, and we'll get that next week. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

And what you see, again, he saw these things, it was a vision, write in a book and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, Myrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. So, I turned to see who it was that was talking to 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 his feet, and girded about the chest with a golden girdle, and his head and his hair was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet were like unto fine brass, as if they were burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters.

And so, it is interesting to me that in the New Testament, with all of the gospel writers writing concerning the life of Jesus Christ, there was never an endeavor by any of them to describe Jesus in a physical sense. None of them said, well, he had brown eyes or he had blue eyes. He parted his hair in the middle, he had a beard.

No descriptions at all of Jesus Christ. So that we are totally without any real knowledge of what Jesus looks like from a physical sense. Man has often drawn pictures of what he envisions Jesus might have looked like, but it's hard to really envision what a person looks like just by hearing the words that he said, or even by even hearing his voice.

You know, it's an interesting thing when I travel around the country to these radio rallies, where we go into an area where we've been broadcasting on the radio for seven years, and we get a chance to personally meet the people that have been listening to us on the radio. And the moment I walk out, I can sense the shock when people finally see the face behind the voice. And they'll come up and say, I thought you were tall, and I thought you had curly hair, and I thought this and that, and the other.

And they had all kinds of mental pictures of what you must look like because of your voice. And it's amazing how far off you can get in your mental, you know, somehow, when you hear a person's voice. Of course, you kids today growing up in the TV area, you don't have it like we used to have when we were kids.

You know, all of our entertainment was by radio. And I had a mental picture of what Little Annie Orphan, Little Orphan Annie looked like. Yeah.

And what Jack Armstrong looked like. You know, somehow you get a mental picture of what they must look like because of their voices. And what you see depicted as Jesus is just in the figment of some man's

imagination.

We don't really, the Bible hasn't really described him in a physical sense. The only real description we have of Jesus in the New Testament is given to us here in the Gospel of John by John himself. And this is Jesus as he sees him in his glorified form.

And he describes him much as Daniel described him in the book of Daniel, only a little, probably more fully than Daniel described him. Now he had in his right hand seven stars out of his mouth when a sharp two edged sword. Now the Bible says the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword.

So his words are like a sharp two edged sword because they are able to cut between the soul and the spirit. They are a discerners of the thoughts and the intents of the hearts of man. His countenance or face was as the sun shineth in his strength looking into the noonday sun, his face just a glorious shining, his feet like brass that had been heated to incandescence, his hair white as snow, eyes like a flame of fire, but a vision holding in his right hand the seven stars.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me saying unto me, fear not. I am the first and the last.

I'm the alpha and the omega. I am the first and the last, the beginning and the ending. I am he that liveth and was dead.

And behold, I am alive forevermore. So be it. And I have the keys of hell and death.

When Jesus died, he descended into hell. Peter in the second chapter of the book of Acts and explaining to the people the phenomena that they were observing on the day of Pentecost declared Jesus of Nazareth, the man who proved himself to be of God by the signs and the miracles which he did in your midst, whom you with your wicked hands have crucified and slain, who God rose from the dead because it was not possible that he could be held by death. For the scripture predicted prophesied in Psalms, thou will not leave my soul in hell, neither will you allow the holy one to see corruption.

So Jesus descended into hell, preached to the souls that were in prison. And when he ascended, he led those captives from their captivity for he had the keys of death and hell and he conquered over death and hell. Now, there have been a lot of people who have claimed that they were going to come back from the dead.

Houdini had often made the claim, you know, that he was going to the escape artist, he was going to escape death. And for several years, they had a phone in the crypt where his body was waiting for him to call. They finally disconnected it.

The escape artist couldn't escape death. But Jesus did. I have the keys of death and hell.

And this saying, Jesus hath God raised from the dead, not possible that he could be held by it. The prophecy of Isaiah concerning Jesus was he was to set at liberty those that were bound and open the prison doors. He did that.

Those that were held by the prison of death, he opened the doors for them and led the captives from their captivity. Now, the command of John in verse 19 gives to you the key to the book of Revelation. And the

understanding of this book is really dependent upon your using the key, which is verse 19 of chapter one.

For there are three divisions to the book of Revelation. Write the things which you have seen past tense. So it was this vision that he wrote of Jesus Christ that he saw here in chapter one.

Secondly, the things which are the present things. And thirdly, the things which will be hereafter, the words hereafter, a translation of the Greek words metatauta, which literally means after these things. So you have John writing that which he saw.

He will be writing in chapters two and three, the things which are during this present age, the things of the church. And then as you begin with chapter four, he's going to write of the things that transpire after the things of the church, the things that will be hereafter or more literally after these things. And so it is significant and you need to watch for it.

Chapter four begins with the Greek words metatauta. After these things, I saw a door open in heaven. And the first voice was as of a trumpet saying into me, come up hither.

And I will show you things which must be again, the repetition of the Greek words metatauta after these things. So you enter into the third section of the book when you get to chapter four. So you get into the future aspects of the book.

We are now living in the era of chapters two and three. The things which are the church continues to exist in the testimony and the witness of the church and the witness of Jesus concerning his church, which is even more important. So the three divisions of the book, it's important that you catch this because if you don't, then you're going to have a constantly confused and garbled view of the future.

You'll see the church in the midst of the tribulation and the 144,000, you'll try to twist to be the church. I mean, there's just all kinds of twisted, exaggerated concepts that have come from the book of revelation because people did not catch the key in this first chapter here. Now the Lord explains to John a little bit of the vision that he saw it.

Remember he turned and he saw him walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, the mystery of the seven stars, which you saw in my right hand and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches. The word angeles in Greek is literally messengers.

It's usually used of a heavenly messenger, but also used of earthly messengers to anyone who is bearing a message could be an angeles, a messenger. The word by usage has come to mean a heavenly divine messenger, divine being a heavenly being. The seven stars are the seven messengers of the seven churches and the seven candlesticks, which you saw are the seven churches.

So the seven churches are the complete church and those who are ministering to the church. Now it is always to me a very comforting and yet an extremely exciting concept to realize the place of the seven stars. They were being held in the right hand of him and how beautiful and comforting it is to realize that as a messenger to the church, your life is being held in the right hand of the Lord.

I don't know of anything more exciting than that and comforting than that. Another thing that is extremely exciting is where Jesus is. He's walking in the midst of the church or the churches, the seven golden candlesticks or the seven churches.

So Christ walking in the midst of his church. You remember in the gospels, Jesus said, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst, his promised presence with his people. So Jesus is here with us tonight.

He's promised to be with his people wherever they've gathered in his name and that's always just beautiful and comforting to realize the presence of Jesus. Now he for a time sought to familiarize the disciples with the concept that he is there even though you don't see him. So after his resurrection, he would show up and then disappear and suddenly he'd be with them in the midst and then he'd be gone.

Two disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus and suddenly Jesus was on the path walking with him. When they got to Emmaus, he pretended like he was going to go on. They said, oh no, it's too late.

Come on in and eat with us. And when he broke bread, their eyes were open and they realized it was Jesus. Probably they saw the marks in his hands and Jesus disappeared.

And they said, wow, that was the Lord. And they ran all the way back to Jerusalem to share with the disciples. Hey, we've seen the risen Lord.

And they said, Hey, he appeared to Peter and Mary, a bunch of women. A lot of them have seen him. Thomas said, I don't give me that stuff.

I man, I'm not going to believe until I myself can take my finger and put it right there in his hand. I mean, I want to take my hand and put it right there in his side. I, you know, I need more proof than your stories, you know? So the disciples were gathered, Thomas present and Jesus suddenly appeared and he said, Hey, Thomas, go ahead.

Take your finger. Touch me. See if it isn't me.

Hey, wait a minute. How did he know Thomas said that? He must've been standing there when Thomas expressed his doubts. You see, but Thomas couldn't see him, but he was trying to get them used to the fact, Hey, I'm there even though you don't see me.

And that was part of the training. Paul, the apostle after 14 days and 14 nights on a stormy sea, when all hope of ever surviving was lost in the morning of the 14th day, Paul stood up and he said, Hey, man, be a good chair. Everybody's seasick and miserable.

Think they're going to die. And this guy saying, being a good chair, he said last night, the Lord stood by me. The Lord was with him the whole while the Lord is with us here tonight.

The presence of the Lord is with us. He said, wherever two or three are gathered together, there I am. Now, often, often we wish that we could have been at the sea of Galilee almost 2000 years ago.

That we could have been at Capernaum or Bethsaida or one of those cities where Jesus visited that we could have actually seen him ourselves. How thrilling it would have been to have lived in those days and to have followed him along the sea, listening to him teach. Oh, I know that if I could have only been right there, if I could have only seen him, I know that he could have reached out and touched me and he could have healed me or he could have helped me.

And, you know, if only I could have seen him like that, I know he could have helped me like Martha. When Jesus finally showed up four days after her brother had died, she said, Lord, if you'd only have been here,

my brother wouldn't have died. You know, if you'd just have been here, if I could just see him, I know that he could do it.

Hey, he's here. He's here. He's here to touch you tonight.

He's here to minister to your needs tonight. Wherever the church assembles in his name, he has promised his presence to be there with them. And he is always there to minister to the needs of the people.

That's the purpose of his being here tonight, to touch you and to minister to the needs in your life. He said, behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Now we come to the messages of Jesus to these churches.

There are patterns in the messages. First of all, the messages to each of the churches begin with an address of Jesus naming the church that he is writing to and then a description of himself. And the description is usually taken from the first chapter here, the description that John had of Jesus.

He describes himself, the one who is writing the message to the church. And the description of himself usually is correlated in the body of the message. So it is Jesus becoming all things to all people.

No matter what your need may be, he becomes all things to all men. Even as the name of God, the Yahweh or Jehovah or however, Yahovah, however it may be pronounced, is the thought of the becoming one. I am the becoming one, where God sought to reveal himself as the one who becomes whatever you may need.

So this name Yahweh is used in conjunction with other words. And so we have Jehovah Rapha, the Lord, our healer. If you need healing, he becomes your healer.

He becomes your provider. Jehovah Jireh. He becomes your righteousness, Jehovah Tisidkenu.

He becomes your savior, Joshua, Jehovah Shua. Whatever your need may be, he becomes. So Jesus in the description of himself as he writes to the churches again, takes that adaptive form where he adapts to what you might be needing.

He becomes all that you might need. So the description of himself. Then in each of the churches, there is the acknowledgement.

I know what you're going through. I know your condition. I know what's happening to five of the churches.

There is the call to repentance. Now, remember the church is less than a hundred years old. We so often hear quoted the early church fathers this and the early church fathers that.

Well, according to Jesus, the early church fathers became corrupted pretty early. Corrupt systems began to invade the church extremely early. As we will see when we get to the church of Pergamos and Thyatira.

These corrupt systems had entrenched themselves within the church before the end of the first century. So you have some of the renowned church fathers, Origen and some of the others who are espousing child baptism, infant baptism, and some of the other things that were borrowed from the pagans. You have an early development of the priesthood.

It began before the death of John in Thyatira and in Pergamos. So you can't really look back to church history to find the model or define the pattern. You have to look right back to the book of Acts to find out God's true pattern.

And the true pattern is one of great simplicity. People just being brought to a faith in Jesus Christ and a living relationship to Him. No fancy organizations, no great structures, no seminaries, just a simple trust and faith in the Lord shared from person to person, friend to friend.

In each of the churches, there is a group who are victorious, who are overcoming, and they are recognized by the Lord. And there are special promises to those who do overcome. And they exist in every church.

So no matter how corrupt the church system may become, the Lord always has His true witness within that church. And in each of the churches, there is that call of Jesus to pay attention. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

So seven times we're going to be commanded by the Lord to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. So let us now, as we enter into this very awesome, solemn territory of the messages of Jesus, you have Paul's epistles to the church. These are Jesus's epistles to the church.

And may God, by His Holy Spirit, give us ears to hear what He is seeking to say to the church. For He's going to tell us, as many as He loves, He chastens and He rebukes. And let's not try to defend ourselves or justify our positions, but let's be open to hear what the Spirit would say to us, His church.

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