

(Spiritual Preparedness #1) the Remnant Church

by Ed Miller

The sermon emphasizes the importance of total reliance on God's Holy Spirit for spiritual preparedness and readiness for the coming of the Lord.

Duration: 52:43

Scripture: Revelation 1:18, Revelation 2:1, Revelation 2:8, Revelation 2:12, Revelation 22:16-17

Topics: "Spiritual Readiness", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of spiritual readiness and being prepared for the coming of the Lord. The terminal point of the book of Revelation is highlighted, where Jesus declares that He is coming and urges the churches to be ready. The sermon begins by reading a passage from Revelation chapter 1, which describes the glorious appearance of Jesus and His imminent return. The speaker also emphasizes the need for total reliance on the Holy Spirit in studying God's Word and highlights the desire of God to reveal Himself to His people.

Transcript

Well, good afternoon, brothers and sisters in Christ, so wonderful to be able to share with you. As we come to look at God's Word and study God's Word, I remind you of a principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable. When we come to this precious book, there are so many helpful principles, but there's only one indispensable principle, and that is total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit.

Only God can reveal God, and he longs to reveal himself. Before we pray together, I want to share this verse from Song of Solomon, Song chapter 5 and verse 2. The groom is at the door in this psalm, in this song. Verse 2, I was awake, but my heart was asleep.

A voice, behold, my beloved, was knocking open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one, and the poetry goes on. A voice, a voice, the Word of God. I was asleep, my heart was awake, a voice, behold, my beloved, was knocking.

Every time God speaks, God knocks. He desires an opening. He desires a response.

And so, since the groom is at the door, and since by his voice he's knocking, let's pray together that God will give us work in us, that attitude of child-likeness that receives from him. Let's pray. Our Heavenly

Father, we thank you so much that in your great grace you have not left us on our own as we study this precious book, but you have put your life, the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

The very one that searches the depths of God and takes the things of our Lord Jesus reveals them unto us. We know someday when we see him, we'll be like him. We know this afternoon if we should see him, we'll be like him.

And so we ask for that transforming revelation of our Lord Jesus. Thank you for drawing us together this weekend. Now we commit this session unto you, and we just pray that these meditations might bring high honor to you, that our hearts would be turned toward our Lord Jesus.

Use even this session as a preparation, we pray, in Jesus' matchless name. Amen. Well, I'm thankful to be able to share the measure of light that God has given my heart on this wonderful theme, spiritual readiness, spiritual preparation.

Oh, that this weekend the Lord might make all of us spiritually ready, prepared, fit, qualified, and ripe for the return of our dear Lord Jesus. I'd like to take my meditations from the book of Revelation, the climax of the Bible, and this afternoon I'd like to start with the end of the book, and then end with the start of the book. That'll make more sense as we go along.

I'll make a suggestion to you in your study of God's Word. Whether you're studying an entire book of the Bible, or just some grand section of the Bible, or a short passage, several verses, it's helpful to look for the terminal points. In other words, how does that section begin, and how does that section end? Very often, by seeing how it begins and how it ends, you can see God's heart, then, in that particular section.

And certainly you can see the simplicity of the passage. So I'm going to ask you to turn to the end of Revelation. We'll look at that terminal point first.

Chapter 22, and I'd like to look together at verse 16 and 17, please. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the Root and the Descendant of David, the bright morning star.

The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let the one who hears say, Come. And let the one who is thirsty come.

Let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. You know, for years I misunderstood this passage. I thought the Bible ended with a grand invitation, and a final call for the guilty sinner to come, to come to the Lord.

I thought the Spirit and the Bride were saying, Come, sinner, come. Trust the Lord before it's too late. Come and welcome.

Let the thirsty come. I thought that come was addressed to the thirsty sinner. But if you read it in the context, the come is not really addressed to the thirsty sinner.

Verse 7, Behold, I am coming quickly. Verse 12, Behold, I am coming quickly. Verse 20, He who testifies to these things says, Yes, I'm coming quickly.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. It's come, Lord Jesus, not come, needy sinner.

That doesn't rule out that God invites the needy sinner. But the Bible ends with a sigh, with a longing, with a great desire for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's not just the spiritual bride that's longing for his return.

It doesn't say the spiritual bride. It says the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. In other words, the Holy Spirit is longing for the return of the Lord Jesus.

And the Church, the Bride, is longing for the coming of the Lord Jesus. And all who are thirsty are yearning, longing for the coming of the Lord Jesus. And that's how the Bible closes.

That's the end. That's the terminal point in Revelation. It closes with a promise and a sigh, a promise and a desire, a hunger, a longing, a yearning.

Come. Come, Lord Jesus. The Spirit says, Come.

The Church says, Come. The thirsty say, Come, Lord Jesus. The theme of this conference, as you know, is spiritual readiness, being prepared.

Matthew 24, 44, For this reason you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think he will. The coming of the Lord, that's how it ends. All right, hold that a moment and turn to chapter 1 of Revelation, please.

How does the same book begin? This is a little lengthy reading, but I think it's important to get the whole text before us. I'll be reading from verse 7. Behold, he's coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see him. Even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him.

So it is to be. Amen. I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is, who was, who is to come, the Almighty.

I, John, your brother, and fellow prisoner in tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet saying, write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, and to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me, and having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe, reaching to the feet and girded across his chest with a golden sash.

His head and his hair were quite like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze when it had been made to glow in a furnace, and his voice, it was like the sound of many waters.

In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword. His face was like the sun, shining in its strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man, and he placed his right hand upon me, saying, Do not be afraid.

I am the first and the last, the living one. I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades. Therefore, write the things which you've seen, the things which are, the things which shall take place after these things.

As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. Now if you'll go back please to verses 12 and 13. I turned to see the voice of the one that was speaking with me, and having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands.

And in the middle of the lampstands, I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe, reaching to the feet, and girded across his chest with a golden sash. That's how it begins. The apostle John sees seven golden lampstands, and someone very glorious in the middle of those lampstands.

Look at the last phrase in verse 20 please. The seven lampstands are the seven churches. This glorious one is in the midst of the churches.

Not only in the midst, look at chapter 2, verse 1. To the angel of the church in Ephesus write, the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, the one who walks among the seven golden lampstands. See, the glorious one is not only in the midst of the lampstand, he's walking among the lampstands. Now before we look at this in more detail, what do we see by looking at these terminal points? How does the book end? You see, the book ends with a sigh and a longing for a return, for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How does the book begin? The book begins by telling us that the one who is coming is already here. You see that? He's already here, walking in the midst of the churches. What that means practically is this.

The coming Lord is not an absent Lord. Absent, of course, in one way, as our brother Stephen shared. Not in the body, but he's here in the Spirit, the same person.

The very one who's coming again is already here. Don't read that la-la-la. May God help us get that.

The one who's coming in the future is here right now. He's coming in his glorified body. There's no question about that.

But right now he is here by the indwelling of his life in the person of the dear Holy Spirit. And the one who's coming someday comes every day. The one who is going to come is constantly appearing.

You say someday he's coming in glory. Amen. And he's already coming in grace.

You know, the theme of this conference is spiritual readiness. I will never be ready to welcome him in glory if I am not welcoming him constantly in grace. You say he's coming, to be sure.

He's already here, to be sure. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, there is a vital connection between his presence in our midst now and his revelation someday when he comes in glory. The very one who will finally be fully manifest is constantly disclosing himself and manifesting himself and showing himself.

You see, the Apostle John was in the Spirit, and he heard a voice, and he responded to the voice, and he had a revelation of the Lord Jesus. And that revelation of the Lord Jesus changed him. He saw the truth as it was in Christ.

You're in the Spirit. That's our prayer. You hear a voice, and paying attention to that voice, you have a revelation of the Son of God.

You see, that experience is not only for the Apostle John. It's for every Christian to be in the Spirit and hear the voice and respond to the voice and see a revelation of the glory of Christ. Now there's no

question this weekend we're focusing on his final coming, on his physical appearance.

But I promise you this, if you're not seeing him in this book now, you will not be ready. If I'm not seeing him in this book when he makes himself known now, I will not be ready to welcome him when he comes back. The only thing that can prepare me rightly for his coming is his coming.

That's what gets me ready for his coming. His coming does. If you're not experiencing his present coming by a present unveiling of the Lord Jesus in this book, how can you ever be ready when he finally reveals himself? You see, just by looking at the terminal points, you can see how basically simple the book is.

The one we're longing for is already here, and the one who's coming is coming all the time. There'll be a final coming, but there are intermediate comings, and we'd better be alive to those if we're going to be prepared for his final coming. Now let me make one other observation about the book of Revelation as a whole before we get a little more in detail into this marvelous chapter.

May God give us light. Now as you're I know you're familiar with the fact there are many approaches to the book of Revelation, some of them very controversial. I will certainly avoid those, but here's what all of them have in common.

All the different approaches have this one thing in common. They all believe at least some, they're different proportions, but they all believe that at least some of the book of Revelation has to do with the future. Some think that it was written early and only a few years future, but there's some future.

Some think it was a greater future and it covered ages. But all, when they come to the end, they have to say it's about the future, because it steps into eternity. You know that future.

And so all believe at least some of the book is about the future. Well then, how does the book about the future begin? And the answer is it begins with a full revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what did the apostle do when in the Spirit, through the Word, he saw a full revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ? Verse 17, when I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man.

He fell down on his face before a full revelation of a risen and exalted Savior. You see, that's how the book about the future begins. This weekend we're asking some very weighty questions.

How can I be ready? How can I be prepared for the coming of the Lord, for the near or the distant future? May I suggest there's some wisdom in Revelation chapter 1? The book on the future begins with the servant of God on his face before a full revelation of the Lord Jesus. I think that's a good way to prepare for the future. If the servant of the Lord would fall on his face before a full revelation of the Lord Jesus, would he be prepared for the immediate future? Would he be prepared for the distant future? Would he be prepared when one day the groom found his bride ready and decided to return? Oh, indeed he would.

May God give us light on this. Now I'm sure this weekend, by God's goodness, you'll be able to glean many helpful suggestions on how to be his prepared people, how to be ready for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. But I would suggest that nothing is more fundamental.

Nothing is more foundational than this. I am made ready for his future coming by being opened and responsive to the Holy Spirit when he reveals him now, when he comes now through the revelation of this book. When I see him, I'll be like him.

God desires us to be on our faces before a full revelation of our risen and exalted Lord. If he's not revealing himself to me day by day, I won't be changed. Do you realize this? Any change that comes in your life, that comes in any other way, than by a revelation of the Lord Jesus, that change is not real.

You're faking it. It's mechanical. It's plastic.

It's not real. You're only changed by seeing Jesus. I'm only changed by seeing Jesus.

And as I see the Lord now, I am being prepared, changed, ready for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are thousands of Christians, brothers and sisters in Christ, that can carry on a conversation and know more about his coming someday in the clouds that know nothing of his coming now by revelation as I study this book under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We can't miss that.

You've got to be seeing the Lord now if you're going to be prepared for his coming. Now, having said that by way of introduction, let's see if we can see God's heart in this grand chapter before us. You know, you might think if I'm going to be one like John that falls before a full revelation of the Lord Jesus, then I must understand all the details of that revelation.

You know, we can get so sidetracked. I don't know if you caught when we were reading that great passage. That's full.

There's so much in there. We can get so sidetracked by some of those descriptions. Think, oh, I've got to understand all of the details in that chapter and understand everything.

I'll tell you, there's really only two things that you need to understand in order to understand Revelation chapter 1. First is, you've got to know who that person is. That's for sure. And then there's a couple of mysteries that are mentioned.

Don't get all distracted by these wonderful titles. I'm the first, I'm the last, I'm the Alpha and I'm the Omega in the beginning, and the one who was dead and became dead and is now alive. Those are wonderful things.

When you have time, meditate on them. I'm not saying neglect them. But don't miss the big point.

Let me put it in my own words. Here's what Jesus was saying. Now, this is not in your Bible, it's only in mine.

But here's what he was saying. John, John, John, it's me. You get the impact of that? It's me.

Remember you leaned toward my bosom? Your friend, it's me. Don't be afraid. You see all these eyes of fire, and you see these feet of brass, and don't get afraid.

It's me. I'm the one that loves you. I'm your friend.

It's Jesus. I'm the one who died for you. I'm alive.

That's the point of it. That's what he's saying. John, don't get sidetracked with all this glory, and all this pomp, and all this display, and all this symbolism, and all this splendor, and all this majesty.

It's me, John. I'm the one who died for you. And how his heart sighed with relief.

He turned around and he saw that great vision. A vision like that is not designed to teach you to look to Jesus Christ in the flesh. You can only look to Christ in the Spirit with a vision like that.

Jesus didn't say, John, I want you to notice my white hair. Now let me tell you what that means. My white hair means this.

And do you notice the fiery eyes? You see, that's talking about omniscience. He didn't say that. He didn't say, look at my golden girdle, John.

That means such and such. And my feet and brass, and brass is judgment, and that means this, and that means the other thing. John just needed to know that this glorious one was the same Jesus that he had known, that walked with him, that died for him, and he's now alive again.

In its simplest form, this is a vision of the risen Savior. But you not only have to know who he is, notice the last verse, please, of chapter 1. As for the mystery of the seven stars, which you saw in my right hand, the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. You see, there are two mysteries here.

If you know those two mysteries, you've got the chapter. Mystery of the seven lampstands, mystery of the seven stars, that's it. Now you know what a Bible mystery is.

Trace that word through. There's many times it's used. Mystery of the kingdom and the rapture, I show you a mystery we shall not all sleep.

The mystery of marriage, I'm speaking about Christ and the church. The mystery of Christ, the mystery of the gospel, the mystery of iniquity, the mystery of faith, mystery of godliness, mystery of union with Christ, the mystery hidden from the ages, Christ in you. A mystery is not something mysterious.

A mystery is not something profound, hidden, deep. A mystery is not something that's confusing. I would read in the past, I'd say, Bible mystery, and oh no, I'll never get that.

That's for the spiritual hotshots. That's for those who know Greek and Hebrew. I'll never figure out a mystery.

A Bible mystery is something that cannot be known until God reveals it. That's a Bible mystery. And once God reveals it, it's plain, no reason not to know the mystery.

And when God speaks about mysteries, it's as He reveals them. And so He said in this vision, there's a lot in the vision, but there's only two mysteries. And so He tells you what they are.

He discloses those two mysteries. You know, when I looked at this vision, I thought, two mysteries? You've got to be kidding me. Seems to me like there are so many.

What does His white hair mean? And what is symbolized by His flaming eyes and His glowing feet and His voice like the sound of many waters and the sword coming out of His mouth and His face like the noonday sun? That must mean something. Those are all mysteries, I thought. And look at His robe, verse 13.

A robe reaching to His feet, girded across His chest with a golden sash. So you read in the commentaries, that's His priestly robe. It's Christ the High Priest.

That's who's pictured here. And then I said, well, then where's His miter? And where's the ephod? And where's the breastplate? And where's the censer? And where are the bells? And where's the sacrifice? And someone said, well, if that is priestly robe, it's His royal robe. He's a king.

And so I asked, where's the crown? And where's the scepter? And where's the throne? And where's the royal color? They said, well, it's both, His king and priest. He's a royal priest. It's both.

And it seems so mysterious. But God says, all of that aside, there's two mysteries. The candlesticks and the star in His right hand.

If you get that, you've got the vision. Two mysteries, that's it. May God help us as we look at those mysteries.

We don't need to bother our heads too much about what they are. He spells it out. Verse 20, the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

All right, that's clear. At least that means, verse 11, the seven churches in Asia Minor, at least it means that. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

At least it means that. Maybe seven churches, maybe they're representative. Some would say that, that it pictures the whole church in every age, the whole body of Christ.

Yes, there are seven literal churches, but maybe seven is the number of completeness and fullness. And those seven churches picture the church of every age. I incline to that myself, that the spiritual condition of those churches and the external circumstances they were going through represented what was coming down the road.

Anyway, the point is not so much the churches, as much as the living Christ in the midst of the churches, and walking in the churches. Verse 13, when it says, in the middle of the lampstand. I used to think that was like the center of a circle, or like the hub of a wheel.

He's standing in the middle. But that's not what is happening here. It's not in the middle, in one spot.

It's in the midst. It's everywhere. If I broke an expensive perfume bottle like Mary did to worship the Lord Jesus, and it was an expensive perfume, the fragrance would be in the midst of the room.

It would pervade the room. Listen to John 12.3, Mary took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Every room, the house was filled with it. And in that sense, he's everywhere. He's in the churches.

His presence is diffused. It's a pervasive presence. You get mystery number one? Hold it.

The churches, the seventh churches, and pervading the churches, in the midst of the churches, filling the churches, walking in the churches, is this risen one. The one who's coming is here now. He's in the churches.

Mystery two. Hold that for a moment. Verse 16, in his right hand he held seven stars.

Verse 20, he explains the mystery. As for the mystery of the seven stars, the seven stars are the seven angels of the seven churches. And so the commentators say, oh, what's an angel? They get into all of that.

Some think because of Daniel chapter 10, there was a literal angel presiding over the kingdom of Persia. And so they think maybe there are literal angels presiding over local assemblies. I don't know about all of that.

I have trouble thinking it was a literal angel, a sinless being, because they're called to repent. And so you'd wonder why that angel was called to repent if it was a sinless being. They say that the word just means messenger.

And some say human messenger, leadership, elders, overseers, pastors, teachers, those who were presiding in authority over the local body. Whether they're angels in heaven that never sinned or messengers on the earth that have responsibility in the body, the same thing is clear, and that's the point. He's holding them in his right hand.

Don't get all mixed up with who they are. He's holding them in his right hand. That's the mystery.

Now the word used to describe that is not this. There's a Greek word for this. I'm holding my Bible.

That's not how he held the stars in his right hand. The word that was used is this, gripping the stars in his right hand. Gripping the stars.

How tight is your grip? I'll tell you how tight your grip is. I know how tight your grip is. Your grip is tight in proportion to the strength of your arm.

Right? You got a strong right arm, you got a strong grip. If I have a strong right arm, I have a strong grip. How tight is God's grip? You see, it's also tight in proportion to the strength of his right arm.

How strong is his right arm? How big is his hand that meets out the heavens with a span, the cups of waters in the earth that has your name engraven on it? How tight is his grip? You see, when we see the seven messengers in the right hand of this exalted one being tightly gripped so no one can pluck them out of his hand, don't just think, oh, they must be sinless angels or else they're elders. They're some responsible person. The leadership represents every believer.

God doesn't have a double standard. And now here's his qualification for elders, and here's his qualifications for the average Christian. He doesn't have a double standard.

He's saying, my qualification for elders are my qualification for every Christian, but you better have come that far before you take on responsibility among the people of God. But he doesn't have a double standard. You see, in this great mystery, John heard the voice, turned around, saw a revelation, a full revelation of Christ, and God began to unfold the mystery.

And the mystery is this. The one who's coming is here and he is in the body. Not only that, but he holds in his right hand every believer illustrated by the seven stars.

He's in you and you're in him. That's the mystery of chapter one. The great revelation of the risen, exalted Christ, and before that truth, John fell as a dead man, a full Christ.

He's in me and I'm in him. He's in us and we're in him. He's moving and pervading his church, and he's holding every member in his tight grip so no one can pluck them out of his hand.

You want to be ready for his return? May I suggest that God open your eyes to that revelation and that you also fall before that revelation. He's in me. He's in us.

We're in him. You want to get ready for the future? Let God dawn that on your soul. Let God dawn that on your heart.

Well, that vision became a personal blessing for the apostle. Verse 17 and 18, when he heard the Word of God and the Word of God revealed the Christ of God, and he saw Christ and God unfolded the mysteries and Christ is in us and we're in Christ. Then the Lord Jesus touched him personally and raised him up and revealed himself, prepared him for the near and distant future, for the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

He also gave him a ministry. He gave him a ministry to the body after God had shown him all of that. Verse 19, he said, now write.

Now write. Verse 11, write in a book what you see. Send it to the seven churches.

Who is now on his face before a full revelation of the Lord Jesus? Who had God discover to him the great mystery that God, Christ is in us and we're in him? What was his ministry now to the church? Once again, this is not in your Bible. Let me say it in my own words just to help get it before your heart. Basically, John was saying this.

I'll say it in my own words and I'll try to show you from the Scripture. Basically, he was saying this to the seven churches. He was saying, I have fallen on my face before a full revelation of the Lord Jesus.

God has discovered to me what could only be revealed by him. He's in us and we are in him. Now brothers and sisters in these seven churches, return to chapter one.

Come where I am. You've departed from chapter one. He's glorified now and you've departed from this chapter.

There's only one place of blessing and that's in chapter one on your face before a full revelation of Christ embracing the truth that he's in us and we are in him. Say, how do you know that was his message? Listen to how he wrote to the churches. He keeps borrowing descriptions from what he had just seen.

Chapter two, one to Ephesus. The message comes from one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and who walks among the seven golden lampstands. Where'd you get that idea, John? Chapter one.

I just saw that. That's where I got it. And then to Smyrna he writes in verse eight and he presents the author of that letter as the first, the last, the one who was dead and has come to life.

Where'd you get that idea, John? From the first chapter. That's what I just saw. And then in verse 12 he writes to the church of Pergamum and to that church Jesus is the one who has the sharp two-edged sword.

Where'd you get that idea, John? Chapter one. I just saw that in chapter one. Verse 18, to Thyatira, the son of God who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like burnished brass.

Where'd you get that idea, John? Chapter one. You see, the seven churches of Asia were especially selected by the Holy Spirit out of hundreds. There were many assemblies.

He didn't need these seven. There were other assemblies because these churches departed from the full revelation in chapter one. Do you realize this, brothers and sisters in Christ? As individuals, as families, as corporate members of the body of our Lord Jesus, there is only one problem that you will ever have in your life.

Not two, not three, not five, not even seven. The only problem you'll ever have in your life is the problem of taking your eyes off the Lord Jesus Christ. That's it.

You say, then why seven churches? Didn't they each have a problem of their own? No, they all had the same problem. They all departed from the full revelation of Christ in chapter one, but there are seven ways to do that. You say, didn't they each fall in their own hole? No, there's only one hole, but there's seven ways to fall into the same hole.

May God help you understand what I'm trying to say. You're prepared if you're in chapter one. You're not prepared if you're in chapters two and three.

In the letters to the seven churches, the Holy Spirit spells out all of the possibilities. There are only seven ways that you can take your eyes off Christ. There are not eight ways.

There's only seven ways. And God has given us in these churches every possible way that you can be unprepared, and He invites you back to chapter one where you can be prepared. The only way that you can ever take your eyes off Christ is as Ephesus did, or as Smyrna did, or as Pergamum did, or as Thyatira did, or as Sardis did, or as Philadelphia did, or as Laodicea did.

Chapter one, how to be ready. Chapter two and three describes those that were not ready, and they were invited back to chapter one so that they too might fall on their faces before a full revelation of Christ and embrace the wonder of the mystery. He's in us, and we're in Him.

I know we've come to Revelation 1-3, and we say, now that's the section on the seven churches. I like to think of it as the section on the eight churches. There's eight churches.

You say, there's seven churches in chapter two and three. Yeah, but they weren't ready. There's a picture of another church in chapter one, and I'm suggesting that John himself pictures that remnant of believers that are ready.

He's the remnant church. He pictures the church victorious. He's the overcoming church.

He describes for us where we ought to be on our faces before a full revelation. He was in the Spirit. He heard the voice.

He saw the revelation of Christ. He embraced the mystery, and he was given a ministry to invite back those who were not ready. In my privilege, my opportunity this weekend, I wanted to present before you the remnant church illustrated by the Apostle John.

And if there's perhaps a brother or a sister or more, I'm not talking now about apostasy. I'm not talking about willful rebellion against the Lord. Of course you cannot be ready if you're going to run out in sin.

I'm not talking about that. These churches had a desire to know the Lord, but they tripped up. They fell into these holes, and there are only seven ways you can do that.

If you have a heart to know the Lord, what I want to do, God helping us tomorrow afternoon, there's so much in there we can't touch it all, but we've got to touch something. And I want to show you every possibility of not being ready. And he that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

May we be a people like the Apostle John who prepares for the coming one by receiving His coming now and falling before a full revelation of our Lord Jesus. May God help us. Let's pray.

Father, thank You so much for Your Word. Not what we think it might mean, but everything You have inspired it to mean. In spite of everything I've said, work in our hearts all You know that it means.

Give us that present revelation of Christ that we might be ready. Lord, we know there's a wedding coming. Court us now, we ask in Jesus' name.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/14/SID14040.mp3>

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