

# (Through the Bible) Revelation - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen's sermon on Revelation emphasizes the importance of being a bondservant to fully understand the book's message and the necessity of maintaining a loving relationship with Christ amidst tribulation.*

**Duration:** 57:27

**Scripture:** Revelation 1:1, Revelation 3:20, Revelation 5:5-6, Revelation 6:9-11, Revelation 7

**Topics:** "End Times", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the book of Revelation, highlighting the unveiling of Christ, the condition of the churches, and the future events towards the end of time. It emphasizes the importance of repentance, overcoming, and staying faithful amidst tribulations. The sermon underscores the need for believers to have a fresh perspective on the sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary and to be prepared for the future events prophesied in the book of Revelation.

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## Transcript

We'll now turn to the last book of the Bible, Revelation. Revelation chapter 1. The word revelation means an unveiling. You've sometimes seen pictures of some dignitary, a cabinet minister or someone unveiling a statue.

There's a curtain over the statue and he pulls the curtain and you can see the statue of some great man. Revelation is like that. God pulled the curtain and showed John three things.

He showed him the glory of Jesus Christ in chapter 1. He showed him the condition, the inner real condition of the churches in that area at that time in chapters 2 and 3. And then the third thing he showed him was the future after, towards the end of time, how it's going to be in chapters 4 to 22. So we could say the first chapter deals with an unveiling of Christ himself. The second is an unveiling of Christ and his church.

And the third section verses chapters 4 to 22 is an unveiling of Christ and his kingdom. That's how revelation is divided. You find that division in verse 19 of chapter 1. The things which you have seen, chapter 1. The things which are at present, chapters 2 and 3. And the things which will take place in the future, chapters 4 to 22.

Now this revelation was given not only for John but for all his bond servants, chapter 1 verse 1. That's important to remember that bond servants are slaves. God has his slaves and God has his servants. What is the difference between a servant and a slave? A servant and a bond servant? The difference is this.

We don't have slaves today so we don't know it so much. But in those days people clearly understood the difference between a servant and a slave. A servant could get a salary.

You have a servant in your house, you pay a salary. And if you don't pay the salary they won't come to work next month. A slave never gets a salary.

His life long he has to serve. A servant has got certain rights. He can go to the government if you ill-treat him.

A slave has got no rights. He cannot appeal to anybody if he is ill-treated. God has servants who will serve him if he takes care of them and gives them money and gives them food and clothing.

If one day he doesn't give them something, they have complaints and they will stop serving him. And they have certain rights. They say, Lord, I did this for you.

You got to do something for me. A slave has given up all his rights. If his master gives him food, he's happy.

If his master gives him some pocket money, he's happy. If he doesn't give him, he still has to be a slave. The difference is those slaves in those days worked out of compulsion.

We choose to work out of love. Like in Exodus 21, I love my master. I will not go out free.

The book of Revelation can really be understood only if you're a slave. If you've given yourself to God so completely that you don't want anything from him, you belong to him completely. You have no complaints about anything he does.

You say, Lord, I'm your slave. I love you. I never want to live for anything other than you.

I don't love serve you for money or any reward I'm going to get in earth or in heaven. If you come to the book of Revelation with that attitude, you will understand. If you don't have that attitude in your heart, you can use your clever brain and get all types of interpretations from Revelation.

And there are plenty of them in the world. They can't get past verse one. It was God gave it to Jesus Christ.

Remember, it's a revelation of Jesus Christ. God gave it to Jesus Christ to show to his bondservants. Are you one of his bondservants? Then he showed it to you.

If you're not one of his bondservants, you can study it for 100 years and get all types of bright ideas. You can read all the books on revelation in the world and you'll get some ideas, but it won't be the truth. It won't change your life.

You'll be living in a world of delusion. So we should don't get stuck in verse one. If you don't get past verse one, I say, forget it.

And John was one of those bondservants. So John saw it. Today there are bondservants, they see it.

Many other people have got theories on it. Okay. Verse three.

This is given to know before that verse one. In the last part, it says he sent and margin says signified it. That's another word I want to point out.

Signified it says communicated or margin signified means he showed it by signs that teaches us the whole book is full of signs. Some of them, we may not be able to understand very accurately, but the more a bondservant you are, the more accurately you'll understand it. And the lesser bondservant you are, the less you will understand the book of revelation.

However clever you may be, however many degrees you get studying this book, and however many books you read on it, you got to be a bondservant if you want to understand it correctly. There are so many views on revelation. I'm not surprised because there are very few bondservants.

All the servants are giving their opinions and their opinions are fit for the trash can. Verse three. Blessed is the man who reads this book.

Now, I believe it's every book in the Bible is blessed if you read it, but there's a special blessing promised on those who read this book. Now you understand why the devil doesn't get most Christians to read this book because there's a special blessing promised on those who read this book. And not those who understand it.

He doesn't say blessed are those who understand that is not mentioned there. But those who obey it, those who keep it, the blessing is on those who read and hear and obey. It doesn't matter if you don't understand everything.

I don't understand many things here. But there are certain things here which I have to obey. The book of revelation has not given us to make charts about the future.

I remember seeing and hearing people who make big charts on the book of revelation and tell you when the rapture is going to take place and how the churches are all pictures of different periods in the church age. And Ephesus was the end of the first century church. And Philadelphia is the church before the last one.

And Laodicea is the church of the 20th century and all this type of stuff. I've seen umpteen charts in my life and I've seen people who study these charts. They fight and quarrel with each other.

They don't have victory over sin. They are defeated. All these charts are again fit for the trash can.

What you need to know is brother is not all these details of prophecy. It does not say there's a blessing on those who understand it. It's a blessing on those who keep it.

The book of revelation is not given us to make charts. The book of revelation is given us for obedience, just like every other book in the Bible. That means there are things here you've to obey.

Find that and that's enough. The other things you don't understand, just leave it aside. It's like when you eat fish, you keep the bones aside and you eat the fleshy part.

The time is near. John writes to the seven churches from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, firstborn of the dead. And immediately he talks about his coming.

This book is related to his coming. Verse seven, he's coming with the clouds. Listen, and when he comes, he will not come secretly.

Verse seven, when he comes in the clouds for the rapture, every eye will see him. There is no secret rapture. Every eye in the world will see him and they will see us being taken up to heaven.

There is only one coming of Christ and all those who pierced him will also see him and they will mourn. And he goes on to say in verse nine, I, John, your brother. He wasn't a bishop.

He wasn't a pastor. He wasn't a pope. He was a brother.

Good example. 90 year old godly John is still an ordinary brother. He wasn't a reverend.

He wasn't a reverend doctor. He was just a brother. Can you follow his example or you want something else? And a fellow partaker in the tribulation the book of revelation is about tribulation.

How can you preach about tribulation if you haven't gone through tribulation yourself? So John had to go through tribulation. He was exiled to the Isle of Patmos and there in suffering tribulation, he gets a vision of how the church will go through tribulation. And if you had gone to John in the Isle of Patmos and told him, brother, do you know the church is not going through the tribulation? He does Brother, I'm already going through a tribulation here.

What are you talking? Do you think any tribulation is going to be worse than what Christians have suffered in communist countries in the last hundred years? You think any tribulation is going to be worse than that? People who think that the God loves these last did last century worldly Christians so much that he's going to take them out of tribulation and these godly Christians who suffered in China and Russia and Albania, he never cared for them. I don't believe that doctrine and he says I was in the spirit on the Lord's day. It's only a man who is in the spirit who can see and understand what God is trying to reveal and he heard as the voice of a trumpet when God speaks and you're in the spirit you the voice will be as loud as a trumpet.

Otherwise, you won't hear a thing. You know, there are voices in this room. There's rock music in this room.

If I get a radio, I can tune it and show it to you. This God's word is being preached in this room in the voices through radio. Why can't we hear it? We're not tuned to it when we are tuned to the spirit.

We hear God very clearly loud as a trumpet. That's how John heard it and the Lord told him to write down what he saw and send it to the seven churches. John was on the island of Patmos was about if you look at a map, it's about a hundred kilometers southwest of Ephesus which is on the mainland.

This is an island, a rocky island in the Aegean Sea and from Ephesus, he was asked to send a message to Ephesus. North of Ephesus about a hundred kilometers was Smyrna and then about a little north northeast northwest about 40 kilometers was Pergamum and then about a hundred kilometers east southeast was Pergamum, sorry, Thyatira and then about 30-40 kilometers south was Sardis. Another 30-40 kilometers was southeast was Philadelphia and southeast to that was Laodicea which is finally about again a hundred so kilometers from Ephesus.

So all these churches were in a circle of about a hundred kilometers radius and yet they did not belong to one denomination. They all were independent churches. They did not have one bishop ruling all over all of

them.

Each had their own elders. That's how the churches were in the first century. So close to each other.

They were all independent churches. So the corruption in one church did not go to the other church. If the one church was corrupt, it just became corrupt.

The church 40 kilometers away was pure. But if they were all in one denomination, one became corrupt, everybody would have become corrupt. The bishop loses his salvation, everybody would lose their salvation.

That is God's wisdom. The New Testament pattern is each church being independent, not one big denomination. So we see here to the churches, not to the church in Asia Minor.

Each church, there's no such thing as the church in India. There are churches. There may be a church here and a church there and a church in another place.

And when he turned around, he did not see one golden lampstand with seven branches like Old Testament. The Old Testament was one golden lampstand with seven branches. The New Testament is seven separate gold lampstands, seven separate churches, not one denomination with seven branches.

And in the middle of the lampstands is Jesus, who is the head of each of these seven churches. And it describes Jesus in poetic language. These are all symbols of his purity and his power and the word of God.

Verse 16 going out of his mouth. And this man, who once upon a time had leaned upon Jesus' breast at the Last Supper, now when he sees Jesus, he falls at his face as a dead man. He sees Jesus in his glory.

The holiest man on earth falls on his face with his mouth in the dust. Whenever you see the glory of the Lord, that's what will happen to you. When you don't see the glory of the Lord, your head will be lifted up.

But when you see the glory of the Lord, your mouth will be in the dust, even if you're the holiest man that walks on the earth. And the same word that Jesus always spoke to his apostles when he was on earth, he speaks to John, who has suffered persecution for so many years. Don't be afraid.

Verse 17. That is the word that rings through the book of Revelation. Don't be afraid.

And that's the word that comes to us as we face tribulation in the future. Don't be afraid. Put your mouth in the dust and see the glory of the Lord.

Forget all these persecutors. Don't be afraid. I am the first.

I am the last. John, don't be afraid. Don't worry about the king up there in Rome.

Don't worry about these people who persecuted you. I'm the first and I'm the last. I'm the living one.

I was dead. I'm alive. And I have the keys of death.

You cannot go through that door, John, till I open it. Don't worry. And tradition tells us that John was not killed.

He died a natural death, as far as we know, because Jesus decided that. And Jesus is the one who decides for you and me whether we are going to be martyred in India for the cause of the gospel or whether we are going to die a natural death. No religious fundamentalist is going to determine that for me.

Jesus has already determined it. It's already written in his book. And if I live faithfully, he's got the keys of death.

I'm not afraid. And you don't have to be afraid either. I tell you, it's impossible to serve God in days of tribulation if you don't first see this vision.

You have to see Jesus first before you see everything else. You have to see Jesus first before you even see the condition of the churches. Otherwise you'll get discouraged when you read about the condition of the churches in chapter two and three.

I sometimes get discouraged when I see the condition of some church. And I say, Lord, I want to see your glory first. Then I won't get discouraged.

And then he says, the seven stars which you saw, verse 20, are the messengers. Angel. Remember angel? In Indian languages, messenger.

Messengers of the churches. Among the elders in each church, usually one was a messenger. That means one usually had the gift of the word.

If there were three elders, one would be the messenger. If there were two elders, one would be the messenger. Every church is the same.

Even today, the church may have two or three elders, but one will have the gift of the word. They're the messenger of the church and right to the messenger of the churches and give them these messages for them and for the churches. Okay.

And the lampstands are seven separate churches, each of whom are directly under me. They're not under each other. There's no bishop in charge of the seven churches.

If there were a bishop, Jesus would have sent the letter to the bishop and say circulated to the others. No, he had to send it to each elder because each elder was in charge of his own church. Don't ever try to be a bishop.

Let each church have its own elders. You can be like a spiritual father. If they want you want help from you, they consult you, but each church must be independent under the headship of the Lord.

If you want to follow the new Testament pattern chapter two and chapter three, we read about seven churches. Two of them are good. Five of them are bad.

Five are terribly backslidden. Two are absolutely pure. First, the church in Ephesus, we could call it the loveless church, the church without love.

They had many good things. Verse two, they had deeds, toil, perseverance. They could not endure evil men means they judged sin.

They could not endure false apostles means they judged false doctrine. They not only judged sin, they judged false doctrine. They had perseverance.

Verse three, they endured suffering for Jesus' name. They did not get weary. You'd think that's a wonderful church.

Purity in life, purity in doctrine, enduring suffering, holding up the name of Jesus, laboring. But the Lord says all this is worth zero because you don't love me like you love me at first. Do you understand how important it is to love the Lord? That all your work for the Lord is worth zero.

He says it's so bad. You've lost your first love. You have fallen.

Can you believe that a man who's laboring, who fights for purity, fights for purity of doctrine, laboring, working hard for the Lord, enduring is a backslider? How many people will think such a person is a backslider? He is a backslider because he's lost his love for the Lord, which he had when he started serving the Lord. The Lord says you've fallen. You were up there first.

How was he up there? Because he loved the Lord and did the same things. Now you've fallen. Repent.

See, the relationship Jesus wants to have with us is like a marriage, husband and wife. You see a newly married couple who really love one another and the wife is so happy to do everything in the house. She's so eager the first week after she's married to cook the food and wash the clothes and keep the house tidy and waiting for the husband to come from the office.

And as soon as the bell rings, rushing to the door, dressed up nicely to greet her husband, she's a little Western minded with a kiss perhaps. Okay, whichever way it is, expressing her love for him. You go and the dinner is ready and they sit and they enjoy themselves.

Now you go to the same house 20 years later and she's not thinking of her husband. She's got other things to think about and she's a priest. She does all the job.

She still cooks. She washes. She keeps the home and the husband comes and rings the bell.

Nobody's at the door. He's got the key. He's got to open it himself and come inside and says, where's the dinner? Oh, it's there on the table.

You can go and eat it. Did she cook the food? Yes. Did she keep the house tidy? Yes.

Did she wash the clothes? Yes. Just like in the first year of marriage. But there's a difference.

The love has gone. The fire has gone. How many marriages there are like that? This is exactly what happened to Ephesus and that's exactly what can happen to you or me.

If we don't preserve our love for Jesus Christ, you must say, Lord, I love you. My ministry is not my God. I want to love you like I loved you at first and even more than I loved you at first.

That is a true marriage. What do I want from my wife? I don't care if she doesn't cook the food or wash the clothes. We love one another much more today than when we were first married.

That's true marriage. That's how it must be with Jesus. Many times I've laid down on my bed and I said, Lord, you can take away my ministry.

You can take away my voice. You can take away my health. If you paralyze me and I can't speak anymore and I lie down in this bed, I will not be discouraged.

I will lie down here in this bed and love you. That's all I live for. My ministry is not my God.

You can take it away any day you like. I never write another book, never speak another tape, never travel anymore for a meeting, but my love for the Lord will just increase more and more lying down on that bed. I hope it's like that with you.

Then your joy for the Lord, then your love for the Lord, then your service for the Lord, rather, will be full of joy and victory. Then we go to the next church. There are many other things.

You can look at it yourself. The church in Smyrna, which is a suffering church. And here is a church that is poor.

Verse 9, it faces tribulation. This church also would not have believed if you had taught them that the church will escape the tribulation. They go through tribulation and this church that's going through tribulation is the one that the Lord is happy with.

The other one that's not going through tribulation, God is not happy with. Do you know that God loves people and he allows them to go through tribulation? Even in the future, it will be like that. But you're spiritually rich.

There are people who say they are Jews, but they are the synagogue of Satan. There are people today who say they are Christians and they persecute the truly godly people. They are the synagogue of Satan.

Even today, the church of Satan who call themselves Christians. Again, what is his word to this church? Verse 10, don't be afraid of what you're going to suffer. What is the Lord's word to us today? Don't be afraid of what you're going to suffer.

The devil is going to put some of you into prison. Can the devil put God's servants in prison? Certainly. All the apostles face that.

Why can't we face it? The devil can take you to court through religious people. The devil can put you in prison. Jesus was taken to court.

Jesus was crucified. And if you follow the Lord, you will follow in his footsteps. You'll go wherever he went.

And why will you be put into prison? Is it without God's permission? That is impossible. The first book of the Bible, Job, first book written, teaches us that God has to give permission before anything happens to his servants. That's written in the first page of the first book of inspired scripture.

So don't worry about that. Cannot be without God's permission. And so it's with God's permission.

He allows you to be put in prison. And why? For us to be tested. We have to be tested.

That's our examination. Don't you want to go to the examination? Sure. What happens after examination? What happens for any child after examination? Promotion.

So what will happen after you're examined? You'll be promoted. Don't miss the examination. Don't run away from the examination.

I want a promotion. And so I'm going to go through the examination. And if the examination is conducted in the prison, will you go and write the examination there? Sure.

I'll go anywhere to write the examination because I want to be promoted. I don't want to sit in the same class forever and ever. So it says you'll be tested.

And please remember that I have determined already the period of this tribulation. It's going to be for 10 days. That's it.

On the 11th day, you'll be free. God determined how long Job should suffer. God determined how long Peter should be in prison.

God determined how long these people should be in prison. God determines how long you should suffer. Some suffering you go through.

Please remember you're in the middle of it, but God has already seen the end of it. And he has said on such and such a date and such and such a month, such and such a year. It's over.

Isn't it good for us to know that? A suffering church. Remember that. Be faithful till the end.

Be faithful and I will give you the crown of life. In each of these churches, the Lord speaks to the overcomers. To the first church, he says in verse 7, if you overcome, I'll give you to eat of the tree of life, which Adam missed.

In verse 11, he says, if you overcome the second death, hell won't touch you. It's not for everybody. It's for those who overcome.

Chapter 2, verse 12 is the third church. We could call this the worldly church, Pergamon. And the Lord says, you are living where Satan's throne is.

That means Satan has got a special interest in your city. He doesn't have his throne everywhere. He has thrown in one place and the demons have got their junior throne somewhere else.

But Satan had his throne in those days in Pergamon because he had a special interest in the believers in that city. And I think part of the reason was because in that city there was a very faithful servant of God called Antipas, verse 13. And when Satan saw this fellow Antipas, he said, I better make my headquarters where this fellow is and give him some problems.

And so there was this Antipas who did not deny the faith. He was probably an elder in that church, a faithful witness who kept the church pure, preached prophetically, preached purity, preached faithfulness. The Lord calls him my witness, my faithful one.

And Satan got him killed. But who opened the door of death for Antipas? Jesus. Who opened it for Stephen? Jesus.

Who opened it for all the other 11 apostles who had died before John? Jesus. Who opened it for Antipas? Jesus. So we see that Antipas goes through the gate and he's dead.

And then what happened? The usual thing that happens when a godly leader dies in a church. Downwards, decline. That's what happens.

That's what happened in Pergamon. It's what's happened in many, many other churches. God's church depends on sometimes one godly leader.

And now what has happened? Antipas is gone and the other leaders are a compromiser, just like in Ephesus after Paul went, it was all compromise. And we see what happened to the church in Ephesus here because of those ungodly leaders. Same thing happened in Pergamon.

And he says, now you're following the teaching of Balaam, more interested in money and you're interested in all compromise and there's immorality in your midst and you've got some other teaching of the Nicolaitans. We don't know what the teaching of the Nicolaitans is, but some type of teaching which God hated. And he says, repent, otherwise I'll come to you and I'll judge you.

Verse 16, again, if you overcome, I will give you some secret revelations, hidden manna, which will not be given to other people. Do you want secret revelations from God? Understanding of scripture, which is not revealed to anybody else? Hidden manna. I'll give it to you if you overcome.

I'll give you a stone like a wedding ring, the diamond on it. You'll be my bride with a new name written on it, my name written on it, a new name which people don't know. The Lord says, I'll have some secrets with you.

I'll treat you like my wife. Husbands and wives have secrets which other people don't know. The Lord says, if you're an overcomer, I'll treat you like that.

You won't be like all the other daughters of Jerusalem, the other believers. The next church is Thyatira, the adulterous church. And there, he says, I know your deeds, verse 19, your love, your faith, your service, perseverance and all that.

But you've got spiritual adultery in your midst. You've got this woman called Jezebel. And the word for woman could be translated as your wife, could be woman or wife.

You elder, you got a wife who's controlling your life. You take those decisions in the elders meetings and you come back and your wife tells you all types of things. You arrange another elders meeting to tell the elders what your wife said.

This is what happens in so many churches. The elders wife controls the church. There are Jezebels in churches, women who want to control the prophets, control the elders.

Jezebel could control her husband Ahab. Ahab was a spineless type of chap controlled by this woman. And there are some elders like that who got no backbone.

Their wife controls them. What did, who was Jezebel scared of? It says in those days, there were 7,000 people who did not bow the knee in Jezebel's time. Jezebel was not scared of any of those 7,000 believers.

She was scared of one man, Elijah. That's all. And she even frightened Elijah for a while.

What a powerful woman. There are some powerful women like this in the church and they need some Elijah's in that church to put them in their proper place. And if you're not going to be like an Elijah to put these strong women in their proper place, I tell you, your church will be another adulterous church like Thyatira.

You can have your choice. And the Lord says, I gave her time to repent and she did not repent. She brought all types of worldliness into the church and all those people who listen to her advice, her children, I'm going to kill them.

And to the rest of you, verse 24, who have somehow escaped her teaching, I'd say, don't listen to that. All these deep truths they talk about, it's all deep truths of Satan, verse 24. Hold fast what I've given you till I come.

If you overcome, I'll give you authority like I gave Elijah authority. And you will rule the nations one day with a rod of iron. Number five, the church in Sardis, chapter three.

This is the hypocritical church, the one that has a name that it's alive, but it's dead. The leaders were like that. The leader had a name.

He was alive. He was a great preacher and he had a great reputation because his doctrines were all evangelical, but he didn't have a life to back up his teaching. He was a compromiser.

He lived on his name and reputation, but he says, in your church, verse four, there are a few, maybe a few young brothers in that church who are zealous. They are pure. They have not corrupted their garments.

They were more spiritual than the elder. And he says, those who overcome will be clothed in white garments. To all these churches where there is sin, he has got only one word, repent.

Verse three, repent. You know the Lord's last message to the churches? Repent. He started out preaching repentance to unbelievers.

In Matthew chapter four, he said, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He ends the Bible with revelation with the same message of repentance, not to unbelievers now, but to the churches. Churches, repent.

Elders, repent. That's the message to elders. Overcome, overcome, overcome.

This is the message of the book of revelation. Repent and overcome, repent and overcome. If you've understood that, you've understood what it means to obey the message of the book of revelation.

Don't worry about the charts, prophetic charts and all that. Just repent and you'll be an overcomer. A lot of people who study prophetic charts don't overcome.

Important thing is to obey. Be like those few people who kept their garments clean. The next church is the church in Philadelphia, the faithful church.

Verse seven, the leader has been faithful and so the church is faithful. And the Lord says, I know your deeds. Verse eight, I have set before you an open door and nobody can shut it.

Wonderful. Do you know when the Lord opens a door for us, nobody can shut it. I have the keys.

I open and no man can shut. That's what he says here. And you've got a little power and you've kept my word and you have not denied my name.

That's wonderful. He's the one when he opens, nobody can shut. I praise God.

I don't have to go banging at doors. He opens them. Are you looking for a door of ministry for yourself? Who's going to give you that open door of ministry? Are you trying to bang it and open a door for yourself? Are you trying to come at the ministry? Somebody else has God has opened the door for somebody else.

You want that ministry, brother, be faithful. God will open the right doors for you and you won't waste your time going through wrong doors. Let him lead you and he will lead you to the right place.

I remember once when I was traveling to a certain country, the Lord said, you are not to write to anybody you know in that country that you are coming there. Just go. And I went and I came back and then the Lord tested me the first time.

Then I went, I found the Lord opened so many doors with people. I never knew. And they were the places the Lord wanted me to go to.

And I saw that God in his sovereignty opens the right doors. If you try to open doors yourself, create a ministry for yourself, you will miss the will of God for your life. Wait on God and let him open the door and you go there.

Don't try to push yourself. I want to have a ministry. I want to go here.

I want to be like that brother. I want to be like that brother. You'll destroy yourself.

God hasn't given you the ministries given somebody else. I open and no man can shut. I've set before you an open door.

The people who hate you, the synagogue of Satan, I will make them one day acknowledge that I have loved you. Then he says, I'm coming quickly. Verse 11, hold fast what you have that nobody takes your crown.

I've given you a ministry, be occupied with that. Otherwise your ministry will go to somebody else and he'll get your crown. Be faithful.

If you overcome verse 12, I'll be make you a pillar in my church. Do you want to be a pillar in the church? You know, pillars are the things that hold up the building. When the pillars go, like in Samson's time, when the pillar collapsed, the house collapsed.

When the pillars go, the church collapses. There were only two pillars in Samson's time that held up a whole building. Sometimes there are two elders that hold up a whole church.

When they go, the church goes. God wants many pillars. How can you be a pillar in the church? Verse 12, overcome in your secret life, in your private life.

Now the last church, Laodicea, which is the proud, lukewarm church. Here is a church that is absolutely content, even though it's thoroughly dead. It hasn't become cold.

That means thoroughly worldly. Neither is it on fire for God. It's sort of half and half, like most churches today.

They are not on fire for God. They are not thoroughly worldly. They say we are somehow getting on.

You know what happens to such churches? The Lord says, verse 16, I will spit you out of my mouth. And not only the church, the leader was not on fire. He was not cold, he was not worldly, but he was not on fire.

And the Lord tells the leader, you are in my mouth now, you are my mouthpiece, but I'm going to spit you out of my mouth. When something is in my mouth, I can say it's inside me. If I have a potato in my mouth, it's inside me.

When I spit it out, it's outside me. Here is a leader who was in Christ, and then he was going to be in danger of being out of Christ. Once saved, always saved.

Not for this fellow. He was going to be spat out. And why? Because he was not on fire.

And the Lord said, you either be on fire or be cold. What does that mean? You either live totally for me or live for the world. Do you know who are the ones who have bring the biggest disgrace on the name of Jesus Christ in India? It's not the heathen.

It's not the non-Christian. Because the non-Christian cannot bring disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ. No non-Christian can bring disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ because he doesn't take the name of Christ.

A man who's on fire for Jesus Christ cannot bring disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ, because he lives totally for the glory of God. Who is bringing disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ in this land today? Those who are neither non-Christians nor on fire for God. These in-between type of believers.

Who'd say, I'm born again and live for the world. Who say, I'm born again, I'm serving the Lord and they are serving money. The Lord says, I'll spit you out of my mouth.

You be out and out on fire for me or be a thoroughly worldly person. And I say that to everybody here. You be out and out for God or forget about Jesus Christ and go and be a worldly heathen.

There are only two options. There is no middle option. There is no third option.

He says, because you're lukewarm, verse 16, you're neither caught nor cold. I'll spit you out of my mouth. Now, I know that most people in that day did not believe it.

Most people today don't believe it. And perhaps most of you don't believe it, but whether you believe it or not, it is true. One day when Jesus comes, you'll discover that every lukewarm person is going to be spat out of the mouth of Jesus.

You don't believe it because you don't believe the word of God. I believe the word of God that every lukewarm Christian is going to be spat out of the mouth of Jesus, even if he's an elder of a church. If you don't believe that, be honest, scratch it out of your Bible and say, I don't believe that verse.

I haven't scratched it out of my Bible because I believe it. I believe it and I preach it and I seek to live in fear of it because I'm an elder. He who overcomes, verse 21, the Lord says, I will make him sit on my throne, even as I also overcame.

That teaches us that Jesus overcame in the days of his flesh. He had to fight a battle. There's no overcoming without a battle.

Jesus had a battle. He overcame and he sat down on the throne and he says to us, you fight, you battle, you overcome, you will sit on the throne. It's the same road for you as for me.

So we see to all the seven churches, the message is basically to the overcomer. And the last church was so bad that Jesus was outside the door. Verse 20, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

That is a verse we quote to the unbelievers. But do you know that was spoken to an elder? Can you imagine Jesus telling an elder, I'm standing at the door of your heart and knocking. I want to come inside.

The fellow's an elder in a church. Can you imagine Jesus standing at the door of a church and saying, can I come inside, please? You fellows who are praising and singing hallelujah inside. Can I come inside? Can you imagine churches can be like that where he's, Jesus is outside the door.

And I want to ask you something. If you are in such a church, the bridegroom is outside the door. What are you doing inside the church? You should be outside the door with your bridegroom.

I don't want to sit in a church where the bridegroom is outside the door. I'm his bride. I'll stand with the bridegroom.

If they throw him out, they throw me out. The sad thing is there are churches today that have rejected Jesus Christ and his word, but there are believers who claim to be the bride of Christ sitting in those churches. I don't understand how.

I think I do. They are not the bride of Christ. That's all.

If you are the bride of Christ, you'll be there outside the door with Jesus. Now these are strong words, but this is the last book of the Bible and you need to get it strong. Otherwise you can go astray.

Then comes the things that are in the future after these things. That means after this whole period of 2000 years of the church age, the Lord says, now come up here. I'm going to show you what is going to take place in the future.

And that's a beautiful word. Verse one, come up here. You know, as we consider the future in India, if you want to really be strong for the future, you need to listen to this word of Jesus in verse one.

Come up here. Look at what is going to happen in India and the world in the future from my viewpoint. Then you won't be afraid.

If you look at it from this low earthly viewpoint, you're going to get really scared. Now chapter four, you see the first of seven glimpses of heaven in the book of revelation. You know, the book of revelation, there are seven spirits, seven trumpets, seven bowls, seven seals.

There are also seven glimpses of heaven. And in every glimpse of heaven, you see they are praising and worshiping the Lord. That is what heaven is like.

And if you want to get ready for heaven, you better start praising and worshiping the Lord now. That is the spirit of heaven. Hallelujah.

The Lord is on the throne. Holy, holy, holy. That's how it is here.

Verse eight of chapter four, holy, holy, holy. They are worshiping him. The elders are falling down.

Verse 10, they are casting their crowns before him. There's no elder going around heaven saying, did you see the crown I won? No, they cast it down before the Lord and say, thou alone are worthy of Lord. Even the reward God gives us, you know, what are you going to do with the reward? Supposing God gives you a reward and says, you've been faithful, my son, here is a crown for you.

You know what you'll do in that day and say, Lord, that's yours. It's not to be on my head. You're the one who gave me grace for that.

I'm nobody here in heaven. Just another servant among the millions of servants of Jesus Christ. Thou alone are worthy.

That will be the attitude of a godly man. Thou art worthy, O Lord. Verse 11.

Let's mean it when we sing it. Chapter five, we read about a scroll that John sees and he hears a voice saying, who can open this book and break the seals? This is speaking about the redemption of the earth. There was an old testament law which said that if a poor man became so poor that he had to sell his land and Israelite, a relative of his, it had to be a relative, a close relative of his could come and pay for it and redeem the land and give it back to this poor man.

That's what Boaz did for Ruth and marry. If it's a girl, marry the girl. Boaz married Ruth and redeemed the land as well.

And Boaz, there is a picture of Christ and Ruth is the picture of the church of despised Gentile whom Boaz married, redeemed the land. This earth has to be redeemed because it belongs to the devil. You remember when Jesus was tempted, Luke chapter four and verse six, I think the devil told Jesus, I'll give you all this world because it belongs to me.

It's been given to me. Who gave it to the devil? Adam. God gave it to Adam.

Adam gave it to the devil. And the devil says, thank you very much. Ever since that day in Eden, when Adam fell, the earth belonged to him.

And when God, he said to Jesus, this belongs to me, Jesus didn't question it. But here's the time when the earth is going to be redeemed back, but it can only be redeemed by a relative. That's why Jesus had to come in the flesh and become our relative to redeem us and redeem the earth.

And we read here about, he says, don't weep the lion of Judah. Verse five is a beautiful verse. I love this verse.

Verse five, the lion of Judah has overcome and he looks to see the lion. Verse six, and he sees a lamb. The lion is a lamb.

That's how a godly man is. He's a lion and he's a lamb. That's how it used to be.

And it says here about his taking the book. And this is the result of the prayers. Verse eight of many of the saints for hundreds and hundreds of years, all over the world, people have been praying our father who art in heaven, thy kingdom come, thy kingdom come, thy kingdom come.

Finally, it's come the prayers of the saints. Don't think those prayers were wasted prayers offered 1900 years ago. Prayers offered now are all going up.

It's God is waiting, but those prayers are not wasted. Not a single prayer prayed by a sincere believer is wasted. It all goes up like incense before God.

And finally the answer comes. And they sing a new song. Thou art worthy.

New means always fresh. They are never tired of singing that Jesus blood has purchased me. I hope you're never tired of singing that Jesus blood has purchased you.

One of the prayers I have prayed is Lord, never let Calvary become a stale thing for me. I always wanted to be fresh for me that Jesus died. Every time I sing about Calvary and this amazing love that could save a wretched sinner like me.

Lord, I want to sing as though I have heard this message for the very first time. And that's how I seek to worship the Lord. As though I'm hearing for the first time that Jesus died for a sinner like me.

And your song can be new even now. I feel sorry for the believers who have lost the freshness of the vision of Calvary's cross. The Holy Spirit can keep it fresh.

And there he sees millions of angels worshiping and praising God. And then when the seal is open, you'll see in chapter 6, one after the other, different seals are open and different things happen. Very similar to what Jesus said in Matthew 24 would happen in the last days when the disciples asked Jesus what's going to happen in the last days.

You compare this when you have time with Matthew 24. And the first thing Jesus said is people will come in my name. That's the first thing.

The Antichrist, a white horse, verse 2, and he who sat on it had a bow and a crown was given to him. That shows that it is not Christ. Christ comes with many crowns and he's not, he owns those crowns.

This is given to him. And this is the Antichrist pretending to be Christ, pretending to be the Messiah on a white horse, pretending to be Jesus. And that's the first sign, the Antichrist.

Second, a red horse, verse 4. That's a picture of war. Peace is taken from the earth. That's the second thing Jesus said would happen in the last days.

Third, a black horse with a pair of scales in his hand saying this is the price of wheat, this is the price of barley, and the oil and wine we will not touch. This is a picture of famine. And the interesting thing in famine time is that there's going to be wheat and barley, which is necessary for food, is going to be expensive.

But the people who live in luxury, oil and wine, that won't be touched. Which means that in a time of famine, the rich people will grow richer and the poor will be poorer. Exactly what's happening today.

And then the fourth seal, when he broke, breaks it, verse 7. Death, a horse named Death comes forth. Killing multitudes of people. Then the fifth seal, verse 9, is broken.

And that is what Jesus also said in Matthew 24, you will be persecuted. And this refers to all the people who've been slain from Abel onwards. Abel's blood cried out for vengeance.

And throughout the Old Testament, many people's blood cried out for vengeance. And when this particular thing happened, as we read here, by that time, by 90 AD, not many believers had died. Multitudes of Old Testament saints had died.

So most of these are Old Testament saints saying, Lord, how long are you not, are you waiting till you avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? And they were told to wait a little, a few more people have to be killed. You've got to wait another 2000 years, because some more believers had to be killed in different parts of the world. And they've also got to join you.

And there's a certain number, verse 11, that has to be completed. You know, just like there's a certain number of people who've got to be saved, where names are in the book of life, there's another list of martyrs, those who are killed as martyrs for the sake of Jesus Christ. I don't know whether my name is in that book, I'd be greatly honored if it is.

And I don't know whether your name is in that book, but I hope you'll consider it a great honor if your name is in that book, that list has to be complete. Those would be killed for the name of Jesus Christ. When that is complete, when the last name there is finished, Jesus will come.

And that's what we read in the sixth seal. When he broke the sixth seal, there was a great earthquake. The sun became black, moon became like blood, the stars of the sky fell, the sky was split, and the mountains and islands were removed.

And the kings of the earth began to hide in the caves and all the strong people and they said, fall on us because the judgment of God is coming. The wrath of God has come, who is able to stand. That is a glimpse of the whole future.

It's like a you know, the book of Revelation is not in sequence. It gives us a complete bird's eye view of the whole book, and then comes down to the little details. And then gives you some little expanded picture, bird's eye view, and then comes down to the details.

It happens again and again. So don't go through the book of the book of Revelation in sequence. I just want to say one more thing in chapter 7. Chapter 7 has got two parts.

Speaks of the time when this tribulation is going to begin. And the first part deals with Israel, verses 1 to 8. A remnant from Israel is going to people who do not know Jesus as their savior now, but who are God-fearing people, are represented here by 144,000 from Israel. It's a representative number.

Remember, signified in the first verse means these are all signs. 144,000 is not an exact number. It's a sign of a small group of people who are whom the Lord looks for.

I believe that the fact that God has restored Israel to their land today. In 1948, Israel came back to the land. Jesus said that the fig tree will put forth its leaves.

And that was fulfilled in 1948 and 1967, when Jerusalem was once again captured by Israel. These are all fulfillment of prophecies that Jesus made more than 1900 years ago. He said when Jerusalem will be ruled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are over.

When Jesus was in Jerusalem, the Romans were ruling. And in the history of Jerusalem, always some foreign power has ruled Jerusalem from Jesus' time till 1967. That's the time when the Jews got back

Jerusalem again.

God's purpose for the Jews is not over. Romans 11 says that. Has God given up his people, Romans 11? No, he hasn't.

He's got a purpose and he's fulfilling it. And in the tribulation time, there's going to be a group of people who are going to be protected from tribulation. And also, it speaks in verse 9 to 17 about another group, which is a great multitude, which is the church.

We look at that in our next study. Let's pray.

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