

66-Revelation – 02-Transcript

well welcome back to Wednesday night Bible study as we continue in this intriguing book the book of Revelation last week we began in Chapter 1 and will continue this week with chapter 1 so we'll begin with the word of prayer as we usually do and then we'll get right into the text Heavenly Father we praise you and just want to thank you God for your loving kindness we know father that you are a God of love and a God of mercy and and loving kindness we thank you Father for the privilege that we have to open your word and to study it together and we ask your blessing now as we begin this study on Revelation we praise you father and thank you and ask this in Jesus Holy Name Amen

so let's get straight into the text last week as I mentioned we began in Revelation with chapter 1 and we covered three verses if you missed last week we're not going to recover we took the whole of last week the whole hour and a bit to go through three verses so there's a lot there and you've what you can do is just check out the archived CGI'd org slash webcast and just check out the archive there and you can catch up with what we covered last week but just for context I'll read again verses one to three the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show his servants things which must shortly take place and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John who bore witness of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ to all things that he saw blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written in it for the time is near

we continue then in verse for John to the seven churches which are in Asia and we have to ask ourselves why does the book begin this way most people who study Revelation they basically skip the first five chapters and goes straight to chapter six where they begin to see and read of the opening of the seven seals and the seals are actually different than what's depicted here because each seal allows part of the text to be read and then you encounter the next seal which Christ then removes and we're able to read the next bit of text but most people just jump to chapter six and miss the context here in chapter one and really through through to chapter five but John is writing to the seven churches and we need to ask why what is it that the seven churches need to understand well we saw in verse one that Christ or or God the Father gave it to Christ Christ signified it gave it to John John has given it to us and he received it from the angel but the purpose is for us to understand and for us to know the things which must shortly take place there's another passage in Timothy that says the wicked will wax worse and worse so so evil men are gonna get worse and worse and then there's passage in Daniel that says the wicked will not understand but the wise will understand and so God wants his people to be wise and he wants us to understand and have a a holistic view of the future to really understand what is taking place on the earth and so this is why the book begins with John addressing the churches and what I said last week and I'll repeat again and probably will repeat often we are not centerstage and that's a big mistake we are so self-centered

you know we're born and from the moment we're born we're self-centered and we think that the whole universe revolves around us and somehow somewhere along the lines we need to understand that the world doesn't revolve around us and usually when we become parents ourselves we begin to learn that the world doesn't revolve around us if we do so much for others for our children and then you know we become more mature human beings who can think of others but we need to become spiritually mature human beings who are not wrapped up in ourselves who think like Christ and who are able to think of others we are not center stage we are on the stage but we are not center stage and so John is now writing to us according to the will of God so that we understand our role in the future and that's really really critical here and we'll talk about that a bit more as we go along but he says John to the seven churches and seven is a very important number in the Hebraic culture it's the picture it's a number that represents completion you know there were seven days that God created to have the heavens and the earth and he rested on the seventh day and that represented a complete unit and seven we understand symbolically to mean completion and we know that this revelation is symbolic it was signified it was made symbolic this conversation of Christ had with his father he took the knowledge that the father gave him and he made it all in a package that was symbolic it's like road signs as we mentioned last week that it was signified so it's like you're you're driving down the road and you understand what the road signs mean so as the future unfolds we need to

understand what's going on in the way that we do that is by interpreting the symbols that are in the book of Revelation so he writes to the seven churches and seven now being symbolic even though he's writing to specific congregations that he had pastoral care for these seven congregations symbolically represent the whole church and so we need to pay very special mention to these letters which will begin next week these epistles from Christ to these seven churches because they are communication from Christ to the Christian community to the covenant community now so John to the seven churches which are in Asia so Asia today we call Turkey but that was the area in the Middle East that these seven churches that that John pastored were located grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come so John wants us to know that God extends grace to us and that God extends peace to us very important in the opening we understand God's mindset and attitude toward us it's an attitude of grace mercy and peace from and now John identifies God as him who is emphasizing the the isness the present existence of God who is and who was and who is to come but notice it emphasizes the the isness it is we sort of think in terms of past present and future that sort of a natural way we think but God doesn't identify himself as him who was who is and who is to come he focuses on the is he is the one who is the the existing one however he wants us to know through John that he was he was he came to earth and he he ceased to exist for three days and three nights and he is coming back and from the seven spirits who are before his throne and and these spirits

we understand as the angel the
Archangels
Gabriel Michael there are others as some
of the Jewish literature speaks of
Raphael as one of the seven cherubim
that are before his throne
so they also have goodwill toward us
so it's from Christ and from these
seven spirits who are before his throne
he's a king and he's enthroned and from
this power position he's extending grace
and peace to us now peace is what he
extends to us and it's important that we
keep that firmly in mind in John 16
when he was with his disciples he said
to them these things I have spoken to
you I've shared these things with you
and this chapter is very important in
the Gospel of John where Christ shares
with them a partial vision of the future
and tells them that the Holy Spirit will
come and give them the rest but he gives
them a partial vision of the future and
he says these things I've spoken to you
that in me you may have peace in the
world you will have tribulation but be
of good cheer I have overcome the world
so he has overcome the world we
understand that it would be peace from him
who is who was and who is to come he has
conquered the world and we will have
peace in him and nowhere else
nowhere else and so we need to brace
ourselves there will be tribulation in
the world
that's okay and that's why these letters
are being written to the church the
seven churches before we get to the
revelation Christ wants to communicate
to his body and make sure that the body
is figuratively and literally we have
our head on our shoulders and because we
are the body and Christ is the head and
so we have to understand how Christ

thinks and have his head on the body not our own head because if we're thinking for ourselves we're going to be confused but if we have Christ as our head we will be wise and we will understand how to understand how to interpret what's going on in the world and we will have peace a lot of Christians unfortunately as they look around them and see just the catastrophe and the terror and the the criminal activity all over the world they become very anxious and they don't want to hear about prophecy because they're just very anxious we have to be in Christ to have peace perfect love casts out fear we must have this filled with the Holy Spirit in the mind of Christ which is a sound mind and it's a it's a spirit of power and and it's a spirit of love perfect love casts out fear so Christ has overcome the world and we are in him and in him we overcome the world as well now it says here in John 4 grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come and then in verse 5 it says and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness and it sounds like you know I guess the father is him who is and who was and it was to come and then there's the separate being Christ who is the faithful witness but this word in Greek I that's translated and it would be better to translate it here even so grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come even from Jesus Christ the faithful witness and and Christ wants us to understand and John wants us to understand that Jesus Christ was faithful he was a faithful witness because he's our example and he's calling us to be faithful witnesses so we need to study Jesus Christ's example and we we did that if you

hopefully you were with us as we studied the Gospel of Luke if you miss that it's in the archive and I would highly recommend that you go through the Gospel of Luke so that we have the whole story Luke acts and now revelation so he is the faithful witness not only that he's also the firstborn from the dead so his faithful witnessing led to him being a faithful martyr so that word mark Taurus in the Greek he was truthful in his witness to the point of death and we must follow his example that's what we're called to do and we must understand that he's firstborn not the only born he's the firstborn from the dead from the dead so death is not the end

I heard of saying the other day born once died twice born twice died once and just think about that so we want to make sure we're in the category who are born twice so that we will only die once so that we have to be striving for this second birth that then the second death has no power over us but if we miss out on the resurrection then we're facing the second death so we mustn't fear death within and and John wants us to understand where he's gonna share with us revelation with dead bodies everywhere and those who fear death will not be faithful witnesses so we have to die there's we can't live in this existence so we have to die and and when we enter into a world where there are dead bodies everywhere well you know who are we to say we must be the ones that live through all of this we must be the ones who faithfully witness for Jesus Christ and what a reward Christ is going to give us for our faithful witness so that what what John wants us to understand is how important it is for us

to embrace our responsibility of being faithful witnesses and taking this knowledge that he's going to share with us and doing the appropriate work that is required now not only is he the firstborn from the dead he's also the ruler over the kings of the earth so he came and he conquered Satan who was the ruler oh really is now even the ruler of this earth until Christ returns to dispose him completely but all the kings of this earth are now subject to the reign of Jesus Christ and he is the highest name above all names and we see now here he says he's the ruler over the kings of the earth and to him who loved us that's why he came and again the US is Israel Christ's bride he came to rescue his bride who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood now this goes all the way back to Genesis and this controversy began when Adam and Eve failed and succumbed to the influence of the devil and when God pronounced sentence on the devil he said I will put hostility or enmity between you and the woman so between Eve and Satan there was no hostility between them or I've had this time not only that but he would put hostility between the seed of Satan and Christ and so Christ came to face this hostility he shall bruise or crush your head he's going to destroy the devil and you shall bruise his heel and so because of that bruising of Christ we are now able to access eternal life by washing our sins in his blood and come out from the Dominion of the devil but look at Isaiah 53 again a reference here that he was wounded for our transgressions are being Israel again he was bruised for our iniquities this is again fulfilling

the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 and all the way through to Revelation he was bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was upon him so when he extends peace to us it's not just a you know an interesting or nice greeting a polite greeting it is his will that we have peace from him because that's why he suffered to rescue us so that we can have peace and by His stripes we are healed and notice now when he says that he is above every king of the earth when he came to earth in Philippians Paul writes therefore a God also has highly exalted him highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name there is no name higher than Jesus Christ except of course God the Father because God the Father is the one that is giving him this very high name so of course he is accepted that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and we need to understand that as we go into the future as we go through the book of Revelation we are going to be seeing some very very powerful people people who look like they have complete control over everything they have so much wealth and so much power and we need to understand it's all temporary it's all temporary and it's going to be taken away from them when Christ acts that's that's where our patience comes from that we know that they are not in control that Jesus Christ is in control and his name is above every name and at his name every knee will bow of those in heaven and of those on earth and those under the earth meaning those who are in the grave they're gonna come out of the grave and they're gonna bow to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord curious is God to the

glory of God the Father so this is not some sort of blasphemous blasphemous statement that the Pharisees took it for and wanted him crucified because of that no this is actually to the glory of God before the Father when Jesus Christ is exalted God the Father is glorified look at Psalm 89 also I will make him my firstborn is the firstborn from the dead and it's right there in the Psalms this was prophesied that God would make him his firstborn the highest of the kings of the earth so John is alluding to these prophecies and making it clear that he is the highest of the kings of the earth and then in Colossians who regarding the firstborn from the dead he is the head of the body the church who is the beginning the firstborn from the dead not the only born the firstborn from the dead he has conquered the grave and as we follow him we conquer the grave as well that in all things he may have the preeminence so this is this is a done deal now no one can stop this now it's just a matter of time before all of this unfold

and Jesus Christ is here on planet earth and the whole earth and everybody in heaven acknowledges that Jesus Christ's name is the highest name and every knee bows to him

but not only that then is not only is he the greatest of the kings on earth but look at this in verse 6 he has made us again us is Israel and those who are grafted into Israel and become part of the Covenant community he has made us kings and priests unto his God so so that is our destiny to become kings and priests Kings have rulership and priests are responsible for educating and facilitating the relationship between man and God and so we are going to be

kings and priests on the earth and we are going to help the rest of mankind come under God's law and become into a relationship with God he has made us kings and priests to his God and Father to him be glory and Dominion forever and ever amen

and now this is a fulfillment here in revelation of God's initial purpose for Israel as we see here in Exodus we see here in Exodus in chapter 19 you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation that that was God's purpose that initially this was the purpose for Adam he was given dominion over all the earth he was a king but instead of being a king and reigning over the earth he submitted to the devil and so he lost his Dominion and then God chose Abraham as the one to work through to reverse this curse and through Abraham ultimately Isaac and then Israel and the 12 tribes of Israel and the nation of Israel and set up a covenant with Israel to establish Israel as a nation of kings and

and so here in Exodus 19 verse 6 you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation a nation that is set apart for divine purpose these are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel so that is God's purpose and that's why he chose this nation these descendants of Abraham Isaac and Israel unfortunately they rebelled they were there were anything but cooperative anything but you know excited and engaged they they were actually very evil but God made a commitment he made a covenant with Abraham and that covenant passed down to Israel and God does not go back on his word and so his whole intent was to ensure that this nation of Israel be set up as a nation of kings

and priests and often when we read revelation 1 and verse 5 and 6 we see O Christ as king of kings and we're gonna be kings and we just sort of take this generic view that he's made us this is just sort of generic us Christ died for mankind and everybody's gonna be kings and priests but God is very precise and he's very specific and he's very loyal to his word and so the US here is Israel and everybody who's been grafted into Israel and Israel will be this nation of kings and priests and the whole earth will acknowledge that God the God of the universe the Creator is the God of Israel now when we were studying the Gospel of Luke

many times we referred to Isaiah 61 in fact Christ launched his ministry in Luke chapter 4 taking the scroll of Isaiah and turning to a high of 61 and reading the first part of it but he didn't finish but let's read a bit more of this passage in Isaiah 61 the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me so he was just baptized by John and then he John the Baptist and he received the Spirit came down like a dove upon him and then he read this the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me

to preach good news to the poor so the poor are those who are being oppressed by the satanic system and and hey it's good news this is gonna be reversed and and I'm gonna raise you up and set you above and I'm gonna bring the wicked down so good news of the kingdom to the poor he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted to proclaim Liberty freedom to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound and that's what we saw in Luke that's the ministry that he embarked upon to

proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and then he closed the scroll and he didn't continue but here now we see what we are seeing in Revelation and the day of vengeance of our God and so that really is the what is symbolized now by the Feast of Trumpets which is coming next week and by the way that saw Wednesday night we will be continuing our Bible studies that hopefully you can join us on Wednesday night as we kick off the Feast of Trumpets and revelation is all about trumpets and it's all about the the day of God's vengeance and then when God finally strikes but before he strikes he actually punishes his own people to get them to repent and once he's finished with his people then he reigns down well I'll call it horror and catastrophe on the wicked and that's the vengeance of God on the day of trumpets and so the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all who mourn to console those who mourn in Zion to give them beauty for Ashes so those who are in Zion are going to have ashes and then God is going to act and replace those ashes with Beauty the oil of joy for mourning he's going to take the mourning away and give them the oil of joy the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness that they may be called trees of righteousness who's going to be called trees of righteousness all mankind is everybody going to get a pass and become trees of righteousness or is God gonna fulfill his promises to Israel and establish Israel as trees of righteousness the planting of the Lord that he may be glorified as the God of Israel now let's continue and they shall rebuild the old ruins they shall raise up the former

desolations and yes there's going to be desolation everywhere and they will raise up the former desolations and they shall repair the ruined cities the desolations of many generations strangers again this is not for everybody is regarded the God of Israel Israel will be established and when Israel is established strangers shall stand and feed your flocks this is now we're getting into the Millennium and we're gonna see the Gentiles feeding the flocks of Israel and the sons of the foreigner shall be your Plowman and your vine dressers those who hated Israel are going to serve Israel but you shall be named the priests of the Lord so this is not a generic he's made us kings and priests and everybody can be kings and priests this is God fulfilling his word and establishing Israel as kings of the earth a nation of kings and priests and establishing Israel so that he can save the whole world that Israel will facilitate this relationship between the whole all of mankind and the God of Israel but you Israel shall be named the priests of the Lord they the Gentiles shall call you the servants of our God's are a lot of controversy a lot of false worship this Babylonian system is going to be very powerful it's going to force everybody to worship the Beast and then all of that's going to be over and everyone that continues to do that lives through into the Millennium and then those that are resurrected shall call you the servants of our God you shall eat the riches of the Gentiles so they're gonna come with their offerings they're gonna come and understand who God is and who his priests are and they're gonna come and they're gonna bring their offerings to Israel and

Israel shall eat the riches of the
Gentiles

and in their glory you shall boast so
you were going to facilitate their glory
and and and Israel will boast in the
glory of the Gentiles so this is all
what John is alluding to as he's writing
this opening to Revelation continuing in
Revelation

behold so him who is and who was and who
is to come now behold when he comes he
is coming with clouds and every eye will
see him and we saw that in Luke when we
were talking about the return of Christ
and how it's gonna be dark when when the
sixth seal is unveiled how there's gonna
be the Sun is gonna go dark the moon is
gonna go dark the star is gonna go dark
and then finally Christ is gonna return
and as the Earth spins every eye will
see this light descending on the earth
every eye will see him even they who
pierced him so he is going to be
returning to Jerusalem and those who
that community that was responsible for
piercing him is going to acknowledge him
even those who pierced him and all the
tribes of the earth will mourn because
of him so I just find this very
interesting that here in Revelation John
speaks of the tribes of the earth and
where we're just sort of in this
diversity mode where we're trying to
pretend there's no such thing as tribes
and we're all the same and everything's
equal and there's no differentiation
well God is very clear this
differentiation there are tribes there
are genetic differences between the
tribes and God continues to see mankind
as broken up by tribes and specifically
his eye and the apple of his eye are the
tribes of Israel so all the tribes of
the earth will mourn because of him even

so amen oh well oh well we're gonna do
our job we're gonna preach the gospel as
a witness everybody has a chance to
repent and if they don't when that
seventh seal
is unveiled and the wrath of God comes
down upon mankind even so amen
oh well now John in 16 and Christ in
John 16 again in this passage would
really encourage you to read John 16
alongside revelation but Christ says
most assuredly I say to you that you
will weep and lament so you know I
really don't understand these these
preachers who are preaching this
prosperity gospel and God just wants you
to be so wealthy and the more money you
give to me the more he'll bless you to
just keep on sending the money to me and
look at the big multi-million dollar
mansion I live in and and the multi a
hundred quarter million dollar cars that
I drive and the jewelry that I wear and
the jewelry that my wife wears and just
keeps sending the money to me because
you'll be blessed and and my blessing is
a symbol of the blessing that you can
have I don't know where these false
ministers get this doctrine from because
it's not from the Bible and it's
certainly not from Jesus Christ Jesus
Christ says to his loyal and faithful
followers most assuredly without a doubt
I say to you you will weep and lament
this world is the devil's world and the
devil is full of hatred for Christ and
for those who follow Christ and so
you're gonna weep and lament and the
world will rejoice and you will be
sorrowful but your sorrow will be turned
into joy so what we will rejoice at the
return of Christ but it says here all
the tribes of the earth will mourn
because of him so that means that prior

to his return the tribes of the earth
the wicked are having a wonderful time
they're just drinking eating and
drinking marrying and giving in marriage
and it's just a wonderful time for them
but when Christ returns they're going to
mourn and while they're having this
wonderful time the people of God are
going to weep and lament but that sorrow
will be turned to joy so there's this
big reversal that's coming and this is
part of what John needs us and what
Christ needs us to understand
is to see the big picture and not get
caught up in the day-to-day see the big
picture and have this peace that
surpasses all understanding this is what
we must have we must don't turn a blind
eye to the news don't turn a blind eye
to prophecy do not despise prophecy
don't seek smooth things face the truth
face the truth and gird up your loins
gird up your loins and be a faithful
witness because what we are promised is
it's it's it's it's beyond words
it's eternal and it's it's just it's
hard to articulate but the Holy Spirit
won't will help us to grasp it and then
we will lay hold on eternal life so
whatever happens in this life there are
no guarantees we just accept it you know
not a hair can fall from our head and so
we accept God's will
knowing that he is faithful who promised
now when it says here he is coming with
the clouds and every eye will see him
this again is an allusion to the Old
Testament in Daniel 7:13 Daniel says I
was watching in the night visions and
behold one like the Son of man coming
with the clouds of heaven
so Daniel saw it Daniel had a vision of
the future and a vision of Christ's
return and he comes with the clouds of

heaven just as John is saying here in Revelation he came to the Ancient of Days and they brought him near before him now in terms of the those that pierced him seeing him so he's gonna come with the clouds of heaven but John is also referring to Zechariah and what Zechariah saw was that I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication so this is the future of the inhabitants of Jerusalem armies are going to surround Jerusalem they're going to be slaughter there's going to be desolation but then there's this prophecy that I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and vacation and they will look on me whom they pierced so these traitors are going to find was referring to that this time is coming in the near future when they will look upon him whom they have pierced yes they will mourn for him as one mourns for his only son and grieve for him as one grieves for a firstborn in that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem like the mourning at Haddad women in the plain of Megiddo so there will be this final acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as their Messiah and that's what God wants and that's part of our purpose as the covenant community those with the Holy Spirit that John is telling us look I'm gonna show you what's gonna happen in the future you need to understand the theater and who's on stage and who's on center stage and then we need to do our part faithfully and properly understanding what the outcome is that goddess is driving toward continuing in Revelation Christ identifies himself now he speaks I am the Alpha and the Omega I

am the beginning and the end so God wants us to understand who exactly he is and he says he is the Alpha and the Omega so the very first letter of the alphabet the very last letter of the alphabet the beginning and the end says the Lord who is and who was and who is to come the Almighty and a lot of people say you know Jesus Christ is not God he's making it very very clear he himself is saying this these are red letters he's telling us he is God he is the Almighty he is the one who is who was and who is to come the Almighty and that's you know the isness that's in John 8:58 when he says most assuredly I say to you before Abraham was I am I am I'm the ever existing one now when he says he's the beginning in the end look at Isaiah 41 who has performed it and done it calling the generations from the beginning I the law and the first and with the last I am he so when he says I'm the Alpha and the Omega he's telling us he is God continuing in verse nine I John both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ was on the island that is called Patmos was on the island that is called Patmos Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ now notice that this is something that we could read over John is telling us that he's our brother so we understand that he has the Holy Spirit we have the Holy Spirit we are brothers in Christ but he doesn't just stop there it doesn't say I'm your brother he says I'm a participant in the tribulation so so this revelation that is coming to us is going to share with us tribulation tribulation these are things that must shortly come to pass

and we must see these these tribulations culminating in the Great Tribulation and John is saying hey you know what I'm telling you these things but I'm a participant in this as well and I have suffered as well what why has he suffered for the witness of Jesus Christ and for the Word of God but he says he's a participant in the tribulation and the kingdom it is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of God if we are unwilling to go through the tribulation then you know how are we gonna be faithful witnesses to go into the kingdom so John is saying look I'm faithful and you know I'm with you in this so I'm gonna share with you what's coming be faithful with me we're in this together so it's through the tribulation that we enter the kingdom and it's through that vision of the kingdom that we have patience and John had patience and we must have this patience and we'll see as we go through Revelation this is the key to victory having the patience of Jesus Christ and that's what the Holy Spirit will give us it's just this understanding that Jesus Christ is king that he has a name that is higher than any name except of course God the Father and they are in complete control and so wicked are gonna walk wax worse and worse and we're just going to accept it and we're gonna be patient because we understand who's in control so it's it's a companion in the tribulation he's gonna be with us in the kingdom and he has the patience that we require to be faithful unto the kingdom so he was suffering he was exiled and he was suffering and in seclusion on Patmos why for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ this was his crime

preaching and being faithful to the Word of God and the martyrdom the witness of Jesus Christ and notice in verse 2 when he introduced the revelation he says who bore witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ and to all things that he saw so this is this is sort of the the operating principle of Revelation that there's a faithful group of people who bear witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ and that is a crime that is a crime in Satan's world there's none of that but Christ is stealing us giving us backbone giving us vision so that yeah you know what John we're all we're with you in this now we're gonna be a better witness to the Word of God and to the martyrdom and the testimony of Jesus Christ now in when we get to revelation 6 notice this when he opened the fifth seal I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain what was the crime what did they do wrong for the word of God and for the testimony which they held that is the testimony of Jesus Christ so this is not Christianity is not for the faint-hearted Christianity is not for those who are serious what we have to be serious about our calling this the god god is recruiting us for a purpose and he's sharing with us the future we have a vision of the future not just so that we can run around saying I know something you don't know but so that we can be useful to him and we can declare this Gospel as a witness to the whole world and others will join us all around the world and faithfully declare the testimony of Jesus Christ in the Word of God and notice in Revelation 12 the dragon was enraged with the woman that is Israel

and he went to make war with the rest of
her offspring and who are these
offspring who keep the commandments of
God that's the Word of God and who have
the testimony of Jesus Christ
so what John had and what John
introduces himself as having the Word of
God and the testimony of Jesus Christ
and John suffered for that and he
says he's a participant with us we're in
this together and our crime this is our
honor that we are faithful to the Word
of God and to the testimony of Jesus
Christ and we understand just how much
Satan hates that continue in Revelation
then John introduces them he now starts
to get into the revelation and he says
he was in the spirit on the Lord's Day
and many want to say the Lord's Day is
Sunday so he happened to be in the
spirit on Sunday cuz Sunday's the day
that Christ was resurrected that's not
what he's saying
what he's saying is he got transported
into the future and he got to see the
day of the Lord and so he was in the
spirit transported so that he could see
the day of the Lord and he heard behind
him or her I heard behind me a loud
voice as of a trumpet now John is not
the only one that got transported in
this way
look what Ezekiel writes in Ezekiel 40
in the 25th year of our captivity at the
beginning of the year on the tenth day
of the month in the fourteenth year
after the city was captured on the very
same day the hand of the Lord was upon
me and what happened and he took me
there in the visions of God he took me
into the land of Israel and set me on a
very high mountain on it toward the
south
was something like the structure of a

city he took me there and behold there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze he had a line of flax and a measure brought his hand and he stood in the Gateway and the man said to me son of man look with your eyes and hear with your ears and that's the same thing that John is told to write the things that he sees and hears look with your eyes and hear with your ears and fix your mind on everything I show you for you were brought here so that I might show them to you declare to the house of Israel everything you see and that's the same thing now that we see with John that John was transported to see the day of the Lord and then he's to write down everything he sees and then he's telling us that he is a faithful witness and that we also must be faithful witnesses and we must faithfully declare everything that is seen to Israel because Israel is the target but we also have to declare this to the Babylonians and drive them to repentance and they many of them will repent because God we see we're going to see that the first fruits are going to come not only from the tribes of Israel but from every nation and from every tribe and from every kindred that means that many of these wicked and evil Babylonians when they hear our preaching of the gospel they are going to repent and they're going to come into the first-fruits community continuing in Revelation verse 11 Christ repeats I am Alpha and Omega the first and the last what you see right in a book so God wants this preserve that here we are 2,000 years later and we still have it because John faithfully obeyed this command and he wrote it in a book and send it to the

seven churches which are in Asia to
Ephesus to Smyrna to Pergamus to Thea
Tyrel to Sardis to Philadelphia and to
letter to sia so God specifically
hand-picked

it's these churches and told John to
write to be seven churches which he had
pastoral responsibility for and Christ
there were other churches as well in
this area but Christ chose these
specific churches that were on a trade
route or a mail route and they were
representative so this isn't this number
seven as we said earlier is symbolic and
a pictures completion

so these epistles of Christ to these
churches arch these churches are chosen
for a reason what and the content of
these epistles which will begin next
week Christ wants all of the churches
through time to understand the content
in each of these epistles now when he
says to write this in a book and send it
to the churches this should bring to
mind Habakkuk then the Lord answered me
and said write the vision and make it
plain on tablets that he may run who
reads it so John is gonna share with us
all of this information about this beast
power this devouring beast that the
reason it's a beast is it consumes and
destroys God's people but here Habakkuk
is thought to write the vision and make
it plain on on tablets that he may run
who reads it it needs to be a warning to
Israel so it's not that this is not
written to us so that we can run no the
epistles are written to us so that we
can get our heads straight and do the
work that were required to do and that
is to proclaim this word so that he may
run who reads it it's a warning to the
nations of Israel and and and the
Babylonians and they need to repent

before God acts for the vision is yet for an appointed time but at the end it will speak and it will not lie though it tarries wait for it so it you know these things when shortly come to pass and certainly they are they did begin to come to pass this was written in 95 AD just as Domitian was to taking control of the Roman Empire and he launched a fierce attack on the church right after Nero and then there were others that would come eventually culminating and Constantine who would stamp out the true religion and make pagan Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire and so all of this was coming to pass but it continues where the Train is still on the track this train of destruction and the Great Tribulation is ahead of us but John was correct these things shortly came to pass in fact when we look at these seven churches none of them exist today they've all been wiped out though it tarries wait for it because it will surely come and it will not tarry so as I said demission demission persecution was just being just ramping up ultimately all these churches would be stamped out so those who are faithful they needed to be encouraged by these letters in these epistles from Christ today these seven churches are all Muslim all of these cities are Muslim this is turkey today so so what was this vibrant Christian community has been absolutely wiped out it has been wiped out and so there are different elements of this vision and we need to understand just how how accurate this vision is it's for it was for an appointed time and it's going to speak and and what John shows us is it comes in waves it's not all at once it's building up it's

building up it's culminating it's gonna
culminate in this Great Tribulation
but it absolutely is accurate and then
John says or through Habakkuk actually
it does not lie the Word of God is
accurate and true so he says then I
turned to see the voice that spoke with
me and having turned I saw seven golden
lampstands now what are these seven gold
and what do they represent that takes us
back to Exodus in Exodus 20:5 when Moses
was given instructions as to how to
build the tabernacle so that God could
come down and dwell with Israel in the
tabernacle look at what he was told that
he must build according to all that I
show you that is the pattern of the
tabernacle so he was given a blueprint
for the tabernacle and the pattern of
all its furnishing just so you shall
make it you shall make seven lamps or
lamp stands for it and they shall
arrange its lamps so that they give
light in front of it and its wick
trimmers and their tray shall be of pure
gold it shall be made a talent of pure
gold with all these utensils and see to
it that you make them according to the
pattern which was shown you on the
mountain so there's a very specific
blueprint for this tabernacle which is a
blueprint of the temple in heaven which
Moses was building a replica on earth
and God was going to dwell in this
tabernacle in the midst of seven golden
lampstands and and Moses had to be very
specific how he built this and he made
in verse 23 he made it seven lamps its
wick tremors and it's trays of pure gold
and so now John is in seeing this vision
of Christ in the midst of Seven
lampstands and in the midst of the seven
lampstands one like the Son of Man
clothed with the garment down to the

feet and girded about the chest with a golden band now who is this and has he been seen before well look what Daniel writes I was watching in the night visions and behold one like the son of man coming with the clouds of heaven he came to the Ancient of Days and they brought him near before him and in verse chapter ten verse five I lifted my eyes and looked and behold a certain man clothed in linen whose waist was girded with the gold of rufus and suddenly verse sixteen one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips then i opened my mouth and spoke saying to him who stood before me my lord because of the vision my sores have overwhelmed me and I've retained no strength so Daniel saw this same vision that John saw now it says in verse 14 his head and hair were white as wool as white as snow and his eyes like a flame of fire and so Daniels going to continue in his description we're going to see this but I feel I just have to comment here because I hear so many people on this verse black people and white people will say things like you know blacks will say look his hair was white like wool that means he's a black man and I've also heard people say you know God is white and because God is white Adam was white and whether you're black or white if this is your mindset I just have to ask you to stop stop this is nonsense this is foolhardy will you degrade the glorified Jesus Christ so that you can exalt yourself is this that your agenda this is speaking of the glorified Jesus Christ he's not black and he's not white he's the glorified Christ and what John is trying to tell us here is just how glowing he is how how bright he is and

and you know if Adam was anything he was read in fact the word Adam means read if it was probably made from red earth really rich red soil and and God this is not about God being human this is about God beyond the Sheep beyond humanity is now in his glory and so this is about how white you know it's it's like if you can't even look at him he's so bright how white his hair was as white as snow and his eyes were like flames of fire this is the glorified Christ come on let's let's just get into his glory it's about us coming like him not him becoming like us Daniel says in 7-9 I watched till the Thrones were put in place in the Ancient of Days was seated his garment was as white as snow and the hair of his head was like pure wool his throne was a fiery flame its wheels of burning fire so this is now the Ancient of Days with this same glorious image his body was like Beryl his face like the appearance of lightning his eyes were like torches of fire his arms and his feet like burnished bronze in colour as its like bronze when it's just burning and just bright it's about the brightness of God and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude his feet were like fine brass their continuing revelation as if refined in a furnace again that means it's glowing and his voice as the sound of many waters and here in first John 3 this is not about us trying to take the glorified God and bring him down to exalt ourselves this is about us understanding our fate what we're gonna be like him John says here in 1st John 3:2 beloved now we are the children of God and as has not yet been revealed what we shall be but we know that when he is revealed we shall be like him it's

not about trying to make him like us we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is when we are resurrected when we joined Christ will be able to see him in his glory and and John reveals to us that we're gonna be like him and in fact this is going all the way back to Judges thus let all your enemies perish O Lord but let those who love him be like the Sun and that's what Daniel tells us that those who turn many to righteousness shall shine like the stars in heaven we will be like the Sun when it comes out in full strength

now Daniel again here as I said it let those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament and those who turn many to righteousness like the Stars forever and ever so that's our job is to turn people to righteousness and not to give in to these social justice warrior mentalities and trying to fight for the basically Marxist causes we're about turning people to righteousness and it's about exalting Christ not trying to bring Christ down to our level and he says here Ezekiel in Chapter one says he heard the noise of these angels that these that were transporting the throne they heard their winds like the noise of many waters like the voice of the almighty so Ezekiel heard the voice of the Almighty and when he heard the wings of these angels he said you know it's like many waters like the voice of the Almighty a talent like the noise of an army when they stood still up and they let their wings down and in Ezekiel 43 behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east his voice was like the sound of many waters and the earth Shon with his glory so again we just have a

kind of a a glimpse as to what this glorified Christ is like what he looks like and what he sounds like and and Daniel here we read this already about Daniel going in Revelation 16 so we see this glorified Christ he's in the middle of these seven lampstands which are the seven churches which are symbolic of the tabernacle that God dwells in his temple he had in his right hand seven stars out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword and his countenance was like the sun shining in its strength and in isaiah he sees exactly this listen o coastlands to me and take heed you peoples from afar the Lord has called me from the womb from the matrix of my mother he has given he has made mention of my name he has made my mouth like a sharp sword so this is exactly what Isaiah prophesied exactly what John sees his mouth is like a sharp sword in the shadow of his hand he has hidden me and made me a polished shaft in his quiver he has hidden me and he said to me this is the Christ the father seemed to Christ you are my servant o Israel and we talked about that in when we're studying Luke that Christ came to represent Israel that there was the faithless Israel he finally came to fulfill the covenant with Israel that Israel has with God and God here in Isaiah reveals that he is the faithful servant Israel in whom I that's the father will be glorified continuing in Revelation verse 17 and when I saw him I felt as it at his feet as dead in other words he passed out he collapsed this was just so glorious that he just his senses were just overwhelmed and he just collapsed but he laid his right hand on me and said do not be afraid I am the

first and the last and we just keep hearing that over and over Christ is the first and the last everything is about Christ and notice that the gentleness you know whenever whenever God or his angels interact with man there is always this gentleness not like the experience that quote/unquote the Islamic prophet Muhammad had where this unclean spirit attacked him but violently he thought it was gonna kill him and when it was when it was done with him he was terrified his veins in his neck were bursting with fear and he wanted to kill himself and it was so oppressive and violent that's not the way God and His angels interact with with weak human beings and so we need to understand the difference here so here he says he's the first in the last and he keeps repeating that and again we can go back into Isaiah who has performed and done it calling the generations from the beginning I the LORD am the first and with the last time he and 4444 he says thus says the lord the king of israel and his redeemer the lord of hosts i am the first and i am the last besides me there is no God so very very clearly the God of Israel that is the Ancient of Days and Jesus Christ they are one and besides them there's no one else and Christ is making it very clear to us this is who he is the first and the last listen to me Oh Jacob and Israel my called I am he Isaiah 48 verse 12 I am the first I am also the last Christ wants us to know this is this is our God this is our God speaking these are faithful words coming to us from our Creator so Daniel here in chapter 8 again when when the angel came to him just how gentle the angel was is

what I wanted to show you there and I'll just go through that so again just the gentleness about the angels and God and himself have when they interact with human beings is what I wanted to show you there here in verse 19 o man greatly beloved says Gabriel don't be afraid peace be to you be strong yes be strong so when he spoke to me I was strengthened I wasn't terrified I wasn't gonna go and commit suicide I was strengthened I was encouraged and said let my Lord speak for you have strengthened me that's the way God interacts with his people I am he who lives revelation 1:18 I was dead and behold I am Alive for evermore amen and I have the keys of Hades and death so he has the keys to the grave and to death that means he controls who goes in and he controls who comes out and and if anything when we read these passages brethren we should be encouraged we should know that we have a relationship with our Creator who has nothing but Grace and peace for us who leads from the front and we just have to follow him do what he did and trust him understand that he's the beginning and the end he's the Alpha and the Omega and we must just trust him that he is the keys so so the same way Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac and that was an act of great faith why because he trusted his God that he didn't understand but he knew that God made a promise and that God will not go back on his promise and this is the same kind of faith that's required of us now that God has made promises to us and he will not go back on these promises and so we can have peace we can have peace though the whole world can be falling apart and certainly and we as we get into this

will be looking at this that the world is unraveling it seems like everybody's gone insane and it's just going faster and faster and faster and faster but we should not be anxious we should have the peace that surpasses all understanding now when he says he has the keys of Hades and death look at this allusion to Hosea I will ransom them that's Israel from the power of the grave so the grave has a power and it seemed very final when you go to a funeral there's just this this ring of finality it's like well that person is gone the grave has power but God is saying that he has the keys to the grave and he will ransom them from the power of the grave I will redeem them from death Oh death I will be your plagues Oh grave I will be your destruction

pity is hidden from my eyes for you death and the grave death and Hades and here now as we as we wrap up we'll just look at this prophecy in Jeremiah go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem so God is always asking his prophets he does nothing without revealing first of all what he's going to do to his prophets but then he asks his prophets to take the prophecy to his people whether it's the people of Judah or the whole family of Israel and so now what we are going to be receiving is this prophecy and he wants us to do something with it go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem saying thus says the Lord I remember you the kindness of your youth the love of your betrothal when you went after me in the wilderness in a land not soul therefore I will yet bring charges against you says the Lord and against your children's children I will bring charges return you backsliding children and I will heal your backslidings indeed we do

come to you for you are the
Lord our God truly in vain is salvation
hoped for from the hills and from the
multitude of mountains truly in the Lord
our God is the salvation of Israel and
that's what revelation is all about the
salvation of Israel and it's in the Lord
our God is the salvation of Israel for
shame has devoured the labor of our
fathers from our youth their flocks and
their herds their sons and their
daughters we lie down in our shame so
there's nothing unless the Lord shall
build the house the laborers labor in
vain their sons on the guard as we lie
down in our shame and our reproach
covers us for we have sinned against the
Lord our God we and our fathers from our
youth even to this day and have not
obeyed the voice of the Lord our God
this is where God is driving Israel and
Judah to this point of acknowledgment
and repentance if you will return o
Israel says the Lord return to me and if
you will put away your abominations out
of my sight then you shall not be moved
and you shall swear the Lord lives in
truth in judgment and in righteousness
the nations shall bless themselves in
him and in him they shall glory o
Jerusalem wash your heart from
wickedness that you may be saved how
long shall your evil thoughts lodge
within you and we could go on and on
every prophet has this this this calling
to Israel and is theirs calling to Judah
to come to repentance and John is no
difference though the revelation that
has been given to him which has now come
to us it's the same cry from the
prophets to his people repent turn from
your wickedness acknowledge your God and
you will dwell in the land
revelation 119 Christ instruction write

the things which you have seen and the things which are and the things which will take place after this and this is again we need to be sensitive to this because we will misunderstand revelation if we don't see that it's not all future it's not all future he's to write the things which he has seen and some of these things that he has seen are in the past some of them are historical and the things which are so these are things that were in his time in 95 AD and he's to write the things which are and the things which will take place after this so once we understand this that the book is not entirely prophetic it's partly historical and it was partly journalistic in terms of what was happening right then and there then he says this 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 so so we don't have to worry or wonder anymore who are these seven stars that are in ascent well there are the angels of the seven churches and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches and a lot of people want to take the churches as symbolic no the church that the lampstands are symbolic and what the symbols mean the way to interpret the symbol is the lampstands are the churches and this is part of the things that are so this is John is to write the things that are in addition to the things which will be and what we're gonna see in the epistles next week are the things that are what's going on right now and then we're also going to see as we call beyond the epistles the things which will be so here as we end and what I want to just emphasize as we

get into the epistles Christ is in the
midst of the lampstands
so he is tabernacling with his temple or
in his temple but he is also the head of
the body and so what we're going to see
as we go into the Epistle every single
lampstand that he writes - he says I
know your works I know your works I know
your works and then those whose works
are not up to par he says repent and
basically do his will
that unless we do the will of God we are
not going to be recognized by God and
the will of God is to proclaim the Word
of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ
and so what we're seeing as the book of
Revelation opens with these epistles
from Christ to the church is basically
Christ saying to his body
get your act together because I've got
work to do I started doing work when I
was here personally now I'm in heaven
well my body is on earth and you need to
be in alignment with me and connected
with me so that I can continue to do my
work on earth and so before we get into
the revelation God has to sort out his
body symbolized by these seven
lampstands which symbolizes the whole
church and we're going to see that every
Christian needs to read every epistle to
these churches because there's
instruction in there for us we'll get
more into that next week but we'll end
here with acts 1 and verse 7 where when
he came down to earth and was
instructing his disciples and us by
extension he says it's not for you to
know the times or seasons which the
father has put in his own authority so
we're all wondering how much longer Lord
when will you finally act and it's not
for us to know this God will act when he
acts but we shall receive power when the

Holy Spirit has come upon us and we shall be witnesses to him in Jerusalem in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth this gospel will be preached in all the world for a witness and then shall the end come who's gonna do that preaching these lampstands that are faithfully aligned with and attach to their head Jesus Christ and that's why next week Wednesday again as we kick off the Feast of Trumpets we will get into the epistles of Christ to his church to prepare us for trumpets to prepare us to announce to Judah to Israel and to the world behold the God of Israel Jesus Christ is King of Kings Lord of lords conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah he is the faithful witness the firstborn from the dead let's follow him and let's do his will