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Revelation

Chapter 4 - Revealing Things from Heaven's View Things Destined to Be (vs. 1-2)

Revelation 4:1-2: After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

Well, in Chapter 4 we just jump into a heavenly scene, don't we? It's an amazing passage. I think in order for us to understand where the rest of Revelation is going, we need to once again firm up the foundation that has been established at the very beginning of the book, and that is

in chapters 1, 2, and 3. In these three chapters, what has been said right from the very start, that this letter is to the church. Which is a bizarre thought when you think that a lot of what the focus is in the Book of Revelation is the tribulation, and much of the difficulties during that, and you would say, “But I thought that wasn't for the church.” It's not. But you have to understand that we need to understand these things in order to follow God more fully in our church.

If you go back to the beginning of Revelation 1, it tells us, (Revelation 1:1) “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, (Revelation 1:2) who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.”

Then it says,

(Revelation 1:4) “John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you...”

He then begins to say, “And all these things are written for you.”

In fact,

(Revelation 1:11) “saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

It's to the church. He ends with the chapter saying that the church needs to be the light and then he goes into the next chapter saying, “To the Church of Ephesus, the Church of Smyrna, Church of Pergamum...” So, who's the letter to? Well, it's clear, it's to the church. Ok. So the question that you continually have to ask yourself is, how does that in any way relate to the things that are about to happen or are going to happen in the future? And that's the connection that you have to get in order to understand the Book of Revelation, because once again, He's revealing to us His purpose. He's revealing to us His plan. What has been conveyed to us as He begins to write about the seven churches is that the world has infiltrated the churches. So, the church has to be very much aware

of the fact that, well, just like Paul said to the Church of Rome, “Don't be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind.” The fact is that the world continues to try to conform the church into their image. Ultimately, we know, as Scripture tells us, the prince of the power of the air is moving us away from God.

So, as you come and you begin to look at the different churches and just by way of review, this is the foundation that we have to lay. By way of review, you have to look at the church at Ephesus and the very first thing that the church is infiltrated with is a sense of harshness, a sense of legalism, and really, it's a way of the world, when you think about it. Because the way of the world is that you push your weight around and you tell people what they have to do, and you become condescending and critical and that's the way you begin to manipulate and that's the way you begin to interrogate and hopefully you intimidate so that you can control them. But that's the way of the world.

If you look with me in Matthew 20, at a very early stage, it was infiltrating the church because here Jesus is with these simple men that are fishermen and He's been training them and yet they begin to debate about who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom. His statement is in Matthew 20, after this debate has gone on a little bit, and of course, the mother is involved as well, of the sons of Zebedee,

(Matthew 20:25) “But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.

(Matthew 20:26) “It is not this way among you...”

What He's conveying is that you've allowed the world to begin to delegate to you the way that we should act, but that's not the way we act. That's not the way of the kingdom of heaven.

“... whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant.”

(Matthew 20:28) “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

So, the clarity of this is that we think very different than the world and the Church of Ephesus was becoming harsh and legalistic. The world was infiltrating their way of thinking. The same thing is true with the Church of Smyrna, in the sense that they were becoming fearful of the things that were happening, and yeah, they were facing dangers. No doubt about that. But the church cannot be fearful. Once we become fearful, then we send a signal that we don't really believe that God is going to take care of us, nor that He loves us. So, once you begin to show the fear side, the reality is that you don't really trust Him, do you? Now, part of our great light that we demonstrate to the world is that we know that He loves us. I mean, we even preach it. “Nothing can separate us from the love of God.” Nothing? Then why are you shaking? See, the world doesn't understand, “How come your message doesn't seem to match the way that you act?” So, the great concern is that the light is being

snuffed out. No man hides the light, right? You don't put it under a bushel. Well, a lot of Christians are hiding the light, and just simply because they're afraid to say anything. I mean, Peter was so afraid that a little servant girl was enough to scare him off, and God says, "What are you afraid of, Peter?" I mean, how many times did Jesus say to His disciples, "Why are you afraid? Why are you afraid?" And the command and the imperative always are "Fear not." To be afraid is to disobey and to disbelieve and to not be trusting in God's love. So, it's obvious that the Church of Smyrna had something to deal with.

Let me just say this, and I don't want to get overly preachy, although I don't mind it, but if you turn me to Psalm 91; we have a little bug floating around. I think the world community is pretty upset about it.

(Psalm 91:1) "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High

Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty."

I mean, is He not powerful?

(Psalm 91:2) “I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress,
My God, in whom I trust!””

I'm not afraid.

Psalm 91:3) “For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper
And from the deadly pestilence.

(Psalm 91:4) He will cover you with His pinions,
And under His wings you may seek refuge...”

(Psalm 91:5) “You will not be afraid of the terror by night,
Or of the arrow that flies by day;

(Psalm 91:6) Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.

(Psalm 91:7) A thousand may fall at your side
And ten thousand at your right hand,
But it shall not approach you.

(Psalm 91:8) You will only look on with your eyes
And see the recompense of the wicked.

(Psalm 91:9) For you have made the LORD, my refuge...”

See, that's the key. Well, if we're shaking in our boots, there's no light.

So, He tells the Church of Smyrna, “You can't be afraid. I know you're about to die. You cannot be afraid.” Paul will say when he's getting ready to die, “I know the Lord will bring me safely home.”

But I love the way that it's put here,

(Psalm 91:14) “Because he...”

Which is making reference to maybe me and hopefully you.

“Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him...”

Well, a big part of you loving God is trusting Him. The way that we demonstrate that we love Him is that we trust Him.

“Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name.

(Psalm 91:15) “He will call upon Me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble;

I will rescue him...”

I'd rather God rescue me than somebody else.

(Psalm 91:16) ““With a long life I will satisfy him
And let him see My salvation.””

The church needs to convey that they are not afraid.

Matthew 10 puts it this way as Jesus is sending out His disciples,

(Matthew 10:24) “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor
a slave above his master.

(Matthew 10:25) “It is enough for the disciple that he
become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If
they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how
much more will they malign the members of his
household!

(Matthew 10:26) “Therefore do not fear them, for there is
nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden
that will not be known.

(Matthew 10:27) “What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops.

(Matthew 10:28) “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

“Don’t I take care of the sparrows?” He goes on and says. So, for us to be afraid is to send a mixed signal to the world. In each case, what you're going to see is that the world has infiltrated the church. The world has made us harsh; it’s made us legalistic. The world has made us afraid. In fact, the world loves fear because fear sells. I mean, you can sell a lot of stuff off of fear. In fact, my wife said that there weren't any masks left in Walmart, just to let everybody know. There are no masks left in Walmart because they're out. They're just completely out. So, somebody made a really good decision there financially. But the point is that the world feeds off of this and somehow, we've allowed some of these things to infiltrate the church, and God is saying, “You can't be fearful. It sends the wrong signal.” In each case, whether

it's the Church at Ephesus that is harsh and legalistic, or the Church at Smyrna that's dealing with fear or the Church of Pergamon that's dealing with really a disingenuous exploitation of people and a lot of times, the church has become run by profiteers. Where does that come from? People are aghast, "Why are churches profiting from things?" Of course, they have it where they don't have to pay taxes on it which makes it even more profiting. But the church has begun to see themselves as a business. Where did that come from? Well, it's the world. The world is profiteering from things and their usury is a part of it.

Of course, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2, and really as you go through Chapter 2 and through Chapter 4, you begin to realize that Paul says, "Ok, we're not like many peddling the word of God, but with sincerity of truth, we are coming before you. If the message is blinded at all, it is the god of this world that has done this, and he's done it by virtue of the fact that you've been disingenuous, and you've been profiting off of the word of God." When the world begins to see the church profiting off of the gospel,

the message is shut off because the whole thing about the message is the generosity of Christ; the generosity of God. For God so loved the world that He gave, and Christ, though He were rich, became poor, that we might have the riches that we have in Christ. I mean, it's a totally different message. So, the light just gets snuffed out by the church doing that. Of course, they gave the example of Balaam infiltrating the Church of Pergamum, but obviously that's certainly a part of it. Then, of course, there are some churches that are politically motivated that will tolerate anything as long as it gains them an advantage. "Well, let's let anything happen. It doesn't matter. We're at least growing. I perceive it more as a political thing."

Once again, Paul says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4, "Look, preach the word of God, be ready in season and out of season. I mean, many are going to fall away, not going to listen to you anymore. They will accumulate for themselves teachers, in accordance with their own desires, and they're going to push you away, and they're going to say, 'I don't want to hear that anymore,' but you

keep preaching it.” Because the church is not a political institution. We're not trying to get votes and we're not trying to get the majority. What we're trying to do is proclaim the truth. We're the pillar and support of the truth. So, we're not going to compromise this. Once the church begins to do that, then the church begins to fall into the realm of the world and Thyatira begins compromise and become tolerant of evil and allowing those things to exist. The same thing is true with Sardis. They're superficial in their truth, and it was all about fame and getting a name out there. “As long as we're popular or as long as people see us as a bunch of do-gooders that are recognized by the world. We don't care how they define us as do-gooders; we just want to be, like, really nice people.” And you see churches really compromising and doing things they really shouldn't do, affirming a lot of evil and yeah, they're very popular churches and they have a name for themselves, and you drop the name and everybody knows about it. Unfortunately, the problem that comes is that they've neglected the truth. Scripture says “as unto the Lord,” you should be doing things; not for the applause of men. That's one of the fundamental

principles of Ephesians 6, when it starts off and it says when you go to work, don't do your work as way of eye service for your boss or for the people around you. No, no, you do it as unto the Lord, and that means you're going to be constantly doing what is right and giving your best all the time, but it's not for the praise of men. It's not for the applause of men. (Matthew 6) Just like how the Pharisees do all their works to be seen by men. So, the great warning there in Matthew 6 is telling us that you don't want the church going there. If, in fact, the church begins to do this, then they're allowing the world to infiltrate them and move them into this direction.

When you look at the Church of Philadelphia there seemed to be a great concern of being a part of somebody. This is a very strong thing that has infiltrated the church, and kind of an esoteric elitism in which people begin to have little groups. Of course, we know that probably one of the greatest texts for this is 1 Corinthians 1, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas." We have these little groups, and we all go around saying, "I know this guy. I know this guy." We try to attach

ourselves to somebody great or some institution that's great, or some institution that's popular and we form our little groups, and we say, "These are the people that we know, aren't we special?" and God says, "No, you're not special because you know somebody. I'm the One that has the keys." So, the one that the church should be proclaiming is Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, we proclaim all these, and we even get celebrities to come up behind the pulpit, and everybody goes, "Wow, the celebrity." Believe me, when a celebrity comes to the pulpit, the pews will be filled. But I can tell you that because he's a celebrity, it doesn't mean he knows the word of God better, and the unfortunate thing is that we've made the celebrity status a higher status than the word of God. So, the proclamation of the word of God is what should be happening. Unfortunately, people are coming to church asking, "What school were you from? Where did you graduate? Who do you know?" These kinds of things, and really, none of those things make any difference. I mean, "Are you talented? Do you have this ability?" What does that matter, really? That we know Him, that's what matters. That's the big thing. So, Christ was trying to tell

the Church of Philadelphia, "Don't worry about getting into these places. Don't worry about that. What you need to worry about is just being right with Me. Come to me for the keys. I'll open the door; nobody will be able to shut it. I'll shut the door; nobody will be able to open it." So, a great passage and way of reminder.

The way He ends with the Church at Laodicea is that you have a church that perceives that they have everything that they need. Now, this is probably one of the most dangerous things that infiltrate the church in which they do everything in their own power. Galatians 6 reminds us that you and I can't do any work according to the flesh. We do our work according to the flesh, of the flesh we'll just reap corruption. It's God that has to do the work. It's God that has to move my heart. Otherwise, I'm just doing it for vain glory, and really, there's not a change because maybe people like me, but they didn't turn to Christ. So, walking in the Spirit, proclaiming the Spirit of God and saying, "Clearly, not to us, oh Lord." When the church begins to think, "Well, I can handle this. We have enough finances to do this. We have enough money to do this.

We can change the world.” That's just the world talking. We're the church. You know what we say? This is what we say, listen closely, “Give us this day our daily bread.” That's how tied we are to every moment of every day, our trust is in Him. Matthew will go on in that same chapter to say, if you'll just seek Him first and His kingdom, “I'll take care of all these, but let Me take care of them.” But what the church has done is it's saying, “Let us take care of it and then we'll be the grand ones.” And literally what they're doing by saying that is they're closing the door to God being involved in your life. You need to trust in God. You need to come to Him and have a personal relationship with Him. You need to listen to Him. Don't let the world come in because look, the god of this world wants to blind the minds. He wants to close that door and say, “God, we don't need You in here anymore. We don't need You here anymore.” That's why Chapter 3 ends, “Behold, I stand at the door knocking.” Why is the door shut? It's a church that He's writing to. Why is the door shut? “We don't need You. We can handle it.” And the perception of the wealth of man and “We have insight and we don't really have to rely on the Spirit of God, and

we don't really have to trust in God and we don't have to come to Him for every direction. We'll make our own decisions based on what we have." And God says, "You've shut Me out."

When you go through the different churches, the harsh and the legalistic influence, the fearful and anxious influence, the disingenuous, exploitive influence, the compromising influence that is tolerant of evil, the influence that is superficial and trite has infiltrated the church and the influence of timid and feeble has infiltrated the church. In fact, sorry to say that the influence of just miserable, greedy idolatry has entered the church. Remember, Colossians says that your greed will amount to idolatry because then you begin to trust in what you have and what you possess, rather than trusting in God.

When you come to the end of the Book of Revelation in Chapter 21, He goes down a list of people that will not be in heaven. Can I list them for you? He says this, "There will be no murderers." If you put that in the context of Matthew 5, as Jesus explains murderers, those are haters.

So, there are not going to be any murderers. There are not going to be any cowards. There are not going to be any liars; no immoral people nor sorcerers. Those are people that fabricate or try to alter reality, sometimes through drugs or some other ways. There's not going to be any sorcerers. There's not going to be any unfaithful. There's not going to be any idolaters. In a way, He literally matches the seven churches to the things they're wrestling with. Because they're wrestling with all those things and all those things have started to infiltrate the church.

Instead, the light is loving, fearless, right? No cowards in heaven. Of course, Christ comes and actually walks to Jerusalem. It says He sets His face like flint going to the cross. I mean, there's no fear there. Loving, fearless, sincere, uncompromising, true, confident; sacrificial instead of greedy. I mean, all the things that Jesus is, is what the Light is. When we say that we're to proclaim the Light, we're proclaiming Christ. Who is the Light? Christ is the Light. So, that's what the church has been called to

do. Unfortunately, the world has begun to infiltrate and move us.

The warning in Matthew 24, if you look with me, is that obviously, as Paul would say to Timothy, “In the last days, perilous times are going to come, and things are going to proceed from bad to worse.” I know that in some circles the churches in their arrogance are basically saying, “We're going to bring in the kingdom of God because we're so wonderful and we're so majestic and because of our holiness, we're going to actually usher in the kingdom of God.” That's not going to happen, and I think it's one of the reasons why the seven churches are there at the beginning of Revelation. I mean, why is it that Jesus has to come in all of His glory, why He personally has to reign? Because we cannot do it. Yes, Christ is in us, but so is the flesh, and there has to be a complete change and He has to reign in our midst. Christ has to reign. So, you come into Matthew 24, and of course, it talks about the fact that the tribulation is going to come. People are going to deliver you up.

It says,

(Matthew 24:12) “Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold.”

Once again, He actually uses the term that fundamentally goes back to a kind of psychosis; an inability to attach themselves to people. Of course, we're seeing that very much in the world today.

It goes on and it says that the gospel is going to be preached, and then it talks about the abomination of desolation, in verse 15. See that? Then people are going to be fleeing.

Then it says,

(Matthew 24:21) “For then there will be a great tribulation...”

See that? What's the church doing wrong? Because things are getting worse.

Then it goes on and says this,

(Matthew 24:22) “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.”

In other words, well, not unlike the days of Noah. I mean, Noah was a righteous man, but had those days not been cut short, Noah would have been dead. So, the fact is that the allurements, the hostility, all the things the world are so powerful, we need a Savior. We need a Savior to save our hearts. We need a Savior to save this world. The church isn't making this world better. The Spirit of God can make it better through us, but we're not bringing about a worldwide change. We are proclaiming the gospel, and through the gospel God is changing lives, but this world is proceeding from bad to worse. So, the purpose of the Book of Revelation is to show the church how easily they are infiltrated and why they can't allow the infiltration to come in. Because what He's going to be doing is He's going to start peeling off and He's going to say, "Look what happens. Look at how horrific this is. Look at how terrible this." I mean, the church is courting all these characteristics of the world and they're thinking nothing about it, and He goes, "You have got to see how this ends." So, He begins to take us to that place.

Now, we come to Revelation 4. The reason I love this text so much is He turns to us, and He goes, “Let me show you the way it must be.” Now, He’s showing us the way it shouldn't be, because Jesus has said to the Church in Ephesus, the Church of Smyrna, the Church of Pergamum, the Church of Thyatira, “Ok, I have this against you,” or “There's a problem here. There's an issue here that you have to deal with. These things ought not to be.” But He then takes John, and you see this interesting picture. I'm just throwing this in. It's kind of like John is tapped on the shoulder, “You’ve got to see this, because this is the way it should be.” So, He takes us from the way the world is and the struggles that the churches are having. I think one of the big problems of many people is they start looking at church and they go, “Ok, that's not Jesus. So, Jesus must not exist.” No, Jesus exists. They're just not following Him, and the church has allowed the world to infiltrate, but that's the problem.

So, he turns in Chapter 4, if you look with me,

(Revelation 4:1) “After these things...”

So, “after these things” is telling us it's directly tied to the things that have been conveyed to us. What were the things that were conveyed to us? Well, chapter 3 says that the church has begun closing the door to God by virtue of all these influences that have infiltrated the church. They're closing the door to God, to the work of God, to the power of God, to the majesty of God. He's not shining forth the way He should.

(Revelation 4:1) “After these things I looked, and behold, a door...”

Don't you think that's interesting? Yeah, we just talked about a door that is shut, and Jesus is knocking on the door, “If you'll let Me in. Let Me in.” Now, we see a door in the heavens, and God says, “You see what's going on in heaven? My door is open. Yours is closed.” Man likes to blame God. “God doesn't love me. He's not nice. He's mean.” Ok, whose door is open? His is.

One of the, of course, most beloved passages that we oftentimes quote in Isaiah 30 is that the Lord longs to be gracious, and you see His arms open wide. Of course, Jesus will say in Matthew 11, “Come unto Me all who are

weary and heavy laden.” I mean, if you look at the difficulties that the Church of Philadelphia was having, in which there was these cliques and little groupies that said, “Well, you're not important.” When you get esoteric about it, it's just a way to shut out the undesirables. “We don't want those people coming in.” Jesus goes, “Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy laden. I will give you rest.” There’s an open door to whoever will come and call upon the name of the Lord. You can be saved. We have a way of catering to the desirables. Of course, obviously James talks about that and he says, “You tell the good-looking rich person, ‘Will you sit here?’ and you tell the other person, ‘Could you just sit a little bit further away from the wind?’” But the push is that you really don't care for them, but God says, “My door is open. If you'll come and you'll humble yourself, I'll save you.” And that's the way the church should be, isn't it? That's the way it should be. So, what a great picture.

(Revelation 4:1) “After these things I looked...”

Of course, he uses this demonstrative which goes, “Whoa! A door, and it was open!”

“... a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet...”

Of course, you go back to Revelation 1:10,

(Revelation 1:10) “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet.”

And of course, as you go on, the sound of the voice was Christ. So, what a wonderful picture of the acceptance of Christ; kind of that picture of Acts 7, where Stephen is being stoned and he looks, and he sees heaven opened and there Christ is standing to welcome him home. What a great picture that is. So, though man will close his door to God, God has His door open and He's saying, “Come. Come.” The desire is that we come to Him.

“...behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice...”

“First voice” making reference to not only superior, but of course, because He is the first One that spoke, is telling us that He has the authority.

“...the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come...””

I oftentimes think of that wonderful prayer of Jesus in John 17, and He says to the Father, “You know what? I really want these guys to come home with Me.” And you get that wonderful picture, whether it's John 17 or John 14, where He says, “Don't let your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places. Were it not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you and I'm going to come again, and you can be with Me and then we'll just be forever together.” Then, in John 15, “Stay with Me. Stay with Me.” I mean, God is the One that's inviting us. We're the ones that are closing the door and He says, “It's just unimaginable. The door was open to Me.” I mean, we think of heaven as such an ominous place and why in the world would God ever just open the door for us? But John is going, “It's open. It's open for me.”

John will make a similar declaration in 1 John, and he'll say, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of

God.” Not only is the door open, but He's saying, “Son, come up.” So, the great voice of the announcement, the first thing that he hears is, “Come.” And what a great picture that is, which is in stark contrast to the world, “Go.” Jesus is saying, “Come.”

“... Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”

Now, I want you to underline the word “show” within the passage, because it has as its root word “to expose,” and basically, what we're talking about, of course, is the Book of Revelation, which is exposing or exhibiting. But it has that sense of the way things were meant to be. So, it's not just simply a showing of something, but it's an exhibiting, and we're going to see in almost a picture, 3D form the way things must be. Obviously, what we've seen on the earth are the way things shouldn't be, and certain things shouldn't be in the church. “Now, I'm going to show you the way things were meant to be.”

He goes on within the passage, not only “show you,” but “what must,” if you look at the phrase here which has the

connotation of that which has to be, basically is necessary, and is right and is proper.

“... what must take place after these things.”

In other words, His point is that things have to change.

“They have to change drastically, because the way things are, though, the church is proclaiming My name, there are so many forces that are coming against the church.

Something has to change drastically in order for things to be made right.” That's the purpose of the Book of Revelation. Things are going to have to change, and the message that God is sending to the church is, “If you have sin in the church, it needs to change drastically. Because perceiving that it's just something that you can live with it is going to destroy you. And I'll show you how it will destroy you.” As He goes through the Book of Revelation, “I'll show you how that will destroy You.” And we'll see how it will. But He's warning the church.

Now, if you look in particular in verse 2, we're going to end with this one, but he says,

(Revelation 4:2) “Immediately I was in the Spirit...”

I want to stop there. Why is that necessary? Because in the flesh we can't understand anything from God. We just can't. So, there's a necessity. I would say, even when you're reading Scripture, if you make it an academic book, you're going to sit there and you're going to go, "I don't get it. I don't get it." And before long, you're going to fall asleep or turn on the TV. But if in fact you come before the Lord and humble yourself and say, "Lord, you're going to have to open my eyes." I mean, look, 1 Corinthians 2, what does it say? "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered in the heart of man the things that God has prepared for you." Only the Spirit can reveal these things to you, which means that you're going to have to come in humility and say, "You need to open my eyes." Walking in the Spirit is loving Him. It starts off with loving Him. So, "God, I just want to do what You want me to do." I mean, how many times have I just come before the Lord, I'm coming against the passage, and I'm going, "I'm not getting it." And I could just hear the voice, "Why are you wanting to know about it?" I can just hear the voice in the back of my head, "Why do you want to know about this?" And I said, "Well, I want to understand it." "Why?" And

what has to come out of my lips? “Because I love You and I want to be like You.” That has to come out of my lips. It has to come from my heart that it’s the reason I want to know. Once that happens, I'm now in the Spirit of God, and His Spirit is revealing to my spirit what He's saying. But I don't understand those things without knowing the heart of God. I don't have the heart of Christ by nature.

So, he says,

(Revelation 4:2) “Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold...”

Once again, that wonderful demonstrative term, “Wow!”
“...a throne...”

Now, why is that the first thing we see? That's the game changer. When God is on the throne, everything's ok, but God has to be on the throne. The problem with these seven churches, some of the problems that was going on was that they were on the throne. Laodicea thought, “Hey, we got the money; we're calling the shots.” And God goes, “Ok, it's not going to work well for you.” It’s going to work really poorly for you. The difficulties are

going to come. So, what has to happen? See, I'm going to show you what has to be in order for you to have peace in your church; in order for your church to grow. So, He's going to show us all these things and He's going to take it to the extremities of showing us what happens if we go the wrong way, and the tribulation in a way, is literally the manifestation of what happens when God is out of the picture. You begin to go, "Wow." I mean, you come to the end of revelation, you go, "We need Jesus." And what happens in Revelation 19? Christ comes on the white horse and all the armies, and you go, "Finally, finally." And that's what this world needs. I mean, the world is discombobulated and clearly, more than confused, just hateful and horrific in the things that they do. We need a Savior. The same Savior that saved our souls is the same Savior that needs to save this universe, and He's coming. So, He's telling the church and purifying the church through this book.

(Revelation 4:2) "Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne."

Now, he's going to convey to us who that is, but more specifically, why that has to be, because once again, you have to go back, "I will show you what must be, what must happen in order for there to be any kind of healing." And that's why when Paul writes to Timothy, he says, "I'm telling you, things are going to proceed from bad to worse." You, as a church continue to do the right thing until He comes, but the reward is always for the expectation of waiting for Him to come. We believe that there actually is going to be a physical coming of Jesus Christ and that has to be in order for there to be this change. But there has to be in our church a divorce from all the things of the world, in order for us to be effective as lights in this very, very dark place, until He comes. So, the interesting parallel is going to be shown throughout the Book of Revelation, and it's been ever encouraging. So, I'm excited about looking at it and we're going to see some wonderful pictures in heaven and God is going to be showing us things that have to be.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word and the fact that You're changing and moving within our midst; that You're calling us as a church to "Come up here. You've got to see this. This is the way that things have to be." And the majesty and the glory of our Christ ruling in the heavens, the worthy One, the One who was slain. Well, it has to be that You are the One that is elevated because only through You will the evil be defeated and victory be wrought, only through You. Father, we believe that, and as a church, we want to separate ourselves from all the things that the world may infiltrate us with so that we may be that clear, unadulterated, wonderful light that You had called us to be.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. You know, we've been talking about church. The same thing is true with your heart. I mean, fear can come into your heart. A kind of exploitive mindset could come into your heart. The harshness towards people that are doing it wrong and it's easy to become critical and condescending to

come into your heart. God has called you to be light to the world and how is that possible if you've allowed the world to cover the light? Pray with me that both you and me as individuals and the church at large would let our light shine and not be hidden in any way. I guess, in a way, I'm asking you to really make a resolve that this will be your pursuit. People are going to see that truth until the day they see Him face to face.