

Heavenly Vision: A Vision of Christ and His Church (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] It's the next to the last book in the Bible, right before confusing book of concordance. Revelation chapter 1.

Going to read from verses 9 through 20. I had planned to teach on the whole section, the whole vision 9 to 20, but about midweek I said, I can't do it.

So we're going to look at specifically verses 9 to 11, the introduction to the vision, because that sets the context. That is the background for the whole book, to understand the author and the readers and their situation, gives us significance to why this book is written and to whom this book is written.

But we're going to go ahead and read the whole section. It is one piece from verse 9 through 20. So if you're able, please stand as I read from the revelation of Jesus Christ, chapter 1, verse 9.

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and in the kingdom and in the patient endurance that are in Jesus.

[1 : 32] I was on the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day.

And I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me.

And on turning, I saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the lampstands, one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze refined in a furnace.

And his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars. From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.

[3 : 03] And his face was like the sun shining in full strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

But he laid his right hand on me saying, Fear not. I am the first and the last. And the living one.

I died. And behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and Hades.

Write therefore the things that you have seen. Those that are. And those that are to take place after this. As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand.

And the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. And the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

[4 : 12] So reads the word. Let us pray. Father, as always we ask you that you would help us as we read and look into your word.

Especially as we enter into this book. This scroll. This revelation. We pray Lord that you would send your spirit. As you do when we open your word.

That he might bring his sword and pierce us with this word. That we might not only have our minds renewed.

Our understanding renewed. But that it would revive our soul. And that it would encourage our hearts. So speak to us today Lord this relevant word.

That you have given to your servant John. That he has written down and passed along. To seven specific churches. And now has been written over and over again.

[5 : 19] And sent to all the churches. Help us to see its relevance and significance this morning. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Please be seated.

So when I was young. That's kind of a wide open statement. When I was around 12, 13. My home church showed a series of movies.

Well in the 70's the night church showed a series of movies on the end times. The first movie was called Thief in the Night. The next movie was called Distant Thunder.

The third movie was called Image of the Beast. Fourth movie. I don't remember. I never saw that one. But they were all about the end times. They were all about the great tribulation.

It was about Christians who were left behind. And so 25 years after this series of movies.

[6 : 28] There's a book series called Left Behind. Following the same kind of storyline. These were Christians who had missed the rapture. Well they weren't Christians at the rapture.

They became Christians after they missed the rapture. And the tribulation came upon those who did not deny the faith. And were killed.

In fact beheaded. I believe the first movie called Thief in the Night got its title from a song written by Larry Norman.

The song goes like this. I remember singing this song. I remember Larry Norman. Song went, I wish we'd all been ready.

There's no time to change your mind. The sun has come and you've been left behind. Kind of scary words, right? That's what we heard regularly during that time in the 70s.

[7 : 34] If you missed the rapture. If you're not a believer and you missed the rapture. There's no time to change your mind. The sun has come and you've been left behind. So those films were scary to me then.

But according to the theology of my church. The rapture would happen first. So if you're a Christian. And the rapture happens. You get to escape all the tribulation.

So it's kind of an evangelical sense of the movies, you know, scaring you. So therefore you better turn to Christ before this comes. Before this happens. So then you can escape the tribulation. Well since then my understanding of end times has changed a little bit.

I don't quite see it the same way. As I was raised and taught. The consistent teaching of the New Testament is that Christians will experience tribulation.

They will not escape it. Jesus himself said in the world you will have tribulation. But take heart. I have overcome the world.

[8 : 41] So here in Revelation we're going to talk about this tribulation. It's a theme of this book. We begin to look at this first vision of the apocalypse.

The vision of Christ and his church. This amazing image of who Christ is. And clearly it's Christ because when John sees this amazing vision that he describes.

He falls at his feet thinking I'm a dead man. He does not recognize this person. But then this person comes and takes his right hand and puts it on John's shoulder. And says I am the first and the last.

The one who was dead. And is now alive. Oh. Sorry Jesus. I didn't recognize you at first. There. You look a little different than the last time I saw you.

So this is Jesus and his church. We have these pictures. So as we began this study a couple weeks ago. We've seen a view of Christ in Revelation.

[9 : 46] We've seen the purpose of this book displayed in the first couple of verses of chapter 1. It is a revelation. It is revealing something. It is a revelation of the invisible cosmic battle.

We're going to see behind the scenes of what is going on. As we enter tribulation. As we enter trial and difficulty. We're going to see. There are things actually that we don't see that are going on.

Not all is as it seems. And this is what the book of Revelation begins to show us. What's going on. In the unseen realm. It's also a book. Not only to reveal things.

But a book of exhortation. Verse 3. Blessed is the one who hears and keeps what is written in this book. It's an exhortation. This is revelation to keep.

To apply. To act upon. To understand and trust. So it is a book of encouragement. There is a theme running through the book about conquering.

[10 : 49] To each church. As we will look at the seven churches. To each church. At the end of the message to each church. It says. To the one who conquers. To the one who conquers.

To the one who conquers. To the one who conquers. This is a book about conquering. This is a book about spiritual battle. It's a book about overcoming in the battle. And each church has a different battle they're dealing with.

Which relates to every church of all time. Particularly to our church today. We will find ourselves in the midst of those seven churches. And maybe we'll even identify with one church in particular.

I don't know. Are we the sleeping church? Are we the lukewarm church? Are we the compromising church? Are we the suffering church? Anyway. We're going to look. We need to take an honest look.

Because we may think we're okay. Like those seven churches. And Jesus comes and says. Uh-uh. Not all as that seems. You look like you're alive. You know what?

[11 : 52] You're really dead. Yeah. So we need to listen. And he says at the end also. To the one who has ears. Let him hear what the spirit is saying to.

Not just that particular church. But to all the churches. Each letter says that. What the spirit says to the churches. So what is said to each church. Is applicable to all churches.

Okay. That's what we understand. The seven thing. Right. Seven is fullness. Seven is representative of all churches. So we also saw last time. Some principles in the first eight verses.

For understanding this book. It's a unique book. It's not like reading a gospel. It's not like reading Paul's letters. It's not like reading the Psalms.

This is a different kind of literature. This is apocalyptic. It's highly visionary. Highly symbolic. Like reading Ezekiel.

[12 : 50] Isaiah. Zechariah. Okay. So in fact it borrows a lot of language from those books. So we saw some principles.

First of all it's a book that reveals. It's signifying. It's a book that has vision. And is seen. It's showing us signs of significance. Secondly. It's soon to take place.

The time is near. It's not a book for something far off in the distant future to the first century. It was relevant in the first century. It's relevant today.

It's something soon to be taking place. Third. Numbers count in Revelation. So we see the number seven. Lots of times. Seven. Meaning fullness.

Meaning completeness. So the seven churches representative of all churches. Fourth. The victory is Christ. The lamb is the one conquering. Very ironic picture.

[13 : 46] We hear about a lion. And John turns around to look at the lion. And what he sees is a slain lamb. And it's the lamb who has been victorious.

Not a lion. But a lamb. It's ironic. He wins the battle by dying. But now he is victorious. Now he is crowned. And now he brings his wrath.

So the wrath of the lamb. Ironic picture. We want a lion. It's a lamb. Oh yes. He's a lion. But we recognize him as the lamb.

We know him as the lamb. So we have these pictures. And then finally Revelation only makes sense in light of the Old Testament. So we are going to be deeply dependent on looking back at these pictures and these symbols that are full.

We saw in the first eight verses a whole bunch of references or intimations from previous books in the Old Testament. So let's now begin to look at this first vision in verse 9 through 20.

[14 : 52] We're only going to take an initial look. In fact, we're only going to make it through verse 11 this morning to understand who is it that saw these things.

Who is this John? And to whom is he writing? Who is reading this? Who are these seven churches? And what are they going through that makes this important for them to hear?

Why is understanding the background of the writer and the readers so significant? Like I said, I was planning to go all the way through verse 20, do the whole thing.

And then I kind of got, well, I can't explain 9 to 11 real briefly. It's too important to understand. So that's why we're doing it. And I've got to justify why it takes me so long to get through, right?

John was teasing me this morning and he said, we've gone through, what, eight verses and it's taken so long. It's going to take us seven years to get through this book, right? Well, I hope not. I don't plan that.

[15 : 50] But here we go. So why is understanding the writer and the reader so important and significant of this book? Because both experience tribulation.

And that's the theme, one of the themes in this book, tribulation. It's not that tribulation is way ahead of them.

They're already experiencing tribulation. John is exiled on an island. He's banished to a penal colony in the middle of the Aegean Sea because he was preaching the gospel.

And these seven churches, all seven, are experiencing going through tribulation. Tribulation. That's why they must conquer.

That's why they must keep the word that is written to them. Okay, so this is about tribulation. It's for those who are enduring tribulation.

[16 : 50] That's what this book of Revelation is for. It's for those who are enduring tribulation. You say, well, I don't think I'm going through tribulation. Well, let me get you to think again about that.

There's different kinds. So let's look at first the writer. Who's the writer? The writer says, verse 9, I, John. John is exiled for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He's banished to a desolate island. Now, Rome did this because that way, you know, they don't have to put him in a prison and take care of him.

Or just drop him off at some desolate island where he's stuck. And, okay, we're done with you. Go. See ya. It's kind of like, you know, they put criminals on the island.

So it's a fun place to be for John as well. So he's banished to this island because he's preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[17 : 51] So let's answer some questions. There's the five W questions in these verses. Who, what, when, where, why. Right? That's basic Bible study, right?

If you want to study the Bible, answer those questions in every verse, every text. Who, what, when, where, why. Okay? So who? Who is John? Well, who is John?

Verse 9, I, John. Back in verse 1, at the end of verse 1, he also calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ. Here in verse 9, he calls himself your brother and partner.

He's the brother, a Christian brother of the churches, and he's a partner with these churches. He's a partner in what?

Well, he names three things. Your partner in the tribulation and in the kingdom and in the patient endurance. And by the way, all three of those things are in Jesus.

[18 : 46] So it's not just any kind of tribulation. It's a tribulation with Jesus. It's not just any kind of kingdom. It's the kingdom with Jesus. And it's the endurance with Jesus.

So he's a partner with them in those things. So which John is this? If you want to read, have a lot of boring reading, look at the commentaries, especially the thick ones that like to talk about who the author is.

And, oh, it can't be that. It must be this one. And blah, blah, blah. Which John is it? Well, how many are there? Well, there's John the Baptist. Can't be him.

He died. Right? There's John Mark who wrote the gospel of Mark, but he goes by Mark. Probably not John Mark. There's John, the brother of James, the apostle of Jesus Christ, the one who, remember, the one whom Jesus loved.

The one who wrote the gospel we call John. There's that John. Oh, it couldn't be him. That's an obvious choice. It's got to be some other John. Well, and so the authors go on and on.

[19 : 57] The critics go on and on. It can't be that, John, because, you know, the language is totally different in Revelation than it is in the gospel of John. Duh. John is a narrative telling the story of Jesus.

Revelation is symbolic. No kidding. The language is different. Same guy can write both. He's not writing the story in Revelation.

He's writing down what he's seen. He's a witness. This is what I heard. This is what I saw. So, John. He just calls himself John to these seven churches. So, clearly, he is known to all these churches.

He's well known. It's not just some John, you know, Doe. John Doe? Yeah, that's it. John Doe. Not Joe Doe.

It's John Doe. Sorry, I got confused. That happens lately. So, according to external tradition, in other words, outside of this book, from the very early 100s, people like Justin Martyr and Irenaeus.

[21 : 04] Some of these old guys' names are hard to say. Clement, etc. They all say it's John the Apostle. Now, this book was written in about 95 AD. In other words, 95 years after Jesus was born.

So, Jesus died in 30 AD. This would be about 65 years after his death. Most of the New Testament, the Gospels and the letters were written in the 50s and 60s.

So, this is at least 30 to 35 years after all the other books are written. This is also written after the big tribulation, the great tribulation that Jesus talked about, what happened within one generation of his death in 70 AD.

The destruction of the temple, the three and a half year persecution of the Jews, and the three and a half year persecution of the church under Nero leading up to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

This is after that. Okay? Long after that. John. Remember, Jesus said, hey, if he lives a long time, remember he's telling Peter, you're going to die upside down, Peter.

[22 : 20] But if I let this disciple, John, live longer. And so, the tradition was that that disciple, John, would live a long time. He's an old man. Old, old man.

Take this old, old man and throw him out on an island. See how he does. So, it's most likely John the Apostle. So, where is he?

He says he's on the island of Patmos. Patmos is now considered one of the Greek islands, though it's not very close to Greece. It's at least 200 miles away from Athens.

But it's closer to the other shore where Ephesus is. It's about 65 miles west of Ephesus in the Aegean Sea.

It's a small rocky island. You know, I looked it up. You can Google it and look at it. It's like you can go stay there now. You can even buy a house there. It's like it's all rocks.

[23 : 19] But I guess they have some nice little, you know, coves, you know, on the Mediterranean there. Whatever. It wasn't nice when John was there. So, who, why, where, why?

Why? Why is John there? He says at the end of verse 9, I was on the island called Patmos on account of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

I was on the island because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was exiled and banished to this island because I taught the Word of God and I gave witness to Jesus.

Testimony or witness. Testimony or witness. I witnessed. I witnessed. I witnessed what I saw and heard about Jesus. I walked with him, talked with him, preached for him.

So, essentially, he's preaching. Preaching Christ. So, why would that banish him? Because the apostles and the disciples have been preaching Christ for years.

[24 : 29] Why now, in 95 AD, are you banished and exiled to an island for preaching Christ? Because the emperor at the time, at the end of the first century, was the man by the name of Domitian.

And he began pushing the idea that he is divine. And he is worthy of worship. And so, if you preached anyone else as king and lord, beside Domitian, you're in trouble.

Okay? So, this is the context the churches are living in. If they stand for Jesus as the Lord, they are anti-government. And that wasn't America.

This is Rome. And Rome will have its Pax Romana. It will have its peace. Even if we have to take these rebellious Christians and take care of them.

So, that's the why. The who. The why. The where. Well, the what. What does he experience? Verse 10, he says, I was in the spirit. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day.

[25 : 40] And then I heard. I heard the loud voice. And then verse 12, I turned to see and I saw. So, he's going to tell us what he's heard and saw.

He's a witness. He's giving a testimony. He testifies to what he has heard and seen. He doesn't tell us what he thinks. He just tells us what he hears and sees.

I'm just the messenger. Just telling you what I saw. Just telling you what I heard. And what happened to me. So, he's in the spirit.

What does that mean? Well, it at least means that he was filled with the spirit. It's on the Lord's day. So, it sounds like he's reading maybe, meditating, praying.

He's in the spirit, which means he surrendered to the Holy Spirit. He's yielded to the spirit. But it seems to be something more than that. He's already prepped himself to be focused on the Lord. He's in the spirit.

[26 : 38] But then it seems like there's a little bit more like he gets raptured up. Caught up. Because now he's going to see a vision. It's the same phrase Ezekiel uses quite a bit.

I was in the spirit and I saw this. John's going to use that phrase, I think, four more times in this book. In the spirit, I was taken to this.

In the spirit, I was taken to see this. So, it's a vision. And then he says, when on the Lord's day? When's the Lord's day?

What day is that? Well, we say every week, intentionally. Not because it's a tradition we do.

It's something we do every week. We say, James leads us in. It's good to be in the Lord's house. In other words, the house that belongs to the Lord.

[27 : 39] It's the Lord's house. On the Lord's day. Because it's a day that we have decided belongs to the Lord. This is the day we meet.

This is the day we gather. We have dedicated it to the Lord. It's the Lord's day. With the Lord's people. By the way, we also belong to the Lord.

So, we meet on the Lord's day with the Lord's people in the Lord's house. Why? Because it's all about the Lord. I need that reminder every week.

It's not about me. It's about Him. That's why we begin our worship that way. So, we say Lord's day. So, when's the Lord's day? Well, there is a tradition that began later after the first century to call Sundays the Lord's day.

It's called the Lord's day because it's the first day of the week. And it was the first day of the week that we will be reminded next Sunday when the Lord, what? Rose from the dead. So, the Lord's day.

[28 : 41] So, it's not a Sabbath day anymore. He was dead on the Sabbath. It was on the first day of the week that he rose from the dead. And now, Christians began to celebrate the Lord's day.

If that's what we're not totally sure that's what John means, it's possible that's what he already means. Remember, he's written about 35 years after Paul's letters when he talks about churches meeting on the first day of the week.

So, maybe 30 years later when John's writing, they're calling it now the Lord's day. Tradition certainly picks that up later. Not that important. Just John gives us kind of a scenario here.

This is who I am. This is where I was. This is why I'm writing. This is what my experience was. And this is when it happened on the Lord's day. So, John sees this vision and all these visions in this book because he's exiled.

Because he's banished to an island. God sent him to Patmos via Domitian. So, he's got a lot of privacy, a lot of time to see what the Lord wants him to see and write down.

[29 : 58] He suffers for the word and for his witness. So, this word, tribulation, is a theme in this book. Christians will suffer for their witness.

So, here's a couple more instances later in the book. Revelation chapter 6. John is saying when he opened this fifth seal, Jesus is opening the seals on the scroll.

There's a scroll rolled up and it's got seven seals on it. So, he's breaking the seals. When he breaks the sixth seal, it's almost open. John says, here's what I saw when he broke the fifth seal.

Under the altar, the souls of those who had been slain. For what? For the word of God and for the witness they had borne. Same two things John says.

I was on the island of Patmos. Why? For the word of God, for the witness of Jesus. So, people, not just John, but others have been slain, been killed for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

[31 : 01] They cried out with a loud voice, O sovereign Lord, holy and true. How long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? So, they're waiting for the Lord's vengeance.

Again, chapter 12, 10 and 11, we have similar language. This is after, remember chapter 12 goes all the way back to the beginning. Revelation 12 goes all the way back to when Christ is born.

And it shows us that the dragon is there wanting to kill the baby born. And then the baby ascends into the baby. But the one who was born ascends to heaven to his throne.

At which time the dragon and his angels are thrown down to the earth. Right? And so, now here is the worship that happens as a result of that. So, clearly, Revelation 12 is not about the future.

It's about something that's already happened. And he says, I heard a voice in heaven saying, Now the salvation and power and kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come.

[32 : 04] So, there's a coming of the kingdom. Why? For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down. Who accuses them day and night before our God.

Watch this. Here comes our theme. And they have conquered him. Our brothers have conquered the dragon. How? They've conquered him by the blood of the lamb.

So, not in their own strength. But by the lamb's conquering. And by, watch, the word of their testimony. The word of their testimony.

Their witness. Their words to Jesus. About Jesus. If conquered by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony. Why?

For they love not their lives even unto death. Okay. So, there's this language. This tribulation language of those who suffer throughout this book.

[33 : 03] From the beginning of the book all the way through. Because of the word of God. Because of the word of God. Because of the word of God. And the testimony of Jesus. Because they're witnessing to their faith. Because they are telling what Jesus has told them to tell others.

They will suffer tribulation in various kinds. Some even to death. So, John and the church are suffering tribulation even to death for their witness to Christ.

So, that's John. So, John is exiled. Banished for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. That brings us to the readers. Who are the readers? Who are these seven churches?

Who is this? In other words, who is this book written for? So, Jesus is giving all of this message, these visions to John. John is to write these things down.

And send it to seven churches. And why just these seven churches? Aren't there other churches besides these seven?

[34 : 06] Some of these seven never even heard of. Paul didn't write to Smyrna or, you know, Pergamum. Where's Thyatira? Heard of Ephesus. Philadelphia, we got one of those in our own country.

Why not Galatia? Why not Corinth? Why not Rome? Is that church? Why just these seven churches?

So, that's a good question. Who is this written for? Well, here is the experience. That these seven churches and all the churches at that time were experiencing.

The readers, the churches, the Christians, were enduring tribulation for the kingdom of Jesus. All seven churches.

All the churches. And you could say that today. True churches are enduring tribulation for the kingdom of Jesus. So, notice.

[35 : 09] Back to verse 9. Now, John's talking about himself, but he also is talking about the churches. Because he says we share something in common. We are partners together in three things. Notice in verse 9.

He says, Your brother and partner. Your partner. The word, we get our word koinonia from that word. We koinonia together. We have fellowship together in these three things.

We share in common these three things. We partner together in these things. What things? Three things. In the tribulation. And in the kingdom.

And in the patient endurance. That are in Jesus. All three of those things are in Jesus. So, they're partners in three things.

So, this is what the churches are experiencing along with John. They are experiencing, first of all, the tribulation. Tribulation. These are churches enduring tribulation. They share it together.

[36 : 07] They have a common experience in tribulation. Well, what do we mean by tribulation? See, so I was raised in a time when, you know, tribulation. The tribulation. I was like, okay, there was only one of those.

And that's way in the future. And the rapture is coming before that. As long as I'm, you know, confessed up and prayed right. And whatever it takes in your church. So, that's the tribulation.

We don't have that. Now, like I quoted Jesus earlier. It says, in the world you will have tribulation. You will. Paul says, anyone who desires to be godly.

Just desires to be godly. Will be persecuted. Okay. It will. You will.

Tribulation. So, the word tribulation simply means to be pressed together. As a Christian, you ever felt pressed? You ever felt kind of squeezed?

[37 : 07] That's tribulation. You ever felt oppressed on some level? That's tribulation. Affliction.

Hardship. Ever been through a trial? Yeah. God intends for us to go through trials so that we grow. You know. All that. We trust him. That's tribulation.

The churches are enduring tribulation. With Jesus. I love that phrase. Because that phrase at the end there. That are in Jesus. It's attached to all three of those conditions.

So, tribulation is in Jesus. It could. I think it's better translated with Jesus. So, I experience tribulation with Jesus. Now, you might say I experience tribulation because I'm tied to Jesus.

That's true. But I like the view of. I'm experiencing tribulation with him. He's with me. And I'm with him.

[38 : 13] And that makes the tribulation a little bit more. Okay. Okay. I'm good. He's with me. Right. Then, secondly, he says we're also partners in the kingdom.

We also share a common experience in the kingdom. The kingdom. So, what's the kingdom? See, again, when I grew up, that kingdom, that was all future.

But then, you know, I studied the gospels and Jesus is constantly, constantly talking about the kingdom. He preaches the gospel of the kingdom. He preaches the parables of the kingdom which relate to things going on now.

Parable of the solar. How do we listen to the word of God? Well, it's kind of like this. It's either that it lands on rocky soil or weedy soil or hard soil or that's now.

That's not future. He's talking about how we enter the kingdom like a little child. That's not future. That's now. Kingdom life is now. So, what's the kingdom?

[39 : 18] It's what Jesus preached. It's what Jesus brought. Paul summarized it in Romans 14. He says, the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking. It's not that physical stuff.

The kingdom of heaven is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. That's what the kingdom is.

It's not something physical. It's something spiritual. It's something that you experience with the spirit. It's the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit or with the Holy Spirit.

As you walk with the Holy Spirit. As you are depending on the Holy Spirit. As you are filled with the spirit. As you bear fruit of the spirit. Jesus taught us to pray, right?

What's the first thing we pray? See if anybody prays. Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Cause your name to be set apart. Second request.

[40 : 18] We pray every day. Because the fourth request is give us this day our daily bread. So the others are related to a daily prayer. Thy kingdom come today.

Today. Thy will be done today. Give me bread today. Forgive me today. Protect me today.

Kingdom is about now. Okay. So how do we experience the kingdom then? Well obviously as Paul summarizes. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

So it's the work of the Holy Spirit. I'm experiencing. How we listen to the word of God when it's preached and taught. That's kingdom. How we walk in our life.

Is kingdom. So how do we share. So kingdom also implies rule. Right? Rule. So.

[41 : 21] The Jews of the first century were looking for the king. The Messiah to come. And to rule. To banish the Romans. And to rule. To sit on his throne. Like the throne of David.

Where all the enemies are suppressed. Jesus didn't do that. Jesus said to Pilate. When Pilate asked him.

Are you a king? Oh yeah. I'm a king. But my kingdom is not of this. World. It's bigger. It's much bigger.

Than this world. And it's an everlasting kingdom. It's not like yours Pilate. You'll be done in a few years. Mine doesn't end. King.

So. Here's the. Something to think about. How did Jesus. When Jesus came. He came preaching the kingdom. He brought the kingdom. How did Jesus reign. While he walked on earth.

[42 : 18] He's the king. He's the Messiah. How did he reign? Not on a physical throne. What enemies did he subdue? What? Gospel of Mark.

Folks. Spiritual enemies. Demons. He subdued demons. He subdued disease. He set captives free.

Right? It's spiritual battle. Every time he preached. The demons would start speaking up. Right? Why? Because. Hey. Hey. Hey. Hey. You can't say that here.

Yeah. I can't. Shut up. That's essentially what he did. Isn't it? I can too. Oh. You're not supposed to be here yet. We do the same thing.

Our kingdom experience is the same. It's spiritual victories. Not physical victories. We reign by conquering spiritual battles.

[43 : 24] Just like Jesus did. We reign by enduring tribulation as Jesus did. It's not a physical victory.

It's a spiritual victory. That's what this book is about. It's about conquering spiritual battles against the beast and against the false prophet. Against all that the enemy raises up against us.

We put on the armor of God. Right? We fight not against flesh and blood. Paul's already talking about this. John is fleshing it out.

Putting the color to it. Okay? So it's ironic how we experience the kingdom. It's not like you think. But again, everything in the book of Revelation is not like you think.

And then finally he says we also share in endurance. Endurance means to persevere. To go through, to persevere in the pressure, in the affliction.

[44 : 30] To, as verse 3 says, keep the word. Right? We keep the word. We continue to trust in Jesus. We endure in Jesus or with Jesus. I endure.

The only reason I can endure is because I'm holding on to Jesus. Right? Hebrews 12 talks about run the race with endurance. How do I do that? Because I get tired.

And I get weary. And I want to quit. And he says by looking to Jesus. Right? Consider him that you might not grow weary or faint hearted.

By looking to him. That's my strength. So I endure with Jesus. I go through tribulation with Jesus. He doesn't leave me alone. So, and then he says these seven churches, as I already talked about, they're representative of all churches.

In fact, you see, as, well, let's look at the church of Ephesus. Look at the end of the letter to Ephesus. This is chapter 2, verse 7. The last word. Notice what he says.

[45 : 38] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the church of Ephesus. Right? No, he didn't say that.

He's been talking to Ephesus, but he says, He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Yes. So what I say to Ephesus, that goes for all of you. In other words, okay?

So even though these are specific messages to specific churches at a specific time that applied to them directly, they also apply widely.

They also applied to the church of Philadelphia and Thyatira. And Thyatira's message also applies to Ephesus. And they also applied to the little church in Palmer Lake.

Which this morning we were talking about the leak and we say, Is it the little log church or is it the leaky log church? Sherry's working on a parable related to that. We think there might be something there.

[46 : 45] You know, because we want to have the water, but we don't want the water to go underground with it. You know, so working on a parable for the little log church or leaky log church. So this applies.

So enduring tribulation is not a distant future issue. It is a normal Christian experience. Listen to what Paul says in Romans chapter 5. This is a beautiful chapter, by the way.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, In other words, we've been declared innocent. We've been declared righteous. Even though we're not righteous, we've been declared that by faith.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him, then, we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.

And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We're looking forward to that day. We rejoice about all that. Not only that. Now, here's where Paul gets, you know, different.

[47 : 45] We rejoice about the glory I had in heaven, right? Oh, yeah. Not only that. We rejoice in our sufferings.

Our tribulations, literally. Is that your experience? You rejoice in your tribulation? Paul does. I mean, the guy's nuts. Why does he rejoice in his tribulations?

Because he knows something. Because he knows that suffering, tribulation, produces endurance. I get better at it.

I build up calluses. I build up faith. I learn to walk with Jesus through these things. And endurance produces character.

And character produces hope. Isn't that interesting? Hope comes through trial. We already have hope.

[48 : 44] But bigger hope comes by going through tribulation, enduring, developing maturity. Hope. And then listen to it.

He describes this hope. It produces hope. Hope does not put us to shame. Because why? Because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

There's the Holy Spirit again. Who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.

See, all this benefit comes to the ungodly. All this benefit comes to sinners. All this benefit comes to those who can't.

Who can't fix themselves. Who cannot stop their sinful tendencies. I can stop them for a while.

[49 : 46] I can fight them off for a while. Man, I still fall. I hate it when I fall. But I'm not justified because of how well I do against my sin.

I'm justified because I have faith in Jesus Christ who bore my sin for me. Made me righteous all by His work. Because I gave Him my sin and He gave me His righteousness.

It's a really good deal. It's too good to be true. But it is true. And then I get peace.

And then I get the Holy Spirit. And then I get hope and power and love of God poured out. I mean, all kinds of good stuff. Oh, by the way, I also get tribulation. Which heightens my experience of all those other things.

That even through the tribulation, I gain endurance and I gain character. And I gain a greater hope. And then it cycles again. I'm more peace.

[50 : 55] Holy Spirit pouring out the love of God in me. It's really good stuff. I hope you know this stuff. I mean by experience. It's a normal Christian experience.

We experience peace with God because Christ has justified us. Given us access to the Father and given us hope. This peace with God does not mean we have peace in the world.

Jesus said, peace I give to you but not as the world gives. It's internal peace. It's peace with God. It's peace that you will experience from me as you learn to put those burdens on me.

Right? The peace that passes understanding when you're just out of your mind anxious. And I turn it over to him. And note what this tribulation brings.

It brings hope. It brings the love of God. It brings the work of the Holy Spirit. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It brings kingdom.

[52 : 06] Is this your experience? Do you know some of this to some measure? Do you share in tribulation? I don't mean great.

It could be inner. It could be small. It could be, you know. Pressure. Because of your faith. Pressure with sin.

Pressure with temptation. Pressure with the world. Pressure with. Because you walk with Jesus. Do you share kingdom? Experience that ministry of the Holy Spirit.

And reigning, not like you think. Reigning by faith overcoming the evil one. Reigning over. And then endurance.

See, apart from Jesus, we can do nothing. Right. No, please. That's all right. Amen. Amen. Apart from me, Jesus says, you can do some stuff, right?

[53 : 11] No. He said, no, apart from me, you can do nothing. You're not going to bear any fruit. Well, you can try to produce fruit, but you can't. You only bear it by abiding in me, right? But if we abide in him, what did Paul say in Philippians?

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this word.

I think we need to hear it, Lord. This word of revelation about trial, tribulation. About walking with you. About you being in the midst of our church.

In the midst of our lampstands. About what's going on behind the scenes. So, Father, keep us in your hand.

Keep us, Lord, aware of your presence. Help us, Lord, to continue to experience those three things with you.

[54 : 17] When we go through tribulations, help us to experience it with you. To experience the kingdom with you. And to experience endurance with you. Thank you, Lord, that you promise us you will never leave us or forsake us.

We depend on you every day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.