

12.15.19

Revelation

Chapter 1

Revealing the Mystery of Light

The Light of Love

Radiating the Unfailing Love of Christ

vs. 7-20

A Light (vs.7-16)

Revelation 1:7-16: BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of

Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

Did you hear that last phrase in that verse 16, "His face was like the sun shining in its strength"? John's going to be talking to us about light. Obviously not only the light

that is being radiating from Christ, but the lampstand, the seven stars, and we're seeing the light. Christ, being the force of all of that light is an interesting picture that John gives us. Our goal is to really unravel and to unveil Revelation to you, because that's what the book means, to unveil. It's unveiling, really the heart of God as well as the mind of man because the one thing that light has a way of doing, it has a way of exposing. So, not only does it enlighten, but it exposes. Paul makes mention of this in Ephesians 5. He says, "You once were darkness. Now, you are light. Now, walk as vessels of light." By virtue of us doing the right thing, it exposes that which is evil, and that's what light does. So that God causes the church to literally be the light of the world.

In this picture that He gives us within the page of this first part of Revelation, it is a picture of lights. As we talked about the lights of the stars last week, we now go back to the specifics of what he is saying in these verses that are to follow. What is clear, just as a way of reminder, is that the book starts off by God choosing one to write this book that was probably the closest of all the disciples to Him.

He refers to himself as a disciple as the one whom Jesus loves and it is the Gospel of John that he writes and he pens through the power of the Holy Spirit. And as he begins to write one of the greatest verses that we embrace, probably more than any other verse of Scripture, “For God so loved the world.” That’s not found in Matthew, it’s not found in Mark, it’s not found in Luke. It is only found in John. But John begins to proclaim the great love of God, and he proclaims it in an interesting way in that he parallels it to light.

In fact, if you look with me in John 1, the Gospel of John, it states this,

(John 1:4) “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

(John 1:5) The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

Another way of putting that would also be “could not overpower it.”

He then makes mention of that Light in verse 9,

(John 1:9) “There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.”

He specifies and states to us that this is the true Light. There are a lot of lights. A lot of people proclaiming it, and when you think of light, it's ever been used as a metaphor for so many things. One of the things that light is a metaphor for is hope. I mean, even when you consider the whole night thing; you have darkness, and then when that sun starts coming up, things begin to change and feel better. That sun bringing a light to things. Well, we know that light means so many things to us. It means not only hope, but it means a kind of joy and a purity. In fact, if you think of the antithetical side of it, oftentimes, when you think of darkness, you think of that which is depressing and sorrowful and obscure and confusing, and light comes in and truth and wisdom and joy and all these things. So, it's an interesting picture because it gives that sense of what light is. Revelation is going to be revealing what true Light is because it's unveiling, right? It's revealing things and it's going to reveal what that true light is. So, within the passage, he begins to convey this.

Now, if you go back with me to Revelation 1 and we see the fact that John is the one that's been chosen. If you look in verse 2, he's the one...

(Revelation 1:2) “who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.”

Now, obviously, there are some things that he's talking about that make reference to this particular book, but he's also specifically talking about the fact that he wrote the Gospel of John and that he bore testimony of all the things that Jesus did. He gave testimony to that. “This is why I chose John.” Because the testimony that he gave was a testimony of the light of God in his life and the sense of love that he felt from God. So, John is the perfect guy to write the book.

So, as we have this just revealing the mystery of light, because there really is a mystery of Light. How do we know? If you look at verse 20,

(Revelation 1:20) “As for the mystery of the seven stars...”

There's a mystery here that's involved in the text. What is the mystery of Light? Well, He's going to be revealing

what it is, but it's important that you understand that He chooses to reveal it through one He loves to those He loves. Because if you look, how do we know that He's writing it to those that He loves?

(Revelation 1:5) “and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood.”

How much did He love us? Well, this is how much He loves us. So, we're beginning to see the Light of God in all of these things. As we go through, strangely enough, He is going to be unveiling this Light. The picture that you have, of course, not only that one of the first things that John sees when he turns around are these 7 golden lampstands, but the passage then begins to talk about the seven stars that are on them. It then talks about in verse 16, the sun shining brightly in his face. It even talks about the eyes of Christ were like flaming fire. So, we're seeing a lot of light in this picture. So, as we come to the passage, we're going to be talking about this Light, and it is a picture of hope; it is a picture of joy; it is a picture of

truth. Because once again, truth like light, exposes things that are false. So, as we come to this, we begin to see the qualities and the characteristics, and I would say the truth about light.

If you look with me in verse 7, we're going to pick up there and talk about the wonderful truth about Light, and in each of these verses, we're going to give you a focus point of what this Light is really all about and what you need to know about Light. In verse 7, just immediately, there's something that has to hit you with verse 7, and that is the evidence of surprise. The text reads, "Look! There's Christ!" It is wanting to convey the feeling of surprise. You say, "Why would it want to convey that?" Because man is actually convinced that darkness is going to win. Man is actually convinced that if he can lie and cheat and steal that he's going to win. I think one of the most confusing things to us, when you read a passage like Romans 12, when you come to the end, he goes, "Ok. Alright, we're going to fight evil, but this is the way we're going to do it. We're going to use good to do it" and everybody in their heads are going, "Ok, that's not going

to work. They're going to run right over us. I mean, they're going to win. The bad guy is going to win.” This is one of the things that Revelation reveals because in the Book of Revelation, you're going to see this beast coming up, and he's got these horns and he's just massive coming out of the sea and he begins to rule the world, and you go, “Ok. He's going to win.” And then who do we have on our side? There's a Lamb. Wait a minute. It's a Lamb, not full grown. It looks like somebody cut his throat. The Lamb that's like it's slain. He goes, “Ok, that's going to win.” There's nothing in this story that seems to make sense to us. So, when we see Jesus coming, the world goes, “Whoa. This can't be true.” And God's going, “He's back.”

So, if you look in the passage,

(Revelation 1:7) “BEHOLD, HE IS COMING...”

See, that's the grand surprise because the perception is that love can't win. “The light of God's love, Him dying for the world cannot defeat evil.” He goes, “I have and I'm coming, and I'm coming with all those that I saved.”

Remember, we were talking about the clouds of all those

that have been saved. We win. God is going to demonstrate that light is going to defeat darkness. He came into the world. He is Light; the darkness could not overpower the Light. What an amazing thing. All that had to happen was the glory of the Light shining. It's like you walk into a dark room, you flip on the switch, where did all that darkness go? It just immediately goes out of the way. So, the passage is almost a surprise.

“BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him...”

“Wait, I thought we killed this guy. I thought He was dead. I thought we won.”

“... and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him...”

You mean love is able to change the heart to bend the knee, to bring about change? The truth about Light is yes, it's able to change. And in some ways, the truth about light is it's unexpected to us because it literally is a surprise to us that that love is going to win. It is the truth about Light, and I think literally it's what John is saying there.

One of the great passages, we oftentimes quote it, but just as a way of remembrance, if you turn with me to Romans 8, it's a good passage to just literally throw within the text because he literally is conveying the power of the light of God's love. Now, why do we put light and love together? Because love is that which radiates hope; love is that which proclaims truth. So, it really is the love of God that is the light that shines upon us.

The passage reads this way, if you look with me,

(Romans 8:35) “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

No. (Verse 37) We win, and we don't just kind of win, we overwhelmingly win. Isn't that what the passage says?

(Romans 8:38) “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

(Romans 8:39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing...”

“...can win against the power of God's love.” It can't separate us.

So, the passage is conveying something and it's a good way to start because we're dealing with Revelation, “Surprise.” Unexpected, right? Light is unexpected and the Light of God will always win.

If you look with me in verse 8, what he's going to reveal to us is, love or Light has ever been determined. What I mean by that is that this was not an afterthought. This was not a plan “B”. This has always been true. John will write in 1 John that in God is light, and in Him, there is no darkness at all. The passage is telling us that the eternal One is eternally who He is and that is Light, or more specifically, the love of God radiates from Him. It is an enduring flame or, as 1 Corinthians 13 will say, His love never fails. It is the unfailing love of God, and what an interesting and wonderful picture. One of the reasons why it's conveyed with flames is the picture is conveying passion. So, what's the passion of God? The passion of God is to bring you hope. The passion of God is to bring you joy. The passion of God is to display His love to you,

and to give you a sense of security. Talk about light, it just removes all the darkness and all the depression and all the confusion. One of the reasons why we love the gospel so much is it's not obscure. "Whosoever believes in Him will not perish." That's an absolute. See, there's nothing obscure or dark about that. You will not perish but have everlasting life, and the life was the Light of men. I mean, do you remember when you first embraced that? You go, "Wow, I feel bright inside." It just took away all the darkness of your life. That's the love of God.

What a wonderful truth, if you look here,

(Revelation 1:8) "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Now, why is He making reference to this? Because He's conveying that nothing has happened that has been out of His control. What do I mean by that? Well, what I mean by that is that He has so ordained that this whole love thing be conveyed exactly the way that's been conveyed before the foundation of the world. It's one of the things

that I love about Ephesians 1, that tells us that we were actually chosen before the foundation of the world.

A clearer passage that makes reference to this is found in Isaiah, and if you just take and maybe mark it in your Bibles,

(Isaiah 46:8) “Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors.

(Isaiah 46:9) Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,

(Isaiah 46:10) Declaring the end from the beginning...”

Is the love of God an afterthought? No. In fact, one of the things that John is going to convey in John 1 is, “In the beginning was the word.” That's the heart or the intent of God. “The word was with God; the word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made”. Now, what Scripture is telling us is that the heart and the intent of God is what created everything. So, everything that's been created has been created with the heart and intent to demonstrate

love to you. Do you understand that? That's the eternal determination. So, the passage is saying, "I declare the end from the beginning."

"... from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish..."

Everything. Not just some.

"...all My good pleasure."

If you look at the end of verse 11, it reads this way,

(Isaiah 46:11) "... Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass.

I have planned it, surely I will do it."

The truth about Light is it's ever been determined. The Light of God has never ceased to shine. It has been shining in the Old Testament. It was shining before the worlds were made. It was the truth about God. It is who He is. Nothing has changed. That's an interesting point because I think the nature of man is to perceive that maybe God is doing a plan B in all this, and His purpose in writing this in verse 8 is nothing's changed. "I'm the first

and the last. I'm the Almighty. Do you think anything can move Me to change? You think anything could have changed My plans? I'm the one that started everything. I'm the one that will end everything. Nothing changes.” And it's good to know to me that love has ever been determined because if God is a God of love today, then He is a God that has ever determined love for us. And when we know that it was that which was the source of all things created, we also know that it will be the source of all the consummate things that end. In other words, all things will end in love as all things began in love. That's the truth about Light.

Now, if you look in verse 9, we almost feel like it's being interrupted by just John adding in, “This is where I am,” but it's not because the Light is not only demonstrating that it's obviously contagious and it changes us, as Ephesians says that you once were darkness, but now you're light, and John's going to be conveying that, but you're going to see that the Light of God is enduring in nature. Once again, it's unfailing. It never ends. One of the ways that we know the difference between the light of

men and the Light of God is that God's Light never goes out. It never fails.

So, if you look within the passage, he writes this, (Revelation 1:9) "I, John, your brother and fellow partaker..."

Now, why is he describing it this way? Because he's describing a relationship. John is saying, "I'm bound to you." "Well, John, why are you bound to these people?" "The love of God constrains me. I don't know. I can't describe that." What unites the hearts of men? It's got to be something. It's got to be a flame. It's got to be a light. It's got to be a power that is far greater than me, and it has to be something that is sincere. It has to be something that's real. It has to be something that's true. It has to be something that's unailing.

"I... your brother."

Another way of putting it is, "the one who loves you fondly," and "the one who is a fellow partaker. We're together in this."

"... I, John...in the tribulation..."

Now, once again, we have to clarify, why is he in tribulation? Why is he in the Isle of Patmos? Why is he, an old man, in prison? Well, the same reason that Paul says in Ephesians to those that he writes to, “I'm in prison for you because I was compelled to give the message of the gospel for you, and they threw me in prison. I mean, look, I could have just sat home and said, ‘I'm waiting for God to take me up to heaven,’ but I'm here for you.” And it's a light that just can't seem to go out. I mean, it's enduring in its nature.

If you look within the passage,

(Revelation 1:9) “I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus...”

Now we're talking about Light, right? The perseverance which is in Jesus. It's actually the same word that Hebrews makes reference to that really describes endurance. It's that same thing that we were seeing, if you look with me in 2 Timothy 2. Remember Paul, when he writes to the church in 2 Timothy 2? If you don't have this text

underlined, you ought to, because in 2 Timothy 2, if you read with me, Paul writes this,

(2 Timothy 2:10) “For this reason I endure...”

The same word as perseverance, by the way.

“For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.”

Now, look at the phrase, “For this reason I endure all things,” not just some things, all things.

If you look with me in Hebrews 12, isn't that the picture of Christ? Well, read it with me, which, by the way, great picture of the clouds, right?

(Hebrews 12:1) “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

(Hebrews 12:2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured

the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

(Hebrews 12:3) For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

You can't extinguish the Light. It is an enduring flame, and it's enduring in its nature, and it's for you. The love of God can't be put out. What can separate us from the love of God? Nothing. Fundamentally, the point of Hebrews is, how do you know that you're saved? You endure.

Because if you have the Light of Christ within you, you can't be put out. You can't not be who you are, which is the Light of men. God has called us to be a light set on a hill, and we can't not be that because the evidence is we can't forsake the assembling of ourselves together. We can't not be hospitable to those, and this is the argument of Paul in the Book of Hebrews. You have to endure and when trials and tribulation come, you embrace them all the more because that's what Light does. It is very distinguishable to the world and John is saying in some way, “You've seen it in me.” Now, he's going to go on to

describe what the church is called to do, but he's given us reason why he is the one who is writing this. Because he has given evidence of that which is true within himself.

(Verse 9) "I'm the one and I've given you evidence of the testimony of Jesus." Which of course is the Light of men, right?

Verse 10 is a great, great verse. I love verse 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."

We talked about this just a just a little bit last week, and that the emphasis of trumpet is that it's calling you to either a battle or it's calling you to a celebration and both of them are true. God's going to call us at the end, to the great battle, but He's also going to call us to the great celebration of the Bride of Christ, and the marriage supper of the lamb. So, it's a call to both. But more than that, the context is, "I was in Spirit." This is a very interesting point because what He's conveying to us is that the things that are going to be seen can only be seen to the spiritual eyes; this is once again one of the reasons why the Book of Revelation is so closed to so many

people. This is the fundamental point of Paul in 1 Corinthians 2, "Eye has not seen; ear has not heard," and he'll go on to say, as he begins to describe to the Corinthians, that we walk by faith, not by sight. We look at things not seen. Of course, the writer of Hebrews will say, "Faith is the substance of things not seen." Why is that true? Because John writes specifically in 1 John 2 that there is this thing called not only the lust of the flesh, but the lust of the eyes. We have a real problem with our eyes and that is, and you can ask the police this too, if you were to ask an eyewitness what he saw, it is usually influenced by who he was and what his agenda is. He can almost translate what he sees into almost anything he wants to. That's why eyewitnesses are not always reliable. You need more than one, and you need a kind of agreement because it's very difficult to really get the whole truth out of just somebody that saw something. The point is that our eyes deceive us, and it is oftentimes ruled by our heart. So, the warning is that you can't really come to God by virtue of signs and wonders. In fact, Jesus will say this, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign." That's pretty interesting, isn't it? And let me say

this, that what you're going to read in Revelation, in Chapter 13 in particular, is that the beast, the evil one, the antichrist, however you want to picture him, is going to come with signs and wonders, and he's even going to call fire down from heaven.

2 Thessalonians 2 makes specific reference that many will be deceived because of his signs and false wonders. Why? Because man is drawn by visual, but the visual isn't really that which can hold somebody because you always have to need more visuals. So, what does Scripture say? Well, Scripture interestingly says in Romans 10 that you and I are actually called by a voice, or more specifically, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

There's an interesting picture of Mary Magdalene after Christ had risen from the dead, and here she is walking in the garden, she sees Him, but she perceives Him as being a gardener, but she hears, "Mary" and she immediately identifies. Now, why is that true? Because the voice conveys a heart unlike what a picture can do, and as you begin to hear the voice of one who loves you, this is why Jesus says in John 10, "My sheep hear My voice, and they

can tell that I care for them; they can tell that I love them; they can tell that I'm the one, and they come because of the voice. They don't even have to see Me. They hear the voice.”

Look at the passage, the way it reads,

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

The passage is telling us a very key point, Light is voice activated. Now, for all you people who have Amazon stuff, I know that you can probably picture some of this, but the point of the matter is that you cannot begin to see till the voice begins to speak. That's an interesting concept, isn't it? This is the truth about Light. Why is it we open up Scripture? Why is it that we proclaim the word of God? Because faith comes by hearing the word of God, and you'll be sitting there and you might have seen a verse, or you might have seen a play, but somewhere along the line you hear the voice of God. Like Hebrews says, the Spirit of God, the voice of God, is saying, “Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.” You can hear and the voice of God begins to speak to you, and it's

not an audible voice because it's a spirit voice. You hear Him speak and the words of God begin to come into your heart, and you go, "He's talking to me. He's talking to me. I can hear Him talking to me" and God begins to move. So, Revelation is revealing that the voice had to come first, right? The Light is voice activated.

Then if you look within the passage, in verse 11, it begins to say,

(Revelation 1:11) "... "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.""

(Revelation 1:12) "Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands."

If you drop on down to verse 20, what are the seven lampstands at the very end of the verse? The seven churches. So, what we know is that this light has somehow been endowed or given to the church. This is a

key point. Remember, as we were looking at Timothy, that the church is the pillar and support of the truth. So, that's an interesting picture. It's like a lamp stand, a pillar and support, and what is it supporting? Light. What is the light? Christ. What is that light radiating? The love of God. For God so loved the world, and the truth is that God is love. That's the truth. Man wants to subvert. Man wants to obscure it, but that's the truth that has been given specifically to the church, and this is his point within the text. Revelation is really revealing whose job it is to proclaim this truth, and God says, "I have ordained the church," or as Jesus says when He's talking to Peter, "Upon this rock, I will build My church." And what's interesting within the passage is that you have these seven that are kind of bound together by proxemics, which is an interesting thing as we were talking about Pleiades in the skies, "Who could bind Pleiades." You have these seven that are literally on this mail route in which it starts with Ephesus and then just follows on around. If you were to put a normal letter on a mail route, that's the way the mail route would go. So, as he begins to list, they are bound together, and they are bound together

interestingly enough, by the same message. "Write these things down. Give it to the seven churches." Now, what's also going to be interesting within the passage is that these golden vessels, which are the containers of the Light which God has ordained, which is the church, which is unveiling, I would trust, but they're collectively unique. I mean, He doesn't say, "To the churches in Asia Minor." He says, "To the church that's in Ephesus, to the church that is in Smyrna, the church that's in Pergamum, church that in Thyatira." I mean, He goes through the list of individual churches. So, you have an interesting sense of autonomy or independence, and yet, collectively, they have the same message that has been given to them. Now, what we're going to see is they have very different personalities. This may shock some people, but some are closer to God than others. People say, "You can't say that's a bad church." Yeah, you can because Laodicea was a bad church. It was a church, but it was a bad one. Why was it bad? Because they believed that money was the answer, or Thyatira, or Pergamum or even Ephesus who had gone so far in the doctrine that they had thrown out love. There are good churches. So, though they may exist

as a church, some are going to be brighter lights, and some are going to be proclaiming that Light the way they should be. So, you see Christ reprimanding some; others He begins to really encourage and strengthen, "You're doing everything right. Keep up the good work." Of course, specifically, Smyrna and Philadelphia are the ones that He focuses on in that regard. So, the passage seems to make reference to the fact that the church is called to be the holders of the Light, and more specifically, they are collectively unique, but they're united by the same message. So that though we're called to have the same message, different churches are not going to be portraying it necessarily the way they should, and the light is going to be darker or lighter depending on how they demonstrate that truth. He's going to be revealing that in Revelation. God has clearly called all of them to be bright, but not all are going to be.

Then, if you look within the passage, not only are there the collective group of lampstands in which he says immediately in verse 12,

“... I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands.”

But in verse 13, if you look,

“and in the middle of the lampstands...”

The picture is, what's the source of the light? You have a lampstand, but what's the source of the light?

“and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

(Revelation 1:14) His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.”

I oftentimes think about this. Once again, we're going to go in detail about these characteristics as we began to see the churches, because he's going to go into detail about the churches and each part of this description is going to relate specifically to each church, which is telling us something. Where is Christ with the lampstands? In the midst of it. What is he telling you? Well, he's telling you one thing right off the bat. God is intimate with His

church. He knows what's going on. In fact, when we begin to read about the seven churches, we will read, and God will say, "I know where you live. I know what you're doing" and the things that He begins to say, they'll go, "How did He know?" He goes, "Because I'm among you. I'm a part of you." God has ordained the church to be the light. He is ever involved in the life of the church, because that's what gives the light to the world, that's what points to truth; that's what points to the love of God. If we're not doing it, it's not going to be done right. The church has been called to be the venue for that.

So, the passage reads that His head was like white wool. There are many descriptions here, the wisdom of God, the eyes of a flaming fire. What is that telling us? I oftentimes think of Psalm 51, where the psalmist says, "I know You desire truth in the innermost beings," and you have this picture of flaming fire that begins to purge everything that's false, and He goes, "I'm looking for truth." Flaming fire; it's an interesting picture.

(Revelation 1:15) “His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.”

Which really, ultimately is the voice of the church proclaiming with Him.

(Revelation 1:16) “In His right hand He held seven stars...”

Which means He's controlling and using these to be the Light of the world.

“... and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.”

These first 16 verses are giving us a graphic picture. It is not necessarily to give you a picture of what Christ will look like when you meet Him in the heaven. I'm not going to debate one way or the other, but the emphasis of the picture is to help you see that He's intimately involved with the church. He has called the church for a particular work. The whole issue is that they are the Light of the world, and that they're to proclaim this Light in His power by His leading and by His direction. They need to first start

off by letting that Light turn on by the voice of God speaking to them. How does that light turn on?

Go back with me to Matthew 7, if you would, and we'll close with this particular passage.

(Matthew 7:15) “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

(Matthew 7:16) “You will know them by their fruits...”

If you back up earlier in the passage in Chapter 5, He then makes reference to the fact that you and I are called to be the salt of the earth, to be the light of the world, and He writes this,

(Matthew 5:14) “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

(Matthew 5:15) nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

(Matthew 5:16) “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

That's the catch, because what most people want to do is they want people to see their good works and say, "What a good person." That's not light. That's darkness. We're to be lamps that are being held by God, and God is directing. What we're going to see as we go through the seven churches is He's going to be speaking to all of us in those seven churches and He's going to say, "This is making you dark" and Paul makes mention specifically to the Corinthians, he goes, "Look, if our gospel is hidden, it's hidden to those who are perishing." The god of this world is distorting and twisting, and we're giving him ammunition. I see people on the news all the time, of course, media more and more are enjoying making fun of the church, and quite frankly, there are a lot of church out there giving them plenty of ammunition to do it. They're saying, "Well, they're only out for money," which is true in some cases, or "they're only out for show," which is true in some cases, or "they're being hypocritical," which is true in some cases. We are the light of the world. If the light is not being shined through the church, it's not being shone, and God has called us. So, when you're seeing these seven churches, He's going to start pointing out,

“You're doing this. You're doing this. You're not doing this. You're supposed to be doing this.” And He's going to be pointing out what real light looks like. It's a great passage because it begins to paint this wonderful picture of how the church fits in and how you and I begin by the turning on the light.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we ask you to work within our hearts. We begin to hear Your words, and Lord, our desire is that Your voice begins to call out. There are different ones sitting here, and I don't know what everyone believes, but I know this, that there is a light that radiates, exposes, and brings joy all at once. It is the light of Your word, and Father, we believe that if You are perceived the way that You are meant to be perceived that man will have hope. You tell us in Your word that God so loved me, that He gave His son. I can't think of a greater life than that, and the truth is that there's no greater love than this. It is this that we as a church have embraced, and this is what we uphold, and this is the light

of the world. Lord, help us not to get in the way of it. Help us not to obscure it. Help us not to put a basket over it. Lord, help us to shine this light brightly and may the world see the love of Christ in us, but may we do it in such a way that it points to You. Because without that, there is no hope to mankind.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. We continue to look at the unveiling in Revelation. God reveals to us His plan, His purpose, and what He has ordained to proclaim this wonderful message. God wants to use you greatly, but God has called certain things, and for certain things to be done certain ways, and if there is not an obedience and a submission to those things, the light is always obscured. Always. He's the Light of the world. He knows what He's doing. These things have not been a quick fix for the moment. This is the eternal plan. This is the mind and the heart of God. He knows what He's doing. Now, I'm asking you today to submit your heart to Him. Say, "Lord, help me to be this light. Help me to be it in a way that You would want me to be. Help me to do the things

that You would tell me to do, that I might display the light to the world in such a way that they would see You.