

(Revelation Thoughts From the Book) 1. the Vision of the Lord Jesus

by Roy Hession

Roy Hession's sermon explores the profound revelations of Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation, emphasizing its significance for the church today.

Duration: 54:20

Scripture: Revelation 1:1-4, Revelation 1:7-9, Revelation 1:17-18

Topics: "Vision"

Description

The sermon transcript is from the book of Revelation, specifically chapter 1. It begins by stating that the revelation of Jesus Christ was given to John by God to show his servants what will happen in the future. John, the author of the book, addresses the seven churches in Asia and sends them grace and peace from God and the Holy Spirit. The transcript also mentions that John was exiled to the island of Patmos for his faith. It concludes with a declaration that Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth and that he is coming again, and John identifies himself as a companion in tribulation and endurance for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Studies on the Book of Revelation, and especially on the prologue to it, chapters one to three. So we're going to read the first chapter this morning. I shall read from the authorised version with occasional emendations from the revised version, but I will not stay to tell you that I am making an emendation.

They won't be a great moment, but they do prove to be helpful in those places. The Book of Revelation, chapter one. The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, who bear record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of the things that he saw.

Blessed is he that readeth, and that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time, for the time is at hand. John, to the seven churches which are in Asia, grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne. Invariably, the Holy Spirit in prophecy is referred to as the seven spirits.

To indicate, I imagine, his ubiquitousness. Do you know what the meaning of that word? His everywhere-ness. He's everywhere, the seven spirits.

That is the Holy Spirit, only one, but this pictures how he's everywhere. And from Jesus Christ, who is the first, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Your Jesus is the ruler of the kings, and the dictators of the earth.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us a kingdom of priests, unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall mourn for him.

Even so, amen. I am Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and endurance of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, doubtless he'd been exiled there because of his faith. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea, seven of them. And please note, the whole book is sent to them.

Not just the particular message which is intended for application to each church, but it would seem the whole book is to be circulated to those seven churches of the day. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle, and his head and his hair were like wool as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto burnished brass as if they had been refined in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead, and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last, the living one. And I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen. And have the keys of Hades and of death.

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter, the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. First of all, this book is to be referred to as the Revelation.

So often we're a bit careless and we talk about the revelations. It isn't. It's the Revelation.

The title in the Authorized is The Revelation of St. John the Divine. Now, he wasn't called the Divine in his other writings, I don't know why they chose to call him the Divine now. But I'm not sure that that is really the correct title.

The correct title is given in the opening words. It's The Revelation of Jesus Christ. And this is what we perceive this book to be, a glorious, ultimate revelation of Jesus Christ.

And for that reason, it is particularly exciting to us. You want a revelation of Jesus? It's here in this book. A little different from what you might think, but that's what God says it is.

And it's in a very essential way. Indeed, this book is an essential part of the Bible. Unless this book had been included in the sacred canon, our Bibles would be incomplete.

They would be an uncompleted canon, or if you like, an unfinished symphony. It needs this book of Revelation to make the Scriptures the extraordinary complete thing they are. Don't neglect it.

In Genesis, we have paradise lost. But in the book of Revelation, we see all that was lost in Adam gloriously completed in Jesus Christ. We see paradise regained.

And that on the widest scale, right on this earth, where sin has done its worst, is the kingdom of Jesus Christ to be established. And once established, and God's name vindicated and His, there will be a new heaven and a new earth. How utterly deficient the holy Scriptures would be if they didn't have this last, final, glorious book.

Not only that, there are contained in it things that the saints today of all days need to know, need to be prepared for, need to know the answer for. Its theme speaks of things that are to come. Those things must be very nearer now than they were when John first received them.

They're awesome things. They are upon us. The time is at hand.

Those seven churches needed to know them, and so do we. The theme is then the overthrow, the final overthrow of evil in the world, and the establishment at long last, visibly, of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the culmination of history, and therefore the book of Revelation is the culmination of the Bible.

Now, most people have had a peep at it and given it up in despair, and they think that it is unintelligible. It is nothing of the sort. Granted, its symbolism may sometimes, if you try to take it literally, it sometimes could make the mind reel.

But I remind you, this isn't something peculiar to John's writing here. The prophets, all, or some of the leading ones, had an apocalyptic ministry. They all spoke in the same sort of strange symbolism that John did, and they all speak of last things.

That is what is meant by that word you sometimes hear used, eschatology, the doctrine of last things. And there are going to be some last things. And our salvation is incomplete unless it includes the last things.

And as I say, you find this style of writing common in scripture. Daniel, he uses very much the same extraordinary symbolism as John does. So does Ezekiel.

Plenty of it. And so does Zechariah. And when you come to the New Testament, you find Jesus himself taking up that symbolism and robbing it of some of its obscurity and telling us what it's all about, in that great and glorious chapter, Matthew 24, when he speaks of that day of his coming, and the various things that were preceded, all, all, in accordance with Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and the book of Revelation.

Paul too. He has much to say about last things, about the awesome things that are going to precede the last great day. You find him speaking much about that in his letters to the Thessalonians.

Peter, he speaks of the last things that John speaks about. Not with that symbolism necessarily, but it's the same theme. And so does John in his epistles.

And so, dear friends, you and I have just got to come to terms with the sort of thing you find in the book of Revelation. If you say, well, I'm just going to leave that on the plate, on the side of the plate, you're going to leave a lot of chapters in the Bible on the plate. And therefore, the style in which John writes was typical of the gift of prophecy in Bible times.

So just come to terms with it. But you see, it is so confusing. Wait a minute, wait a minute.

What I want to suggest you do, is that you ask yourself, not what does this mean, but what does it say? Forget for the moment what it means, what does it say. And the serious student of scripture would be well advised quietly to go through the book of Revelation and the latter part of the book of Daniel, with those extraordinary visions he had, and make an outline. And then having made the outline, stand back.

And you see an extraordinary pattern. You see a poetic pattern. You see what follows what.

What a particular vision means may not be clear, but the great thing is to get it clear what it says, before you seek to understand what it means. And you find that when you've got what it says, leading things become very, very plain. And you find that what it's saying in Revelation is what Paul has elsewhere said.

There are doubtless some aspects that you may have to say, well, I know what it says. I'm not going to penetrate or try too much into what that particular thing means. Though it's amazing how increasing light comes on all parts with the passage of years of our study.

I said the serious student of Scripture should do this. I want to say every child of God, not only ministers, should be a serious student of Scripture. The mother, with her children, should nonetheless be a serious student of Scripture.

She may not have the same time to spend as others, but if she's walking with Jesus, the little time she has, when she turns to her Bible, the Spirit will teach her. I'm thankful for those influences were brought to play upon me in the early days of my Christian life, when I found myself in a bunch of young people whose one great passion was getting down to the Word. It was just the grace of God.

It stood me in good stead, but you don't need to worry about anybody else. Every Christian ought to settle in. Just because I am a Christian, I'm going to become a serious, lifelong student of Scripture.

One of the colleagues in the church talks about the patient, or have I got it right, the patient study of the Scripture. You've got to be patient. Well, yes, you don't understand it all, but be patient.

Go on, and don't miss out anything, even the genealogies. Pass over nothing. How many times? How many of us have read the whole Bible through? And how many times have we read the whole Bible through? I'll tell you a very simple thing.

When you've gone through a book, tick it in the index, and then you'll see the bits you haven't read. And when you've done it, do it again, and then cross-tick it over the years. And a serious student of Scripture, when it comes to portions like this, set it out, what it says.

Make your own outline, and you will find you're going to be beautifully, wonderfully instructed by the Holy Spirit. Now, what I think one wants to do in these mornings is to concentrate on what I call the prologue of

this great writing, this great revelation. The prologue consists of the first three chapters.

And as we shall see as we turn to chapters two and three, they are made up of messages, letters, which the risen Lord gave to John to transmit to these seven churches of that day. He has special things to say to those churches. And at the end of every such message is the ever-recurrent word, He that has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Because what the Spirit said to the churches of those days, He wants to say to us too. So we're going to listen in on what was said to those churches, to our own great prophet. As I say, chapters one to three are the prologue.

The book of Revelation doesn't really begin until chapter four. In chapter four, he has his initial vision, when John sees a door opened in heaven, and he sees there behold a throne, and one sitting upon the throne. And he describes him as best he can, likening him to various jewels.

And there was a rainbow round about the throne, like in sight unto an emerald. And this is the vision of God the Father, God the Creator. And it bears extraordinary similarities to the same vision that Isaiah saw in chapter six.

But say of him, crying holy, holy. They'd been doing it ever since Isaiah saw them do it, ceaselessly. And they'd been doing it ever since John saw them doing it.

Worship? Our worship's pretty pathetic, but he's receiving it from the seraphim to this very day. And they ascribe worthiness to him. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, power, and honor, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

And there the seraphims are courting unbounded worship of their Creator, and seeking to hide their own excellence, covering themselves with their wings. That's what Isaiah saw. That particular thing is not mentioned in Revelation.

Lest their glittering beauty should detract from the infinitely greater beauty of the one that sat on the throne. Then we come to chapter five. We're still looking at that throne with John, and he says, And behold, in the midst of the throne, a Lamb, sharing that throne with God the Father, and thereafter that throne is called the throne of God, and the Lamb, co-partner of His Father's eternal throne.

And there we hear the praise rising to new heights, utterly eclipsing the former praise of God as Creator. This is praise to the Lamb as Redeemer. And they sung a new song, Thou art worthy to take the book, because thou was slain and hast redeemed us to God thy blood.

Oh, the glory of God in redemption is infinitely greater than the glory of God in creation. God, in the gospel of His Son, has all His mightiest works out done. And there we see the Lamb receiving a book, a scroll, and He is declared worthy to break the seven seals with which that scroll is sealed.

None can do that, but He has paid the price of redemption. What is that book? What is that scroll? Well, as following chapters make quite clear, that book, that program, that scroll is God's program for the final overthrow of evil and the establishment at last of the kingdom of His Son in the earth. He breaks each seal.

And as He breaks each of the seven seals, terrible judgments in pictorial form are seen to fall upon the earth. Because this world has rejected the gentle ways of the grace of God, and will not have this man Jesus to reign over them, He must therefore, God must therefore, bring in the kingdom of His Son by judgment. And this is what you read.

And as the Lamb, that dear Lamb that you love so much, breaks those seals, a further judgment falls, and then another, and then another. And of course, seven is a sort of symbolic number, and you feel you're coming up to something terrific when He breaks the seventh seal. Now's the climax! And there's silence in heaven for half an hour.

And we're ushered in. To seven trumpets. I don't know, there's a music like that a bit.

Sometimes dear old Tchaikovsky, he gets you all keyed up. He builds up, he's coming to something, he's coming to something, and at last it comes, and then he starts another ladder up. I don't know of a composer that compels your attention.

Like friend Peter Tchaikovsky. And you're compelled! The seventh seal, what's coming? You start again. Seven trumpets.

And each time an angel sounds a trumpet, there's a further disaster of some sort or another. And it goes into all sorts of details. And it isn't always all that symbolic.

It's pretty clear, as those various trumpets are sounded, what's going to come upon the earth. Exactly what Paul said was coming, and Peter. But of course, the last trumpet, well that's going to be something.

And you come to the last trumpet and you start all over again. And the angels are given vials, bowls of the wrath of God. And first one bowl is emptied, then another one.

And it isn't all that symbolic either. Some of it is, some of it's pretty clear. You build up.

And only after the seventh is the climax come. The horse and its rider, on the white horse, Jesus at last comes. And you know in this book, he doesn't appear as ultimately coming until chapter 19.

And at last the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of Jehovah and of his Christ. This is, this world, this whole world's going to be the scene of his kingdom. And that done and demonstrated, we end up with a new heavens and a new earth.

And you see to your joy, everything that was lost in Eden is restored in the new heavens and the new earth. How important, how important we should have this scripture. We would have been left guessing had we not had this glorious scripture.

Now listen. If that is the theme, the judgment of the world, that Jesus Christ's kingdom might be established, it is obviously very necessary that the Lord should have a word to his church first. I mean to say, surely a judge who goes day by day to court to pronounce judgment should first be concerned to discipline and correct his own family.

And that's what you've got here. This is the importance of the prologue. God wants his dear but needy church put right first and revived first ere he proceeds on his way to the judgment of the world and the establishment of his kingdom.

When I talk about the judgment of the world, I don't mean after death. We're in the middle of some of the judgments now. The things that God allows to happen on the earth.

And God doesn't have to send thunderbolts to judge the world. He's just got to let man's choice of independence from himself work itself out to their logical conclusion and you've got it. He said I'm not going to interfere.

And as far as he's concerned, he's in a judgment. But in actual fact, he didn't have to do anything more than not interfere with the outcome of man's choice of independence from God. Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast wind it in either direction. I said there's the prologue. And so he's got to say something to the churches of the day.

How could he proceed with anything else and leave his own blood-bought ones uncorrected? And that we shall see as we proceed with our study what he has to say to those various churches and we're going to see to what extent it applies to us too. For we're as much blood-bought as ever they were. And we're as needy as they were.

And some of the things that he had to convict them of we need to be convicted of too. Revival and the return of the Lord are linked. When I talk about revival, I don't mean just some vague blessing.

It's the revival of something. And what is the something that needs to be revived? It's the church of the redeemed which needs yet to be revived. And this is the purpose and reason of those seven letters to those churches of that day.

Now it begins, as we have read, with a glorious, full-length portrait of Jesus Christ. He says in chapter one, verse ten, on his island, his exiled home in Patmos, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, what thou seest, write in a book and send it, the whole thing, unto the seven churches. Verse twelve, and I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw, not firstly the one speaking, but the seven candlesticks in the midst of which he was walking.

And he describes that vision to us. It's one of the great, full-length portraits of Jesus Christ. It's not the only portrait of Jesus Christ, but it is one of them.

And before, I'm going to assume for a moment, you have some conception from our reading as to what is said of this one that spake to John, I want to contrast it with another full-length portrait. It's strangely in the Song of Solomon. And Bible students, all down the years, have always seen in the Song of Solomon a love duet between Jesus Christ and his church, the redeemed.

The Song of Solomon comes just before the book of Isaiah. I always think it's much better to help people find their places that way, than to say what has become so fashionable today, our reading is from the Song of Solomon, it'll be found on page something or other in the church Bible. What a state we've got into.

I was unconverted, I went to school chapel, but nobody told us where to find the reading, I had to find it. If I didn't know, I used to quietly look at the index and hope nobody watched me. But now, ignorance is taken for granted, even in churches full of professional people.

Well, okay, maybe we've got to do it that way, but I prefer to tell you where to find it, then you'll know where to get it the next time, because you won't remember the page. But by the way, never be ashamed of using your index, that's what it's there for. How else do we know our Bibles and their order? I never went to Sunday school, I was brought up in a home that was an unchurched home, and I never learnt these little rhymes which give you the books of the Bible and their order.

Whether they're still taught or not, I don't know. And so I've just got to fumble through, and I've had often recourse to my index. Well, the Song of Solomon comes just before the Book of Isaiah.

Chapter 5. And here is the one upon whom Solomon set his love, describing her beloved. And as I say, hymn writers and Bible students down the centuries have always taken this as pictorial of Jesus, once again in very figurative, poetic language. My beloved, verse 10, chapter 5, verse 10, is white and ruddy, the chiefest, or the most distinguished, among ten thousands.

Jesus Christ is a very distinguished saviour, completely excels everybody else. The chiefest, the most distinguished, literally, among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven, his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water.

Now notice, in Revelation his eyes are as a flame of fire, but here we've got another aspect of Jesus. His eyes here are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.

His lips, like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, in the book of Revelation, out of his mouth proceeds a charred two-edged sword. But here you've got another aspect of the same Jesus. His lips, where are we, like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh.

You know, in the days of his flesh, they wondered at the gracious words, the words of grace that proceeded out of his mouth. That is surely implied here. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl, his body is as the bright ivory overlaid with sapphires, his legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold.

His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as cedars. His speech, his mouth, is most sweet. Nothing too sweet about those, that two-edged sword.

But here, it's sweetness. Grace is dripping, dropping from them. Good news for bad people.

Oh, what a saviour. Yay, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved and this is my friend, oh daughters of Jerusalem.

Turn back to Revelation. Now I want to put those two pictures of Jesus in contrast to one another. The one in the Psalm of Solomon pictures Jesus full of grace.

The one in the book of Revelation pictures Jesus full of truth. And John in his Gospel tells us he's full of both. Not only one, but both.

Turn to John 1.14. John 1.14. And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. Listen to this.

Full of what? Grace, Psalm of Solomon, and truth, the book of Revelation. And then in verse 17 it expands that. For the law was given by Moses and condemned the lot of us.

But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Not only grace, but linked with it, truth. And not only truth, that would be hard to bear, but coupled with it, grace.

Those two things are bound up in the Lord Jesus. We need to see that. And sometimes you get one aspect, the thing that blesses your poor old self-despairing heart is the message of grace.

But you know, you can so be taken up with grace that you go easy on sin. Oh, I can always repent. There's always mercy.

And grace can in fact become almost sentimental if it isn't coupled with truth. That is the truth about yourself. He is the faithful witness.

And if you don't know what's wrong with you and what's gone wrong and made you so sad and you can't analyze yourself, go to Jesus and say, Lord, you said to me the faithful witness. Be faithful to me. Show me the truth.

I don't know how to repent. Where do I go? And then you get him revealing himself to you, full of truth. But they're never separated.

Always together. Very often the mixture varies. The spirit knows how to change the mixture according to need.

There are some times when what your poor old heart needs is a new vision of grace flowing like a river for wretched, undeserving people like yourself. You embrace it and you take wings and you're free. But as I said, there are other times when you've been going easy on sin and you need this same Jesus who has eyes as a flame of fire to show you what you were trying to avoid seeing.

And so he mixes, he varies the mixture. And you preachers, vary the mixture as the spirit leads you. Sometimes it needs more of one than the other.

But there's always got to be grace. When the truth has come, it's only that we might qualify for the grace and admit to the truth and come to the cross. But as I say, the mixture needs to vary.

And have you noticed you've got this same mixture which we've got to transmit to others. Colossians 4, 6 says, Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. You can be so nice and so on, you're never truthful sometimes with that brother who's in grave need.

He's as blind as a bat. And I believe we've got to be willing with great care and love to mix grace with the salt of honest, loving challenge sometimes. Dear brother, there's something that I see that you don't seem to see.

I think it's spoiling you. It's only because I love you, I'm telling you. That's fellowship.

A fellowship where grace is dominant, but it's seasoned with salt. Yes, we're to be the salt of the earth. Haven't got to be the Lord's lemons though.

Some people get a lot of lemons. Grace seasoned with salt. And so you've got these two beautiful pictures of Jesus.

I need them both. Yes, my ultimate need is always of mercy and of grace. But there are times when I need being stopped in my tracks for Jesus to show me what I'm getting blind to.

It's only that I might repent and come back to him and qualify them all for that marvelous grace of a loving Lord. But I do need the ministry of the Jesus referred to here in the book of Revelation. Now, really turn back to Revelation 1. I told you to do it, then switch to somewhere else.

But let's look a little more in detail at this picture we have here in chapter 1. The first thing that's said of him in the midst of the candlesticks, One like unto the Son of Man. Before I go further with this, I have a thing I've put down here to mention. This is not a picture of Jesus dreamed up just by John.

It's almost word for word the same vision of the Son of Man that was given to Daniel in chapter 10. It only makes us respect this so much more. This really is authentic.

And there's something very similar describing Jesus in Daniel chapter 7. Sometime you might like to look at those two others. Well, the first thing, as I say, the Son of Man. This isn't just the deity disembodied.

It isn't just Jesus before the world was. It's the same Jesus who was incarnated on earth, walked our streets, was crucified and rose from the dead. I am the first and the last, it says in 17 and 18, the living one.

And I was dead and behold, I'm alive forevermore. That's the Jesus. One like to the Son of Man.

And he never loses his humanity in his deity. They're both there. He took our humanity back.

His name is Jesus. He is my friend. He's human as well as divine.

I want you to meet him. I want you to greet him. This wonderful saviour of mine.

Then I want you to notice three things at least which show Jesus here as the one who wants to challenge sin. Challenge his church. First of all, his eyes.

In verse 14. His eyes like a flame of fire and the other, dove's eyes. Yes, that's true.

But this is true too. Jesus turned and looked upon Peter and Peter went out and wet bitterly his eyes where as a flame of fire they looked Peter through and through. And this Jesus wants to exercise that ministry with me.

He's been doing it. Showing the subtle intents motives of the heart that lay behind the things I do and the words I say. His eyes are as a flame of fire.

Dear one, he'll never let you down and if you're willing he'll never let you off. Do you want him to let you off? He's full of grace. He's not doing it to thrash you but to heal you.

Do we want him to let us off? Perhaps you do. You won't get much. We've got to settle for it.

His eyes are as a flame of fire. Looking us through and through. That not only but habitually.

Oh there's mercy enough, don't you worry but there's this too. And then his feet in verse 15 seem to emphasize the same thing. He's full of truth and not only full of grace and his feet like unto burnished brass as if they'd been refined in a file.

This I believe is taken up also by Daniel. He sees the same feature about this son of man. His feet are of brass and Bible students especially those that love the study of typology and I happen to be one of them generally are agreed that brass is to be taken a picture of judgment.

That which brought life and healing to the serpent bitten Israelites in the wilderness was a serpent made of brass. An effigy of the thing but made of brass that is judged. And it's through the judgment of sin at the cross that I get life.

And his feet are of brass. And he comes walking amidst the candles and he wants to judge sin. He's not going to judge the sinner.

He's not going to judge the saint. He's going to judge the thing! And he wants you to agree with him. That's what it means to confess, to say with God.

To agree with his judgment. He said was that absolutely honest? Was that absolutely loving? Or were there other things? Back. Self-interest.

Jealousy. Impurity. And this Jesus has his feet as brass.

And he asks you to agree with his judgment about yourself as the spirit convicts. And then will you notice his mouth, verse 16 and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. Wasn't whatever it was, myrrh coming out of the mouth as in the song of Solomon.

Oh, there are the words of grace for us. But also there are times when you need to see that out of his mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword. And this is what Paul says in Hebrews 4.12 The word of God is living and powerful sharper than any two-edged sword piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.

Not flesh and spirit merely but soul and spirit. Something which is merely soulish. The soul is the natural part of you.

Not the carnal which is the fallen nature. The natural part of you. And sometimes our service can be operated purely in the natural soulish.

That's not of the spirit. And oh, this sword sometimes divides asunder between things in our heart and we see what's phony what isn't, what is merely natural merely me and what is really of the spirit piercing to the dividing asunder. Do you want any truck with this Jesus? If you want him at all you've got to settle that this is him not only full of grace good news for bad people but the bad people have to see how bad they really are and therefore he's full of truth.

And what does this one do here? He's walking in the midst of the candlesticks and the candlesticks are quite clearly said, were told are the seven churches. There they are the candlesticks and Jesus this Jesus is walking in the midst of the candlesticks and he's still walking in the midst of the candlesticks. This Jesus, what in the world does he see? How little is his voice heard how little do we meet those eyes which are as the flame of fire, the things that go on.

The flesh in the service of God is the most abominable thing in God's sight and yet it's in our deacons' meetings our PCCs our congregational meetings where they discuss things and no man repenteth himself saying what have I done? He's there though wanting to be heard little wonder that his power and revival is not felt if walking in the midst of the candlesticks we don't wake up to that fact and hear and humble

ourselves.

And this one also has seven stars in his hand seven stars in his hand and the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and he's got them in his hand he's got the whole wide world in his hand, he's got those seven stars and those angels I think it's clear are meant to be the ministers of those churches and please notice we talk about his letters to the seven churches they're first letters to the angels of each church they are to the church but they're first to us who are in some measure in a place of responsibility this Jesus as I draw to a close something very interesting if you look at the message to each of these seven angels of these seven churches you'll find it's always prefaced by some little bit out of this full length portion portrait, turn to chapter two these things that

holdeth the seven stars in his hand well we've seen that about him who walketh in the midst of the golden candlestick that's to the church of Ephesus, to the church of Smyrna these things, that's the first and the last which was dead and is alive we've had that in the portrait then verse twelve, Pergamos these things hath said he which hath the sharp two-edged saw it's every bit of what's been said before is picked up and a little bit of it applied to each church I haven't gone through the whole thing we'll look at it as we come to it in other words there's a special aspect of Jesus that each of us need to see yes we need to see grace but even him as the truth a little bit of it is picked up and it's going to be just what you need and if we're open it'll be inescapable really my last word

is to turn you to 1 Kings 3 1 Kings chapter 3 and here Solomon is speaking speaking back to God after God has given it that dream and said to him ask what I shall give thee 1 Kings 3 verse 6 and Solomon said thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy according as he walked before thee in truth thou showed to my father great mercy terrific mercy as he walked before thee in truth he walked in truth he broke and humbled himself when God touched him because of that fact mercy beyond he ever imagined was piled upon him and so it is Jesus is the sinner's friend the hope of every contrite heart the joy of all the meek the one who doesn't take a stick to us who's got good news for failed saints news of a on a scale beyond you've ever dreamed your best days failing as the past

have been are going to be your best days they can be according as we walk before him in truth not striving not turning up a new leaf and saying yes lord you're right and I'm wrong and then we qualify for that other aspect of our wonderful Jesus full of grace full of something good offering something beautiful something good when all our confusion he understood all we had to offer him was emptiness and strife but he made something beautiful of our life but we've got to see the emptiness and strife we've got to confess it and judge it and then you're on the receiving end of Jesus in all his abundant grace not only forgiving what's gone wrong but overruling it to a greater good than was even there before and so here's our Jesus I want that Jesus in both of his aspects not one at the expense

of another I want him in my experience to be proved full of grace and full of truth

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