

Revelation - Chapter One

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Date: 01 December 2008

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[0 : 01] Good morning. I sure do appreciate you being here. Thank you for coming and sharing a beautiful morning with us. We've got lots of content ahead of us. I don't know if we're going to be able to do it or not, but we're going to try and bite off all seven of the churches of Asia Minor this morning.

And I hear some snickering already that indicates there is some unbelief out there. I can't imagine why that should be the case. But anyway, I think everybody has all of the paperwork they need, and we will be making use of it as we go along.

And by the way, I want to mention to you that it probably would be helpful, I know it would be helpful to me, if you all would agree to keep a notebook like the Thursday morning men do, because I've got a bunch of notebooks that were provided to us gratis.

And if you would be amenable to the idea, at our next month's session, I will bring a quantity of those. They're just three-ring binder notebooks that I've got in abundant supply.

Or if you want, you can take these and put them in a notebook you might have at home. But I've already got notebooks that have been donated, and I'd be glad to bring them next week, because there will be a great deal of material handed out, and it just tends to get away from you if you don't have a place to keep it all together.

[1 : 33] And as I've told the Thursday morning men, this material will be just as valuable 50 years from now that your grandkids can read, as it is today, because it's all related to biblical truths and principles that are unchanging.

So you might consider that, and then as you come to each session, these are three-hole punch. Just add them to your notebook and let them collect, and that way you'll be able to thumb through them and find anything that you're looking for.

And I think that would be very helpful. So is there a general consensus that you'd like to do that? Great. Okay. I'll bring the notebooks next time. And if you want in the meanwhile to provide your own notebook, that's up to you.

But I do have a bunch of freebies that were given to me, so I'd be glad to see that you get them. All right, let's have a word of prayer. We are grateful, Father, for a beautiful day that you've given us, and we thank you for the occasion to be together with believers of like precious faith.

And we ask that as we engage the material, the Spirit of God who inspired it will give us direction and understanding as to the text. Thank you for the occasion that brings us together, and thank you for the meal that we'll be enjoying shortly and for the day that is before us.

[2 : 50] In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Okay, if you will take the sheet that you've been given, which describes the first chapter, the Revelation of John, and the accompanying sheets, then we will get underway.

Morning, folks. Good morning. Here are some materials that you're going to need. So take one of each of these, if you will, please.

There are several there. Get one of each sheet, if you will. And also one of each of these as well. Thank you.

And I want to remind you of the outline that you were given on the Revelation.

It's got a map on the back. And if you will look at the outline, it becomes very apparent that... You don't have that one?

[4 : 10] Okay. That's that. I think everybody should have those. Just check on the back and make sure.

This is the one that's got the outline of Revelation on the front. It's also got the map on the back. You probably already have that. The number seven is used repetitively throughout the book of the Revelation.

And we have indicated that the number seven does very emphatically appear as the number of perfection throughout the Bible. It is the number that is related to the being and character of God.

So it should not surprise us that there are... As you look at the outline on this page that is... That has the map on the back.

And look on the front, the Revelation. It talks about the outline and the letters to the seven churches. Then you'll note that there are seven seals, seven trumpets. There are seven bowls.

[5 : 18] And all of these... Later we're going to see that there are seven stars, the seven angels, and so on. These are not coincidental. They do reflect the character and the perfection of God.

And in addition to there being seven churches that we will be looking at momentarily, there are seven messages to each of those churches.

So again, as I've indicated earlier, there is just entirely too much here to consider it coincidental. There is a definite pattern that is established by the Spirit of God as these things are written.

In the very first chapter of Revelation, before I go to that, just look at the back, if you will, for a moment at the map. And you will see that the white space that is labeled in large letters Asia, that of course is Asia Minor.

That is present day Turkey. And it is present day Turkey where those seven churches that John will be addressing are actually located.

[6 : 26] If you go there today, they are all tourist attractions. You can see the ruins of those seven churches. And there are interesting items of information in connection with all of them.

And they are, of course, as indicated in the map, almost in a circular path here, beginning with Ephesus, Smyrdim, Pergonim, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, etc.

And then you'll note off to the left, Patmos. That's where John was when he wrote the Revelation. There in the Aegean Sea.

So all of this white space is Asia Minor. And the darker has to do with the Aegean Sea and also the Mediterranean. That will give you a little bit of a perspective as to where John was at the time.

Any questions about the map? All right. If you will take the text then, let's begin with that, if we may. The Revelation of John, Chapter 1.

[7 : 37] Reminding you that this is content taken from the 26th Translation New Testament, which unfortunately is out of print and unobtainable.

So we have made photocopies of it and provided them for you. At the very outset, we are informed as to the object of this entire document.

The object of it is the person of Jesus Christ. It is not merely a revelation of things to come, because it is that.

But more principally, as we pointed out in our first session, more than anything else, it is the revelation of Jesus Christ. And that's made quite clear right at the very outset.

It is that which God gave unto him to show his servants which things which must shortly come to pass. Then we've spent a little bit of time here, but further identifying the origin of this material.

[8 : 41] If you would look at verse 7 across the page, Behold, he cometh with clouds, every eye shall see him, they also which pierced him.

All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, amen. And then the originator of all of the content is revealed. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.

I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom of patience and patience of Jesus Christ was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

In other words, what John is saying is that the reason for his being where he is is not because the Roman authorities are persecuting him and putting him there, although that was true too.

But in the sovereignty of God, there was a much higher and nobler purpose behind the actions of the Roman Empire, exiling John the Patmos.

[9 : 54] And John is saying that the main reason that he is there is for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. And then he tells us in verse 10 the circumstances under which he is going to be functioning.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and heard a trumpet and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet. I'll be as brief as I can, but we need to get this on the table.

When John says he was in the Spirit, I think he is saying here that this is not something of bodily function from the standpoint of just seeing and hearing and recording, but there is another dimension to his being.

He is involved, if you will, in a spiritual capacity that goes beyond mere seeing with the physical eyes and hearing with the physical ears.

This is content that is going to be communicated to John on a higher level. And it required him being in a particular kind of position in order to absorb this material.

[11 : 12] And it is much like that which the Apostle Paul described when he was caught up into the seventh heaven and he heard and saw things that were unlawful for a man to utter.

That too was the similar kind of situation. So John is, may I suggest that this is possibly an out-of-the-body experience?

We read some rather far-fetching stories about people nowadays who have out-of-the-body experiences. Most of it is pure hokum. But there isn't any hokum about this.

This is a supernatural preparation of the heart and mind of John to be able to receive this information. And he tells us that it was on the Lord's Day. I pointed out to you, I think in our first session, that I do not think this refers to Sunday.

He isn't talking about Sunday, the Lord's Day. In the first place, the Bible never refers to the Lord's Day as Sunday. It is the first day of the week.

[12 : 19] And what John, I think, is saying here is he was in the Spirit on the Day of the Lord. If you are familiar with the expression, the Day of the Lord, you will see that it goes all the way back to the Old Testament.

It's mentioned many times by the prophets, Isaiah in particular. And it talks about the Day of the Lord, that great and terrible Day of the Lord. It is found also in the New Testament a number of times, but more pointedly in the Old Testament, both major and minor prophets.

And it refers to the time of cataclysm that is coming upon the earth that we might consider equating with the 70th week of Daniel.

It is a time of judgment, a time of devastation, a time of calling the whole earth into divine account for their history.

And it will be principally a time of judgment. This is what the Revelation goes on to describe, and Jesus Christ is at the center of all of it.

[13 : 33] The Day of the Lord is going to be described from chapter 4 or chapter 5 of Revelation, no, I'm sorry, chapter 6 of Revelation on.

That's where it is really described, and it begins with the four horsemen of the apocalypse. So, what he is saying is, he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

He is saying, I was actually permitted to see and experience this time that is coming upon the earth well in advance to its happening.

His being in the Spirit on the Lord's day means he is going to be privy to and is going to be required to record everything that he is going to witness.

God is going to give him a bird's eye view of everything that is coming upon this earth in regard to the time of judgment, the Day of the Lord.

[14 : 40] We refer to this now, what we are now seeing as the times of the Gentiles, it is the Day of Man, if you will, that's going to come to a screeching halt.

The Day of Man is going to be visited by the Day of the Lord, and mankind is going to be called into account. That is what the Revelation is all about, and Christ is revealed in the midst of the whole thing.

So John says, it all began when he was on the Isle of Patmos, in the Spirit, on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet.

He is not saying that it was a trumpet, but he is saying this voice was as loud and as clear as the sound of a trumpet blaring.

It must have been rather overwhelming. And he heard this great voice say, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what thou seest write in a book.

[15 : 56] Now, the 26 translations that we have is rendered by Rames, this is from the Rames-Douet version, write in a scroll, and that's precisely what it is.

They didn't write books, but they wrote a scroll. This was like a vellum or papyrus scroll, and you would unfold it at one end and fold it up at the other end, and it was written, most of them written just on one side.

Write it on a scroll, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

What is going to be the content of that scroll? It's everything that's going to follow here in the Revelation. This is the message that these churches are going to get.

We'll talk momentarily about the identity of the churches. And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and here is our seven again.

[17 : 11] Seven lamps of gold. These were not candlesticks like wax candles that are in a candle holder. these are lamps.

They were ancient oil lamps, the kind that were used in that day. It was like a pitcher with a wick in it, and it burned oil. And this is what he's talking about, and of course it illumined the whole area.

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, or one resembling the Son of Man, Weymouth translates it, and if you will look at the next page then, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

This is girt about the breast, or a belt of gold around his breast. He wore a long robe that reached to his feet, and he had a gold band around his chest.

Norley translates it. Now, the appearance of this one as the Son of Man, and this is none other than, of course, our Lord Jesus Christ, is a dazzling kind of appearance, and it is going to have an understandable effect upon John.

[18 : 26] He goes on to describe this being, his head and his hairs were white like wool as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire.

Notice all of these are as. He's not saying they were these things. He's saying this is what they remind me of. His hairs were as white as wool and white as snow.

His eyes, I'm sure these were eyes that looked like eyes, but they also looked like a flame of fire. I think that means they had a penetrating, piercing gaze about them that was just captivating to look at.

And his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace that is purified and smelted, and his voice as the sound of many waters.

If you've ever been to Niagara Falls, you can hear the falls long before you get there. You hear this distant roaring in the far off that you can't quite identify what it is, but as you get closer and closer to it, there is this roaring voice of this mighty waterfall.

[19 : 45] And that must have been something similar to what John is describing here. His voice as the sound of many waters. This isn't a babbling brook or a little stream.

This is a roaring, deafening torrent. All of this is described as the majesty and the splendor that is behind the personage who is communicating to it.

He had in his right hand seven stars and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword and his countenance was as a sun shineth in his strength.

These stars are symbolic of something. And the question of course that needs to be asked is what do they symbolize?

They're a symbol of something. What is it that they symbolize? And we will see as he reveals that later. Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. This is going to be revealed again in chapter 19 I believe it is.

[20 : 54] That Christ comes on the white horse and he has the sharp sword proceeding out. This is his spoken word. It is the authority that resides in his person. And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his string.

This is reminiscent to me of the transfiguration when Peter, James, and John saw our Lord transfigured and they remarked that he had a brightness about him that was brighter than the shining of the noonday sun.

It must have been dazzling, almost blinding, brilliant. we're looking at the ineffable majesty here. It is something to behold.

My suspicion is that one of the reasons that John is in the spirit, possibly in an outer body experience, out of the body experience, is because in his flesh, in his humanity, this is a vision he would not be able to tolerate, he would not be able to embrace.

It is reminiscent of the shekinah, the glory of the Lord, and no man can look upon that and live.

[22 : 11] So we have an expression here I think that is indicating somewhat a protective element for John, so that he is not exposed to something that he would not be able to endure.

His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength, and when I saw him, this is the only logical response, when you are in the presence of deity, on your face, fall on your knees, you are not worthy of standing upright, before one like this.

You just prostrate yourself on the floor. And I think John had a very predictable response.

I fell at his feet as dead. head, and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, fear not, I am the first and the last.

Deity is going to find it necessary throughout the Old and New Testament to use this expression, fear not. first time it is used, is when God confronts Abraham, fear not Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.

[23 : 53] Abraham was trembling, and the angel, Gabriel, is going to use this expression many times, when he appears to Mary, when he appears to Joseph, first two words he says, fear not, because they were absolutely terrified.

John is here, appropriately, understandably, scared, witless. He knows the being, he is facing, his deity, he knows his unworthiness, he knows how undone he is, he knows how out of his league he is by being here, and he is given the assurance that he is not to fear, that this one is going to communicate with him, I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead, and here of course he identifies himself from his humanity and the death, burial, and resurrection, behold I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.

Here's your commission, John, here is what this is all about, here is why you are here, here is why I am here, here is what you are to do, write the things which thou hast seen, and this is a very key verse by the way, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter, and right there wrapped up in that one little verse we find an expression of the past, the present, and the future, that means the whole nine yards, this is going to be inclusive of everything, now he goes on to define some of the sevens, 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, these stars are, in my estimation,

I'm going to give you a few Wiseman opinions now, so that can put up your red flag, what I say, like everything else I say, may be true and may not be true, but this is the way I see it, and that's all I can do, I think these seven stars are seven principal players, they represent seven key prominent figures, they are described as angels, what do we call a person who has the lead in a story, or a play, or a drama, or a movie, or whatever, we call them a star, don't we, who's starring in that, we mean, who's the leading man, who's the leading lady, they are the principal characters, and the plot, whatever it is, is built around those individuals, and their actions, they are the star of the play, well these angels, are referred to as stars, and the common,

I suppose, the common view by the vast majority of the commentators is that these angels are the messengers to the churches, because that's what the word angel means, it means assent one, angelos, assent one, they are messengers, and the majority opinion, by far, is that these are the pastors of these particular churches, and when you think of the average church, you would think of the pastor probably as being the principal person, or the spokesperson, or the individual who is generally thought of first when you talk about a particular church, everybody wants to know who's the pastor of the church, so it is quite natural that this should be interpreted, in the minds at least of most people, that these are the pastors of the churches, I seriously question that, and the reason I do, is because if these angels here are pastors, it is the only place in all of scripture, where they are ever referred to, where pastors are ever referred to as angels, or where these angels are ever referred to as pastors,

[28 : 49] I have got what I think is a rather new, a novel interpretation of what this word angel means, I think it means angel, I think it means real, bona fide, I guess I can't say everyday, angels, because there's nothing everyday about them, angels are special angelic beings, but I really do think these angels are angels, and if they are, they are seven angels that are involved with these seven churches, or if you will, one angel to each church, now, that's going to involve then of course, further identifying these churches, and are we suggesting that each of these churches has an angel, then does every church have an angel?

I don't know, but I wouldn't be surprised, especially in light of the fact, that scripture seems to indicate, that individuals, believers, have angels, now I'm not ready to go to the mat on that, but there is that verse in Hebrews, that talks about angels being ministering spirits, sent to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, well, we are heirs of salvation, do we have an angel, each of us assigned to us, possibly we do, I've never met mine, if I have one, we do not know exactly to what degree angels are involved with individuals, we just cannot say, but there seems to be something there that we don't understand, I'm suggesting the same might also be true of a church, now, I remember years ago, pastors always have embarrassing moments, and this isn't one of mine, but it's an embarrassing moment of another pastor, this was out in

Washington State, little town of Ellensburg, in the church where Barbara and I were married in 1956, and I can't even recall the name of the pastor who was there at the time, it wasn't the man who married us, but he was a successor to his, and he was having real difficulty in this little town of Ellensburg, Washington, of getting people out on Sunday evening, well, every pastor can understand that, it's difficult enough to get them out on Sunday morning, much less Sunday evening, so he came across this brilliant idea, he was going to preach a series of messages from the book of Revelation, and that certainly is an attraction, and everybody is interested in the future, people will be more likely to come out for that than anything else, and then as he studied this passage, about the angels of the churches, and the commentaries, and came to the conclusion that these angels of the churches were undoubtedly pastors of those individual churches, so he took it upon himself as sheer marketing genius, advertising genius, put a big ad in the local newspaper, big ad in the local newspaper to the effect that come to Main

Street Baptist Church Sunday night, 7 o'clock, the date, and see the real live angel. Well, he had a crowd.

He did have a crowd, simply because people couldn't believe believe that a local church man would be so devious and deceitful as to lie to them, that somehow or another, I don't have any idea how he did it, this guy has been able to make contact with a real live angel, and he's going to have him there at the church Sunday night.

[33 : 20] Can you imagine what a letdown it was when he confessed that he was that angel?

Now, I don't know, I never heard whether anybody got up and stomped out or not, but I think he would have had it coming if they had, because they probably felt like they had been had.

You talk about the ultimate bait and switch, that was it. Well, I don't recommend that kind of publicity because that's going to cause you more trouble than it will provide benefit.

But my thinking is, and I realize this is, I don't know how it is I always find myself out of the mainstream on everything.

And you know, I don't want to do that for the sake of being different, because that's really dumb. But you know how committed I am to a literal interpretation of scripture.

[34 : 27] And I think that these angels are angels. And then we've got to go on and identify these churches. And let me just say this as succinctly as I can, so that I'll try to get it out in a couple of paragraphs up front.

This is a Wiseman opinion, alright? And that is, I think these churches really did exist at the time John wrote.

They are all geographically plotted on the map as these seven churches of Asia Minor. I think they were seven literal churches with congregations and with pastors and with an angel assigned to each of those churches.

I further am considering and I haven't settled on this but I just want to share it with you. I think that all seven of these churches exist today.

And that Grace Bible Church is one of them. and I think Central Methodist Church downtown in Springfield is one of them.

[35 : 50] I think every church that names the name of Christ is one of these churches. My opinion currently is these are seven different kinds of churches that have always existed from the first century continue to exist today.

It makes no difference what name they go by Methodist Baptist Presbyterian Lutheran or whatever or even non-denominational every church is of a type and sort that is described in these seven churches.

they actually existed geographically and physically historically in Asia Minor at the time John was writing and they still do.

In other words every church that exists today is either an Ephesian type church a Thyatiran type church a Pergamos type church a Laodicean type church one or another or there may be a kind of combination where one is partly one and partly another and what I base that on is that all of these have to do with certain deficiencies and certain strengths and certain weaknesses of each congregation and every congregation has these every church every church that names the name of Christ has some of these strengths and some of these weaknesses some of them may be very very short on strengths and long on weaknesses some of them may be the other kind now one of the things I base that on is if that is true and I can't prove it and I'm not like I said I'm not ready to go to the mat for it but one of the reasons that this appeals to me is if this is the case this is not an out of date message this is the message for the church in other words these churches that existed in the first century when John wrote these letters to them continue to exist all throughout the world as these kinds of churches never mind what name they have this is the kind of church they are if that is the case then this content has been right on track for all churches from the first century to the present there has never been a church that exists that wasn't one of these seven churches questions

I realize this is really outside the box and and it's sometimes uncomfortable to be outside the box because you're a more visible target when you're in the box they can't see you we're outside the box any questions or comments feel free all right let's move on you'll have some later I'm sure if you will I want you to note that there are in these seven churches seven messages to each of the churches they have this in common all seven of these churches number one there is the addressee and that is to the angel of the church at Ephesus to the angel of the church at Smyrna to the that's the addressee and each one has an addressor and that will be the person of Christ each one contains an assertion of knowledge and we'll be able to identify these as we go through them you're going to identify them each one has a comment or an exhortation each one has a promise or a threat of his coming each one of the seven has an admonition or a warning to heed and each one of the seven has a promised blessing for obedience so as we go through these you will be able to indicate from the description that is given each of those seven things that I have just provided and do you know what as I look at them they are very apropos for any church today now as we look through the descriptions of these it is only natural to think that our church belongs to the one that has received the most commendations and the less criticism everybody wants to think that's their kind of church but we are all poor judges you know we are all poor judges of our own character we are probably all poor judges of our own churches too and the reason for that is is that total honesty and objectivity escapes us because we are all biased we are all prejudiced in favor of that which we want and it doesn't make any difference what it is we just have a natural built-in inclination to be biased that's part of the human condition so

[41 : 32] I want you to note just let me give you an example here with the very first one that is given in verse one of chapter two unto the angel of the church at Ephesus write so here we have the addressee this is the angel of the church in other words by the way all of these things are addressed to the angel they're not addressed to the churches they are all addressed to the angel I suspect that that is another reason why a lot of people think that the angel is the pastor because he would be the logical recipient of this information but I want you to consider and this is just just for your consideration that if if each church if each congregation that claims to name the name of Christ has an angel assigned to it that angel has some kind of authority discretionary power or whatever as regards that congregation

I have no idea how that would work I have no idea how this angel if what I'm saying is true I have no idea how this angel would implement it I have no idea how this angel would provide motivation or protection or anything else I just don't know but one of the reasons that I think it is an angel is because this angel is going to be in place in perpetuity pastors come and pastors go this is going to be an ongoing thing could it be and I'm not making a statement I'm asking a question could it be that angels are assigned to congregations that are described as listed here in these and each angel knows precisely which congregation his charge fits and he realizes what it is that he is dealing with and is up against he is being forewarned or armed if you will that this is what is true of this kind of congregation and

I don't have any idea how this is delegated to the angel how the angel implements this if he uses people I suspect that he does use people but how and to what degree he does I don't know where human volition comes into play as regards angelic volition I don't have answers to any of that this is a real mystery to me but to me I think this is this is what is being expressed and I think there will be more reason for that surface as we go along then item number three to the angel of the church of Ephesus there is an assertion of knowledge and that is I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience and how thou canst not bear them which are evil and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not and has found them liars and has borne and has patience and for my name's sake has honored and has not fainted nevertheless all right now all of this has to do with the assertion of knowledge that's item number three then the nevertheless begins the comment or the exhortation and all seven churches are going to get the same formula every church is going to be addressed and the one who is addressing it is going to be named as the person of

Christ and the revelation of I know everything about you nothing about you is hidden from me that is going to be revealed then there is going to be the comment or exhortation sometimes it is usually it is a criticism then there will be the promise the threat of the coming the admonition or the warning to heed and then the promise blessing for obedience and we see this repeated in all seven of these here in verse four of chapter two is where the exhortation begins I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love and what might that be I think it is the person of Christ they did not lose their first love when you lose something we tend to think of that being accidental don't we you don't lose something on purpose but when you leave something that's volitional that's not accidental when you leave something you walk away from it and leave it behind you when you lose something you do it unintentionally and sometimes you don't even know you've lost it until you look for it but this is a deliberate act of the will and this what has been left

I think is the person of Christ notice the other translations they have rendered it 20th century you have abandoned your first love weymouth says you no longer love me as you did at first and repent and do the first works now this word repent is something I've been working with for quite a while and it's a wonderful theme I call it the lost art of repentance because it certainly is I've often defined the word or expressed how the word is usually defined in the minds of most people and that is you see a cartoon picture and here is this nerdy little guy wearing a white gown and got a beard and everything and he's carrying a sign that says repent the end is near and we tend to associate it with some kind of fanaticism or emotional something or other or doomsday ism but the word repent as you well know simply means change your mind it means reverse yourself and what the admonition here is you need to repent and return to your first love and that is exactly what repentance means and the basis for repentance is always the same information when people hear information data they have they have something to process something to think about and that's exactly what the teaching of the word of

[48 : 54] God is that's what preaching is all about it provides people with a reason for changing their mind about something in this case of course it is they're having abandoned their first love and when you change your mind you reverse yourself why should you do that because you have gotten information that convinces you first of all you are wrong you are wrong and it may be about anything it may be about anything if you paint a wall in your home and you paint it a certain shade of green because you think it's going to look nice and when you put it on there and it dries you look at it and you say ugh you know what I was wrong about that that looks nasty that does not look the way

I thought it was going to look you know what you've done you changed your mind you repented now we don't call that repentance because we associate something religious with repentance but it need not be so repentance means to change your mind about anything it's just a good word that means change your mind about anything the reason you do is information what was the information that you got the color that hideous color that was your information you took it in with your eyes you saw the paint and you processed the information and the conclusion you reached was that looks terrible I was all wrong about that I have to change it I have to reverse myself so you are going to paint something else that's exactly what the word means only in a religious context it almost always has to do with a moral failure or weakness from which you repent and the basis for doing so there is you change your mind on the basis of information data received that's all preaching preaching and teaching gives people an occasion a reason for changing their mind because you're constantly receiving information and when you receive information you're saying boy

I didn't know that I always thought I guess I was wrong I need to change my thinking about that it doesn't mean penance it doesn't mean shedding tears although depending on what the issue is there may be tears it doesn't mean that you make promises that you'll never do a certain thing again it just means you change your mind this is a lost art it is not preached at all like it should be and let me tell you it is a New Testament theme some would say well that's an Old Testament nonsense nonsense the apostle Paul preached repentance and he preached it on more than one occasion and so did others and it means you need to change your position just like Peter preached on the day of Pentecost that they need to change their position and by the way all seven of these churches are going to be given the same admonition repent the only reason to repent about anything is you become convinced that you are wrong and it makes no difference what you're wrong about you're just wrong now we're not talking about matters of opinion or personal preference or taste or anything like that we're talking about issues that are more solid that are not open to subjectivity verse six or verse five remember therefore from whence thou art fallen in other words get back to where you were repent and do the first works

Philip says repent and live as you lived at first or else and here is the threat and they all contain one or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent and Philip says if your heart remains unchanged but this thou hast that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans which I also hate now who were these people the Nicolaitans and the word by the way Nicolaitans comes from the Greek word Nikaos and it means the victor or the one who vanquishes or the one who gains control and authority over the word

Nikaos in the Greek was picked up on by the Pentagon years ago when we developed an intercontinental ballistic missile called the Nike the Nike missile N-I-K-E that's where it got its name from the Nike and marketing geniuses involved with sporting goods picked up on it too I mean who in athletics or sporting activity of any kind doesn't want to be a victor and to vanquish the enemy and to come out victorious so you produce these sweatshirts and these sneakers and you write your name Nike across them now probably people who wear them don't have any idea what they mean but that's exactly where the word comes from and here it means it means victory over the people this is the establishment of an ecclesiastical elitism and it is akin to a priesthood an ecclesiastical domination of the elite over the people it is really going to come into play as the

[55 : 40] Roman Catholic Church comes into power and as the priesthood is entrenched in power and authority this is Nicolaitanism and there were roots before the Roman Catholic Church ever came along because Nicolaitans were prominent in Israel in the scriptures in Israel the Sadducees constituted a priestly elitism who in fact lorded it over the people and they dominated and controlled the people we see this was the subject of Christ rebuke of them many times in the gospels for their treatment of the people and that is all tied in with this and by the way historically speaking it goes back to about the right period of time too because we're talking about the first century and that's when this really started to surface so food is here now and we'll have to continue this next time we didn't get through the seven churches but we got through one of them ok thank you do you feel that the first chapters of revelation are to the body of

Christ as well as to the kingdom program well is it just that we can learn from those more things in favor that we can learn from it you know dispensationalism have argued over this yeah have argued over these churches forever you know yeah and I have never I have never heard an interpretation that was satisfying of these churches

I don't have any problem understanding that they were actual churches at the time I don't have any doubt about that at all but it's what we do with them after that that's the problem yeah