

# Revelation 2:1-7 - To the Church at Ephesus

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As we get into Revelation chapter two and three, we're going to embark on the next major division of the book of Revelation. Chapter one is the first division. You'll recall in chapter one that John was given some instructions. Let me put it on the screen for you:

## **Revelation 1:19 (ESV)**

*Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.*

The Lord said to him write therefore the things that you have seen, and that was essentially chapter one.

He said also those that are. And that's going to be chapters two and three. And then He says, and those that are to take place after this. And that's chapter four to the end of the book of Revelation. So we're in now that middle section, the things that are. And the things that are involve seven letters written to seven specific churches that existed at that time in Asia Minor or modern day Turkey. Asia Minor is what they called it then. But that is today the area of Turkey and the author as we look into this, we know that there's an author behind the letters that are going out to these seven churches in Asia Minor. And the author has previously identified himself, once again, in chapter one.

I'll put that on the screen for you from verses seventeen through nineteen. It says:

## **Revelation 1:17-19 (ESV)**

*When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this."*

When I saw Him, John writes, I fell at His feet as though dead, but He laid His right hand on me saying, "fear not". And then He identifies Himself. He says, "I

am the first and the last and the living one. I died and behold I am alive forevermore."

He went on to say, I have the keys of Hades and death, and so on and so on. He identifies Himself and particularly that phrase where He says, "I died, and behold I am alive forevermore" makes it very clear that this is Jesus Himself who is dictating these letters to John, and that point is very vital.

Next as we go through these letters, you're going to see that there is a consistent pattern that all of them follow. Let me show you this pattern on the screen:

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The Pattern of the Letters to the Seven Churches

- The address to the Messenger of the Church
- A statement about Jesus
- A statement addressing the condition of the church
- A pronouncement regarding the condition
- An instruction from Jesus to the church
- A general exhortation
- A promised reward

It begins with the address. To the messenger of the church. We'll talk about that in a bit. Then there's a statement that is made about Jesus Himself.

Then there will be a statement addressing the condition of the church. A pronouncement regarding the condition. There will be an instruction from Jesus to the church. A general exhortation, and that could really be to any believer. And then He will speak of a promised reward. All right, so let's begin by reading the first three verses of the chapter, and I'm going to interrupt these as we go.

It says, *"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:"* And I want you to know first of all, that this word angel in the Greek is angelos. And it most of the time refers to what you would expect, a heavenly being. One of God's angels. But the word can also be used of a human messenger. The word can be translated messenger. So, that may be the case here. Some believe that it could even be referring to the leader or the pastor of those individual churches who are given the task of receiving the letter and conveying it to the body. That's a possibility too.

But he goes on to say, *'The words of Him who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.'* And you'll recall once again from chapter one that we received the interpretation of those two types. The seven stars you'll remember are the seven angels or messengers of the seven churches and the seven golden lampstands are the seven churches. The churches in this case are represented by lampstands.

Jesus goes on to say in verse two, *"I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. <sup>3</sup>I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary."*

This is a very personal note that Jesus is making to this first church in Ephesus, and you'll notice that He's well aware of their works and their toil. These are their labors for the Lord. He's not just talking about, I see you when you go to work. He's talking about their work as believers, getting out the gospel, making disciples standing against those who are teaching false doctrine.

I see it. I understand it. I want you to know something. God never forgets what you do for Him. God will always remember your toil, your labor. Your work for Him. Not one single thing will be overlooked. And you'll notice that He also says He knew of their patient endurance. Did you catch that? Those words are often used and usually correctly used to describe the suffering that we as Christians endure simply for being associated with Jesus Christ.

He says, I know, I know. Your patient endurance. And He goes on to say I know you cannot bear with those who are evil. Your NIV Bible says you cannot tolerate wicked men. And the church in Ephesus, this is one of their characteristics. They were intolerant of evil people or wicked people.

It doesn't mean that they were unloving. It doesn't mean that they were mean spirited or cruel. It simply means that in the church they refused to tolerate those who infiltrated their ranks, who had ulterior motives and were in fact wicked and had no desire to serve the Lord and walk with God. And you know that that is the case in every church.

Can I just tell you, can I remind you that, I hate to say this, but in every church there's going to be those issues. We know that. And the church in Ephesus was, boy, they cracked down on that kind of stuff. He says, I know that you can't bear with those sorts of people. It doesn't mean that they were that way toward the outside world.

When he says, I know you can't tolerate wicked people, it doesn't mean they were railing against the emperor. It doesn't mean that they were railing against the local procurator and saying, "uh, evil man" that's not what they were doing. They were intolerant of wickedness in the church. Why were they not intolerant of wickedness outside the church?

Should we be tolerant? Let me show you a statement the Apostle Paul made when he wrote to the Corinthians:

**1 Corinthians 5:12-13a (NIV84)**

*What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside.*

Here's Paul. He says, what business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? He says, are you not to judge those inside? He's writing to the church because they were dealing with issues.

Of people who were engaging in sin and they were unrepentant about it, and he says, is that not your job to take care of situations like that? But look what he goes on to say, God's going to judge those outside. That's not your job. That's not my job. We are not to rail against the world for their wickedness.

We know that they're wicked. We know what's going on outside the church. These people are captive. The people outside of the body of Christ are captive to the lies of the devil. What do you expect out of people who are captive to the lies of the devil? You should expect no less. And so if we're going to sit around all day long and just be angry, and I've met people over the years who felt like it was their job to rail against the world, and shake their fist at the wickedness of the world.

Where is that going to get you? I'll tell you one thing that's not going to earn you any converts is people aren't going to come to Christ because of it, and you're not going to win the world over by shaking your fist at them. So what good is it going to do? "Well, I know, but it just makes me feel better Pastor." Well then that's pretty selfish, isn't it?

I just love what Paul says. What business is it of mine? What business is it of mine to judge the world? That's God's business. I'm going to leave that in His hands. Right? I think that's a good policy, by the way. Man, I get a lot of questions from people, Pastor Paul, how should we respond to this sin or these people or people that are engaging in that sin or whatever. Love them and share the gospel with them.

Love them and share the gospel with them. I know that you have to be careful how you love them because you have to be careful that you don't convey to them that you're okay with their sin. But you still need to treat them respectfully and lovingly and create bridges so you can share the gospel with them.

Again, if you shake your fist at them, you'll burn your bridges to be able to share the gospel with them. So anyway, those are challenging questions that a lot of people ask. I also want you to notice here that Jesus commended them for rooting out those who He said call themselves apostles and are not. Did you catch that? There in that verse. He says, you can't tolerate those who call themselves apostles. But in fact, they're really not apostles. What that means is they called themselves apostles, but they were never called into the ministry. In fact, they're false apostles.

We know that this was a huge issue in the first century church. You know how we know that? Good grief. We just got done with 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and Jude. What was the theme of those letters for the most part? False teachers and false apostles making their way into the church.

Read the book of Galatians. Paul is dealing with the fallout from false apostles and false teachers. This was absolutely enormous in the early church, so we know this was a big deal. Check out this:

### **2 Corinthians 11:13 (ESV)**

*For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.*

Paul writes to the church and says, for such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, he says. Disguising themselves as apostles of Christ, when in fact the inference there is that they are not in any way, shape, or form.

We're going to pause here for just a moment because I want to share something with you about this whole idea of what Jesus is addressing with the church in Ephesus. Over the years, as people have studied the book of Revelation and particularly studied these seven letters to the seven churches, we've noticed something.

We've noticed that the message that Jesus gave to each church bore an uncanny likeness to the characteristics of various time periods throughout church history. And this is kind of an amazing sort of a thing, but eventually what we noticed became a method of understanding essentially these seven letters.

This method that we're talking about is referred to as the historical prophetic interpretation of the seven letters of the book of Revelation. But before I define it for you, and I'm going to define it here in just a moment, so hang on to what I just said. But before I do, I want to just be completely honest with you and say that not all Bible students agree that this is even valid.

In fact, I've even gotten some nasty comments from people from past teachings when I've mentioned this because some people are just kind of against it. And there are some challenges that go along with even embracing this view, but I believe there's enough compelling evidence to bring it to your attention.

Honestly, whether it's true or not, it's not going to make any difference in your salvation, right? Or whether Jesus is coming back. So this is not what you would call a critical thing, but I think it's one of these very interesting and very compelling elements of the letters to the seven churches that we at least give credence to the idea that there could be a historical prophetic interpretation that's going on here.

Now, let me define it for you on the screen. This is what it is:

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Historical-Prophetic Interpretation

This view holds that each of the seven churches provide for us a prophetic snapshot of the Church Age – from its birth in the book of Acts up to the return of Christ.

Now, this is one of these perspectives we couldn't have until, frankly, the last maybe couple hundred years. I mean, the early church wouldn't have been able to see this because they didn't have the benefit that you and I have of looking back at history and being able to compare what Jesus said to these seven churches with what we see historically. As what these various stages in the church. Here's what we've noted. All right. In these stages, I'll put them up again on the screen for you here:

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Different Periods in Church History

AD30-100 – Apostolic church

AD100-313 – Persecuted church

AD313-590 – State church

AD590-1517 – Papal church

AD1517-1730 – Reformed church  
AD1730-1900 – Missionary church  
AD1900-Present – Apostate church

These are the different periods in church history, essentially from around AD30 from the beginning of the church to about AD100. This is referred to as the Apostolic era and we call that the Apostolic church.

Then from around AD100 to around AD313, we call that the Persecuted church. And the reason we do is that the body of Christ during those years went through some of the most unprecedented persecutions in the history of the Christian Church.

Something happened in AD313, do you know what it was? The Roman Emperor became a Christian, and so Christianity became the state religion. And that's why from AD313 to around AD590, we call that the period of the State church. And by the way, it was not really a very good period at all because when it becomes fashionable or even politically advantageous to be a Christian, whether you really are one or not, that's going to create a real issue with sincerity and genuineness in the body of Christ. But that's what was happening.

Then we have this period from around AD590 to around AD1517. This is almost a thousand years, which is a period of time we call the Papal church. And the word papal is where we get our word pope. And this is when the Roman Catholic Church essentially ruled and reined. This is a very dark period in history. In fact, this time period that you see on the screen is referred to as the dark ages. This is the time of great atrocities that were done by the church in the name of Jesus. And it was a very difficult time.

But something happened around AD1517. A man by the name of Martin Luther, who was himself a Roman Catholic priest, began to question the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church after he started reading the Bible. And it's really a fascinating story. He tried desperately to find Jesus. And he tried every method that was advanced by the Roman Catholic Church and he came up empty. And so he thought, well, what the heck? I'm going to read the Bible. And he found Jesus in the pages of scriptures.

Does that surprise you? It shouldn't. Well, he got saved and he began to realize just how corrupt the Roman Catholic Church had become. And so he nailed his thesis on the door at Wittenberg declaring the changes that frankly needed to be made for the Roman Catholic Church to even begin to reflect a biblical

institution, Christian institution. And of course he was hotly persecuted because of it. The Catholic hierarchy wanted him dead. They hunted him down for many years. And you probably know the story of Martin Luther. I don't have to get into details about it, but we call that period of time the Reformation, or the beginning of the Reformation. Martin Luther ushered in that time of the Reformation. And so we called that period of time from AD1517 to around AD1730 the Reformed church.

Then roughly from AD1730 to AD1900 during a time when travel around the world became much more advantageous. The gospel literally exploded upon the world. People began taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth in such incredible numbers that we refer to this period of time as the Missionary church because missionaries were literally going everywhere into China, into other parts of the world. It was a powerful, powerful missionary move of the church at that time.

And then we have AD1900 to the present, which is referred to as the Apostate Church. Now I know what you're thinking. Oh, wonderful. I'm part of the Apostate Church. Well, I need to tell you that the titles that we've given to you that you're seeing on the screen, and I want to leave this up on the screen, these titles are telling you about the most prominent characteristic of those time periods. But I want you to know something about all those time periods, even the dark ages. God always had a remnant, and he still does today. And that remnant are people who cast off the traditions of man, the rules of man, and get back to the word of God. And God has always had a people and He always will have a people. We will always be a minority, frankly. And I believe that we will continue to be that remnant as we keep our eyes on Jesus and look to His word to guide and direct us in all that we do and say.

But for the most part, leading up until the coming of Christ for His bride and ultimately, to return to this earth, this will be marked as a characteristic of the Apostate church, and we're going to see that. Now, you'll notice that you're seeing on the screen here, all of these different designations that are given to these different time periods, these different epochs in church history during the church age.

Now I want to line them up with the letters to the churches. Check this out:

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Different Periods in Church History

Ephesus – Apostolic church (AD30-100)



Smyrna – Persecuted church (AD100-313)  
Pergamum – State church (AD313-590)  
Thyatira – Papal church (AD590-1517)  
Sardis – Reformed church (AD1517-1730)  
Philadelphia – Missionary church (AD1730-1900)  
Laodicea – Apostate church (AD1900-)

Ephesus is the Apostolic church. And you'll notice that we've already shown you that, what did Jesus talk to them about? It was what was going on in the early apostolic period. The biggest issue that they had to deal with was false apostles.

It was enormous. It is covered over and over again in the New Testament. And that's because that was the primary characteristic of that time period. We're going to get then to Smyrna, and we're going to tell you what Jesus said to the church in Smyrna had to do with this prophetic snapshot of the Persecuted church from AD100 to AD313.

We'll get then to Pergamum and that letter. And we'll see how it has this uncanny resemblance to the characteristic of it being the State church. Same with Thyatira being the Papal church. And you'll see that the characteristics that went on with the Papal church are things that Jesus discusses with the church in Thyatira.

Sardis is the Reform church. We'll talk about why when we get to it. Philadelphia is the Missionary church. Philadelphia means brotherly love. That's why the city here in the United States is called the city of brotherly love. And that links with the Missionary period of the church, the body of Christ, as they went out and shared the love of Jesus Christ.

And then finally, Laodicea is the Apostate church, the church that Jesus said, unless you repent, I will spew you out of my mouth (Revelation 3:16).

Now I want you to notice something. When we go through this, you're going to see that not only do the letters speak of these various time periods in church history, but they're in proper order. We don't have to put them in any different order. This is the exact order. These seven letters are very keenly connected to these historical snapshots that we're talking about. Let me be careful to add something before we move on here in chapter two. I'm not saying that these letters weren't pertinent to the churches they were sent to at the time. Don't misunderstand me. I get people writing me saying, "no, I believe Jesus really

was writing to real churches and that was what was going on in those churches." I believe that too. So you see I totally believe that Jesus was addressing things that were going on in those churches at the time.

And so what I'm saying is the historic prophetic view takes nothing away from the immediate meaning of these letters to these churches that were there in the Apostolic period. All right. Now, let's keep going. You'll notice that after commending the Ephesian church for their willingness to kind of root out and expose the false teachers and apostles that had made their way into the church, Jesus had this to say to them:

*<sup>4</sup>"But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup>Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent." (ESV)*

Wow. These are some pretty strong words for the first century church that literally turned the world on its ear with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But when the Lord addresses their first love, He's probably talking about both their love for Him and their love for one another because that's what we are called to. Love the Lord your God with everything that you have. But love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus told us that people would know that we are His disciples by our love, that we have one for another. And yet, it just was lacking in the Church of Ephesus.

But if you had visited this church, you may not have really noticed it at first. You might have walked into the church in Ephesus and thought, this is a pretty happening place. They've got a lot going on. Remember what Jesus said? I know your work and your toil.

They were busy. They were doing things. And they were busy rooting out false teachers and these false apostles, and they were standing for the truth. And when you walked into that church initially, you would probably think, wow, these guys got a lot on the ball. They're really standing strong for the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is a great place to be. This is a happening people. I like this church.

But Jesus said something was wrong, something was missing. And what was missing is something that wouldn't have immediately shown up on the outside. But Jesus revealed that what was wrong was on the inside. And it was very simply how they were loving God and how they were loving one another. And

you can't underestimate love in terms of what it means to making a church what it ought to be. You cannot underestimate love how we love God and how we show our love one to another. Do you guys remember what the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians thirteen? Let me put it on the screen:

**1 Corinthians 13:3 (ESV)**

*If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

If I give away all I have, he says, listen, if I deliver up my body to be burned, he means for the cause of Christ, but have not love, I gain nothing.

So you tell me how important is love to what we do for Jesus? Who we are for Jesus. How important is it? Wow. It's everything.

So when you're thinking about this, stop thinking about how other people are loving and start asking yourself the question, how am I loving? How am I doing at loving God? What kind of a grade would I give myself on just loving God?

And then secondly, what kind of a grade would I give myself on loving people in the body of Christ. And I want you to think about that because too many times and too often it's just easy to say, well, that church isn't a very loving church. I went there and they're really cliquy and no one greeted me like I thought they should, and our expectations aren't met. And we walk out the door in a huff because, well, that church or that or whatever . . . well, what have you done? What have you done to make your church a place where love resides, where people are being loved, where God is being loved?

When we come together to worship, let's stop singing songs and let's start focusing on loving God. Loving Jesus Christ. How about that? Let's forget about if the sound system is working well that Sunday, or if something is wrong or the lights are weird or somebody's singing off tune nearby or whatever. Who cares? Let's just love, let's just love Jesus. Let's focus on loving Jesus, lest we receive a similar word from the Lord. You've left your first love. You've left it behind.

Jesus, you'll notice, gives them a strong ultimatum when He says, repent and do the works you did at first. You guys know that repent, or to repent, means to change direction. It means to turn around and go the other way. It literally means in the Greek, a change of mind, but the inference that goes along with it, the implication of changing your mind is that you're going to change your direction. It's like the prodigal son. He realized that he was slopping the pigs

and that his father's servants ate better than he was eating. Because the slop that he was giving the pigs now looked good to him. And so what did he do? He changed his mind. And went back home. They always go together.

So when Jesus says "*repent*", it is natural that He's going to follow that with "*and do the works you did at first.*" Because changing your mind always takes you the other direction. So that's what He's telling them to do. Change course. Am I loving you enough? Am I loving Jesus enough? If I come to the conclusion through the Holy Spirit's help that I could improve in that area, my job is very simple. Change course. Change course. And that's what Jesus is speaking to you as well. Change course, do the things that you did at first. But he also gave them this warning about if they didn't, he says, "*if not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.*"

People have over the years wondered what He meant by that. As far as I can see, we were told the lampstands were the seven churches. So if Jesus is going to remove the lampstand, it seems to me that He's talking about literally that church ceasing to exist. And the witness and the testimony of Christ in that area would die out and it would be lost. And for the most part, Turkey has been lost. If you look at what's going on in Turkey, the Christians who are there are a very infinitesimal percentage of the population. It is a Muslim area today. I mean, Islam has taken over, so the lampstand was eventually removed.

I believe that's what Jesus is saying would take place. And you think about that, you think, well, wow, that's serious business. But He then goes on to say in verse six, if you look with me in your Bible, "*Yet this you have: you hate the work of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*"

You say, well, what were the works of the Nicolaitans? I don't know. The Bible doesn't say. The Bible doesn't really tell us really anything about the Nicolaitans. Obviously, their ways were well known to the church in Ephesus to the degree that Jesus spoke about it to them. And we know that the Ephesians opposed them. So we can assume that this was some sort of a group that was falsely representing themselves as Christians, and their actions included some kind of immoral activity. We don't know what, but He said you hate the works of the Nicolaitans.

And then He gives a final exhortation that is really for all of us. He says in verse seven, "*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*" You can tell when He says what the Spirit says to the churches, that there was an assumption on the part of Jesus that these letters would not only be read in

the church to which they were addressed, but that they would be read by the body of Christ throughout the church age, just like we're doing right now.

Isn't it kind of amazing to think that it's been over 2000 years and we're still reading these letters? We're still reading them in the body of Christ. But there is a wonderful blessing. To him who has an ear. Well, how do you have an ear? Is it given to you by the Spirit? The Spirit is the one who gives us the ear to hear.

He says, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. And then comes a wonderful promise. He says, "*to the one who conquers*" and Biblically speaking, a conqueror, or an overcomer your Bible may say, in the New Testament, is someone whose faith has enabled them to overcome the world. The world is a pretty big barrier to overcome, isn't it? I mean, the world is constantly providing for you and me obstacles to overcome, but we're given the power to overcome. Through the Spirit. We're given the word of God, we're given the full armor of God with which to battle against the evil one. As Paul says, on the day of evil, we're given what we need to be overcomers, to be conquerors (Ephesians 6:11-18).

And He says, "*To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.*" Now you're going, okay, what is that all about? The tree of life. Well, it helps to know your Old Testament. You might remember that back in Genesis chapter three, that the tree of life was the tree that God would not allow Adam and Eve to have access to after they had sinned and eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Let me show you this on the screen:

### **Genesis 3:22-24 (ESV)**

*Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" therefore, the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.*

In other words, to keep anybody from ever getting near to the tree of life. This is an interesting passage. Why did God not want Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of life? We know what happens. If they were to eat from the tree of life, they would live forever. Why is that a problem? Because they're now sinners, and in order for them to be redeemed, they must die.

So you see, the fact that God kept us away from the tree of life during that period of time was actually an act of mercy on his part. Because without death there's no life. There had to be death. The problem was the death that we deserved wouldn't allow us to enjoy anything afterwards because that death would've meant eternal separation from God.

And so God sent His Son to die for us and to bear that separation so that when we come to Him, we are given new life. And now being redeemed and eventually casting off the old sinful nature, which will happen when we physically die. We will then be ready to now once again partake of the tree of life like God intended, and live forever. So you see the fact that God kept them away from the tree of life was an act of mercy on His part. Otherwise, they would've just remained in their lost, sinful state, separated from God.

The restoration of this tree is also something that is mentioned, and you'll hear it again at the very end of the book of Revelation. Let me show you this from Revelation chapter twenty two. It says:

**Revelation 22:1-2(ESV)**

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

We know what the fruit does, but look that even the leaves are for the healing of the nations. Even the leaves of that tree are going to perpetuate the healing of the nations.

The fruit itself is going to perpetuate eternal life. Isn't that amazing? God's got all these things dialed in. We can trust him. He knows what's shaking. That's where we're going to stop for tonight. We're going to pick up the next letter next time we come together, Lord willing, next Wednesday. Let's pray.

Father, we are so incredibly thankful that you have given us the privilege of being able to read and dig into these verses from scripture. And Lord, I am just impressed every time I go through the book of Revelation that you are the God who knows the beginning from the end and the end from the beginning. Then you have it all planned out and you have revealed that plan to your servants.

And we see such order and peace in the things that are laid out in the scripture. And we pray in Jesus' name that as we continue to dig through the book of

Revelation and find the jewels, the treasures that are there in these verses, that you would increase our faith. Lord, tonight our prayer is that we would make sure we get back to our first love, loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and strength and loving one another in the body of Christ.

Lord, would you speak to us about that this week? About how we love and how we can do a better job loving. Thank you. We know that you're faithful. We commit our hearts to you and all that we have heard tonight in the name of Jesus Christ, our soon coming redeemer. And all God's people said together: Amen. God bless you.