

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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Take God's Word, and find Revelation chapter 1 and when you've found it look up here. The book of the Revelation is sometimes hard to understand. Because when we look at this display, this chart that I have behind me, it looks very involved, very convoluted. And we say, is there a key to help us to understand the book of the Revelation. Well friend, there is and the title of our message today is, "The Golden Key, The Golden Key to the Book of Revelation."

You want a key to help you to unlock this book and to understand this book? Now remember, it's the blessing book. God says you're going to be blessed if you'll read and heed this book. Well, where is the golden key? Well, it's hanging on the front door. It's right here in the first chapter. It's found in verse 19. Here is John's commission to write the book of the Revelation. The apostle John hears the Lord Jesus say to him, "Write," alright, here it is, now watch it, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

Now God is not trying to conceal. God is trying to reveal. God is trying to make it plain. John must have been a Baptist preacher; at least he was given a three point outline. And what you're going to see here in the book of the Revelation first of all, this division right over here is called, look right up at the top, "Things thou hast seen." And what had John seen? He had seen a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. We've already talked to you about that the last few Sundays. Jesus said, "Write it," and John wrote it. And we read it and preached about it.

And then He said, "Write things which are." And the things which are is the church age. We're living in a time of the things which are. And there is a message in the book of the Revelation to seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. Now, we're going to see that these, while they're literal churches in Asia Minor, they're also representative churches of all churches through all ages. Talk more about that later on. But that's the second division.

First division, relatively small; one chapter. Second division, relatively small; chapters two and three. And then the rest of the book, "Things which shall be hereafter." Alright, so most of the book is prophecy. It is a book of prophecy. So you've got a three point outline. The first division, relatively small; chapter 1. John saw the vision. Jesus said, "Write it John." And John wrote it. So we could call this, past things. And then, things which are, we can call that what? Present things. And things which shall be hereafter, we call that what? Prophetic things.

Now, I wish I had time to get down deep and talk about each one of these divisions this morning. But we'll go back and lap back and do that in a moment. Not in a moment, today, but in a moment next several weeks, months, years. But we'll talk about those things that are coming or we'll talk about the seven churches especially in more depth. We've already talked about the vision that John saw of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what I really hope to do is to deal primarily with, "The things which shall be hereafter," prophetic things. You see, this shows us that Jesus has come. He is the living, risen, resurrected Savior, King of kings, Lord of lords. That's the past. He has come.

Things which are, He is here now. He is shown in chapters 2 and 3 in the midst of the churches. Jesus is here today with us. He's here, "*Where two or three are gathered together in My name,*" what? "*There am I in the midst of them.*" So, things which are, or things which have been, or things which you've seen. That's past things. Things which are, that's present things. He's alive and well in this church today. He has come. He is here. But in a very special sense, He is coming again, "*Things which shall be hereafter.*"

Now, let me say folks, we're dealing primarily with prophecy. And I want to tell you, the devil doesn't know prophecy. Don't get the idea that the devil knows the future. He doesn't. The devil's a knucklehead. He's a knucklehead. Well you say, "I thought he was brilliant." Yes, he's brilliantly stupid. And, you say, "I thought he was attractive, an angel of light." Yes, but he is hideously beautiful. The devil is perverted. He doesn't understand these things. Can you imagine the unmitigated gall, the audacity to think that he could overthrow God? No, only God knows the future.

By the way, there are a lot of soothsayers and prophets and prognosticators and people today who'll try to tell you the future. We have enough gullible people in America today to keep 10,000 astrologers working full time and another 175,000 working part time trying to tell gullible people the future. As a matter of fact, you can pay \$75 an hour and have somebody across the nation just project healing thoughts to you if you're that stupid and rich at the same time. They will reveal to you hidden secrets about your love, your life, your career, your money, your luck, your marriage, your health, your future, your personal problems, and folks all it will cost you is \$3.99 a minute plus your soul if you get wrapped up in the occult and all this devilish, hellish business. Now you if you're into astrology, friend, if you have any astrological charts or books, go home this afternoon and put them in the garbage. Just put them in the garbage. Get them out of your house. You say, well, I just amuse myself with them. Well, you're going to amuse yourself into hell. Just get rid of it. Only God knows the future.

Put this verse down, Isaiah 46 verses 9 and 10. God says, "*Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, there's none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all of my pleasure.'*" What is God saying? God says there's none that knows the future. Only God knows the future and those to whom God reveals the future.

One of the great ways that we know that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God is fulfilled prophecy. You see, what God is already fulfilled is enough to tell us that what God has already fulfilled is an indicator of the fact that He will fulfill the rest.

Peter Stoner is a mathematician, who deals with the science of probabilities, which is a real science. And he took, Peter Stoner just took eight of the prophecies of the Old Testament referring to Jesus coming the first time. Just eight prophecies; just eight. Now there're scores and scores of them, but he used just eight. And mathematically he said, "What is the probability that all eight of these prophecies could be accurately fulfilled in one man? Mathematically," he said, "It is one in a septillion." One in a septillion that just eight of these prophecies could be fulfilled. Now, we don't know what a septillion is. We don't even have an idea. So he said, "Let me tell you what that would be like." He said, "Take a stack of dimes edge to edge and fill up a space of 80,000 cubic miles. Alright, 80,000 cubic miles. 80,000 miles this way, that way, up and so forth. And put in there all the dimes it will hold. 80,000 cubic mile, miles." Then he said, "Mark one dime with a red X. Blind fold a man and drop him down in the pile and if he comes up with that one dime by chance, that's one in a septillion." It is absolutely impossible that these Scriptures that have already been fulfilled could have been fulfilled by chance. Now he only takes eight out of the scores. If you were to take all of the Scriptures, Peter Stoner says there's no word; we don't have a word in language that describes that kind of a number.

Now, God says, "I am the One that knows the future." We are looking at things, past things, present things, and future things. We're going to be looking at these things from the eyes of God. Not our guess, but what God Almighty has said.

Now what I want to do this morning is to give you what I'm going to call a panorama of prophecy. We've already dealt pretty much with chapter 1. We will later on deal with chapters 2 and 3. But what I want to do is to start right here and go through this morning the end of this chart to give you a panorama, to give you an overview. And then we'll come back and put the limbs and the twigs and the leaves on. Okay! But what I want to do right now is just to show you the great major branches of prophecy.

I want to talk to you about seven major things that I believe are about to begin. Are you ready for them? Number one: **the rapture of the church and the departure of the saints**; the rapture of the church and the departure of the saints. Now in chapter 4 verse 1, John says, "*After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in Heaven. And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, 'Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.'*"

Now you remember in chapter 1 verse 19 he said the third division were things which must be hereafter? So, that's, that's where this begins; chapter 4 verse 1. From chapter 4 verse 1 we're looking at the hereafter. From chapter 4 verse 1 the word church drops out. Because why? Well, the church is going to be raptured. It's going up. And so in the rest of this we're not here. Friend, we're up here going through the judgment seat of Christ, the marriage of the Lamb. Down here on earth is what? The great tribulation. So at this point, at the end of the church age there's going to be a voice like a trumpet that says, "*Come up hither,*" and friend, I'm leaving. I'm going. I'm Heaven born. I'm Heaven bound. And when the trumpet sounds, count me in, color me gone. I'm out of here. Now are you saved? Get right or be left.

Now friend, I'm telling you, the trumpet's going to sound and the dead in Christ will rise first. Put in your margin First Thessalonians chapter 4 verses 16 and 18, "*For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.*" Now that's the rapture. That's the first thing that's going to happen when we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Revelation 4:1, "*Come up hither.*"

When will the rapture take place? At any moment. We're not looking for some sign. We're not looking for some prophecy to be fulfilled before Jesus can come for His church. At any moment; perhaps this afternoon. "*Be ye therefore ready for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh.*" He is coming like a thief in the night. A thief never writes a note and says I'll be here tonight. No, Jesus is coming at any moment. Do you believe that? Say, Amen.

Alright now, if you really believe it, you be ready. Alright now here's the second thing. First of all, the rapture of the church and the departure of the saints. Number two: **the rise of the beast and the deceptions of the devil.** When the church is taken out, we are the salt of the earth. Salt preserves, salt heals, salt restrains. They don't like us. They wish we were gone. Well, one day we will be and then corruption will set in. And to lead that corruption will be a man called, the beast. He's also called the man of sin. He's called the antichrist. And in the Revelation he's called the beast. Revelation 13 verses 1 through 3, John says, "*And I stood upon the sand of the sea,*" and in Bible prophecy the sea represents peoples and nations, "*And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea,*" that is, out of these nations in turmoil, "*having seven heads.*" Seven the perfect number, ten the complete number. Heads speak of wisdom. Ten horns speak of power. "*And upon his horns ten crowns,*" that speaks of dominion, "*and upon his heads the names of blasphemy.*" That speaks of his character. He blasphemes God. "*And the beast I saw which was like unto a leopard, and his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. And the dragon,*" the dragon's Satan himself, "*gave him his power and his seat,*" that means his throne, "*and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world wondered after the beast.*"

Well, you say, what does all that mean? Well we'll get to that later on in our study. This is only an overview. But I'm telling you that Satan's superman, the antichrist, the counterfeit Christ, is coming into this world. And when he does, he's going to turn the world into a vast concentration camp with all of the inmates numbered. Nobody will be able to buy or sell unless they have the mark of this man, the mark of the beast. John Phillips, Bible scholar describes the beast this way, "*He will be a most attractive person, a veritable savior to a world careening like an express train without throttle, wide open, out of control, and without a man at the helm. No doubt his personal charm will be great, his intellectual genius immense, his wealth and influence proverbial, his authority overpowering, his passions and hatreds extraordinary, his organizing skill unsurpassed, his techniques superb. Men will follow him to death. Women will swoon at his feet and children will say his name as savior of the world and the hope of mankind. Yet for all of that, he will be totally and thoroughly bad. He is the man of sin.*"

Alright, so, after the church the Christ, the true Christ comes for His bride. Then the antichrist, the beast will arrive. Third thing that will happen. The third thing is: **the great tribulation and the devastation of the Earth.** Look in chapter 6 and begin in verse 12.

John says, *“And I behold when he had opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of Heaven fell to the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the Heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains. And said to the mountains and the rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.”* Can you imagine a phrase like that? *“The wrath of the Lamb.”* Look at that sacrificial lamb. Won't always be that way. The lamb becomes the lion. *“Hide us from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”*

In the tribulation period, not only will the antichrist hold sway and deceive the nations, but God will pour out His wrath upon this world. The Bible says it will be so terrible that men will desire to die and will not be able to die. Death will flee from them.

Alright, number four. The next thing that's going to happen, and what I'm trying to do now is just give you an overview of the book of the Revelation. I'm trying to give you seven major things that we can look for. First of all, the rapture. Secondly, the rise of the beast. Thirdly, the great tribulation, the devastation that's going to come upon this earth. There'll never be a time like it. Hell will have a holiday. It's a horrible time. Even if there were no hell, you would not want to be left behind to go into the great tribulation.

Number four: **Armageddon and the defeat of the beast and his armies.** Now this tribulation period will last for seven years. The last three and half years will be the most horrifying, the most horrific. We'll talk about that later on. But this period, this great tribulation will end with a battle called Armageddon. And there at this battle, the beast and his armies will be defeated. Put for your verses Revelation 16 verses 13 through 16. John said, *“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon,”* of course, that's Satan himself, *“And out of the mouth of the beast,”* that's the antichrist, *“and out of the mouth of the false prophet,”* that's the sinister minister of propaganda who will, who counterfeits the Holy Spirit. *“For they are spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold,”* Jesus said, *“I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked, lest they see his shame. And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon, Armageddon.”*

If you've been with me traveling Israel, we've gone up on Mt. Megiddo and looked out over that vast plain where this battle will take place. Demon spirits are going to draw the world leaders to this place to come against Jerusalem. And how's the battle going to be fought? Revelation 19 verse 11, *“And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True,”* that's speaking of Jesus, *“and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood. And His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword.”* Remember we told you last week that sharp sword is His Word. *“That with it He should smite the nations. And He shall rule them with a rod of iron. He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and the wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on*

His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." And what a day that will be when Jesus comes.

Friend, at this time the church has been taken up. We go up at the rapture. Then there's the great tribulation. And all of these tribulation calamities happen: hail, fire, blood, a burning mountain cast into the sea, a bitter star named wormwood that poisoned the waters, cosmic darkness, locusts which are really demon spirits, horsemen that ride forth to bring pestilence, and the worship of the antichrist. And then, the vials of God's wrath are poured out. Boils and the sea will turn to blood and the rivers of blood and great heat and great darkness. And the river Euphrates dries up and those Asian armies come across against Israel. And hail like great stones, and God is going to begin to judge the world and mystery of Babylon and Babylon the Great will be judged. And then all of the antichrist coming in all of his power, he's coming now against God's ancient people, against Israel. All nations of the world will be gathered together against Israel. But what has happened? The church has gone up here. We're up there with the Lord Jesus Christ at the judgment seat of Christ, the marriage of the Lamb. And now Jesus comes, not at the rapture, but at the revelation. Now He comes in power and great glory. And at this point there is the battle of Armageddon. Armageddon takes place when Jesus comes again. This time not for His saints, but when Jesus Christ comes with His saints. And the armies of antichrist are defeated at Armageddon and the tribulation has ended. We'll talk about Armageddon later on, but, oh, I can hardly wait to be there. And I will be there for that battle. But I'm going to be behind the Lord Jesus and He's going to fight the battle and He's going to do it with one weapon, the sword in His mouth.

God gives us pictures all through the Bible so we can understand things. Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane praying. Judas and the Roman soldiers and the priests are coming to take Jesus. And Jesus is praying, just like Jesus right now is interceding for us. He's in the glory interceding. And here comes Judas. Judas is a type, a picture of the antichrist. Judas is called the son of perdition. The antichrist is called the son of perdition. The Bible says that, "*Satan entered into Judas.*" That doesn't say that about any other person in the Bible. Nowhere else in the Bible does it say that Satan entered into a person. People may be possessed of demons, but it says of Judas that Satan entered into him. You know, people say, "I've been wrestling with the devil all day." You're not that important. The littlest demon could deal with you and me, you see. But Judas was really filled with the devil. He so represents the antichrist. "Anti" means against and it means instead of. And so here comes Judas, and he's leading these people against the Lord Jesus Christ. And here's this army. And here they are. They've got their torches. They've got their spears. They've got their swords. They have their authority. They have all of this stuff. And here's the Lord Jesus over here. And they come and Jesus looks at them and says, "Who are you looking for?" "We're looking for Jesus of Nazareth. Are you Jesus?" "I AM." And they fall down like dead men. Just His word, "I AM." Just the word out of His mouth and they drop.

Now of course, He allows them to get back up because that's a part of His plan. But what a demonstration of His mighty power. Friend, I tell you what, the only thing that held Jesus to the cross was not spikes, but golden cords of love. Did you know that? He said, "*No man taketh my life from me. I lay it down of myself.*" And so how's this battle going to be fought? This battle is going to be fought by the sword that goes out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what is the next thing that we're going to see? The next thing on God's event is the millennium. After the battle of Armageddon we're going to have **the millennial reign of**

peace and the dominion of Jesus. Now look if you will in Revelation 20 verses 1 through 6, *“And I saw an angel come down from Heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan and bound him a thousand years.”* What is a thousand years? A thousand years is a millennium. *“And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him.”* He’ll get the longest prison sentence in history and I hope it’s with hard labor. *“That he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled. And after that he must be loosed a little season.”* We’ll talk about that when we get to it. And, I’m going to skip on down to verse 5, *“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”*

Now, that’s what we call the millennium; one thousand years. How long will this period be? So far it’s been 2,000 years from the time that Jesus went up to this time. But this millennium, milli-anum, milli meaning a thousands, anum meaning year, a thousand years, speaks of the reign of, of Christ. When the lamb and the lion will lie down together and the lamb won’t be inside the lion. It’s going to be peace. And the Bible says that, *“The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as waters that cover the sea. And men shall beat their spears into pruning hooks and their swords into plow shares. And nations shall not lift up sword against nation.”* There will only be ultimate peace in the Middle East when Jesus comes to rule and to reign. And how we need to pray for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Can you imagine what the millennium will be like? No war, no disease, peace on earth during this millennial reign of the Lord Jesus. Now we’ll talk about that a little bit later.

But now the sixth event, and what I’m trying to do is just give you a panorama. The sixth event is: **the final judgment and the doom of the lost.** Revelation 20 beginning in verse 11, *“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them. And they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell,”* death and Hades, *“were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”*

And so how does the millennium end? With the final judgment. There’s coming a time when every unsaved man, woman, boy and girl will stand before the great white throne. Who is sitting upon that throne? Jesus Christ. The Bible says, *“The Father judges no man. He has committed all judgment unto the Son.”* And the resurrection of the unsaved dead will take place. *“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. The sea gave up the dead which were in it; death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them. And they were judged every man.”* Well, why do we wait until here for the judgment? Because, you see, the waves of sin have not yet hit the shores of eternity. You drop a petal, a pebble in a lake and concentric circles begin to go out to the shore.

Let’s take a person like Hugh Hefner, who had his playboy empire. He lived high, wide and handsome. And he has corrupted so many people. But he corrupts somebody, who corrupts somebody, who corrupts somebody, who corrupts somebody, who corrupts somebody, who

breaks up home here, who sodomizes somebody here, who rapes somebody here, who steals the virtue from somebody here. And, and on and on and on it goes. Now, Hugh Hefner died, but his influence goes on and on and on. And so you wait until the final judgment. When God puts the final period upon the final sentence upon the final paragraph upon the final page upon the final book of history, then we see cumulative judgment. And that's the reason God waits until the final judgment. And at the final judgment the unsaved dead are judged and they are cast into the lake of fire.

Which bring us now to the final of these seven great events: **the final state and the destiny of mankind**. Revelation chapter 21 verses 6 and 8, *"And He said unto me, 'It is done.'"* That's it. It's done! *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful and the unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

Ladies and gentlemen, when God created you He made you in His image. God made you a living soul. You could no more cease to exist than God Himself could cease to exist. Endless, timeless, dateless, measureless, your soul will be in existence somewhere, either in Heaven or Hell because God is making new heavens and a new earth and we're going to talk about that later. But God brought me here to say to you that you have a life to live, a death to die, a judgment to face and an eternity to endure; either in Heaven or in Hell. And you cannot miss Hell and go to Heaven unless you are twice born.

Now friend, we've seen some terrible things. And I want to ask you this question: when the stars are being run from their sockets, when the sun is darkened, when as black as sack cloth of hair, when the moon hangs in the sky like a clot of blood, when mountains are crumbling and nations are shaken, when the sky is split and Jesus comes in the blood washed armies of Heaven, when all of these things are going on, where will your soul be? The wisest thing you could ever do would be to give your heart to Jesus Christ. The last invitation, the Bible says, *"And whosoever is athirst, let him come and take of the water of life freely."* The last prayer in the Bible is this, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."*

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Now, please get quiet and still. Be very reverent. There are souls in the balance this morning. There are people who may die and go to hell if they're not saved today. This may be God's final public invitation to someone here today. And if you're not absolutely certain that you're saved, I want you to be saved.

"Pastor, can I be certain?" Yes, you can be. "Pastor, is there some way that you could help me?" I want to right now. I want to lead you in a prayer and guide you. And you can pray this prayer: I call it the sinner's prayer. You can pray and ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart and into your life. Friend, to learn the facts of prophecy and not to know Jesus would only increase your judgment. So you need to be saved. And the surest thing and sweetest thing would be to be saved today. Pray this prayer, "Dear God, I know that You love me and I know that You want to save me. I am a sinner. My sin deserves judgment, but I need mercy. I cannot save myself. But Jesus, You died to save me. You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You. I believe that You died for my sins. I believe You paid my sin debt with Your precious blood. Thank You for the shed blood that cleanses my sin. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And I now receive You by faith as my Lord and Savior. Come into my heart. Forgive my sin. Save me, Jesus." Pray that friend from your

heart. "Save me, Jesus. Save me, Jesus." Did you ask Him? Then don't wait for a feeling. Don't look for a sign. Just take Him at His word.

If you're sincere, pray a sincere like this, "Thank You for doing it. Thank You. I receive it by faith and that settles it. From now on I belong to You, Jesus, and You belong to me. Now I'll not be ashamed of You, Jesus. I'll make it public. Just give me the strength to get down there this morning and I'll do it. In Your name I pray, Amen."