

Intro: Stefan Duerksen, Lead Pastor **PRAY FOR OFFERING**

Announce: *Alvina Falk passed away this last Thursday, February 13th. She will be deeply missed by her husband Wilbert, their two children and their families. Wilbert & Alvina have been part of our church family for a while and were active in the Pillars Group. Our hearts go out to the family and the many friends from this church who have “walked her Home”, to be with Jesus. The funeral will be at our church this coming Thursday at 1pm.*

Church-Wide Prayer: 2. Heart of Southland: 500 people - Prayer Summit, Set Free! & Bible in a year

- Praise God – God answered prayers and brought Joshua & Febe safely into country
- Pray for us to grow in knowing God through private & corporate prayer!
- Pray – growth at Prayer Summits & Set Free! Heart transformation! 500 in attendance.
- Pray for those trapped in anxiety, depression, addiction, and bondage to be set free!
- Pray for those stuck in secret sin to have the courage to share their struggles
- Pray – for us to be good Bereans – who study Scripture and seek God’s truth. 500 BIAY.
- Prayer Summit, Set Free & Bible in a year are EACH ONE, REACH ONE ideas as well 😊

Intro:

The Letter of Revelation was meant to be a source of HOPE for ALL BELIEVERS – to remind us of JESUS and the things to come and then to cause us to LIVE IN ACCORDANCE TO THIS REALITY.

The repeated message of Revelation is to hold onto HOPE – do not compromise your faith! **JESUS IS COMING SOON! EVIL HAS AN EXPIRATION DATE.**

Jesus – who IS, who WAS, who IS to come! Faithful witness! Firstborn of the dead! King of kings! The One who loves us and freed us from our sins through His blood!

He made us a kingdom of priests to God the Father!

THINGS ARE NOT AS THEY SEEM – Whether we are going through suffering – or are living the good life! Revelation reminds us – There is an unseen REALITY – ALL of human history has been moving towards an ending – one that is greater than anything humans could conceive of on their own!

The King is coming back! Are we ready?

A. Breaking news: Jesus is coming back on the clouds!

Revelation 1:7-20 (ESV) 7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

- **Daniel 7:13 (ESV)** “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.
- **Matthew 24:29-31 ESV** “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the

clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

- **Zechariah 12:10 (ESV)** ..., when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him,...
- **Mt 26:24, 64; Mark 14:62, 13:26-27; Acts 1:9-11**
- **This is the HOPE. Evil has an expiry date. Whatever you suffer now ENDS. Jesus is coming soon!**

Reflection: Do you want Jesus to return? Or, are you hoping to live your life first?

- *How we answer questions like this reveals the true object of our affection.*
- Suffering and trouble in THIS life – is often used to refine our desires and focus.
- **Scripture instructs and warns us – LIVE IN LIGHT OF THE REALITY OF CHRIST’S RETURN!**

B. Jesus - our Origin, Purpose, & Destiny

⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

- Alpha and Omega – Greek letters at the beginning and end of their alphabet.
 - **Revelation 22:12–13 (ESV)** “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”
 - **Greek word for beginning: arche –archetype.** That by which anything begins to be – Jesus is the beginning, the origin of creation, humanity, history, salvation – it’s ALL about him! (exists through him and for him)
 - **Greek word for end: telos** – more than just the END. It is that but also translates – “the end to which all things relate, aim, purpose”
 - **PICTURE acorn: what is this? Acorn!**
 - **PICTURE oak tree: an acorns telos is to become an oak tree!**
 - **Colossians 1:15–20 (ESV)** 15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.*
 - **REFLECT: Could an acorn become an apple tree? NO! imagine how much energy would be wasted on a failing endeavour should the acorn try!**
 - **The Telos of Humans:**
 - To become like Jesus – in suffering, righteousness, and love.
 - Image bearers – to reflect God’s character, attributes, desires, and will on the Earth.
 - To do good works – to rule and care for the Earth. E.g. work, relationships, free time.
 - To be Ambassadors of Heaven – evangelism, discipleship, ministering to the needy.
 - **PERSONAL: are you living in light of your telos? If NOT, you are like an acorn trying to be an apple tree** – it is IMPOSSIBLE. This will cause ALL sorts of stress in your life!
 - *The above idea is taken from Discipleship on the Edge by Darrell Johnson*

C. Jesus is the Ancient of Days – Eternal & Unchanging

⁹I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

- **To the SEVEN CHURCHES – remember. Real Churches.**

- Why not Colossae or Hierapolis? They were major churches as well.
- SEVEN represents perfection – so there are multiple PURPOSES being fulfilled here!
 - They are addressing REAL churches and ISSUES
 - They are addressing the ENTIRE Church as well
 - They continue to address EVERY major issue the Church faces today!

¹²Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

- **Example Picture:** Construction gear on a man = construction worker!

Jesus shows John what is wearing! And it reveals WHO HE IS – He is the Ancient of Days – the Son of Man!

- **Daniel 10:5-8 (ESV)** I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude
- **Robes were given to Priests & Kings.** Jesus is our High Priest and our KING!
- **Golden girdle – across chest meaning...** His work is already FINISHED.
- **This Jesus is standing in the MIDDLE of Seven Lampstands.**

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. (JUST LIKE DANIEL!)

When we see Jesus – our entire lives and all of human history will be put in perspective.

C. Jesus is our Shepherd

But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last," ¹⁸and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

- **Jesus, John's best friend, touches him and says, "John, it is I, Jesus! The One who died! The One who is LIVING! I defeated death John – you no longer have to fear – just LOOK TO ME! I am coming back soon"**
- **Shepherds care for their flock! They fight off lions and bears!**
- **EVEN during suffering and evil – Jesus wants us to FEAR NOT! But to come to Him!**

D. Jesus wants us to live in accordance with reality

¹⁹ Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. ²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Jesus has just given the most EPIC introduction of himself to John and to the rest of us!

1. Jesus wants us to know what he expects & what is coming!

- **Write:** things that ARE and things that WILL HAPPEN AFTER. Jesus is uncovering what is really happening and what everything is moving towards.

2. Jesus wants us to be aware of the spirit realm! (WORSHIP TEAM GET READY)

- **Seven stars are seven angels – either he means:** 1) messengers bringing the letters, 2) Pastors leading the congregation and reading the letters, or, 3) Supernatural angelic beings!
- #3 is the correct view and lines up with the context of how John uses Angels throughout Revelation.
- **WARNING FOR US:** In the West we are uncomfortable with talking about demons, angels, spirits, the Devil, etc. even the Holy Spirit! We are comfortable with JESUS.
- **JESUS IS THE ONE WHO REVEALS THE REALITY OF THE SPIRIT REALM. It is active right now. We are warned to be vigilant against the Devil and his schemes.**
- **Ephesians 6:12–13 (ESV)** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.
- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

3. Jesus wants us to know He is actively judging & evaluating His people

- **Jesus is walking between the churches – He's evaluating them! And actively correcting and encouraging them!**
- **Seven Lampstands were Seven LOCAL CHURCHES. Jesus encourages, warns, instructs and disciplines His Church!**
- **NEXT WEEK we look at their report cards!**

Jesus has REVEALED to us the things that are and the things that are to come!

- Jesus is coming back in bodily form on the clouds!
- Jesus is our archetype & telos (origin, purpose & destiny)
- Jesus is the Ancient of Day – Eternal & Unchanging
- Jesus is our Shepherd
- Jesus actively evaluates His Church & His people (us)
- Jesus warns there is a spiritual war going on
- Jesus has shown us what will happen towards the End of the Age

- Jesus has revealed what He expects from us

P. RAY, speaking on spiritual warfare - "If you are spiritually asleep, you have already succumbed to the attack"

Reflect: are you living with reality in sight?

If TODAY were the day you stood before Jesus. Would you be ready?

SPECIAL: Even so Come

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM and 11AM

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

Care@mysouthland.com

SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2024

Cruise ship → → → → Battleship

- 1. Life on Mission:** Churchwide commitment to "Each One, Reach One"
- 2. Heart of Southland:** 500 people - Prayer Summit, Set Free! & Bible in a year
- 3. Next Gen:** ❤️ Passion for Jesus, memorization & find identity in Christ
- 4. Church Renewal:** Double funding, mentors & CRI Churches in Canada
- 5. Persecuted Church & Israel:** Salvation, hope & perseverance - MARANATHA