Session 3 The First Commandment and the Book of Revelation

1. The biblical storyline: the Spirit is raising up a prepared Bride

*We are on a ten-part series on the First Commandment, and this is such a big topic. There is so much on it in the Word of God that we could never cover it in ten sessions, so we are introducing it. Tonight we are looking at the first commandment in its place in the book of Revelation. And one of the reasons I am saying that is because the book of Revelation is such a glorious book, which, in Revelation 1:1, is called the revelation of Jesus. The book itself–it is the only book in the Bible that is titled “The unveiling of the beauty of Jesus.” That is really what that means, that this is a revelation of Jesus, the man Christ Jesus Himself, who is fully God and fully man.*

*The theme of the book is often misunderstood, and that is what I want to talk about tonight because it is such a glorious book and is so helpful for the Body of Christ. However, if we have a wrong view of the book, we are going to end up shying away from it or think, “Well, I am not really into that book of Revelation stuff.”*

*Yet the primary theme of the book of Revelation is actually that there is a king who is coming to the earth. That is what the theme of the book is, and it is right there in chapter 1, verse 7: He is coming back as a king. Then we see it in chapter 19 and several other places as well. And, He is not just coming back to rule the earth. It is more than that. He is coming back to rescue and to vindicate and prepare His people as a mature Bride. The theme of the book of Revelation is a coming king, but He is not just coming to rule. He is coming to be greeted by a people that have become a prepared Bride. That is what the book is about. It is not mostly about how bad the Antichrist is. It is mostly the Lord’s action plan to take the Church across the nations and to transform them so radically in one generation so she becomes a prepared Bride. And so He is rescuing His people, vindicating them, anointing them, and empowering them so that they are mature as a Bride actually before He comes. He does not make her mature after He comes. The book of Revelation is His plan to bring maturity to His Bride before He returns. That is the focus of it. And then He has a wedding at the end of the Great Tribulation, the beginning of the millennial kingdom, and then this Bride whom He has transformed across the nations rules with Him forever. Of course it is the redeemed through history as well, but He takes this great harvest at the end of the age and brings the Church to such maturity that she is able to reign with Him as a mature Bride forever and forever. It is a remarkable storyline in the book of Revelation.*

* 1. ***Review***: Jesus’ statement in Matthew 22:37-38 reveals God’s mission statement for the human race. The Spirit will reveal the supremacy of the first commandment to the Church before Jesus returns.

37“‘You shall love the Lord…with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38This is the first and great commandment.” (Mt. 22:37-38)

*We start every session with this verse, Matthew 22:37, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your mind.” And then in Mark 12:30 He added, “and with all of your strength.” So there are four dimensions of the human make-up that the Holy Spirit is wanting to touch and for us to respond with in love, and then Jesus went on to define something brand new. This had never, ever been declared until He said it right here in verse 38. He said, in effect, “I want all of history to know this commandment to love Me with their all is actually the highest priority to God. It is the first commandment.” It is what the Holy Spirit is emphasizing most. It is what the book of Revelation is actually about. It is this commandment. This is what is first on His mind. This is what the plan is aiming at: to bring forth a people across the nations who love Him in that way.*

*Well, in verse 38, it is not only the first commandment, the highest priority to God, but it is the great commandment. God says that if you embrace this commandment, He will call your life choices great, and not only that, He is saying if you embrace this commandment you will see the great purpose of God. The great plan and purpose of God is linked to this verse. Now the part that I love to mention is that Matthew 22 is Jesus’ last public message before He went to the cross. If somebody asks, “What would Jesus preach on if He had one more sermon?” you can say that you know for sure what He would preach on because Matthew 22 tells us. And so Matthew 22–He ends it with this declaration. This was actually His final public declaration to the people of God before He would go to the upper room. Now, after that He went and rebuked the leadership of the nation and told them that they missed it, but to the people themselves this was actually His last declaration.*

* 1. The theme of the book of Revelation is to “reveal” the beauty of Jesus (1:1) who is returning (1:7) as King to reign (1:5; 11:15-17; 15:3; 17:14; 19:16) with His Bride (1:6; 5:10; 19:7; 20:4-6; 22:5).

1The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants…5[He is] ruler over the kings of the earth…6and has made us kings…7He is coming…and every eye will see Him…” (Rev. 1:1, 5-7)

*Well, He died, and He rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and most scholars assume that this was sixty years later because we do not know from the book of Revelation the exact number of years until He appeared to John on the island of Patmos. Still, the book of Revelation is His next message after He gave this one. Now at a casual read we would not connect that, but Jesus could say, “The last thing I told My people in a public forum was that they should love Me and that this was of the highest priority to me and that this is where the greatest purposes of My heart are contained, locked into this verse.”*

*Then, in the book of Revelation, He says, “Let me unveil My glory and My plan and show you My great purposes.” So it is almost like you could take the sixty years from His death and resurrection to the book of Revelation—again, most agree that it was sixty years later—and put them together and it is like He is finishing the sentence or paragraph that He began. He said, as it were, “Let Me take up where I left off. I want you to love Me. Now here is My glory and My beauty in the book of Revelation; it is called the revealing of Jesus. Here is My action plan and these are My great objectives.”*

* 1. John made a stunning prophetic declaration that the end-time Church will be a prepared Bride
	(Rev. 19:7). The biblical storyline includes far more than a great end-time revival (Rev. 7:9, 14),
	it includes the Father raising up a *prepared Bride for His worthy Son*.

7…for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)

*His great objective is that He is going to bring the worldwide Body of Christ to the place of being prepared and ready as a Bride. This is one of the most remarkable, stunning prophetic declarations in the whole Bible. The Body of Christ right now across the nations—I am not trying to be negative; I am trying to stir our hearts to be alert—many in the Body of Christ across the nations are living in a Laodicean spirit of compromise. Many say that there are nearly one billion people who claim to follow Jesus or claim that He is the one that they look to for salvation, a billion people. Nobody knows the actual number, but I would say hundreds of millions or thereabouts of that billion, if that is the actual number, are living in a Laodicean spirit of compromise. They are living in spiritual passivity, hundreds of millions, or they are living in some very specific compromise in their life. Now, there are millions who are not, but hundreds of millions who are, and here is the remarkable thing: in the span of one generation—we do not know how long a generation is, as it could be fifty to one hundred years—in the span of one generation the Laodicean spirit on the end-time Church will be so radically transformed that she will be a prepared Bride before He comes. This is not talking about Him raising them up, rapturing them, and then they are prepared. They are prepared when He comes.*

*This is what I call the greatest miracle in natural history: the corporate miracle of the transformation of the end-time, compromising Church into a prepared Bride. A Bride that has made herself ready, and the reason—obviously it is the grace of God that has made her ready. It is the provision of the Spirit, and the Lord could have said it that way really clearly, but here He is emphasizing that she did her part in participating—she said yes to the available grace of God because the grace of God is available now, but she actually took hold of it and in that sense did her part of exercising her freewill to take hold of the abundance of the grace of God in the revelation of the beauty of Christ and made herself ready. And so if you do not understand Matthew 22, the great commandment, and you do not know where the book of Revelation is going, you can easily misinterpret the book and its purpose.*

* + 1. The greatest corporate miracle in history is the transformation of the end-time Church from spiritual compromise into a *“prepared Bride”* walking in the first commandment.
		2. God’s ultimate eternal purpose for creation is to provide a family of faithful children for Himself and an equally yoked Bride for Jesus as His eternal companion.

*The biblical storyline in the book of Revelation is far more than just an end-time revival, though there is a great end-time revival that is recorded in the book of Revelation: Revelation 7:9-14 suggests that there will be a spirit of revival in every single nation, every tongue and tribe on the earth during the final years of this age. The greatest revival in history is coming just preceding the coming of the Lord, so much so that there are radical, lovesick worshippers of Jesus in every tribe and tongue of the earth. That has never happened before, but before the Lord returns that revival will take place. It will be the greatest revival in history.*

*I like to say that the miracles of the book of Acts and the miracles in the book of Exodus—you know when Moses led the Israelites out, and the Red Sea was divided by the power of God, and all of the miracles—the miracles of the Old Testament book of Exodus and the miracles of the book of Acts will be combined and multiplied on a global level in the greatest revival ever seen. And that is one of the sub-themes of the book of Revelation. It is mentioned and highlighted several times throughout the book.*

*However, the real theme is the Bride is ready, and there is a generation and I believe that there will be a billion people—again, I do not know the real number but a billion people—in the great end time harvest. And so there are a billion-ish now and a billion more coming, but of course of the billion now the Bible makes it clear that there will be a great falling away. We do not know what the percentage is, but it will still be substantial. I think it has the potential of hundreds of millions of people who are currently professing Christ to actually draw back and deny Him, but a billion will come in.*

*So if somebody asks, “Is there going to be a great falling away or a great ingathering at the end of the age?” the answer is both because the dark will get darker and the light will get lighter. The glory will get more intense, but the darkness and deception will also become more intense. Isaiah 60:2 clearly says that when deep darkness covers the earth the glory will be seen on the people of God. And so the dark will get darker and the light will get lighter. There will be a falling away but yet a great ingathering. There will be tremendous compromise but a historic and indescribably glorious transformation of the end-time Church and the billion new souls that will come in. Again, no one knows the real number, but it is a big number, and they will come into an environment of radical, lovesick believers who are walking out the first commandment. And that will be normative before the Lord returns.*

*The end-time storyline is much bigger than just a great revival. Now the reason I say that is because I love that theme, and some folks really lock into the revival, but I ask, “A revival unto what?”*

*They say, “What do you mean, unto what? Unto people going to heaven instead of hell when they die!”*

*I say, “No, there is a bigger storyline. I love the truth of going to heaven instead of hell when I die. That is a great truth, but that is not the main storyline.” The main storyline is that the Lord is going to have an equally-yoked Bride. She will love Him with all of her heart in the way that He loves her, corporately, with all of His heart. And of course His All is far bigger than our All, but the All will be there. An equally-yoked Bride is what the Lord’s purpose is in salvation. The whole purpose of natural history, all six thousand-ish years from Adam to the Second Coming—we do not know the exact time but ballpark—God’s purpose is that He is bringing forth a people that will be His Son’s inheritance as His Son’s eternal companion. She will be equally yoked to Him in love.*

*The book of Revelation is the ultimate love story of God transforming, winning, redeeming, rescuing, empowering, and anointing the Bride of Christ. It is a great love story that unfolds on a global level for all eyes to see. The “book of Revelation” plan is so glorious that it causes the end-time Church to love Him with all of her heart. As a matter of fact, it says in Revelation 12:11 that the Church will love Jesus even more than their physical life. They will love Him even unto death. Death will not matter to them. They will be so convinced of His beauty, glory, and leadership that they will consider it rubbish like Paul said in Philippians 3:8, “I count it rubbish because of the glory of who this Man is!” And the end-time Church will embody that spirit. The book of Revelation is a grand love story.*

*Again, as I have talked with people, they think that it is mostly about how powerful the Antichrist is. It is not about a victorious Antichrist and a defeated Church. It is about a victorious Church and a defeated Antichrist. The book of Revelation is not mostly about persecution. As a matter of fact, there are four hundred and three verses in the book of Revelation. Only twelve of them are about persecution, out of four hundred and three. Three percent of the book of Revelation is about persecution, three percent, but if you ask somebody in a casual way about the book, they will say it is terrifying. I say, “Well, no, not really. It is glorious, actually, if you understand the correct storyline.”*

*The judgments in the book of Revelation are not against the Church. They are against the Antichrist. It is the storyline of what happened in the book of Exodus, retold on a global level. In the book of Exodus the people of God are in slavery and bondage to an oppressive leader, Pharaoh. Moses marches into the land, releases the power of God, defeats Pharaoh, and liberates the people of God with the supernatural power of God. That is the storyline that we are all familiar with, but that was just a cameo; that was only a down payment. The book of Revelation is about the end-time Pharaoh called the Antichrist and the end-time Greater Moses called Jesus and how He liberates His people. You will find that the trumpets and the bowl judgments in the book of Revelation are very similar to the ten plagues of Egypt, and they are meant to be. The story is meant to be connected. It is the Exodus story on a global level, liberating the people of God and bringing them into their destiny. Now in Exodus they stumbled with unbelief in the wilderness, but the end-time Church will not. It is a glorious storyline.*

* + 1. If we lose sight of Jesus coming for His Bride, then the book of Revelation may be reduced to end-time events, facts, and charts.

*If we lose sight of the fact that Jesus is coming for a bride, if we lose sight that it is about preparing a bride in the first commandment and defeating the Antichrist, if we lose sight of that, then the book of Revelation is reduced just to understanding end-time events and charts and to arguing about timeframes. The book of Revelation is the greatest and most glorious love story ever put in print, if you read it from the right point of view. The Lord is going to release His judgments, but against the end-time Pharaoh, who is the Antichrist, and his empire. He is not releasing His judgments on the Church. He is releasing His judgments on the Oppressor of the Church, the end-time Pharaoh.*

*Now somebody might say, “Well, the book of Revelation is about doom and gloom,” and I respond with, “Well, it is doom and gloom for the Antichrist for sure, but it is the greatest revival, the greatest harvest in the nations, and the greatest transformation of the redeemed ever in history, in that generation!” Yes, gloom and doom, but for who? For the people who are opposing love. And what we find out is that God’s judgments are released to remove everything that hinders love. That is what His judgments are about. His judgments are not a contradiction to love. They are actually confronting everything that hinders love. It is a most glorious thing.*

*Again, a lot of folks avoid the book of Revelation because they have the wrong paradigm of it, but I like to connect His last declaration in Matthew 22, “Love the Lord your God!” to it. He goes to the cross, and sixty years later He comes back and says, “Let me pick up where I left off!”*

*In Revelation 1—I am just repeating myself—it is called the unveiling of the beauty of Christ Jesus, and then He talks to His Church. Which is the first church that He talks to? Ephesus, the great revival church, and we will get to this in a few minutes, if we do—By the way, for those who are visiting, I never finish my notes. I do not ever try to. I just put them out there, and we do what we do—when He visited and spoke to the church of Ephesus, the great revival church, He said, “I appreciate and honor the way you serve Me, but you do not love Me like you used to love Me!”*

*He stayed with the same theme that He ended with in Jerusalem right before the cross and resurrection: love the Lord your God. Jesus is absolutely locked into the same storyline. That is what the book of Revelation is. It is not mostly about persecution, and it is certainly not about judgment on God’s people. It is judgment on the great oppressor of God’s people, but that is not even the great storyline. The storyline is that He is preparing a Bride to be equally yoked with Him in love and then He is going to transition the earth to the age to come when He returns as the king. It is the greatest storyline and the greatest hope. I mean, it is the most glorious story that you could imagine.*

*That is why or at least one of the reasons why the book of Revelation is the only book of the Bible in which says it several times, “Blessed are you if you read the book. Blessed are you if you hear the book.” It says if you even hear it or read it, you have a special blessing, but you have to hear it through the right paradigm, because a lot of people hear it and they say, “Bah, humbug! That is just gloom and doom. It makes me afraid!”*

*I say, “No! You are not hearing it! You are completely on the wrong storyline.” There is a blessing on anyone who hears it according to how the Lord meant it to be understood. That is the unveiling of the beauty of Jesus and His plan for His end-time people; the Bride of Christ.*

*Of course I believe that in eternity the whole of the redeemed is the Bride of Christ. However, across the nations, in the end times—again we do not know, but—there will be a billion who will enter into that. I mean it will be so glorious, challenging in our outer man undoubtedly, but glorious in our inner man. For the people who love Jesus’ leadership, it will be the greatest hour of history. For the people who live mostly for comfort, well, it is going to be some challenging times. However, if you are living for and your spirit is invigorated with Jesus, and you love loving Him and love being loved by Him, it will be the greatest hour of human history. It will be the greatest hour for the Church in human history. And the plan is locked in and is unfolded in the book of Revelation.*

* 1. The Spirit will use the great end-time outpouring of God’s power and presence and the establishing of His people as a family together with great persecution to transform His Church.

*The great end-time outpouring of God’s power and presence is, again, the greatest revival in history. Now we could take some time to develop that for those of you for whom this is the first time here and you are thinking, “Where is that in the Bible?” Well, it is really clear, but I am not going to take time on that tonight as that is not my subject right now, but it is substantial in the Old and New Testaments that the Spirit is going to use the great end-time revival. He is establishing His people as a family. He really is turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers, until His people walk in a divine unity with a family connection like no other time in human history. And, He is using the persecution of wicked people against the Church, so He is going to use the whole thing, and it is going to cause the transformation of His Church. The Lord is going to use the least severe means to reach the most people at the deepest level of love without violating anybody’s free will.*

*I will say that again for those who are new here. I make that statement all the time, so the locals have heard that over and over again. The book of Revelation but also the Old and New Testament prophets describe this great plan of God; the book of Revelation captures part of that plan, not all of it. Isaiah captures a whole lot that John does not talk about, and John adds things that Isaiah did not see, but Isaiah saw probably as much as anybody. And it is clear that the Lord is using the least severe means. He could say, “I am not making it any more challenging than necessary; it is not one percent more intense than it has to be.” The Lord uses the least severe means to reach the greatest number of people. That is the billion—again, that is not an actual number but a big number—all the tongues, tribes and nations, at the deepest level of love, He is going to cause the Body of Christ to walk in the first commandment. It is going to be established before the Lord returns. The first commandment will be established before He returns, and that is the action plan we see in the book of Revelation. And He is going to do all of this without violating anyone’s free will. He is not going to force anyone to love Him, but He is going to show His leadership and allow persecution. He is going to release glory, and He is going to cause the family dynamics to be all combined together, plus a few other components. They are not all listed here. And that is going to result in the transformation of the end-time Church. That is the storyline of the book of Revelation.*

*Some people have said to me, “Man, you are really into the end times!” I say, “Actually, I am not,” and they say, “Yes, you are, because you teach it,” and I say, “No, I am into Jesus. That is who I am into. And if this is His plan, I want whatever plan He has.” Now, if He has another plan, I do not care what it is; I just want the plan that He says is best. And so I am into His leadership in His great purposes, because this great commandment will bring the Church to the greatest purpose imaginable to the human spirit. I mean, the purpose that God has for His people as a Bride is beyond anything that we could imagine, far beyond the greatest imagination of glory that we could come up with. It is far beyond that.*

*Paul said that in 1 Corinthians 2:9. He said, in effect, “Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, it has never entered the mind of a human the degree of the glory that God has planned,” and I am going to add, “for His Church functioning as a Bride.”*

* 1. ***Bridegroom revival***: Jesus will come to His people as a Bridegroom who wants all of their heart. The end-time *“Bridegroom revival”* will be far more invasive than any revival in history. Jesus will reveal and impart His love in an unprecedented way that will transform the Church.

*I call the end-time revival: the “Bridegroom revival.” That is just a term I use, and you will not find that term technically in the Bible. However, the idea is clearly the Bible. And what I mean by a bridegroom revival is this. I have been a student of revival, as many of you have been. Revivals of history, the first great awakening, the second great awakening, revival in Wales, Azuza Street, many revivals. I have been a student of revival and I am a connoisseur of what God has done in history in bringing thousands and multitudes to His name using great activity of the Holy Spirit. However, one thing that is clear in the revivals through history is that the primary thing that happens is that large numbers of people come to salvation. They have a revelation of Jesus’ Lordship, and they have a dedication to the Lord at least for some season, or some years afterwards. And after some years, the revival fires lift, and the Church stumbles again in the years after that, some years down the road.*

*The primary thing that I see is God’s heightened “Holy Spirit” activity: large numbers of people coming in and they are dedicated to serve Him with high dedication. However, the Bridegroom revival is going to be more than large numbers coming in dedicated to serving Him because the Bridegroom revival will be far more invasive than any of the other revivals of history. What do I mean by invasive? The Spirit will press into the human heart in a way where He wants much more than faithful, zealous servants. You see, as the Bridegroom King, well, as a King He shows His power and He anoints His people to serve Him as a King, but as a Bridegroom He releases His beauty because He is after your heart. The Bridegroom God revelation is that He is coming for everything, not just faithful service, not just that we would stay away from defiling sins and serve Him diligently, like the great testimony of the revivals of history. No, far more than that. He wants a revelation of the beauty of Jesus and the first commandment established in the heart, and He wants our thoughts, our dreams, the inner dialogue of our heart. He is after our hearts at a whole other level. This has never happened in history before, where He is pressed into, in a widespread universal way, for that.*

*Mostly people get convicted of sin, they get rid of their defiling behavior, and they faithfully serve Him. However, the end-time revival is going to take it up a couple notches beyond that. He might say, “No, I am going to grab the secrets of your heart, and I am going to cause a deep dialogue between My heart and your heart. I am going to reveal My beauty and cause My love to be revealed and imparted in you in a whole new way that you cannot imagine.”*

* + 1. Jesus is a Bridegroom King who is coming back for His cherished Bride. He is King with power and a Bridegroom with desire for relationship with His people.
		2. As a King, Jesus desires that His servants faithfully serve Him; as a Bridegroom He wants all of her heart.
		3. As a King, Jesus anoints the ministry of His servants with power; as the Bridegroom, He wins the heart of His people with His extravagant love and beauty.
1. The end-time Church in her bridal identity
	1. Revelation 22:17 is one of the most informative and significant prophecies describing what truths and activities the Spirit will powerfully emphasize in a new way in the generation the Lord returns.

17The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!” Let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come…20“Surely, I am coming quickly.” Even so, “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:17, 20)

*The end-time revival is going to result in Revelation 22, in the Church being transformed in her spiritual identity. She is going to see herself as a cherished Bride. Never in Church history, two thousand years, has the Holy Spirit emphasized universally the spiritual identity of the Redeemed as a cherished Bride. Now, there is always some little group on a mountain top that understood this more than everyone else, but ninety-nine percent did not. In the end-time Church, the Spirit is going to move. And for the first time in history He is going to say universally—I am talking about to a billion people or whatever the number is—He is going to say, “You are more than faithful servants. You are actually a cherished Bride.”*

*And this cherished Bride, look at verse 17. This is, by the way, Revelation 22:17. I consider it one of the most informative and significant prophecies in the whole Bible for the end-time Church, and at a quick read it looks pretty simple. I remember giving a message some years ago where I gave fifteen distinct implications of what this verse would mean in terms of the different activities and mindsets of God’s people. And I do not mean that in this fifteen I have it all. My point is that it is much more elaborate in its significance and implications than meets the eye.*

*He is not only coming for the Church with a new spiritual identity, He is coming for a Church that will be agreeing with the Spirit. Whatever the Spirit is saying and doing, the Church in that hour will be saying what the Spirit says and doing what the Spirit does. Never in history besides a few years after the day of Pentecost did the Church do this in a widespread way. Right there in Jerusalem for a few years, in Acts 2-5, the Church was doing what the Spirit was saying. However, soon after that there was compromise breaking out everywhere. Beloved, I have good news for you: there is coming a day—look at verse 17—the Spirit and the Church will be saying and doing the same thing in agreement. This has remarkable implications.*

*And the Church will have a new spiritual identity. She will see herself as a cherished Bride. Now, where does she get this identity? She has a new revelation of the King as a Bridegroom King. He is more than a King with power. He is a Bridegroom with desire for relationship. When she sees Him as a Bridegroom, she will see herself as a cherished Bride. She is not going to grow in the bridal identity in a vacuum. It is the fruit of seeing Him differently. And never before has the Holy Spirit emphasized Jesus universally as a Bridegroom.*

*It is in the Bible, Old and New Testaments, in many places. One of my other favorite series that I have done is a twenty or twenty-four-part series—I cannot remember—on the Bride of Christ, where I take the theme of the Bride of Christ straight from Genesis right through the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, right through the New Testament. There are so many passages in the Bible about this. Now, if you do not have the right glasses on, the right paradigm, you will not even see the Bride of Christ, but once you see the Bride of Christ, you find it all over the Bible. You will wonder how these verses got into the Bible. That is what I asked, “When did this get in the Bible?” Obviously I am saying that tongue in cheek, but my point is that it is an old, established truth in the Bible, but it has not been an emphasis of the Holy Spirit universally to reveal the Messiah as a Bridegroom.*

*However, in the generation the Lord returns He is going to show that He is more than a King with power, that He is a Bridegroom with a deep desire for relationship. He is a Bridegroom King and that is who He is. And when we see Him differently, we will see ourselves differently, and this is what the storyline of the book of Revelation is. This is the central theme of the book in terms of its grand objectives of where it is going. Well, the Spirit will be moving in the Church in such unity, they will be saying the same thing! They will be doing the same thing. I have a little bit on that here, but we will just move on.*

* 1. Revelation 22:17 describes the Church saying and doing what the Spirit is saying and doing.
		1. ***What is the Spirit saying?*** He is *revealing* the Bridegroom and the redeemed as His Bride.
		2. ***What is the Spirit doing?*** He is *praying* for Jesus to come in power as the Bridegroom, and
		He is *calling* thirsty people to come to Jesus as the Bridegroom and to see themselves as His Bride. Thus, He is *praying* and *calling* the nations to Jesus through the lips of His people.
	2. The body of Christ will walk in her identity as a cherished Bride.
		1. This indicates a great increase of fresh understanding of Jesus as the Bridegroom King
		and of the redeemed as His cherished Bride.
		2. Only as the Church sees Jesus as a Bridegroom will they see themselves as His Bride.
	3. For the first time the Spirit will universally emphasize the Church’s identity as Jesus’ Bride.
	John does not proclaim that the Spirit and the *family* say, “Come,” nor the *army*, the *body*, the *temple,* or *priesthood*. Forever we will rejoice in our identity as God’s family, body, temple, etc.

*I have already mentioned this, but I will just say it again. For the first time in Church history universally—it has not happened yet, but it is starting to happen—universally the Spirit is going to emphasize the revelation of Jesus as a Bridegroom and the identity of the Church as a cherished Bride, for the first time in history universally. He is going to move in dreams and visions, and He is going to grab people supernaturally, and the old passages that have always been in the Bible will, all of a sudden, become an emphasis in the end-time Church. They have been ignored for years.*

*I remember how the Lord first called me to this. I will not give the whole story, but it was by the audible voice of the Lord talking about the Bride of Christ, back in July 1988. I remember I did not like it. I thought, “I do not want to do the Bride of Christ.” I remember it! It had been glorious to encounter the Lord, but then later on I figured out I do not want to do the Bride of Christ. “No!” I told the Lord, “Give that to the women’s ministry. They love that stuff!” I actually said that. I did not have any interest in it, but I was compelled as it was the audible voice of the Lord. I have had two “audible voice of the Lord” assignments in forty-plus years of ministry. One was “Do twenty-four/seven prayer with singers and musicians,” and when the Lord said that in 1983, I said “No! I do not want to do that!” But you know He wins every wrestling match. He is state champion wrestler and way beyond.*

*The two times that the Lord has spoken audibly to me in a direction, both times my flesh said, “No.” First, “I do not want to do twenty-four seven prayer with singers and musicians.” People have said to me, “That must be amazing!” and I say, “It did not make any sense to me.” I wanted to see revival, I did not want to have prayer meetings. I did prayer meetings so I could see revival; I endured prayer meetings, I did not like prayer. I said, “I do not want to do prayer meetings. Let somebody else do prayer meetings. Let me go out there and be Reinhart Bonnke.com, you know. Let me go on to the next level.”*

*Then the other one was the Bride of Christ. Both of them were contrary to me. I had no interest, and my point is that I look at that and imagine the Lord saying, “I am going to do this all over the earth” and He is doing it! I remember it was 1988. July 1988 is when that happened and I was given this commission to focus on the Bride of Christ. And, I mean, this was a sad moment for me. I mean, it really was.*

*I had a research team as I was pastoring the church, and they searched the greatest Bible teachers of history. I had a pretty robust research team; they went to all the libraries as we did not have the internet back in those days, but a lot of the Bible school libraries and seminary libraries, looking for everything they could find on the Bride of Christ. In 1988, I want to tell you this: they almost found nothing! I mean the great Bible teachers of history, and they had a paragraph.*

*I said, “Come on, you guys! Someone has to have something!” I did not know what to do, because I could not make sense of those verses myself. And I said, “There is nothing on it!” I mean we searched everywhere. Again some little ministry over here that no one ever talked about or had heard of talked about it a little bit. I thought, “Huh!”*

*And now in the last thirty years or however long since July 1988, I have seen many people called to this. So few were even talking about it, and then in last thirty-five years or whatever I have run into more people who have had divine encounters where the Lord told them to focus on this. I said, “Lord, You are really about this!” I sensed He said, as it were, “Oh, yes, and I am going to really ramp it up.” I mean, not that He used that term, but there has been an escalation. He is stirring up the Body of Christ, and it is not just the women’s prayer group. He is stirring up the Body of Christ.*

*And here John did not say the Spirit and the army of God prayed, “Come, Lord Jesus!” although we are the army of God. He did not say the Spirit and the family, though we are the family. He did not say the Spirit and the Body of Christ. All of these are true parts of our identity in the Lord forever; we are the army, the family, the body, the temple, the priesthood. We are all these things, yet those truths have been established in the Body of Christ universally over the years, but the Bride has not been. Go look in Church history and find the great, prominent Bible teachers of history and see for yourself how little has ever been said about it; just a little here and a little there. It was actually a little bit daunting and discouraging. However, today you are hearing songs and messages and conferences and people are having dreams and encounters and are stirred up, and I am saying “What is going on?” and the Lord would say, “What do you think is going on?” and you know He did not say it just that way but I can imagine Him saying, “I am preparing and stirring My Church up. They will have a new revelation of Me as a Bridegroom, and they will seem themselves entirely differently.”*

*Well, for the men, the guys out there who are like me: I said, “I do not want to be the Bride of Christ! I don’t want to, like, put on a dress and get candles and have my worship time with candles… No! I don’t even like candles! My wife does, but I do not!” I understood that women are sons of God just like men are and they do not have any problem being sons of God, but the boys, they do not want to be the Bride of Christ because they misunderstand. The women do not misunderstand it. As sons of God, it is not a call to be masculine; it is a position of privilege.*

* + 1. As sons of God, we are in the position to experience ***God’s throne*** as heirs of His power
		(Rev. 3:21; cf. Rom. 8:17).

*It is a position of privilege to experience the throne of God. That is what “sons of God” means. It is not male nor female. It is a position of privilege.*

* + 1. As the Bride, we are in the position to experience ***God’s heart*** (emotions or affections).

*As the Bride of Christ, it is not male or female. It is a position of privilege, to experience His heart and His emotions.*

* 1. John prophetically described two activities that the Spirit will emphasize in the Church worldwide.
		1. The Spirit will inspire and anoint the Church ***to pray*** (for Jesus to come in power as Bridegroom)
		2. The Spirit will inspire and anoint the Church ***to proclaim*** the prophetic message (of Jesus as the Bridegroom and the redeemed as His bride).
	2. The Church can pray, “Come, Lord Jesus, as a Bridegroom!” in three different ways:
		1. ***Come NEAR US in intimacy*** (individual breakthrough of our heart in God).
		2. ***Come TO US in revival*** (regional or national breakthrough of the Spirit in revival).
		3. ***Come FOR US in the sky*** (historical breakthrough of the second coming of Jesus).
1. Jesus is returning for a Church filled with God’s glory
	1. Jesus’ commitment is to present the Church to Himself in the end times, filled with glory.

25Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26that He might sanctify and cleanse her… 27that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle…29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church… 31“For this reason a man shall…be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”
32This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:25-32)

*The end-time Church—oh, this is a glorious one! We will just look at this for a minute or two. I am really just giving you some of the headliner passages because the book of Revelation brings them all together. That is the storyline, and that is the point.*

*John wrote the book of Revelation, and here in Ephesians this is Paul, but he touches the same theme when he says in Ephesians 5:25—everybody knows this passage because it is quoted at almost every other wedding that you go to—that Christ loved the Church and that He would sanctify and cleanse her. But here is the verse, verse 27: He is going to present the Church to Himself as a glorious Church. Now, this is not after He raises them from the dead and they are filled with the glory of God in a resurrected body. That is not what Paul is talking about. Jesus is coming back for a “prepared” Bride. It is the greatest transformation miracle in human history, and it* ***is*** *a* ***transformation*** *miracle. She will be glorious!*

*Verse 29 tells how is it going to happen. I want you to catch these two words. He is going to “nourish” and “cherish” the Church. God is going to raise up ministries, whether singing, music, media, preaching, blogs, and a hundred ways to communicate—that are going to reveal the heart of Jesus to “nourish and cherish” His people.*

*I believe in the people of God being faithful servants, diligent in difficulty, and persevering to work hard. I believe in all of that, but cherishing and nourishing is a different dimension of God’s heart. Paul gives us great insight that it is the cherishing heart of God, it is the nourishing of our hearts and the cherishing of us, even in our weakness, that gives us confidence to run to Him instead of running from Him, even though we discover our weakness. Beloved, when I am cherished by Him, I see that it transforms my life. It transformed my life some years ago when I began to see this. I still don’t see it that well, and I still need to grow a lot in it. However, in my early days, when I stumbled, I just wanted to run away and go put myself on spiritual probation. You know, just kind of put myself on “timeout” for a while, and I would think, “I will suffer for a while and then come back and prove how sincere I am.” Like I said last week, a lot of people want to feel really bad when they sin, and so they actually feel good about feeling bad, but that is just called dead religion.*

*However, when the Lord began to show me this cherishing and nourishing, that He wanted to cherish me in my weakness, and I thought, “What? What meanest Thou this? What is that? I have never even heard about this!” Then it gave me confidence to run* ***to*** *Him instead of* ***from*** *Him. That is just a little incremental way in my small, little life and in a small way, but the Lord, the Holy Spirit, is going to reveal the cherishing and nourishing heart of Jesus globally and in power. It is going to cause the Church, in verses 31 and 32, to walk in the mystery of being one heart with Jesus. You can look at that in your own time.*

* + 1. ***Present her to Himself***: The high point of God’s plan is to present His people on the wedding day in His glory and splendor. This is the greatest day in history.
		2. ***Sanctify her***: Jesus separated us to Himself in the highest position of favor and privilege.

*The Lord is going to do these glorious things. He is going to sanctify the Church. That does not just mean get her free from sinning; it includes that but sanctify means to set apart. He is going to set apart His people. Well, He has already done it, but He is going to show them that they are the crown jewel of the kingdom of God as His beloved people. He is going to tell them that He has ordained the highest privilege and favor for His Church. They are going to see themselves not just as set apart, meaning, “Do not do bad things,” but they are set apart to the glory of God, and they will say, “How could a weak and broken person like me be set apart?” It is the revelation of the Bridegroom God. And it is the book of Revelation’s storyline that is going to bring this into focus.*

* + 1. ***Cleanse her***: Jesus will cleanse His Church from all compromise and feelings of shame.

*He will cleanse the Church, the defilement of our hearts, and not just the defilement of compromise because you could be done with compromise but still remain in shame. You can break your agreement with sin but still walk in condemnation because you do not know the heart of God. He has forgiven you, and you are not even doing the things you stumbled in anymore, but you just feel dirty, and you feel intimidated in your walk with God. The Lord would say, “No, I am going to free you from all of that. I am going to cleanse not just the sin but the shame and the rejection out of you as well.”*

*I want to point out one thing as I felt specifically tonight to say this, though you could point this out anytime because it is so prevalent today: one of the issues that God is going to give great victory over is immorality. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure this out. There is an explosion of pornography that is taking place in the earth just in the last ten years. Well, I mean, you could say ten, twenty, thirty, forty years, but in the last ten with technology it is exploding. I have bad news and good news; the bad news is with the new artificial intelligence and the augmented reality and virtual reality and state of the art robotics and all the places to where it is going, the perversion industry/pornography will be going to a level in the next ten or twenty years beyond anything that we can comprehend. That is the bad news.*

*The good news is that God is going to have a Church walking absolutely free from that! I mean weak and broken people who were entrenched in it walking free of it because the great revival is coming from the nations that were entrenched in darkness and they are going to be that cleansed. Let me give you just one view of pornography. It is a direct strike of the enemy against the first commandment purposes of the end-time Church. The enemy is saying, “The Church will not walk in the first commandment! I am going to give a counterfeit passion. I am going to give defilement so they will never walk in the first commandment.” Pornography has a number of purposes in the devil’s strategy, but I believe its primary purpose is an attack against the first commandment and the Bride of Christ. And so many people feel overwhelmed by this, but I have good news for you. He is going to cleanse and liberate His people from that. He is going to give a new revelation of the beauty of Jesus. Again, it is the storyline of the book of Revelation.*

* + - 1. The end-time explosion of pornography is the enemy’s direct attack against the first commandment. He is seeking to seduce the nations with a counterfeit dark passion.

1“I have made a covenant with my eyes; why should I look upon a young woman?”
(Job 31:1)

* + - 1. In the generation the Lord returns, immorality and sexual perversion will reach its fullness (Rev. 9:21; 14:8, 18; 17:1-4; 18:2-4, 9-10; 19:2; 21:8; cf. Dan. 8:23)
		1. ***Nourishes the Church***: The Spirit will help the Church receive more of Jesus’ nourishing.

*He is going to nourish and cherish the Church. Nourish and cherish the Church.*

* + 1. ***Cherishes the Church***: We love God more by “seeing more.” When we see more, then we feel more, leading to being transformed more. I encourage people not to “try harder” but to invest time to “see more.”
		2. ***For this reason***: The drama seen when Adam received Eve (Gen. 2:18-25) is replayed again as Jesus, the second Adam, draws the end-time Church in intimacy with Him as His Bride.
	1. The Spirit is raising up His messengers who will reveal the cherishing heart of Jesus and who will call others to define loving Jesus as God’s highest priority. They will make encountering Jesus’ heart and walking in the first commandment the primary focus of their life and ministry.

*I say this probably every other week so. Those of you who have been here for a while have heard this over and over, but you just need to keep hearing it, and I like to keep saying it anyway. We love God by seeing more about Him. We do not love God by trying harder. We do not grit our teeth and say, “I want to love more! I am trying to love, but it is not happening!” You cannot change your emotions by gritting your teeth. You cannot change your emotions by resolving to change your emotions. You can change your mind, but only God can change your emotions. However, if we will put our effort into seeing, if we put our time and energy to understand Him and who we are to Him, when we see more clearly, then we feel different. You know that a lot of folks are constantly just trying to turn the dark stuff away: “This time I really mean it! I double-triple-promise this time!” And that is not the answer. It is not like we are being captured into darkness and we just say “No, no, no! No! No!” and we are going to overcome it. It does not work that way.*

*The Holy Spirit is going to tap us on the shoulder. He is going to turn our focus, and we are going to see the superior pleasures of who Jesus is and who we are to Him. The superior pleasure of the gospel—this is the term I like to use—is when God reveals God to the human spirit, and it will change your emotions. And when we see differently and we are pursuing superior pleasures, then we can say no to the inferior pleasure of sin. We can turn around and say, “No!” But if all we have is sin to say no to, we will never overcome it. We have to shift our attention to see Him more clearly and to see who we are to Him more clearly.*

*And with that, the superior pleasures of the gospel little by little increase, as it does not increase in one minute, but over the months and years, and you can be pursuing that and you can turn around and say, “No!” to darkness and have far greater power in terms of your lifestyle. However, a lot of folks do not have this vision of Jesus. They do not know that He is coming back for a prepared Bride. They do not think of Him as a Bridegroom. Or, if they do, they say, “Well, I do not really get it. Bridegroom something…”*

*Jesus might say, “No! It is My heart, My cherishing, nourishing heart! It is the revelation of My beauty! I am preparing the end-time Church to be a Bride! And this end-time Church is not going to just be a prepared Bride but a praying Bride partnering with Me!”*

*Beloved, the end-time Church is going to be praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!” She will not just be a prepared Bride. She will be praying, and I call the book of Revelation, “the end-time canonized prayer manual.” The book of Revelation is much more than just a description of the bad things that are going to happen to the Antichrist. When the first trumpet takes place, guess what happens after the first trumpet? The second trumpet, because two always comes after one. What happens after the second trumpet? Three! What happens after the third trumpet? Fourth trumpet! Guess what? The whole Body of Christ will know the next judgment like Moses releasing the ten plagues of Egypt on Pharaoh. The whole Body of Christ will be in unity after the third trumpet and will be praying for the fourth one. Then the whole Body of Christ will be praying for the fifth one, and the greater Moses, who is Jesus, will act with His end-time Bride in partnership with Him which is the most glorious reality. And the enemy does not want this to happen! Again, I call the book of Revelation “the end-time canonized prayer manual” which means it is biblical! It is infallible. We know the fourth trumpet, we know what it is, and we know what comes after the third one. All the saints in Asia, all the saints in Latin America, all the saints on the islands will know that the fourth trumpet is next! It is glorious. And He is actually going to use us in mature prayer under His leadership. He is the greater Moses, but we are going to be in partnership with Him, praying the judgments on the Antichrist Empire in those final days. He is going to have a people, their spirits vibrant in the love of God.*

*And so I call the book of Revelation, “the end-time canonized prayer manual,” the global one. Even if people do not know it when the first trumpet happens, they will just say, “Oops, got the second one!” as it will be really clear. No one will even have to tell them. It will be very obvious.*

*I also call the book of Revelation, “the end-time book of Acts” because it is the book of Acts for the end-time Church, written in advance. The miracles of the book of Acts and the miracles of Exodus are going to be combined. The miracles are actually real; they are not symbolic. They are actually real miracles. It will be the Ten Commandments of Moses far beyond. I mean, it is the most glorious hour!*

* 1. David prophesied the Father’s promise to give Jesus an inheritance consisting of a people whom He fully possesses in love. No one else can give God all “your love” except for you. A unique part of Jesus’ inheritance has been entrusted by the Father to you—it is the love that only you can give.

8I [the Father) will give You [Jesus] the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. (Ps. 2:8)

*David touched this subject. He called it Jesus’ inheritance. John called it the Bride of Christ. David called it His inheritance.*

* + 1. *Mandatory obedience*: God will cause all creation to obey Jesus (Phil. 2:9-11).
		2. *Voluntary love*: God will raise up people who voluntarily choose to love Him.
	1. Moses prophesied Israel would love God with all their heart in the end times (Deut. 30:1-6).

6The Lord…will circumcise your heart…to love the Lord…with all your heart. (Deut. 30:6)

*Moses prophesied that the hearts of the end-time people of God would be circumcised. Meaning, they would be anointed by the Spirit to love God with all of their heart. Moses talked about the end-time people of God moving in the first commandment. John is not the only one. He used the Bride language in the clearest way, but David and Moses are touching the same theme in the end times. Big subjects! I mean you could spend a lot of time on those two, but I just threw them in as little bullet points on the way to my final points here.*

1. Jesus’ Primary Message to the Seven Churches (Rev. 2-3)
	1. Jesus gave a strong correction to three churches—Ephesus, Sardis, Laodicea—for having drifted into spiritual dullness and compromise, and He counseled them how to overcome it. He corrected these three churches for neglecting His primary message to love Him with all their heart.

*Well, I am going to do this really quickly as I just want to point it out to you. Jesus appeared in His resurrected body to John the apostle on the island of Patmos and spoke to the seven churches. However, to three of them He gave a very specific correction with very clear counsel on what they should do. And He was correcting three of them because of their spiritual dullness and because they had neglected the first commandment. That is the essence of what He is talking about.*

*Now remember, from my point of view, and it is historically true as well, Matthew 22 was His last public message. In Matthew 23, He rebukes the leadership. He does not call them to anything. He said, “You are under judgment!” And then He talked to His leaders, then went to the cross, and so His final [public] message was Matthew 22. Now, sixty years later or so as we do not know the exact amount of time, He is still speaking to His Church again. And again for the Lord a thousand years is like a day. It is a minute later to the Lord—sixty years is a minute—He is still in the same conversation.*

* 1. These churches represent the common ways that believers drift into spiritual dullness without being aware of it. We are to apply His counsel here to our personal life and to those to whom we minister.

*So He looks at the church in Ephesus, and these three churches are a picture of the most common ways that the Church stumbles into spiritual dullness and loses their connection with the first commandment. It is a real gift of God that we have this instruction from Jesus for these seven churches, but these three are particularly related to the first commandment and to their being spiritually vibrant in their heart. Let’s call it that. It does not use the language of the first commandment, but it describes the first-commandment reality. I look at these three messages, and they were obviously for the Church all throughout all of Church history for two thousand years, but they have a tremendous application to the end-time Church because they have an application to the Church on the earth when the book of Revelation plan unfolds.*

*He wasn’t just talking to history and then said, “Oh, by the way, I am shifting subjects. Now I am going to the end of the age.” Yes, He was talking to them for their day, but implied is, “Hey, do you get the message? The struggles and the opportunities of the church in that day are going to be magnified at the end of the age when the book of Revelation storyline unfolds globally.”*

* 1. Jesus corrected the church of Ephesus for neglecting to love Him in the way that was initially so prominent in the great Ephesian revival (Acts 19). They had a unique history in revival.

1“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write…2‘I know your works…3you have persevered… and labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. 4…I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5Remember from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works.’” (Rev. 2:1-5)

*He looks at Ephesus. It is the first church He talks to, and again it was just a minute ago when He was talking about the first commandment, sixty years earlier. It is His first message here. He is giving it to John to give it to the Church publicly. He said, “To the angel of the church of Ephesus.” Most of you probably know that Ephesus was the greatest revival in the book of Acts. Acts 19 and 20 was the church of Ephesus, far beyond the city of Jerusalem. The greatest miracles and the greatest number of people impacted.*

*Look what He says to them, verse 2, “O church of Ephesus, I know you work hard. You persevere. You do not quit. You do not get weary. It is tough the work you do.” Verse 4: “But you do not love Me like you used to.” That is the first thing He says. “You do not love Me like you did when the great revival was happening, and I want you to return,” and He gives them three different things for them to do.*

* + 1. They drifted into spiritual dullness by over-activism—by working for Jesus without communing with Him. Over-activism hinders us from cultivating a responsive heart of love. Service is very important, but it can never replace taking time to cultivate love for Jesus.
		2. Jesus called them to respond in three ways to restore their love—to remember, repent, and act.
	1. The church in Sardis had a reputation for its dedication to Jesus, but it had become spiritually dead. They drifted into dullness by having confidence in the reputation related to their past dedication.

1“To…the church in Sardis write, ‘…you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
2Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die…3Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent.’” (Rev. 3:1-3)

*Now He goes to the church of Sardis. He speaks to the church of Sardis, and again these are microcosms of the end-time Church because these are the most common ways the Church stumbles into spiritual dullness. Individuals do as well as churches and whole ministries. He says to the church of Sardis, Revelation 3:1, in effect, “You have a reputation that you are on fire, but the problem is that you are living by your reputation while you are dead now. I mean, you are still born again, but you are not spiritually vibrant. You have lost the fire and you do not even know it!” And He tells them to turn around and gives a little bit on that.*

* + 1. They were dead or asleep in their spiritual life as evidenced by their lack of hunger for His Word and being weighed down with things like fear, shame, despair, compromise, etc.
		2. Jesus gave them five exhortations for restoring their spiritual passion—to be watchful, to strengthen things that remained, to remember, hold fast, and repent.
	1. The church in Laodicea drifted into spiritual dullness by misinterpreting God’s blessing on their finances and circumstances as His approval of their spiritual lifestyle. Jesus gave them five exhortations—to buy from Him gold, to buy garments, to anoint their eyes, be zealous, and repent.

14“To the…Laodiceans write, ‘…17Because you say, “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing”—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—18I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire…and white garments …that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.
19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.’” (Rev. 3:14-19)

*To the church of Laodicea He said, “You have misinterpreted My blessing upon your finances and your circumstances,” because in Laodicea they said, “Hey, we are rich! We do not need anything! I mean we have favor and everything is happening. We have big buildings, lots of money, and people are coming!”*

*He said, for all intents and purposes, “No, you are misinterpreting My blessing. You think that because money is increasing and you have some favor that I am pleased with your spiritual life, but I am not.” A lot of folks are stumbling in this right now. I think the Laodicean church is one of the most prominent descriptions of the Church in this hour. He said, in effect, “You do not know that in your spiritual life you are miserable. You have misinterpreted My blessing on your circumstances with My pleasure in your spiritual life, but it is not. Get gold! Come and go deep with Me! Come and go deep with Me!” and then He breaks that down.*

*For those who are visiting, I have a twelve-part series on the Seven Churches in the book of Revelation. I mean every one of these is a dramatic statement that the Lord was making to His Church back then, but He is really speaking it to a billion in the generation He returns.*

* 1. ***Buy from Me gold***: The gold of a deep relationship with Jesus makes us rich by tenderizing our heart to feel more love from Him and for Him. We *buy gold* or engage in the God-ordained process of acquiring a deep relationship with God. In buying gold, we do not earn it, but invest in a costly way to position ourselves to receive it—by placing our cold hearts before the fire of His presence.

*Verse 18. Beloved, I want to end with this: I want to get gold, and I want to get gold refined by fire. I want to go deep. I do not want to look at my financial or my circumstantial blessings and say, “Wow! I guess this is as good as it gets.”*

*The Lord would say, “No, you are looking at the wrong thing! Yes, accept My blessing, but do not misinterpret it as you being spiritually vibrant. I have more for you. I am coming back for a mature Bride.”*

*Amen and amen! Let’s stand before the Lord.*

*Lord, here we are before You, and, Lord, I ask You even now that You would bring us into that first commandment reality, that we would see the supremacy of the first commandment.*

*That was my point: that in the book of Revelation this is supreme to God. This is what the storyline is about. We have such a destiny ahead of us in the Lord: who we are to Him, how dear we are, and who He is to us. So many believers are stuck in the narrative of their weakness or that their ministry is not very good. They do not have enough friends. Some people were mean to them. The Lord would say, “No! I have a bigger narrative for you. Do not get into that narrative. Get into the narrative of what I have called you to do!”*

*And so, Lord, here we are before You and we ask You to let us see what You see in this book of Revelation storyline.*

*I am sure that this was new to some of you, so you might have to look at it again and again. You may be saying “Wow, you lost me somewhere back at the twenty-two-minute mark.” There is so much, and it is so clear and easy to get once the fog lifts a little bit. You will say, “Oh, this is a great storyline. It is a great storyline!” It the greatest news imaginable–the book of Revelation!”*

*Lord, here we are before You, and we are saying yes to You, and we want gold refined by fire. We want our hearts awakened in the first commandment.*

*I invite anyone in the room who says, “I would like prayer. I feel stuck. Though I am in all the way and I want to go for God, but my heart feels stuck,” to come up for prayer.*

*I think a lot of people feel that way, and I mean many, many, many in the Body of Christ. The Lord would say, “I have an answer. I have a future for you. Do not buy into that narrative. That is not your destiny.”*

*And you are saying, “I want my heart revitalized in a new way.” I invite you to come up here if you would like prayer. We just want to sing over you for a little while as you wait in the Lord’s presence.*

*Lord, we love this storyline! Here we are, Holy Spirit. Lord, we wait before Your presence.*