

God's Plan in the Book of Revelation

God's Plan in Scripture

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This morning I have privilege of concluding our series on God's Plan in Scripture. For the past ten weeks we've been working through large sections of the Bible in order to understand the plotline and see how all the pieces fit together. And we've argued that on the one hand, the plotline of the Bible can be summarized by one word and what's that word? Jesus. And here's a little cool slide Arvid put together. Can you see all the books of the Bible written in the word "Jesus"; can you see all that? Isn't that cool. He's kind of slick with that kind of stuff, isn't he?

In one sense, we can talk about the Bible in one word and that is the word "Jesus." However, we've also argued that if we have a little bit more time, a little bit longer to discuss the Scriptures, we can discuss it in three words, again, using all of the books of the Bible to highlight three words: creation, fall and redemption. And if we have even more time, we can unpack this great storyline found in the Scriptures a bit more by explaining and, to all those single people, here is the correct answer to, "Well, you want me to go on a date with you? Explain the plotline of the Bible first and then I would happy to." Here it is: that God created human beings in his image without sin for the purpose of being his representatives on the earth and Adam and Eve chose to disregard the counsel of God and obey their own selfish desires and as a result, sin and death entered the world and thus, even today, we live in a fallen world.

But praise God that was not the end of the story. God, instead, chose a man named Abraham and promised him land, descendants and blessing. He made a nation from the children of Abraham called Israel. He made promises to Israel and established a covenant with them and based the covenant on the Ten Commandments as the cornerstone of the law. And yet, time and time again, the people rejected God. They broke his covenants. Initially, they lived with God as their King; with God's presence in the Tabernacle. But, later, they wanted to be just like all the other nations, "Give us a king so that we can be just like them." So God gave them exactly what they asked for.

Despite that rejection, God continued to make promises to his people. He told David that God would give him a descendant that would rule on his throne forever. Then, as we moved into the prophetic literature, God sent messenger after messenger after messenger to tell the people to repent and yet, they continued to rebel. So, you finish reading your

Old Testament and you realize that God really is a gracious, compassionate, slow to anger kind of God who is quick to forgive and slow to judge.

Despite the nation's continued rebellion and rejection, God continues to make promises, renew covenants and send messengers. In fact, God promised to Noah that he would never destroy the earth with a flood again. God promised Abraham land, seed and blessing. God promised David that there would be a descendant who sits on his throne forever. God promised the nation that he would send a Messiah, a Deliverer who would pay the ultimate price for sin. What an unbelievably gracious God we see throughout the Old Testament.

We also see that man is incredibly rebellious; that every one of God's moves toward the nation or toward people is met with people moving away from him. God moves toward, they move away. The complete opposite of the song that Liz was just singing a moment ago of pursuing. They were running.

But when one opens the pages of the New Testament, something happens, that is, Jesus who is like awesome, comes on the scene. He is the King. He is the Suffering Servant. He is legit, as Luke explains. And he's the only path to eternal life. In other words, Jesus is fulfilling those promises. And then Luke picks up his pen yet again and writes about the post-resurrection ministry of this King, Servant, Deliverer. And it starts off with a bang. A small band of followers of Jesus reaches pandemic proportions. By the time the Book of Acts is over, we have revival in the nation as many repent and believe in Jesus as the Messiah. And then we have God raising up men like Paul and Barnabus, Timothy, Titus and Silvanus who take the message of the resurrected Jesus to the outermost parts of the earth. When Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not stand against it," the Book of Acts proves that to be the case.

But the good news was not over. The good and gracious God doesn't leave us hanging. He doesn't just start the church, doesn't just bring redemption, instead he also provides us instruction so that we can understand how to live in the church. Pastor Trey helped us to think about all the epistles that help us to just that. Now today, I get to conclude with the privilege of helping us think about the end of the story. That is, what is God's plan in Revelation? I'm going to give it to you in one word. Are you ready for this? Are you ready for the word? Victory. Now you say it. Say it like you mean it.

That's right, it's about victory. So, please turn in your Bibles to Revelation 1. That is on page 190 of the back section of the Bible in the chair in front of you. As you're getting there, here are a couple of facts regarding the Book of Revelation. First of all, it was the last book of the Bible written, about 95-96 AD by the Apostle John while he was exiled on the island of Patmos. It was written at a time when being a Christian put you at odds with the Roman emperor. Domitian was his name and he required his subjects to call him "Lord," and "god." Rather troublesome if you're a Christian. Revelation also has a lot of symbolism, we're going to see that. Some of that symbolism is actually explained while other of it is not.

Most importantly, we need to listen carefully to how the Book of Revelation related to the people who received it and how it relates to us and not focus exclusively on what is to come but to also learn what is the here and the now. There is, of course, a lot of debate on Revelation. There are myriads of ways in which people have read it before. So, I want to encourage you to listen, to be a Berean, to be a student of the Word especially this morning when we're going to cover a lot of material. This sermon represents my understanding of the book.

I'd like to begin reading in chapter 1 beginning in verse 4,

“John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood - and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father - to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’”

“I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, ‘Write in a book what you see, 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.’ Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. As for the mystery of the seven stars which 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.’”

Now, here's what I'd like us to do: with my time remaining, I want to walk through the Book of Revelation in three parts. Here's the first one: to understand a basic outline of the Book of Revelation and I'm going to argue that it is a message from beginning to end of victory. Outlines are, of course, rarely perfect. The biblical authors did not include their working outline in their books but sometimes, they tell us something about how they organized their material.

In Revelation 1:19, which I just read, notice where it says, "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things." There appears to be a three-part division to the Book of Revelation which roughly corresponds to this chart. "The things which you have seen" is the vision of the risen Christ; from verses 9 all the way to verse 20; a picture of who the risen Jesus is. "The things which are" are the letters to the seven churches which we'll get to in just a moment. 4-22 are the things which will take place after these things; a discussion of the future things.

What I'm arguing here is in this first chapter, what we see is a picture of the risen Christ. We saw the throne and we read about his identity: the one who gave his life; the one who rose again; the one who made us priests in his kingdom; the one who is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet explaining the beginning and the end. And this description, especially in verses 12-16, is one of just sheer awesomeness. There is another reminder that not only is Jesus alive, not only is he awesome but he is also victorious. He is not cowering in the corner. He is ruling the world. He is active in building his church. He is active in the lives of people.

So, not only does John give us this picture of the risen Christ, but then he's also in chapters 2 and 3, recognizing that God is actively working in the churches at the time. This is written in the mid-90s. These seven churches existed at that time. And God had a message for them. Sixty years had transpired since the death of Jesus and these churches had been around for about 40-50 years at this point. And, you know, 40-50 years is long enough to get some things right and to get some things wrong. And there are some fantastic lessons about victory given to these churches that we need to listen to and learn from today. We're going to consider that in just a minute.

If we keep focusing on the outline, I'd like you to turn to Revelation 4 and I'm going to read verse 1. Notice the wording, "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you,'" and notice this phrase, "what must take place after these things." That is a duplication of the phrase in chapter 1:19 which gives us very good reason to believe that "the things which are" are Revelation chapters 2 and 3 and "the things which will take place after these things" represent chapters 4 all the way to 22. We'll talk about that more in a minute.

Here's what we have: in the first three chapters God is giving his people a vision of the risen Christ and continued instruction on how to live in the church and then he gives an

eternal perspective. We have the privilege of knowing how the rest of the story is going to unfold. Praise God for both of those things. And as we read, we're going to see victory, victory, victory.

With that in mind, let's now look at the next part, that is, Revelation chapters 2 and 3. That is repentance and passionate commitment is the pathway to victory. As we read the letters to the seven churches we see that the letters have some very common elements. They first of all, begin with a greeting. Then there is a description of the risen Christ in every single letter. Notice just for example, chapter 2 beginning in verse 1. Here's the letter to the church at Ephesus, "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write," there's the greeting, "The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this." That is a picture of the risen Christ that was given earlier.

Notice verse 12 of chapter 1, "And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man." Then, verse 16, "In His right hand He held seven stars." In other words, what John did is pick out a description of the risen Christ and he does that to every single one of the churches showing that each church is established and ruled by this risen Christ.

Then there is praise for the things that are good, except for Laodicea which apparently gets no commendation. Then there is criticism for the things that are sinful, except Smyrna and Philadelphia who receive no condemnation. Then there is a warning, a call to respond and a promise.

I've given you another chart. This is like chart day. So, if you're wondering, "Man, today was chart day," here's where it is. I thought this would be helpful for us to think through what are the most important lessons that we could glean reading chapters 2 and 3? What are the messages to those seven churches? And how do those messages relate to the here-and-now? The first column is the church. The second column is a description of the risen Christ. In other words, every single description tied to chapters 2 and 3 goes back to chapter 1 verses 9-20 which describe the risen Christ. Then there is a section to describe the things that were good and everyone except Laodicea had something in that. Then there was a description of things that were not good and every one except for Smyrna and Philadelphia also had some of that. And then there is a response, a call to response; here is what you as a church must do.

There are a whole host of letters and messages and important applications from each one of these but just for the sake of time, I'm going to boil down these letters to three lessons for us in the church today. Here's the first one: in each case the church is called to repentance and/or passionate commitment. Every single one, every church is given the same basic call to response. Those with sin in the camp needed to repent and everyone needed to have a passionate commitment for Jesus. That is what is so relevant about having a description of the risen Savior at the beginning of each of the letters. The church must remember to put priorities where priorities belong. The risen Christ, the one who

died and now lives, the one with the two-edged sword, the one who is holy and true and faithful, the beginning and the end, deserves our wholehearted allegiance.

That is why we need to forsake our sin through repentance. And I get it, repentance is not easy. I don't like to repent deeply either, but in God's economy, victory comes through the pathway of humility. Pride is the pathway to destruction and at some point, people who are proud, God will humiliate. He forces them to be humble. He says, "Here is the pathway. Either choose to be humble yourself or I will humiliate you because I will not share my glory with another. What God wants us to do is to acknowledge our sin and deeply, meaningfully repent after the call to response, rather than after humiliation. Repent now. Humble yourselves now. The good news is that Jesus died, is alive and victorious and so he's able to forgive your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness, but please take the sin seriously.

Pastor Viars mentioned there's a lot happening this fall. Our new counseling ministry over at Faith West is going to begin two weeks from tomorrow. Move-in for the residents is Saturday. We have a preschool opening in the very near future. School is getting ready to start next week. Two weeks from today is the first public launch of the worship services at Faith West. FCI and Wednesday night Kids of Faith begin in just a couple of weeks. You know, we just can't have sin in the camp. If this is all going to happen we just have to get sin out of the camp.

We may need to have a time of confession for our hearts to be humbled before the Lord and we have some great patterns to follow. David in Psalm 51; Daniel in Daniel 9. We need to have a time of mourning, a time of repentance, a time of confession before God, that we're really not all as great as we might like to think of ourselves to be.

After we have that time of confession, after we have that time of mourning, after we have that time of deep repentance, meaningful repentance, then the message to the churches is also that we need to passionately pursue Christ. That is, it's time to get off our knees and to renew our passionate pursuit of Christ. We resolve to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. We resolve to serve with clean hands and a pure heart. We resolve to give our focus and attention to the things of the Lord. And, you know, it's relatively easy to say it but doing it requires very thoughtful consideration. We have to remind ourselves on a moment-by-moment basis of Scripture. We have to meditate on it so that each moment of our day is in one sense tied to the question, what am I doing for Jesus in this moment?

One lesson is that we have to repent of our sin and then passionately pursue Christ, not wallow in our sorrow. We repent, we confess, we mourn over our sin and then when we're done, we get up and passionately pursue Christ. A second lesson is that it's possible to be doing things for God without developing a relationship with God. I want to draw your attention to a couple of the letters to the churches. Of course, it's possible that a person can and a church can do both, they can do good things and they can develop their relationship with God. That's one of the reasons, apparently, that the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia do not have anything under the "not good" section. God was, in

essence, saying to them, “You’re doing great. Keep it up. Continue to passionately pursue Christ just as you are doing right now.”

On the other hand, apparently, there were some other churches that hadn’t quite gotten that down yet. I’d like you to notice, for example, the letters to Ephesus and Sardis. In Ephesus 2:2, it says, “I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.” Great! Good news there, right. Verse 4, “But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.” Apparently, it was possible to be doing a lot of things for God without developing a relationship with God.

The same is true in chapter 3:1. In this case, it’s the letter to the church of Sardis. After the description of the wonderful Christ, it says this in verse 1, “I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.” In other words, “Yeah, I know you’re doing stuff. Great! Keep doing stuff. But remember this, right now, here’s what’s happening, you’re doing it without building your relationship with the risen Savior.” Apparently, the people in these two churches, the churches in Ephesus and Sardis, had not been able to bring those two things together; had not been able to bring together a working for Christ and a passionate love for Christ. Instead, had simply been doing this: apparently, God wanted to caution all of us about thinking that we’re something or being overly concerned with our reputation or being excited about all the things that we’re doing for God as if he is lucky to have us. In each case, he called them to repent because all of those things should be directed to the praise and glory of the risen Jesus.

How does that apply to us? Can I encourage you that your service is not divorced from a passionate love for Christ. So, if you’re serving in Children’s Ministry, serve with a passion, asking the Lord to give you a greater love for Christ and his Word than you’ve ever had before. If you’re serving in ABF as a team leader, you have a huge role in that ABF and if you don’t fulfill it, your class will suffer. But, can I ask you to do that with the motivation that you love your risen Savior? That that’s just not a thing that you do, it’s not just a checklist, it’s not just something on the calendar, it’s something that is motivated out of a love for Christ, that the two of those things go hand-in-hand.

I understand it’s easy to want just a little bit of the glory, just a little bit. You don’t even have to want all of it, just a little. “God, I’ll give you like 90% of it but can I be recognized for the 10% that I did right? Can I just get a little bit of the glory?” And the answer should be, “No, no, no, no, and no.” As Pastor Viars prayed, we need, in the process of sanctification, to give all the glory to God. All of it because we love him and we want his name lifted high. We want people looking at Christ, not looking at us. We want people seeing the message of the cross, not how cool of a job we did at presenting it. And that’s the beauty of this that, apparently, in these two churches of Smyrna and

Philadelphia, they figured out how to do both; they figured out how to passionately work hard for Christ and at the same time work at loving Christ. That's a good message for us.

There's so much more but let me just make one more observation here. That is: we're to test every truth claim against the truth in Scripture. The letters to the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira contain the same criticism and the criticism is they accepted things as true that were actually false. You know, our world encourages us to believe things that are simply not true too. Some believers spend hours in front of a tv or hours watching movies and then do not run the claims made by those shows through the grate of Scripture.

We see it every Monday. There are believers coming in for help and, of course, we're delighted to do that but they make all sorts of statements that are simply not true. Not only about their own circumstances, but even how they talk about God is at times full of lies. Here's one example: some are convinced that God is perfectly okay with whatever they think is right because God wants them to be happy. Where did they get that? That God exists to be their genie. Where did they get that? Where do they understand that? Where do they come to the conclusion that they can do whatever they want and God is just going to be okay with that because God is really interested in their happiness? It's a lie that sometimes people believe.

It has a shade of truth to it. That is, does God want us to be happy, yes or no? Yes, he wants us to be happy. Where? In him. He wants us to be happy in him. He wants us to love him, to worship him, to enjoy him. He wants us to be happy in him not just whatever we feel like doing.

The letters to these churches remind us that God cares about the truth and he wants his children saturated with the truth. I think I saw Paul Tripp do this illustration one time and I think it's so helpful. I'm not going to do it but if I shook this cup, water would spill, right? And why would water spill? Not because I shook it but because water was in it. If juice were in it, juice would have spilled. If Coke were in it, Coke would have spilled. But water spilled because water was in it. So one of the questions that we have to ask ourselves is, are our lives so saturated with the truth of the Word that when it's shaken the Word of God comes out.

All of us know that we have been encouraging you to read the whole Bible every week, we got it. Every week, somebody gets up here and says, "We want you to read, like, this tomorrow. Email me and let me know you're finished." I get it. We all get it. And we're not really making apologies for that for this reason: imagine how much better our thinking would be if our time was spent saturated in the Word.

Now, you're thinking, "Man alive, Rob, we're, like, through three chapters. There's 22." Well, I hope you had no plans for lunch, right? We'll pick up the pace and talk about this third point. That is: rejoice in and enjoy the victory of the risen Savior. Earlier I argued that chapters 4-22 were a unit. They, accordingly 1:19, discuss the things that will be after these things speaking to the letters to the churches. These two chapters represent

things that are futuristic. And I've given you yet another chart. Let me give you the genesis behind this: my goal is that you could rip this out, stick it in your Bible and the next time you were reading Revelation, you could use this as a guide to read it, to think about it, to study it, to imagine it and to decide whether or not it's actually true.

Let's put the chart back up. There is something really important that happens in chapters 4 and 5. It seems to break the sequence but what I like to argue is that John gets a vision of heaven where the risen Christ is praised for being the Creator and being the Redeemer for a very specific purpose and that is, who else can open the scroll? Who is qualified to bring judgment on the world? Who is worthy to begin such a process? Who has the personal holiness to do that task with integrity? In fact, in Revelation 5:3-5, John confesses that there's no one in the world who is able to do this and he mourns, he weeps over the fact that no one is qualified to stand to do this until the Lamb comes, until the Lion of Judah comes, until the Root of David comes, until the one who has conquered sin and death comes, until the one who has faced temptation and did not give in comes. "And they sang a new song." Why did they do that? To draw us, yet again, to the risen Savior. Why is it that chapters 4 and 5 are so important? They are a worship scene in heaven to the risen Savior.

Not only is Jesus alive, not only is Jesus awesome but he's also victorious. That would be a good milkshake question, by the way. What was the key point of the sermon? Not only is Jesus alive, not only is Jesus awesome but he's also victorious. From chapter 6 all the way to 19, we find the events of the tribulation and the level of destruction is scary. When God brings about his wrath, no one can stand. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess and they will either do so in reverence for the Savior who died on the cross for their sin or they will cower in fear before the Great and Powerful Victor. In chapter 20, Satan and all of his host are thrown into the Lake of Fire. Jesus has final victory.

Let me draw out a few conclusions out of this section that I think should be helpful to us. Number one: we should focus on the victory in Christ because it eases the suffering of the present day. When we read Revelation 21 and 22, the new heaven and the new earth, we say, "Lord, can we please have it now?" When things are going great, we say that but we especially say it when there are significant challenges. When we're diagnosed with cancer or some other serious disease, it's easy for us to think about, "Well, what about Revelation 21 and 22?" When we face hardships because people we love are suffering, it's easy to do that. When life is just plain hard, it's easy to do that. And, you know, one of the reasons that God gave us the end of the story was to help us focus on eternity and the victory of the risen Savior in the here-and-now. He wanted us to know the end of the story so that we can rejoice.

So, if you're suffering today, could I encourage you to read in your devotions Revelation 21 and 22? Can I encourage you to take every thought captive about the place of your suffering and put it in the context of the victory of the risen Savior? And if you're rejoicing today, can I help you to remember that this is not as good as it gets?

You know, this last week, I was in Glacier National Park with our family and we climbed up one of the mountains. We said, “You know, there’s a mountain, we’ve got to scale it.” That’s the bottom line, mountains are for climbing, right? Don’t just look at them from the bottom, you’ve got to get to the top. So we huff our way up, about 8,200 feet and we could just see for miles. You look down and you think, “You know, if I fell, I’m going to fall 4,000 feet before I hit the ground. It’s going to be a fun ride but it’s going to be a rough landing.” There were a couple of other mountains that we saw and they were higher and I was just drawn to them. I was like, “You know, if the view from 8,200 feet was like this, what would the view be like at 9,100 feet. That would be even cooler. Let’s get up there. Let’s scale this thing.” Here’s the point of that: I’m sure it would be but, you know, when we get to heaven, whether we ever got to scale the highest mountain or not, we’ll get to see it with heavenly eyes; we’ll get to see it with perfection; we’ll get to see it as it really is, not as the sin cursed taint that it has on it even today. Even what we experience today is not the best there is.

Second, we should be motivated to share our faith because intense judgment is on the way. You know, one of the things I hope that motivates you especially now that we have two additional services that are beginning is that we have seats. We have nothing but seats. Look around, we’ve got seats, don’t we? And then you add two more services. We’ve got seats everywhere and we want them filled, don’t we? Every single one of them. Filled. So that way, as many people can hear the message of Christ as possible because here’s the reality if God should decide to begin the tribulation soon, then listen to what happens to those who will experience it: it’s utter horror. Horror. And if we think, “If they experience a part of it then they’ll repent.” Here’s the message of Revelation: they are not repenting. “Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, ‘It is done.’ And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men,” and here’s what men did, “and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.”

Here’s the point: people curse God in the best of times and they curse God in the worst of times too which is why it is so important today to share the Gospel. In the Gospels themselves, Jesus did miracles and did people repent? No. They said, “Show us a sign. Give us something else. We want to see something else.” And in the Book of Revelation here is what people do, “God, we hate you for sending that.” There is a need today to reach as many people for Christ as possible.

We should rejoice over the victorious future that awaits. If I had time, I’d read through Revelation 22, we’re back in Eden-like conditions, where everything has been made right, there is no more death, dying, pain or suffering. You don’t need lightbulbs, grocery stores or gas stations or even Bible lessons. That’s a reason for rejoicing.

Lastly, we should steward the opportunities until the Lord comes. Notice how the book ends, “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.”

Tonight we have the privilege of gathering as a church family to hear about the initiatives that our whole church family has worked on. We’re going to see the strategic plan, not only for our current property, the 90 acres contiguous to what we have, the 100 acres of Bethany Farms and it could very well be that the meeting tonight would be one of those that you will remember 15 years from now should the Lord tarry. Fifteen years from tonight, you would think, “You know what? I was there. I was there when we talked about that.” If God is going to give us Faith West, if he is going to give us as a group a strategy for doing something for Christ, then we have to steward that well.

After all, Jesus is not only alive, he’s not only awesome, he’s also victorious.