

Vision of the Son of Man (Part 1)

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[0:00] Revelation chapter 1. Let's read the whole chapter.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written, for the time is near. 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 kings on earth. To him who loves us and who has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father.

To him be glory and 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 tribes of the earth will wail on account of him.

[1:21] Even so, 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 partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus was on the island called Patmos, on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands, one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars. From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

[2:46] But he laid his right hand on me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades.

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

So, in Sunday school classes for our children, a lot of times we'll give them coloring pages, you know? And there are things like Balaam and his donkey, or there are things like Jesus and the woman at the well.

Things that are really easy to illustrate for our kids to picture. We don't ever give them coloring pages of this Revelation chapter 1, at least not that I know of, because it's terrifying, and it's awesome, and it's really hard, I imagine, as we see for John to, and though he's inspired by the Holy Spirit, right?

And these are God's words to put into human language what he is seeing with his eyes. I was just interested to see if some have tried to illustrate what John describes here, and so I Google imaged it, and there's all kinds of crazy things.

[4:28] A lot of pictures with Jesus with this big sword coming out of his mouth and eyes of fire, and I mean, that's certainly what the text describes, but just terrifying images.

But the important thing to keep in mind here is that each of these descriptions of Christ that are given tell us something very important about him and about his work in his church.

So before we continue on to the Lord's individual letters to the churches of Asia Minor, we need to give close attention to what John saw in his vision of the glorified Christ.

Though John is the human author of Revelation, those words, or these words, aren't his. These are truly God's words, and so these pictures which were chosen were chosen specifically by the Lord because they contain a message that he wants us to know about.

These aren't meaningless details that we should skip over, as I mentioned before, which we do when we read Revelation. We read that and think, well, that sounds really weird.

[5:43] Okay, letter one to Ephesus. What's going on here? But the Lord chose to manifest his glory in this way, in a very intentional way, and that was done so to communicate to us, his church, a very important message about who he is and his relationship to his church.

So again, if you weren't here last time or if you were, just to give you a little bit of context, John the Apostle is living in exile at the time of this writing on the prison island of Patmos.

His crime is preaching the gospel. He's about 90 years old, or in his 90s as he is writing this letter.

He is the last living apostle on the earth. There has been and there continue to be at this point in his life intense persecution of the church.

Many churches are beginning to defect from the truth. They are starting to abandon the faithful teaching that John and the other apostles delivered to them.

[6:50] And so at this point in his life, the future of the church no doubt seemed to bleak. In the midst of all of this that's going on, the glorified Christ appears to him with a very important message, but he first directs his attention to the churches of Asia Minor.

So all of the images of John's vision carry powerful doctrinal implications for the church's relationship with its Savior.

In these verses, we receive comprehensive insight into what the Lord is doing, doing, present tense, in his church. This isn't just about what the Lord was doing in the congregation of the seven churches of Asia, but what the Lord is doing right now, today, in his church.

More specifically, I think we can look at these verses and receive insight into how the Lord interacts with our church, with Highland Park Baptist Church.

And so we need to pay attention to what is being described here by the apostle. So first of all, we need to look at the setting of the vision, verses 10 through 11.

[8:07] John says that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. This phrase means that John was experiencing something that was not normal to human experience, everyday human experience.

This was a supernatural experience that he was having. Through the Holy Spirit, John was empowered to experience something outside his senses and outside of the physical realm.

There's no indication that he was sleeping or that he was dreaming from what we have here. The impression is that he is wide awake, but while he is awake, he is receiving this vision that he cannot explain, that cannot be explained by any phenomena of the created world.

He is not hallucinating. He didn't have something bad to eat, you know, that's causing him to have weird visions or think strange things.

Again, he is not sleeping. He is not in some kind of a coma. This is very real what is happening.

This is a very real experience. And he is lucid while he is having it.

[9:15] He is in his right mind. He is coherent as he experiences everything that takes place in this letter. So, however it happened, John was transported by the Spirit beyond the limits of human understanding to a spiritual plane of existence where he was able to communicate directly with God.

This is not the first instance where something like this is recorded in Scripture. Though we must keep in mind that these instances are very rare experiences, even in the Bible.

And so I kind of like an unassisted triple play in baseball. One player making all three outs. It rarely ever happens. Or I also put, or like OU winning a national championship, which is also very rare experience.

Though I should, maybe I, and my KU Jayhawks are about to experience the same thing. Okay. So, I'm not hearing any of the grumblings and stuff. Okay.

So, a very rare experience, nonetheless. But it happens. So, for example, let's look at Isaiah 6, 1 through 5, as Pastor Dan preached a couple weeks ago.

[10:32] If you want to turn to the Bible there, go ahead. Isaiah 6, 1 through 5. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings. With two, they covered his face. With two, he covered his feet. With two, he flew. And one called, and another said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And that does not mean that we should add smoke machines to our worship experience, right?

And I said, Woe is me, for I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Another example. Ezekiel, chapter 2, 2. And he said to me, Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you. And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

[11:34] Acts 10, 9 through 16. So these experiences aren't limited to the Old Testament. The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

And he became hungry and wanted something to eat. But while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance. And he saw the heavens open and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.

Acts 22, 17 through 21. When I, Paul, had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.

Again, in 2 Corinthians 12, verses 2 through 4, Paul wrote about another experience he had, where there he says, I know a man, and he's speaking of himself, in Christ, who 14 years ago was caught up to the third heaven.

Whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise. Whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows.

[12:43] And he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. So like Paul, we can't say for certain how this happened for John.

What we know is that the Lord supernaturally opened John's awareness to the divine realm in order to communicate clearly and vividly with him and through him then to us.

So, please, don't try to do this at home. Okay? Don't go home and think, I'm going to be one of those rare ones. Lord, let's go. Third heaven, here I come. Please don't do that.

We have the complete revelation of God right here, right here before us. So, don't treat that as an insignificant thing. It certainly is not.

We have the words of God recorded in Scripture. We have all the revelation. We have all the instruction that we will ever need. John says that he received the vision on the Lord's Day.

[13:43] This term was commonly used in the first century by Christians to refer to the first day of the week, which is Sunday. Sunday, in that to memorialize the day that the Lord rose from the grave.

So, John is telling us, very simply here, that it was Sunday on Patmos when he saw Christ in his glory and received this revelation from him.

Then the rest of verse 10 and 11, he says, Throughout the book of Revelation, a loud sound or voice precedes a solemn announcement and expression of heavenly praise.

For example, Revelation 8, 13. Then I looked and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, saying, Whoa, whoa, whoa to those who dwell on the earth at the blast of the other trumpets with the three angels are about to blow.

Again, Revelation 14, 2. And I heard a loud voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.

[15:08] So, John says this sound was like a trumpet, but not a trumpet. Trumpets have a very distinct sound, don't they? It's a piercing and a penetrating sound, kind of like a bugle.

And you guys know, back in historically, bugles were used during battles because of that clear, distinctive noise that they made.

And they were able to communicate in that noise, in the confusion of battle, a message to the soldiers. And so John likened that sound that he hears to a trumpet.

It's the sound of our Lord's voice. And he is drawing the apostles' attention to himself and drowning out all the other noises that are around him at that time.

And as I mentioned last time, it's possible that John was confused about the sequence of events that resulted in his exile on the island of Patmos. He may have wondered why all the other apostles had died.

[16:11] Imagine, imagine you're the last one left, and now you're a very old man, and you're living in exile, and you will be there until you die. So I don't think it's stretching too much to say that he probably wrestled daily.

In fact, I think he probably certainly wrestled daily with the concerns that he had for the church, and the doubts that he had maybe of the church's future. In verse 11, Jesus gives him an answer.

That though he was old, though he was in exile, he was not done using John. So matter what your age is in the church, as long as you have breath, you have a reason for being here that the Lord wants you to fulfill.

And so he realizes here that John, from Jesus, he realizes he has one last book to write. And he receives the privilege of looking ahead to the end of times as we know it, to the final victory of Jesus Christ over sin and the future glorification of those who are in his church.

Though he was doomed to spend the rest of his days in exile on a giant rock, the apostle now would be lifted up through this prophetic vision and ascend into the very throne room of God, of the ancient of days.

[17:39] John MacArthur says of this that he was shut out from the world, and now he traverses the heavens. The Lord tells him to write what he sees, and what he sees is incredible.

Verses 12 and 13, John sees the Lord in his church. John sees the Lord in his church. Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands, one like a son of man.

Back in my seminary at Midwestern, we have a glass case that's filled with lamps back from this time period.

And there's a lot of them. There's probably 50 or more, and one of our Old Testament teachers is an archaeologist as well, so he would go to Jerusalem quite often, and he would do these digs, and he would bring these things back.

And so I assume that though they're rare and certainly valuable, that because they're not in a museum and they're in our school, and they're just in a glass case so people don't touch them, but they're not taking up a prominent location in the library even.

[18:56] So that, I think, speaks to the fact that people use these things quite often, that there's a lot of them when you go over there and they do these digs, they find them a lot because they were used a lot.

People use these lamps. They're real little, very small, at least the ones that we had in our school, and they're made of clay or of stone. And they would fill them with oil, and they had a floating wick on top, which produced the light.

In order to illuminate the room then, obviously, you would have to put the lamp on top of a stand so that it would be in that elevated position, able to give light to the room.

So John's first century readers would understand that imagery. They would be very familiar with lamps and lampstands. However, these lampstands were special.

They would be unlike any of the lampstands that first century readers would have been accustomed to, certainly not anything that they probably would have owned themselves because these lampstands were made of pure gold.

[19:59] And that indicates that they were very precious and they were very special and that these lampstands had tremendous value. Jesus explains the significance of these lampstands, these items, in verse 20.

As we read, they symbolize the seven churches. So why would he use such imagery of lampstands to symbolize his church?

Matthew 5, 14 through 16 comes to mind, right? Jesus says, You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Philippians 2, 15. The Apostle Paul says that you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation among whom you shine as lights in the world.

So just as a lampstand was used to illuminate a room, God has called his church to be lights that illuminate the world.

[21 : 24] The fact that the lampstands are made of gold communicates just how valuable and just how precious the church is to God. In fact, there is nothing more valuable on earth, more valuable to God, and nothing on this earth was purchased at such a high price as the church of Jesus Christ, which was purchased by the blood that he shed for us.

So the church is a very special and valuable thing. The imagery here depicts the seven churches of Asia Minor, but I don't think that it was meant to be limited just to those seven churches.

Because in Scripture we know also the number seven is often used to signify completeness. So while these specific churches will receive specific messages from God, his words are meant, I believe, for his entire church.

These lampstands depict both these specific churches and the church throughout the history, including this present moment. As we'll see, though, there is 2,000 years, 2,000 years of separation between us and between those seven churches back then.

The issues that they had, the things that they struggled with, the failures that they experienced, still are issues and struggles and failures that the church today encounters.

[22 : 51] And just as Jesus' message to them is to repent, so too we are called to repent as well so that our lampstand is not removed from its place.

Another really important detail here that would be tragic to miss is Christ's position in regards to the lampstands, which again represent his churches.

Notice that he's not on the outside looking in, right? He's not on the outside of these lampstands just kind of wondering what's going on there. Nor is he looking from up above down on his churches as if, you know, well, I hope that they get it right.

Nor is he down below looking up as if, well, I really need my church, I don't really have much influence on it or anything like that. No, he is right in the midst of his church.

This is a reminder that Christ is not hidden from his church, but seeks to be in constant communion with his church, and that, to me, is a great source of encouragement, and I hope it is for you as well.

[24 : 13] That we don't serve some kind of distant deity who is uncaring about what happens in his church and has left it for us to manage on our own.

Thank God he hasn't. That he's not unattached, that he's not indifferent to our lives or to our worship. Nor do we serve an ancient martyr, a good moral teacher, whose life may have ended, but his teachings endure.

No, we see here that our Lord is risen. Our Lord lives. Our Lord lives in the midst of his church today, and subsequent details of John's vision give us insight into exactly what Christ is doing in the midst of his church.

So in verse 13, as we continue on there, we see that John sees the Lord as interceding high priest. He sees the Lord as interceding high priest.

And he begins to describe him. He said that he was clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. So such robes, as John describes here, they were worn by royalty.

[25 : 26] They were also worn by prophets. But the word translated robe was used most frequently. In fact, six of its seven occurrences in the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament, to describe the robe that was worn by the high priest.

While Christ is presented in Scripture as prophet and as king, the robe here depicts Christ and his role as the great high priest of his people.

That he had a golden sash around his chest reinforces that interpretation since the high priest in the Old Testament also wore a sash. Exodus 28, 4. These are the garments that they shall make, a breast piece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash.

They shall make holy garments for Aaron, your brother and his sons to serve me as priests. Now the book of Hebrews says much about Christ's role as our high priest.

Hebrews 2, 17 through 18. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for

the sins of the people.

[26:42] For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to make those who are being tempted. He is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 7, 23 through 25 continues to talk about his high priestly work.

The former priests were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing in office. But he, speaking of Christ, holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 9, 11 through 12.

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, he entered once and for all into the holy place, not by the means of the blood of goats and calves, but by the means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

So as our high priest, Christ once offered the perfect and complete sacrifice for our sins and permanently now intercedes for us.

[28:00] Romans 8, 33 through 34. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died.

More than that, who was raised? Who is at the right hand of the Father? Who indeed is interceding for us? Our Lord sympathizes with us.

He intercedes on our behalf to the Father. He has offered the sacrifice that has permanently atoned for our sins.

Himself, His body. He is moving sympathetically in the midst of His church and His people, interceding for them, caring for them, protecting His own.

He is actively providing us with comfort and with hope. This is what He does for us. Verses 14 and 15 we see, what else does He do?

[28:57] Well, John sees the Lord as purifying sovereign. The hairs of His head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire.

His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in the furnace. And His voice was like the roar of many waters. So first of all, His hair. John's description here parallels Daniel's description in Daniel chapter 7 verse 9 where there Daniel describes the Ancient of Days seated on His throne and he says the hair of His head was like pure wool.

So the imagery here affirms Christ's deity and it also speaks to His purity. He is utterly unblemished. He is absolutely holy.

Now we often, we associate white hair with what? Old age. And with that, we also associate white hair with wisdom and knowledge, alright?

So it's not all just one thing. And so no doubt that the Lord is wise. He's the source of all wisdom. No doubt that the Lord is knowledgeable. He's the source of all knowledge.

[30:09] But, I think that the whiteness of His hair symbolizes how intensely pure and holy He is.

As such, He expects His people to be holy too. This is a problem, isn't it? Because, I don't know about you, but I'm not holy.

On my own, right? I cannot make myself holy. Certainly I sin. As do you. But as Paul explained to the Ephesians, that was the Lord's purpose in saving us.

Ephesians 5, 25-27, Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. That He, Christ, might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish.

He is the one who makes us holy. He is the one who purifies us. Likewise, Paul exhorted the Colossians, reminding them that in Colossians 1, 21-22, and you, who were once alienated and hostile in mind doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in the body of his flesh by his death in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him.

[31:41] I like this quote by John MacArthur. He says, Giving everything Scripture tells us about the purity and holiness of the Lord, I cannot understand how professing believers live the kind of lives that they live or how so-called churches can operate the way they do.

The repeated dalliances with sin the unending attempts to curry favor with unrepentant sinners. I think we've seen a case in point of this recently with the United Methodist Church.

Have you been following any of that? That they presented several plans and I would say the majority are certainly the bigger and more influential churches in the United States of America wanted to change the Book of Discipline so that they could ordain homosexuals, practicing homosexuals for the ministry and so thankfully for them the United Methodist Churches that make up primarily a lot of the African nations they were strong in saying no, we're not going to go that way.

We're going to uphold things as they are and that's precisely what happened. Now, that's not going to be the end of the story as some of the churches in fact, there's a large one in Tulsa that has said that should that be the case then they'll break off and they'll go somewhere else.

They'll do something else. And you think why? Why is it that way over there and this way over here? What's the difference? Well, what I see happening in our country not just with the UMC it certainly is happening with the SBC and any other dot dot C you want to throw out there, right? [33:27] Is that there is a temptation to give the world what we think that they want so that they'll come here. And so, we do all different kinds of things.

We water down our messages. They're only 20 minutes long instead of 30 or 40 minutes long, right? Our music, it's pretty much repeating the same verse over and over again and the lights are dimmed out in the congregation and there's flashing lights and smoke to give people because we love to be entertained.

Let's admit it. In the United States of America we need our entertainment. We are very hooked on entertainment. And so, what a lot of churches have done is well, we're going to bring that into our churches and instead of trying to disciple the membership, trying to help them grow deeper in their knowledge of God's word and grow as a disciple who makes disciples.

Instead of that, it's just like you're just a body in the pew and we're going to give you what you want because we know that you'll keep coming back because your ears are tickled and it's a good experience for you.

At least, you think it's good for you, but it's the worst thing that the church could give a person. So, we are not obeying the Lord's command to be holy as he is holy.

[34:49] James 4.4, you adulterous people, and I think this speaks again to the church in the West, you adulterous people, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?

Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. It's heartbreaking to see so many people who say that they're Christians insult the holiness of our Lord. And this isn't just a new problem. This was a problem I believe that John was seeing take place in the churches in Asia Minor. And as we get to those churches, you'll see that a lot of the things that were plaguing their congregations are a plague to our congregation still today.

But the vision here illustrates that no matter what is going on in the church, the Lord himself is aware. He sees what is going on. And that is illustrated by John's description of his eyes.

How terrifying. His eyes were like a flame of fire, John says. This is a picture of his omniscience. Like penetrating laser beams, the eyes of the Lord see everything.

[36:01] It reminds me of my third grade teacher. She saw everything and she heard everything. It was like, how did you know? We'd be wrestling around in the bathroom as boys and we'd come out and she'd be like, you, you and you.

I know it was you. Go over here. How does she know these things? Nothing escaped her notice. Nothing escapes Christ's notice.

There are no secrets that he doesn't know about. There are no things that will remain hidden. His gaze is piercing. He sees right into the heart of his people and of his church.

in Matthew 10 26, Jesus says, there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. The author of Hebrews explains the comprehensive nature of the Lord's omniscience.

Hebrews 4 13, there is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom, I love this, with whom we have to do.

[37:01] There is no escape. The Lord of the church will not fail to recognize sin in his church and he will not fail to do something about it. The vision continues with John describing his feet.

He says, his feet were like burnished bronze refined in a furnace. So in the ancient world, kings and rulers sat on elevated thrones.

You know, we have our elevated stage right here to give respect to the word of God, right? That's really, that's why it's up is because it's the word of God that we are revering, not the pastor, not the people on top of this thing, but the word of God and the word of God being sung, the word of God being preached.

But in those cultures where you had a king or a ruler, they would sit, their throne would be on an elevated platform so that all who entered the throne room were literally under the king's feet.

So that's what the purpose of that was because the king's feet symbolized his authority and his position to execute judgment on whoever entered into his throne room.

[38:13] Everybody was under the king or the queen's feet. So, like, for example, I know as kids when we would wrestle around, we'd get somebody on the ground and then you'd put your foot on that person.

We know that's a really, that's a, don't put your foot on me, right? Because we don't, we don't like to feel like somebody is ruling over us or has power over us, but that's exactly what's happening right here.

And no matter whether you like it or not, you are all, we are all under Jesus' feet. So a king's feet symbolized his authority and his position. Unlike human rulers whose feet are composed of flesh like yours and mine, Jesus' feet are described as being like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace. So the red hot glowing feet of Jesus here picture him moving through his church not just as its high priest but as its sovereign ruler who judges.

What is depicted here is Christ's pruning work within his church for the sake of its purity. Jesus spoke of this very thing in John 15 too.

[39:24] He said, every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away and every branch that bears fruit he prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

Christ will discipline his own. The writer of Hebrews went into greater detail about our Lord's work in disciplining his people. Hebrews 12 5-10 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord and be wary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he hates.

No. The Lord disciplines the ones that he doesn't like. No. The Lord disciplines the ones he loves. And chastises every son whom he receives.

Verse 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline in which all have participated then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

[40:35] Besides this we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them but he disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness.

The Lord loves his church. He loves his church enough to discipline his church. He disciplines his church to guard his church to protect his church and its church and its purity.

He does it to instruct us and he instructs us to do the very same thing that he does for us. Matthew 18 lays out the prescription for dealing with sin in the church.

A pattern that many churches ignore today. If your brother sins against you go and spread gossip with other people and make it uncomfortable for your brother to go to church there so eventually they'll go to the church down the street.

No. Go to your brother. This is so important because I know and I do not enjoy conflict at all.

[41:45] I really don't. But it's so important for the purity of the Lord's church. And I have found in my experiences when you do this nine times out of ten it seems to me that when you do that you win your brother or your sister.

And you're able as brothers and sisters in Christ to see that you know what whatever we have between us isn't worth what it could potentially do to our church. But if that's not the case there are other steps and so it's so important that we follow through with that.

So we cannot fail to protect our purity. It's so important. So when you see a believer whose life is being crushed by sin or if you see a church leader who is forced out of ministry because of some kind of secret corruption in his life which we have seen taking place this past month and we see it unfortunately seeming like it's taking place more and more and more.

But when you see that happening what you're witnessing is the Lord at work in his church to purify you.
Amen.