

## Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, November 24, 2024

***“... And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.”<sup>1</sup> (Revelation 1:12-16)***

We have been taking a close look at this oracle for several sermons now. Since there are gaps of time between my sermons on the subject of eschatology, I believe we should always begin with a small reminder of our context. Generally, anything written in prophecy should be viewed in at least a threefold way. First, we should consider that the chief application is to how that prophecy informs the end of all things – eschatology. Second, we should consider the application it has to the ongoing struggles of a saved soul who travels this wilderness on the way to the glories of heaven in the presence of the Trinity. Third, that prophecy likely has some level of temporal application. For those matters of historical relevance, this lens will best serve us as positive evidence that God’s prophecies are 100% guaranteed of fulfillment. Therefore, we can be fully assured that those matters that are yet to be fulfilled will most certainly come to pass.

All of the prophecies that are contained in the 65 books prior to the Revelation will likely inform the more specialized collection of detailed prophecies contained in this last book of the Bible. We are now taking an in depth look at this book – this template for how Christ will return to take His kingdom and His purchased possession. After introducing the book – taking a dozen or so sermons – John has begun to discuss the first *action* in the book. It is a stupendous sight and should properly hold our most rapt attention and our greatest affection. It properly sets the stage.

This oracle leads into the letters that Christ directs John to send to the elders of the seven churches that were in Asia Minor during the early years of the New Testament dispensation. To better understand the letters, we should have a clear view of this opening description of the Christ who tells John: ***“What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches” (Revelation 1:11)***. If a letter has been written to us – from the only source of wisdom and

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<sup>1</sup> The remainder of the oracle is found in verses 9-20, except that quoted above: ***“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. ... And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”***

knowledge in the whole of the creation – we should be keenly interested both in He who sent the message as well as what we have been told.

My last sermon closed with me in the midst of examining the presentation of Jesus Christ in this vision, in three particular dimensions.

1. The intimate association between Jesus Christ and the Church
2. The disposition of Jesus Christ in the vision
3. The promises of Jesus Christ in the vision

I finished that sermon having addressed the association between Christ and the Church as well as two elements of Christ's disposition toward the Church in the vision: ***"like unto the Son of man"*** and ***"clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."*** Today we will pick up our further consideration of His disposition as represented in the additional physical characteristics displayed.

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***"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow"***. As I put forth in the last sermon, this language is very closely aligned with the description of this same Christ as visioned by the prophet Daniel in the first recorded dream he was given regarding Christ's return to destroy the Antichrist beast, like this: ***"the Ancient of days did sit ... and the hair of his head like the pure wool:"*** (Daniel 7:9). What is the significance of this presentation of His hair being white as snow like the pure wool?

Expositor John Trapp says efficiently *"his innocence and integrity in judgment"*. Matthew Poole, likewise efficiently says *"his innocence, and righteousness in judgment"*, referencing Isaiah 42:4, which is also an eschatological passage<sup>2</sup>. Expositor Albert Barnes gives an additional component in his simple input, *"for whiteness – a characteristic of venerable age. The image here set before us is that of one venerable by years and wisdom."* True enough that the ***"hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness"*** (Proverbs 16:31). This pertains to the wisdom of humans that can be gained with age and experience. Expositor John Calvin does a full discussion on how when God (here, Christ specifically) is presented in visions to the human, it is done in such a way as to condescend to their developed notions of characteristics. So, as we venerate wisdom from old age – symbolized by whitened hair – we should understand the deep wisdom of our Creator.

Another component that is displayed both in the presentation of Christ's head and hair – as well as in some more direct expressions – is His brightness. The focus here is on the head, and when we return to this same part of the Christ in the vision, it closes with ***"and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."*** So with the whiteness of His hair comes the brightness of His countenance. We know it was so in the vision shown to the Apostle Paul, to wit:

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<sup>2</sup> ***"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."*** (Isaiah 42:4)

***“At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” (Acts 26:13-15)***

We also know specifically that with such strength of brightness, the seventh iteration of the Antichrist is addressed: ***“whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:” (2 Thessalonians 2:8)*** This passage shows how the purity of this ***“brightness”*** is such that it destroys that Beast who is the essence of darkness. If we had no other passage to measure this attribute of Christ in the vision, we know that in the presence of the brightness, nothing less can be sustained.

Jesus Christ is called ***“the brightness of glory” (Hebrews 1:3)*** and ***“the bright and morning star” (Revelation 22:16)***. So it would be proper to see in this vision of Christ that He brings the brightness of His Father’s kingdom with Him to do this work. That heavenly light, that exceeds all within the known universe, is present with Him. That light has a power in it that simultaneously destroys the darkness and refreshes the Church in pure light. There is no impurity that will sustain the brightness of this light ... the very perfection of wisdom and knowledge. It predates all of the creation and infuses unfiltered knowledge into the work of the final purification of preparing the last body of believers.

We will shortly examine the purging power of the inexhaustible wisdom and truth in application, but the distinction here is between the light in essence and the light in motion. The shining forth being described with the white hair of pure wisdom and the strength of pure truth in the countenance or face of Christ is the essence of God’s truth in the appearance of our blessed Savior.

***“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:6)***

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***“his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace”***

I’ve joined these two attributes because in application I believe they are expressing the same energy in Christ’s presentation – though through two operations.

In Daniel’s final eschatological vision – traversing chapters ten through 12 – we see this same presentation of the Savior, like this:

***“His body also was like the beryl ... and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass,” (Daniel 10:6)***

The three references here ... **“beryl”, “lamps of fire”, and “like in colour to polished brass”** refer to the same general sense. They all reference the appearance of flames as they reflect lighter and darker shades of red, yellow and black. The beryl stone actually has many iterations, but the word translated here in Daniel is the Hebrew **“tarshiysh” (“tar-sheesh”)** and refers to the beryl that is known also as a jasper **“or other yellow coloured stone”**. Brass, when polished, captures the complex spectrum of light between deep golden-brown, through the red ranges, to bright yellow, even to the intensity of white when the heat or light reaches sufficient intensity. Fire, as anyone who has watched it much knows, similarly moves through a whole range of bright and dark coloring depending upon how intensely it is burning.

When expositor Barnes opens up the reference to these **“eyes [that] were as a flame of fire”**, he has some pretty good thoughts: *“Bright, sharp, penetrating; as if everything was light before them, or they would penetrate into the thoughts of men. Such a representation is not uncommon. We speak of a lightning glance, a fiery look, etc. In [Daniel 10:6], it is said of the man who appeared to the prophet on the banks of the river Hiddekel [who also is Christ], that his eyes were ‘as lamps of fire.’”* Trapp says the eyes are *“sharp and terrible, such as pierce into the inward parts”*.

Curiously, many of these educated men stumble about a bit with respect to the import of this molten brass substance. They spend significant time discussing the physical properties involved in the smelting process, but do not sound a common voice about what it imports. Seiss moves the needle much closer to where I think scripture properly places it:

Seiss: **“And his feet [were] like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.”** He once said, through Isaiah, *‘I will make the place of my feet glorious.’* But here we have the feet themselves, those feet with which he is to tread down the wicked; and the description corresponds with the rest of the picture. Christ is all-glorious, even to his feet. They are like glowing brass — like brass in the fire heated unto whiteness. The glory of this metal, in such a state, is almost insufferable to the human gaze. It presents an image of pureness which is terrible. And it is upon these feet of dreadful holiness that our Lord walks among the Churches, and shall tread down all abominations, and crush Antichrist, and Satan, and all who unhappily set aside his authority and his claims. Beautiful are those feet to them that love him, but terrible and consuming to those who shall be trodden by them.”

I think he captures the essence of this descriptor, though he stretches a bit beyond the focus of the vision in his excited utterances. His view of what these brassy, fiery feet represent – the purity of Christ’s holiness – mixes perfectly with the flaming, piercing gaze. Christ, you recall perhaps, is present with His Bride in the office of their Counselor (Isaiah 9:6) – what the Muslim countries would call their Grand Vizier. What this arrogant nation calls the Secretary of State. The source of the chief knowledge and wisdom.

**“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” (Romans 11:33-34)**

So putting this all together, what I believe this portion of the vision provided John was an understanding that the Church was in the presence of – the *active and intimate* presence of – the piercing and unrelenting standard of Christ’s holiness. The time has come for the Church to be purged of every blemish in her doctrine and in her practice. This, I honestly submit, is the actual and most direct relevance to the passage that has been oft cited from this pulpit:

***“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”***

The time has come – in this vision. The time has come that judgment will begin at ***“the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”*** (1 Timothy 3:15) This is why it immediately precedes the letters to the seven churches. It is very specialized work focused on the one closest Him ... the one for whom He holds the greatest affection. The time has come for the Husband to finally and fully prepare His Bride – she must become that ***“glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that [she] should be holy and without blemish.”*** (Ephesians 5:27).

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This involves communication: ***“his voice as the sound of many waters”***. In my sermon on June 2, 2024 I gave some little treatment of this part of the vision. There I was discussing the terrifying effects of the voice of Christ as he called for John’s attention. There is another component of this part of our oracle that demands some careful attention and helps to better comprehend the disposition of Christ here toward His church, as dispensational fullness comes to pass.

To begin with, let us look at this expression ***“many waters”***. Remember that we are considering the nature of this noise ... and what it adds to the understanding of the communication. The word for ***“many”*** is likely the part that is simplest to describe. Copious and ubiquitous are two concepts that will help to get there. If we had in this house a person who has lived through the advancing of a major, water-emphasized natural disaster ... tornado, hurricane, typhoon ... we would probably get some good sense from that person’s perspective. The Greek word is ***“polus”*** (***“poloos”***) and expresses ***“largely: — abundant, + altogether, common, + far (passed, spent), (+ be of a) great (age, deal, ly, while), long, many, much, oft(-en [-times]), plenteous, sore, straitly.”*** There is a remarkably huge amount of it (copious) and it presents as an energy that is never not present (ubiquitous). The Greek word for ***“waters”*** is ***“hudor”*** (***“hoo’-dore”***), and expresses the various literal and metaphorical ways to think about water in large amounts. The word comes from a base that references rain, but adds the cumulative bodies of water that are formed from the abundance of rain. Fountains, pools, seas, rivers, ... all the way up to the great deluge of Noah. Figuratively, as we see in other passages using the concept within the Revelation, referencing large collections of people.

When David sang praises to his God for being delivered from that reprobate Saul, he says ***“he drew me out of many waters”***. (2 Samuel 22:17) This song is repeated by David, as a type of our

Christ, in Psalm 18, including this same language in verse 16. It is well presented by Dr. Gill in these expository words: *“the many afflictions, sorrows, and sufferings from which Christ was freed, when raised from the dead, and highly exalted and crowned with glory and honour; and the torrent of sins which flowed in upon him at the time he was made sin for his people, from which he was justified when risen; and so will appear a second time without sin unto salvation; and the wrath of God, the waves and billows of which went over him, and compassed him about as water, at the time of his sufferings; from which he was delivered when he was shown the path of life, and entered into the presence of God, and sat at his right hand, where are joys and pleasures for evermore; and also his grand enemy Satan, with his principalities and powers, who came in like a flood upon him; but he destroyed him and spoiled them; and particularly the floods of ungodly men, spoken of in Psalm 18:4; seem to be here designed; compare with this Psalm 144:7; ‘so many waters’ signify many people and nations, Revelation 17:15”.*

The application of this to our present verse would suggest that Christ is, in the vision of John, speaking to His Bride through the afflictions and sorrows and suffering – whether in the form of men (both oppressive and flattering) or providential circumstances in health or station. More particularly, we understand that as the seven churches will undergo so many iterations of doctrinal and practical distresses ... it is the manner by which Christ speaks to them to purge them and prepare them for His Day; His wedding day. Each of these is a different voice. Different tenor, inflection, volume, intensity. Does our Christ whisper to us in our bedchamber? Are we presented with raging enemy at our throat?

***“And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”*** (1 Kings 19:11-12)

This is not to say that the servant of God will not ever hear the LORD in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire – because we know He speaks in all providential dealings – but the voice he brings to us is uniquely delivered in the midst of **“many waters”** so we are never presuming to know how our God will bring His words to us for our spiritual edification. Today it might be in the terrifying milieu of deathly illness. Tomorrow it might be to draw us up short in the vanity of a flattering tongue. Then it might be in a calm and blissful deliverance from a bone-crushing guilt or a simple elucidation of a doctrinal or practical principle in His Word that gives us immediate and deep comfort.

So while we know for certain that this voice of our Christ is terrifying – causing John to fall **“at his feet as dead”** (v. 17) – we must know for certain that it is also a voice of guiding comfort and counsel and is presented in more ways (**“many waters”**) than our weak human frames can imagine.

Drawing out our lens a little bit, we also learn in this clause that our Christ is communicating with His Bride. Remember that this vision involves the intimate intercourse between these two. This

is not Christ's presentation to the world. Howsoever frightening and intense and piercing His countenance and disposition ... His presence is with that blessed woman for whom He died.

***“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,” (Ephesians 5:25-26)***

Listen to me, husbands! Young husbands ... medium husbands ... old husbands. You have a responsibility to communicate! You have a responsibility to speak – in every way that human beings communicate with other human beings – with your wife. Looks, words, body language, tone, labor, how you resolve matters domestic, what standards you set up and how you adhere – or don't adhere – to those standards. That is your responsibility every day. In every context. Consider how Christ here engages with His Bride. His disposition, about which we've been talking extensively. Christ is the type you are to follow in your communications with your bride. Of course, every member of this church has a duty to participate in this proper type – as members of the Bride and therefore of Christ – but there is a unique duty identified in this sober passage that should draw every husband in this house up short.

And the communication is not about vanity! Among humans, there is much about vain things of the flesh. It is the battle we are required to wage as long as we are in this flesh. But Christ's engagement with His Bride here is predicated on one single standard: ***“out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword”***. What comes out of your mouth, when you engage with your bride? What is coming out of your mouth when you engage with your fellow members of the Bride with whom Christ is here speaking?

***“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)***

Look at how perfectly this passage from Hebrews folds into this discussion. When Christ is seen by John in this vision, He is present with His Bride and fully about purging her from her doctrinal and practical error ... with one single standard being applied; His Word. All of His bright, piercing countenance ... His flaming, purging disposition ... His endless presentations of communication in providential settings ... 100% about His Word.

Now as a concept, I think this is easy to grasp. It is a direct vision with a clear implication about Christ vis-à-vis a collection of humans who are prone to error and can benefit from a super clear and sharp and inalterable standard. So grasp that and let that sink deep into your understanding of how Christ is here poised for the work of addressing the Bride (e.g., seven churches) in preparation for His Revelation. Do that over and over and over again, so as we move into the passages about those letters to the churches, we can keep this Christ before our eyes.

But after you have that in your grasp, move to this other unavoidable thing being here shown about this Church of Revelation, that is engaged with this Redeemer on the cusp of this world's

transition between the New Testament dispensation and the dispensation of Christ's millennial kingdom. It is about how they are communicating – and failing to communicate – with each other as is proper between those members of the body that are brought together for the building up of the house of God ... the Bride of Christ. There is a perfect, or spiritually-mature, way for that communication to take place. There is also a vain and earthly way for that communication to take place. When the body is properly communing with each other, both doctrinal and practical purity will be present. When the body is improperly communing with each other, doctrinal and practical error slips in. Christ, in this vision, is establishing the basis for that communication and exemplifying what good communication looks like by His disposition with the Church.

It begins with this sharp twoedged sword coming out of His mouth. It begins by His Word: ***“to the law and to the testimony” (Isaiah 8:20)***. Our communication with each other – our communing with each other – has real and critical implications in our spiritual existence. When we communicate with the world, it is always some form of vanity. Even when it is about our employment ... or about how we deal with the need for food or shelter or education or health ... it is utterly filled up with vanity. Except where we bring into the equation our dependence upon our Christ and our God – giving Him all praise and glory for the matter and its disposition – the matter is utterly filled with the vanity of this life.

***“And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.” (Mark 4:18-19)***

In fencing with these thorns, we learn habits. Communication habits. Defensive tactics and machinations that seem necessary to mitigate the influence of this deluge against our souls – righteous souls that are vexed day by day with the unrighteous deeds of this generation (2 Peter 2:8). We have to be aware of this. When we come into this body, we absolutely must learn to distinguish between how we seem to be required to deal with those who grind us every day, and how we should deal with our blessed co-elect. We must work on our spirits continuously, seeking to deal in the spiritual realm with each other. Seeking to look upon each other and engage with each other as though we are among those with whom we will walk the streets of gold and play harps of gold and sing continual praises to God.

What I'm trying to say here is that we might be seeing the very root of every problem identified in the seven churches. If that is the case, we should expect that to be the primary thing about which the judgment of our Christ will be occupied, as He walks with His Bride. If we are communing in the spirit, we will return to our first love ... we will avoid the treachery of the Nicolaitans ... we will not fear the tribulations to come from Antichrist's rage ... we will avoid the idols and fornications that come from the doctrine of Balaam ... and that wicked woman Jezebel with her well-spun deceits ... our works will not be infested with leaven that takes the strength and vitality from them ... we will not opt for the lukewarm and tasteless malaise that comes from battle fatigue ... our zeal will burn hot for our Husband as we see His Day approaching.



In every communication, our spirit should be drawn to Scripture for our guide in what we say and how we say it. The wisdom of this world is more than of no value – it is poisonous and vicious and deceitful and destructive. The very first thing that should be abandoned when we commune with each other is the wisdom of this world. The very first thing that should be looked to in our communications is the Word – the sharp, twoedged sword – our Christ. We are of Him. We should strive to be in all ways like Him.

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**“And he had in his right hand seven stars”**. This description of Christ, though it looks like a description of action, is actually a further description of His disposition toward the Bride. The oracle ends with a very direct statement from Christ that **“the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches” (v. 20)**. The danger in dealing with this clause is real. Here’s an example of what I mean:

*Seiss: “Christ walks among the candlesticks, but he holds these ministers in his right hand. The democratic idea of Church organization, which makes all power proceed from the members, and makes the ministerial position nothing more than what inheres in every Christian, is thus scattered to the winds. Ministers have relations to Christ and to the Church, which ordinary Church members have not. They partake directly of Christ’s authority, and are responsible directly to him, and are upheld by his right hand, beyond the power of men or angels to displace them. What a lesson for ministers, as to the holiness of their office, the solemnity of their responsibilities, the necessity of unswerving fidelity, and the exercise of every confidence in their sacred functions. They are in Christ’s hand. If they are unfaithful none can deliver them out of that hand; but if true to their position, none can touch them, or quench their light. They shall shine as the stars forever and ever. What a lesson for the people as to the authority of those ministrations which they are so prone to despise. Dealing with the regular ministers of the Churches, you are dealing with the jewels on Christ’s right hand. And what a lesson for all as to the Divine majesty and glory of our Lord! The Pauls, and Johns, and Husses, and Luthers, and Cranmers, and Knoxes, and Wesleys, and all the hosts of those who have been teaching and guiding the Churches for these 1800 years, are no more than the rings upon his fingers. But they are jewels to him. He holds them as precious. Disregarded as they may be of men, they are dear to him. He holds them, as a man holds what he most esteems. He holds them, for service now, and for judgment when he cometh. He holds them, for success against the hosts of evil, for glorious honour if they are faithful, and for eternal disgrace if they are not.”*

**“¶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” (Colossians 2:16-19)**

Seiss lays out some good, Bible truth in this analysis, but also slips into danger, looking too closely at the man. As a general principle, I would recommend that if we ever get into a thought process whereby we begin to think of ourselves better things than what the Bible plainly says of us ... we are in danger. The two witnesses, of whom we have read much, and will continue to read and speak much, are never identified – because the power is not of them; it is of God.

The presentation of these stars – or messengers – in the right hand of God does intimate good things with respect to the elders of the Church. They are under the immediate and most tender protection from their Christ, as are all of the elect who have been given Him by God in the Covenant of Grace (John 10:28-29). Seiss clearly concludes that the promises of Daniel 11:3 – ***“they that turn many to righteousness [shall shine] as the stars for ever and ever.”*** – are to the elders of the church, and at least Dr. Gill agrees. I’m not satisfied that the passage can bear out that conclusion, since Daniel’s visions are near exclusively regarding the redeemed of Israel in the Day of the Lord. I’m inclined to conclude that passage reflects that all those who, in that time of crisis for Jews and the world, minister good things from God will have eternal life. Not just the elders of the church.

The emphasis in this vision John sees, I believe, is in the direct source of power in the preaching and ministering done for and with the Bride by those appointed as elders. When God was delivering the Israelites into the promised land, we’re told ***“from his right hand went a fiery law for them.”*** (Deuteronomy 33:2) Similarly, His law goes forth for the Bride as she is preparing for her wedding ... from His right hand, via His ministering elders. It is a reflection of the immediacy with which His word is injected – like the immediacy of the oil flowing from the olive tree into the candlestick. So interconnected is the tree and the candlestick, that the elders – two witnesses – receive both as their identity: ***“These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”*** (Revelation 11:4)

There are more things, no doubt, that can be culled from this vision related to the disposition of Christ toward His Bride the Church. But we have a pretty solid base upon which we might stand as we begin the work of opening the love letters that follow. We will continue this work next time I have opportunity to speak with my friends here. Lord willing, we will consider the promises Christ makes to the Bride in this vision, and then we may visit the words written to the elder at Ephesus.

I continue to encourage all of you to spend time on these matters of eschatology, because I believe we are approaching that time. If we are, it will become precipitously more critical for every soul who will be saved at that hour to have full engagement within and without the Church.

I love you all. Amen.