

God Sets the Categories

Series – God's Score Card

- Letters to the Churches in Revelation
- Important Messages for our Church
 - reveals what God commends and condemns
 - establishes what we need to be focused on
 - allows us to invest in the right things
- Critical for us in leaving a legacy that lasts

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Key Reminders For Us:

1. The Church is called the Bride of Christ
 - striking image of one getting ready for the groom
2. Bridegroom is returning for His Bride – John 3:29
 - gospel parables, Jesus words, promise of scripture
3. Scripture Reveals the Qualities The Bride should have
 - purity, passion, purpose, preparation, focused
4. Holy Spirit Gives Spiritual Gifts – 1 Cor. 12
 - building up of the bride

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Heb. 13:7-8 – ***“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. “***

- scripture allows us to hear from God
- that word is to be considered carefully – responded to
- Jesus is the same – plan is not changing
- need to focus on what is revealed

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Revelation 1:1-19

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

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Look, he is coming with the clouds,
and every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall
it 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 companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.

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His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

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Observations

1. Authority of the Source

- revelation of Jesus, given by God for us
- things that will take place – know in advance
- From John – disciple, apostle, friend, servant of God
- Blessing is attached to this news
 - * reads the words
 - * hears it
 - * takes to heart - responds

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2. Reasons to Respond

a) Who is giving the message

- God the Father – before time, alive, returning to rule
- Jesus – faithful witness, firstborn from dead, ruler
- seven angels – given to the churches

b) What has Happened

- loved us
- freed us from our sin
- established us in relationship

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c) What will Happen

- returning – quoting Zech. 12:10
- revealed as God
- established on the throne – note 1st time we see Jesus it is in obscurity, humbled himself, now the picture is ruler, king, in all His Glory.

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2. John Sets the Stage

a) identity and humility

- brother, companion in suffering, patiently enduring

b) while doing the right things.....

- Lords day, in the spirit, told to convey what is seen

c) Establishes the Picture

- 7 lamp stands

- Jesus revealed: robe of Priest or King, white hair, blazing eyes, feet of bronze (copper & iron), 7 stars in hand, sword of truth & judgment, glow of glory

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d) Response of John

- fall down

e) Response of Jesus

- touch

- reassurance – do not be afraid

- revealing – seven angel, seven churches

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So What

1. We are The Bride of Christ
 - have clear instructions about preparing for bridegroom
 - will be commended or condemned for our preparation
2. God has given his spirit, gifts, instructions, authority, power – every resource available to us
 - is clearly returning, calling us to participate to be ready
3. God lovingly is giving us the scorecard. What is Important
 - will we engage – read, hear, respond – and be blessed?