

Revelation 1
What Christ's Resurrection Means to Me
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Would you join me as we lift our hearts in prayer to the Lord? Oh Lord, thank You, Lord. You are great and I pray that this morning, Lord, if there's somebody out there that doesn't quite know how great You are, Lord, I pray that today would be the day. We thank You for this time in Your word as it's so important, Lord, for our lives.

And so, Holy Spirit, speak to us. May we not miss out on the blessing that is in Your word for us today. Lord, we continue to lift up Pastor JD. Strengthen, watch over, keep, protect him and his family, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. And good morning and welcome on this day that we celebrate Resurrection Sunday. You can be seated. So glad you're here. Those of you joining us online, we're so very glad that you are.

Before we get started, I want to let you know that on Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. here, that's April 2nd, we're going to have our prayer meeting. Would really encourage you to make plans to come and join with us. I'm going to be addressing the recent manifestation of a demonic spirit during the March 24th Prophecy Update livestream last Sunday, specifically as it relates to the many questions about what actually happened and why we did what we did.

Then we're going to go to the Scriptures and look at those passages that speak directly to the reality of demonic activity, for which most Christians are sadly and woefully naive of. And this woeful naivete is really in two extremes, the first of which is sensationalism: Seeing the demonic in everything and everyone.

And then conversely, on the opposite side is what I'll call cessationism, which is ceasing, the polar opposite. It's dismissing of the demonic in anything. So you got two extremes, and Satan is in the extremes and couldn't be happier when we are. So what I'm hoping to accomplish Tuesday night is offer a biblically balanced response to a deeply divisive issue.

So again, we'd encourage you to come and join with us on Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. here. Note the start-time online will be 7:00 and not 7:30 p.m. as it is on Thursday as we continue our verse-by-verse study through Daniel. We're going to continue our verse-by-verse study through Revelation today.

Yeah, but Pastor, it's Resurrection Sunday. Where's the Resurrection Sunday Sermon? I'm not feeling the love right now.

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[Laughter]

Well, as only God can and did, He timed our verse-by-verse study through Revelation in such a way that last week we only got to *verse 3*, no hurry. Today we'll pick it up in *verse 4*. Deeply profound, *verse 4* comes after *verse 3*, and wouldn't you know it, right smack in the middle of the text before us today is, wait for it, the resurrection. So that's my story and I'm sticking with it.

So with that introduction, may I invite you to stand? If you're able, you can follow along as I read beginning in *verse 4*, where John by the Holy Spirit, inspired by the Holy Spirit, continues writing and even identifies himself.

Verse 4, "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, [That's the resurrection right there] and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, [Verse 6] and [A lot of ands] 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.

[We're not done yet] [I love verse 7] [Let me have this one, okay?]

Look, He's coming..."

[No, that's what it says] [I know I — emphasis added]

Verse 7, "Look, He is coming with the clouds, [This is the Second Coming] [Look, He's coming!] 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.

[We're not done yet] [Verse 8] I am [Notice the turning of the corner now from John to Jesus]

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, [And here it is for the second time] "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Wow! Let's pray. Please join with me.

Father thank You, thank You, thank You, thank You, thank You. Thank You for this day that we celebrate as Resurrection Sunday. Thank You for going to the cross. Thank You for the

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resurrection after Your burial on the third day. And thank You that You're coming back soon and very soon one day. So, Lord, we want to celebrate that today. And this text that we have before us today, we want to celebrate this as well.

So would You, as You're always so faithful to, just first and foremost, would You just settle our hearts? I know there's a lot of unsettling and just a lot of stuff. People's lives are just so crazy, off the charts crazy. Everything that's going on, not just in the world, but in our world. And so we just — this is a sanctuary for us in every sense of the word. It's a safe place for us to come here in this, Your church and hear this, Your word.

So Lord, we're very protective of our time together in Your word, and we long for it. We look forward to it. And certainly we're looking forward to what You have for us today. So keep our hearts settled but keep our minds focused too because we don't want to be distracted or have anything take us away from that which You have for us today. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen and amen.

You can be seated. Thank you. So for today's Resurrection Sunday Sermon here in our continuing verse-by-verse study through Revelation, we have the resurrection woven into the fabric, really as the central theme of this passage in *verses 4–8*.

Let me say it like this. It's a — and I know I have this proclivity to come off as being sensational and dramatic. It is a custom in my country. But I mean, this is marvelous and magnificent. It's a marvelous and magnificent revelation of what the resurrection of Jesus Christ means to us and for us.

And let's delineate between the two. Because this is what it means to me. This is what it means to you. And moreover, this is what it means for me, and this is what it means for you. There are three — I found three. You might find more. You probably will. But I found three magnificent and marvelous meanings concerning the resurrection specific to me, to you, to us.

Let me frame it like this. If it weren't for the resurrection, what I want to share with you today is inconsequential. It is of no consequence, of no value. In fact — don't do this. We could just all pack up and go home. Don't leave. But we could if it weren't for the resurrection.

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And I want to share with you three of these — can I just say it one more time — let me have it — marvelous and magnificent revelations of what the resurrection of Jesus Christ really means to me, and for me, and to you and for you.

The first one is in *verse 4*, and it's that Jesus gives peace to me. I could use me some of that. Second, in *verses 5–6*, Jesus loves and frees me. And third, in *verses 7–8*, Jesus is coming for me.

Oh, of course, Pastor JD, you're going to bring that into the sermon.

No. It's already there. I didn't have to bring it in. It's already there.

What do you mean? Are you telling me that the rapture is here?

Yeah.

No, but, Pastor JD, you could find the pre-tribulation rapture in a banana.

[Laughter]

Maybe I can. I mean, give me enough time, I will. I'll figure something out. But this is not that. It's all beautifully — okay, one more time — marvelously, magnificently here for us because of the resurrection. I hope all of us, myself included, will be truly blessed.

As we learned last week in *verse 3* that the *Book of Revelation* is the only book in all of the Bible that promises a blessing to those who read it, hear it, and take it to heart. I hope that all of us are truly blessed and greatly encouraged by this portion here before us in God's word on this Resurrection Sunday. So you ready? Let's jump in.

Verse 4: Jesus gives peace to me, and not just peace, grace and peace, affectionately referred to as the Siamese twins of the New Testament and rightfully so because you can't know the peace of God until you've tasted of the grace of God. When you've tasted of the Lord and seen that He is good and you know and embrace God's grace, then you'll know God's peace, the peace of God from the God of peace.

And here — and don't dismiss this, please. I'm not — am I sounding like I'm being mean?

Okay, good. I'll try harder then. No.

[Laughter]

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I don't want this to sound mean. But you know — maybe I'll just use myself as an example because you know I'm such a godly pastor. I'll take one for the team. I do. I'm just as prone as the next guy. You read *verse 4*, and you just read past *verse 4* and you move on to *verse 5*. And you read past *verse 5*. No. Stop!

Do you know what John's saying here, inspired by the Holy Spirit? First of all, he identifies himself, “**John.**” I'm writing to the seven churches and to you. You talking to me? Yeah, you. Me? Yeah. What for? Grace and peace to you. Okay. Let's talk. You got my attention because I need God's grace. It's by the grace of God, go I. I need God's mercy too.

You know the beautiful relationship between grace and mercy? As one so aptly said, grace is God giving you what you don't deserve. And mercy is God not giving you what you do deserve. I don't even want to think about that. I mean, I'll take both. Thank you very much. Where do I sign? I need God's grace. I need God's mercy.

And when I'm the recipient of God's grace, and I am the recipient of God's grace, then the peace of God will ensue. I not only have peace with God, I have the peace of God. And in a world where people are full of anxiety, riddled with anxiety, the antithesis of peace, here's peace to you and for you because Jesus died for you and instead of you. And that's what He gives to you.

Notice too here that — and we see it twice in our text, and it's first right here in *verse 4* — Jesus, who is, now; who was, past; and who is to come, future. In other words, God dwells outside of time. He dwells in eternity. I'll try to explain this as clearly as I possibly can. I mean, *verse 4* is packed pretty full, so I'll do my best. But Jesus existed before the creation. You know that, right?

So *Genesis 1:1 (1:26)* “**Let Us create man in Our image.**” You know the Trinity is all over here right throughout the entirety of Scripture. I get a kick out of — actually, I don't get a kick out of it anymore. I'm too old for getting a kick out of things. I get irritated actually, when...

[Laughter]

I'm just being open with you. Don't look at me all spiritual. You do the same thing. People say well, the word Trinity isn't even in the Bible. (Said snarkily)

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The one that, of course, the enemy knows really gets me is, the word “rapture” isn't even in the Bible. (Said snarky)

How about this smarty pants? The word “Bible” isn't in the Bible? How about that? Don't do that. That's just — that's, that's mean. But I could do mean if I need to. Actually, the word rapture — just so we can clear this up because apparently, I've got to get this off my chest. The word “rapture” is in the Bible if you have the Latin Vulgate.

1 Thessalonians 4, which we're going to get to probably about 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. today. Sorry about your lunch plans.

How about Trinity? Well, the word “Trinity” is not technically in the Bible, but the Trinity is all through the Bible. You've got God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And if there was no Trinity, then Genesis would not read, **“Let Us make man in Our image.”**

It would read instead — this is almost blasphemous I feel like, just even uttering these words, ‘Let Me make man in My image.’

That sounds like us, doesn't it? That's the antithesis, the opposite. You know, evil is live backwards. L-I-V-E, E-V-I-L. It's man making God in his image. We want a god — and that's what they did in the Old Testament. They basically made their gods after their own image.

So no, it's **“Let Us [The Trinity] make man in Our [The Trinity] image.”** So Jesus was there. He always was. He's the Alpha and the Omega. There's no beginning, no end. How does that work? We'll find out soon enough when we get to heaven.

I know for all of eternity, all of those questions, you won't be asking them, but they will get answered. I hate to ruin your Resurrection Sunday. But you know that list of questions that you have? “When I get to heaven, I'm going to ask God... ”

No, you're not. I mean, you're going to get to heaven, you'll just be going (Looking in shock) worshiping before the throne. I know they have terms for this. But I just picture some of the heavenly host coming up and going, wait, didn't you have some questions you wanted to ask, JD?

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Never mind. I got it now. I get it now. Because see, we're going to have our glorified bodies and what comes with our glorified bodies is our glorified minds. And we are going to know Him and learn of Him for all eternity. He dwells in eternity. He has always been, always is, was, and is to come.

And it even gets more interesting because John just had to go on and say, **“And from the seven spirits before His throne.”** Okay, now that's really messing me up. Because I was starting to get my mind around the triune nature of God, God in three persons. But now I've got seven spirits? What's up with that?

I'm so glad you asked. Remember last week for those of you who were here? For those of you who weren't, you totally missed out.

[Laughter]

(Chuckle) That was mean, wasn't it? It's in love. But last week we talked about how that the *Book of Revelation* refers to the Old Testament more than any other book in the Bible, and why it had to. It was sort of cryptically written because of the persecution at that time under Domitian.

So these were literal letters to seven literal churches in Asia minor, we know today as modern-day Turkey. And in order for those letters to get to those churches, they had to be, to the Romans, nonsense. But it would absolutely make sense to those on the receiving end of the letter. Why? Because they knew their Bibles.

So all throughout the *Book of Revelation*, there's all of these Old Testament references. And it's almost like when you write in code in a way that only the person who's on the receiving end is going to know what that means.

You know that saying we have, “You had to be there”? I say that a lot after I'm trying to be funny, “You had to be there.” When nobody laughs: “Oh, you just had to be there. Well, they were, and they were there, and they knew that this was referring to the Old Testament.

So 404 verses in the *Book of Revelation*, and *verse 4* is one of what some believe to be over 90% of the entire *Book of Revelation* that is a reference to the Old Testament. So they would have decoded it. I hate to use that word because it sounds like everything's hidden,

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and this *Book of Revelation* is not hidden. It's a revelation. It's revealed, not hidden. It's unveiled that which was veiled or hidden.

But they would have understood. Oh, John, dude — the dude's not in the original — you're talking about *Isaiah 11:2*. Can I read it? It's not seven spirits. It's the seven-fold work of the Holy Spirit, singular. You ready? Watch this.

Verse 2, Isaiah 11. "The Spirit of the Lord [One. I'll be careful with my fingers when I count] shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom [Two] and understanding [Three], the Spirit of counsel [Four] and might [Five], the Spirit of knowledge [Six], and of the fear of the Lord." [Seven]

Boom! Mic drop. Is that how they say it, mic drop? So here they get this letter from John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and he says, "...and from the seven spirits before the throne." They would have immediately connected the dots to *Isaiah 11:2* and in so doing changed the whole complexion of what John was writing in just one verse. We haven't even got to *verses 5 and 6* yet. Just *verse 4*, right out of the chute, "...the Spirit of God... the seven-fold..."

Can I just take it one step further? Why am I asking for permission? I'm just a gracious man, that's why. Can we just look at these real quick before we move on? The Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit of wisdom. The Spirit of understanding. The Spirit of counsel. Wonderful counselor. The Spirit of might. The Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord, seven, again, the number of completion, which is replete throughout this book.

We talked about this in the Prophecy Update today, very fascinating study out of Numbers 19 about the red heifer, the ashes of the red heifer. And they were to be sprinkled seven places, seven, the number of completion, a picture of Christ who was — who bled, His blood shed in seven places: the two feet, two; hands, four; back when He was whipped, five; the crown that impaled His head, six; and then the sword in His side, seven. The number — it is completed. It is finished.

So we got seven churches representative of the completeness of the church age. And that's going to be Chapters 2 and 3 and the seven-fold work of the Holy Spirit. Can I say it like this? Complete work of the Holy Spirit, right here. And that's just *verse 4*.

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What's in store in *verses 5-6*? Oh, it gets even better. So peace to me but love and freedom for me. I mean, if you're anything like me, and I suspect that you are, you've come to love this about John, who's referred to affectionately as the apostle of love, John, and he even says as much.

I know we talked about it last week. I think it's worth repeating again in the context of our passage today. But John in the Gospel is the same John that was inspired to write the Gospel. This is the same John that we just got done studying the epistles, 1, 2, and 3 John. And it's the same John in about the year 95 AD, banished to the island of Patmos, that receives this revelation, who's writing here. This is John we're talking about, okay?

And he's still alive after being thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. We talked about that last week. How freaky would that be for the Romans? They throw him in there, and he doesn't die. What are we going to do with him? Banish him to the island of Patmos. Surely he'll die there. He doesn't even die there.

Listen, you ain't going to die one day, one second before it's time. God holds the day of our birth and the day of our death in the palm of His hand. So I'm not through with you yet, John. Sorry about the whole oil jacuzzi thing, but I'm not done with you yet. I still got an island getaway for you. It's not really that, but...

[Laughter]

Is that too much? So in his writing of the Gospel, inspired by the Holy Spirit — I mean the Lord allowed him this — he always points out “The disciple that Jesus loved.” You know who he's talking about? Himself in the third person. And the implication is, I'm the only disciple that Jesus loves. The other disciples? No, He put up with them, but He loved me.

[Laughter]

And there's always — I find the humor in this, and it's a sanctified humor, and it's medicinal, by the way. But, you know the relationship between John and Peter? I got to believe that God, in His grace — you know there was just some coming together, but there was a little — you could tell it was testy at times, you know, especially at the resurrection.

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You know John's account in the Gospel of John? You know early that morning — John makes it very clear in no uncertain terms that he beat Peter to the tomb.

[Laughter]

No, read the Gospel of John. It's actually better than Netflix. Because here's John going, you know, "...and we... and Peter." No, really for real. **"And Peter."** It's kind of like, oh yeah, and Peter.

You know it's kind of like when somebody says, Gentlemen, oh, and yeah, JD.

[Laughter]

Wow. Wow. Really? Yeah. **"And Peter."** You know, so it's kind of like he's not a gentleman. He's not one of the disciples. And I am the disciple that Jesus loved. You know what? All of the disciples knew they were loved. But John, the apostle of love, just wanted us to make sure that we knew that Jesus really loved him more.

So where am I going with this? Well, Jesus loves you, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. You know, it's sad, and I know I've shared this. You'll indulge me. I think it's appropriate. Isn't it sad that we live in a day where the word "love" packs no punch?

I love you. Yeah, I love you too. Jesus loves you. Yeah, I know Jesus loves me. God is love. Yay, God is love. What if we reworded it this way? Jesus likes you. He does? He likes me. Where — what happened where the word "love" came in lower than the word "like"?

Jesus likes you. He likes me? Yeah, and He loves you, too. And Peter, He loves you too. It's kind of like a side note, an asterisk. You know, you scroll. Oh, He loves me. No, but let's get back to "He likes me."

Let me see if I can expound on the "why" behind the "what" of this. When I hear Jesus likes me, that means Jesus is not angry at me. You know how it is in marriages? And I won't look at anybody. But I know many times my wife— of course, I have a perfect marriage as a pastor. You know that, right?

[Laughter]

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But there's been so many times where my wife will say, "I love you, but I don't like you right now." Uh—oh. I know she loves me, but the problem is she doesn't like me right now. And that seems to pack more weight because the inference, again is that, well, if you — I know you love me, but if you don't like me, then I've got to right the wrong. Because I want you to like me and send me a friend request on social media. And like my posts too, by the way because it's all about likes, isn't it?

Come on. Come on, you're in church. You got to be honest.

[Laughter]

You know, that's a dopamine thing, right? When you — somebody's like, hey, you like me? I like you too. You liked one of my posts. I like your post too. Let's flip it around to be fair. You don't like me, huh? I've never really cared for you either.

[Laughter]

Right? So wait. Jesus likes me? Yeah. What if I said it like this? There's nothing you can do to make Jesus like you less or love you less. Why are you looking at me like that? It's true. And here again this is one of those places in God's word, of which there are many, where we just read it. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I know, I know, I know.

No. Listen, you may not like me, but Jesus likes me. That's all that matters. You may not care for me, but Jesus does. You may not be pleased with me, but that doesn't matter because I'm not a man-pleaser anyway. I'm a God-pleaser. And if what I am doing is pleasing to God and displeasing to you, guess what? You're going to be displeased. Have a nice afternoon.

So can we move on to the package deal here? It's not just that Jesus loves me, likes me, but He also frees me. This is what I love about John. He gets right to the point, unlike your pastor. He says Jesus loving me and freeing me is vis-a-vis His resurrection from the dead when His blood was shed in my stead.

And then he doesn't just leave it there. He is inspired to continue by writing that Jesus has not only freed us in His love for us but made us to be a kingdom and priests. We're all

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priests. Did you know that? You want a robe? You're not getting one. That's not what a priest is.

[Laughter]

We're a royal priesthood. We make up the kingdom. I want to spend the remainder of our time, as you might imagine, on this third one of *verses 7–8* because it's the proverbial icing on the cake. Jesus is coming for me.

Please stay with me because I don't know if it's possible to overstate the paramount importance of what John writes in these verses, and this for several reasons, chief amongst them is that if we're left only to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and not the return of Jesus, then wouldn't you agree that we are to be most pitied? Just think this through with me. The Gospel, good news, which means, good news: Your debt has been paid. You're free. **“And whom the Son has set free is free indeed.”**

How was my debt paid? What debt, by the way, did I owe? Oh, the death penalty. Really? And somebody went to their death in my stead? Yeah. What was His name? Jesus. Good news. Bad news is you were sentenced to death because **“...the wages of sin is death.”** The good news is that Jesus went to His death in your place, and He rose from the dead on the third day, and He's coming back again one day. Now, let's just talk about this for purpose of discussion.

What if the Gospel was just Jesus came, He was crucified, He was buried, and He rose again from the dead? Good news. Okay, and? Dot, dot, dot. I'm waiting for — you know when you see the text, dot, dot, dot? Wait. They're still texting. Wait.

[Congregant says something]

Yeah, right. Yeah. And then it goes off, and you're going, whoa, whoa! What happened? I better not go there. So wait. That's it? No, that's not it. I mean, here we are today in this God's church celebrating the resurrection of Jesus the Christ. But what is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus if the resurrection of Jesus does not include the return of Jesus? Are you with me? Please say yes so I can move on.

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Now think about this. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then Jesus isn't coming back for those He rose from the dead for. Did you get that? Okay, He is risen!

[Congregation says, "He is risen indeed!"]

Thank you. Wow. You guys, that was good. I'm impressed and blessed. But wait, is He coming back?

[Congregation shouts, "Yes!"]

No, He rose from the dead but... Thanks a lot. Bye. I rose from the dead. See ya. Where are You going? No, I rose from the dead. You're on your own, kid. I hope it works out well for you.

[Laughter]

I have to do that to illustrate the point. What's the point? The point is is that the good news, the Gospel, is not just the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's the return of Jesus Christ because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And because if Jesus — now, it gets worse. We're almost through this. Hang in there. If Jesus isn't coming back for those He rose from the dead for, then it's not good news. There's no Gospel. If there's no return of Jesus after the resurrection of Jesus, then there's no Gospel.

Okay, I'll catch my breath and calm down and stop yelling at you. But what if I told you that the first mention of the Gospel, the good news of salvation found in the person of Jesus Christ, the first time it's mentioned in the epistles, it's in the context and inclusive of the pre-tribulation rapture? There's your banana.

[Laughter]

I don't have to get a banana to find the pre-tribulation rapture in it. It is all over the place, okay? *1 Thessalonians 4*: You guys know this passage well, right, if you've been coming here for any length of period of time. The first letter the Apostle Paul is inspired to write at the very beginning of his life and ministry is to this church in Thessalonica. It's a church he started. He was in Thessalonica for, some believe, about maybe three months before he was run out of town. And in that time that he led them to Christ, a saving knowledge of Jesus

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Christ, and started the church, planted the church, he taught them about the rapture.

(Gasp!)

These are new believers. Shouldn't they go through a new discipleship class, a spiritual growth class? Don't they have like a 12-week course on Bible 101? No. Go big or go home or go to Thessalonica where Bible prophecy is taught. He taught them about the pre-tribulation rapture. These are babes in the Lord. They're infants in Christ. They're new believers, grounded in the word of God and sound doctrine at the very beginning of their lives.

I'm sorry I'm yelling again. I'm very excited. I love these people so much. Now, don't imagine for a second that Paul is trying to, like you think I do, trying to figure out a way to insert the pre-tribulation rapture anytime and anywhere he can. No. All he does is proclaim the Gospel. And what comes packaged with the Gospel is the pre-tribulation rapture of the church.

Because this is the Gospel: Jesus came, He was crucified, He was buried, and He rose again from the grave on the third day, defeating death, and He's coming back again one day in the rapture of the church. That's the Gospel. Please don't stop at crucified, buried, rose again. That's the Gospel. That's 1 Corinthians 15, the first four verses.

But that's not the first mention, the principle of first mention. The principle of first mention: The Gospel is the crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and return of Jesus Christ in the rapture of the church. I'm going to read it now. I probably could have done that a little while ago.

[Laughter]

Listen to how Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, writes this, the way he says what he says. **"I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren."** Okay now, talk about mean. Are you saying I'm ignorant?

No, I'm saying I don't want you to be ignorant. Because I was there for three months. When I was there with you, I taught you this stuff. You guys should know this stuff. **"I don't want you to be ignorant concerning those who have fallen asleep, [Speaking of death] lest you sorrow as others who have no hope."**

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You're going to grieve but not like those who don't know Jesus Christ. And here's why. Here's why you don't grieve like the world grieves when somebody dies that you love in Christ. You're going to see them again. How so?

Verse 14. Listen very carefully. **“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep [In death] in Jesus. [We're not done] For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.” [In death]**

Stop right there. Paul thought the rapture was in his lifetime. **“We who are alive...”** What's this **“we”** stuff, Paul? This was almost 2000 years ago. We who are alive and remain, we're going to be raptured. So don't be so downcast. Don't be ignorant concerning — because see, they were freaking out because there was a forged letter from Paul. They stole his ID, identity theft, right, and they put his name on it, set up a social media account with Paul's, you know, picture in it, and posted stuff about “you missed the rapture.” and they're freaking out.

And that's why Paul writes them. He says, you guys, come on. Are you kidding me right now? I taught you this. Don't be ignorant. I don't want you to be ignorant. You didn't miss the rapture. And then he goes on and he encourages them with the Gospel, and he's going to encourage them again.

But did you catch that in *verse 14*? That's the Gospel. **“...And then we who are alive and remain...”** And then *verse 16*, **“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.”**

Make that distinction. I know I harp on you, no pun intended, a lot on the trumpets. Did you get that? Harp, trumpets. There's the trumpet of angels for Israel, the trumpet of God for the church. There's the first trump for Israel, the last trump for the church. This is the trumpet of God.

“And the dead in Christ will rise first.” Those are your loved ones. My mommy, my daughter, all of the loved ones, all of those that I've done memorial services at this beloved church, their bodily resurrection will take place first. They're spirit. **“Absent from the body is present with the Lord.”** But they're going to get their bodies first in the resurrection.

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“Then [Verse 17] we [You and me] who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. [And then he says this] [Verse 18] Therefore comfort [Or encourage] one another with these words.”

So when I get blasted about the pre-trib, the sound doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture... By the way, I'll never shy away or cower or falter. I caught myself one time. I'm just as prone as the next guy. I'm preparing my notes, and I thought, you know, maybe don't say “pre-tribulation rapture” so much. And then I caught myself. I'm like, no.

So I made sure to say it more.

[Laughter]

because here's why. I'm just being very open with you. I just want you to know what my inbox is like, okay? Because I know people are going to go... Yeah, never mind. It's not worth it.

Well, wait a minute, Pastor. Where do you get the pre-tribulation rapture? Okay, okay, I'll go with rapture. I'll take the rapture, caught up, harpazo in the Greek, rapturos in the Latin Vulgate.

By the way, that's your answer. Did we talk about that First Service or was that this service? I don't even remember what service it was. That's really bad. But rapturos in the Latin Vulgate. So if you have a Latin Vulgate, you can say, yeah, no, well, it's not in your Bible — leave it there — but it's in my Latin Bible. But if you have a Greek Bible it says harpazo. I really like rapture a lot better. It just sounds quicker, faster. Harpazo just seems slower. But **“Caught up [In English] together with them in the clouds.”**

So how do you get pre-tribulation rapture out of this banana? I'll tell you why. Because if the rapture was not before the 7-year tribulation, then *verse 18* absolutely makes no sense, at best. At worst, it's cruel. Watch this.

The mountains will be cast into the sea. The islands are gone. Hawaii? Bye-bye. Aloha? Catastrophic, cataclysmic, unspeakable, horrific, unthinkable, catastrophic events, the likes of which have never been seen before. Be encouraged and encourage one another with

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these words. I'm sorry. Yeah, that doesn't work. I'll tell you what does work. We're not going to be here for that. Encourage one another with these words. I just peeled that banana for you, so enjoy it. It's an apple banana.

[Laughter]

You like apple bananas? Okay, I'm going to try to finish the sermon now that it's probably already been over.

John 16: I want to begin reading in *verse 5*. We're almost done. This is Jesus speaking. Listen to what He says. **“But now I go away to Him who sent Me, [The Father] and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper [Holy Spirit, paraklētos] will not come to you. But if I depart, I will send Him to you.”**

In other words, translated, you want Me to go. I'm going to the cross. But after the resurrection, you want Me to go. I know I won't be with you, but after I go — and you want Me to go instead of being with you — I'll be in you.

No, think about that. The disciples are just so filled with sorrow. Their hearts are so troubled. Jesus is going away. No! Don't go! And Jesus says, no, you want Me to go. Because when I go, I'm going to send you the Holy Spirit. So you won't just have Me with you, you'll have Me in you, indwelling you by the Holy Spirit.

Think about that. You have God the Holy Spirit, indwelling you. They've had Jesus all this time with them. Now they've got God the Holy Spirit, dwelling in them. That should bring great comfort. But then it even gets better. I got the wrong text on there.

Verses 1–4, John. Wait, what? I messed up. I did this at like 2:00 in the morning, so be gracious to me. Let's see. This is *John 16*. What did we just read? We just read *John 16*. And then we saw in *16...* Oh, it's supposed to say *John 14*. You know what? Turn in your Bibles to *John 14*. Don't look at the screen.

I want to read *Verses 1–4*. Wow. Jesus is talking to them and says to them, and you know this passage, **“Let not your heart be troubled.”**

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Why would He say that? Because their hearts were troubled. Any time you read in the Scriptures where God says to someone, **“Don't be afraid,”** it's because, well, they were afraid. Otherwise, why would He say, **“Don't be afraid?”**

Don't let your heart be troubled. Why would He say that unless their hearts were troubled? Their hearts were very troubled. Why? Because He just got done telling them, I have to go. You want Me to go.

But don't be troubled in your heart. **“You believe in God, believe also in Me. [And here's the “why”] In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you [Receive you] to Myself; that where I am, [In My Father's house] there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.”**

It's humorous right after this. If you want to read — don't right now because I'm still preaching. But if you go on to *verse 5* right after Jesus says that, Thomas goes, no, I don't know where You're going. Where are you going?

[Laughter]

No, he doesn't... (Chuckling) Yeah, that's “and Thomas too,” I guess, too with Peter.

Okay, what are you so excited about here? Do you know what this is? I mean if I could just simplify it. I hope it's not an oversimplification. It's like Jesus is saying, listen, how can I come back for you if I don't leave in the first place? So I say to you, listen, I'm coming back.

Well, You haven't left.

I'm going to come back for you.

Well, You're right here.

You know when somebody says well, I need to find myself? Dude, I found you. You're right here. I probably didn't need to take it that far. So Jesus is trying to calm them down, settle them down. Listen, I know you don't want Me to go. You need Me to go. Because think about it, you guys. If I don't go, I'm not going to return because I can't return if I don't go. If I don't leave in the first place, how am I going to come back? So I have to go.

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And by the way, where I'm going, you know: My Father's house. And I'm going to prepare a place.

What's this place You're preparing for us?

A bridal chamber. And they would have got it. Just like the recipients of the letter from John there in modern-day Turkey would have understood that he was talking about *Isaiah 11:2*, so too would the disciples have understood exactly what Jesus was saying.

In fact, that's why Jesus says, "...you know." You know what I'm talking about here, you guys. Because in that day the Jewish bridegroom, after the betrothal, the engagement, would go to his father's house and build a room addition for his bride, a bridal chamber to consummate and celebrate the marriage. And then he would come at an hour that nobody knew and receive, abduct, catch up, snatch away, rapture away as a thief in the night, his bride and take her to that place he prepared for her. And they would celebrate and consummate their marriage together for seven days.

And then at the end of the seven - days, years, period, completion, consummation, they would emerge from that bridal chamber for a huge feast, wedding feast of the lamb, after the seven. That's pre-tribulation because the tribulation is for seven years. I like how one said it. While the world is tribulating, we're going to be celebrating. I'll take the latter for seven.

Now listen, don't mess with the typology. Ask Moses how that ended up for him. Not good. That's the type. And please don't miss this. You know this, you guys. When I say this to you, that I'm going to prepare a place for you, this is a bridegroom speaking to his bride at the betrothal. If I go, I have to come back. And I have to go in order to come back.

And when I do come back, I'm going to receive you. I'm not going to come back and stay with you. No, I'm going to come back and take you to be with Me **"...that where I am, there you may be also."**

That's the pre-tribulation rapture. And you don't even need a banana for that.

[Laughter]

Okay, now I'm done.

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Acts 1:9-11. Whew! We made it.

Speak for yourself, Pastor.

Okay, I will. Listen to *verse 9*. I love the Book of Acts. **“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He [*Speaking of Jesus*] was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”**

Here's my close. You like that word “close,” don't you? Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and He's coming back to take us to that place He prepared for us. As He went, so will He come. And that's the good news. And that's the celebration of the resurrection.

And please, as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on this day, let us also with it, let's not be robbed of this. Because the enemy comes to steal, rob from us, steal, kill, and destroy. He wants to steal our hope, blessed hope, kill our joy, and destroy our Christian lives.

Don't let him do that. Let's celebrate the resurrection of Christ knowing that the resurrection of Christ means the return of Christ in the rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ before the 7-year tribulation. You be encouraged and you encourage one another with these words on this Resurrection Sunday.

Yeah! Kaponono, come on up.

[Applause]

Why don't you go and stand up? Boy, that was a good save towards the end there, yeah? Kind of getting off the rails a little bit.

Thank You, Lord, for Your grace, Your mercy, Your peace, Your love, Your resurrection, and yet future, Your soon return when that trumpet sounds. Lord, we just, we can't wait. We can't wait. What a much-needed reminder for us on this day to celebrate Your resurrection because of what it means. It means You're coming back. It means so much. It means everything to us.

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But what it means to us as an encouragement to us is that You're coming back for us. You're returning. You rose from the dead, and You're coming back for us. And we believe it's sooner than any of us could possibly imagine. So, Lord, thank You. But Maranatha. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.