

Start with the End in Mind

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[0:00] Let's all stretch out our hands as we pray for our leader. Father God, we thank you. We thank you for the life of my brother and our brother, James.

We thank you for his obedience. We thank you for all that you've brought him through to this day, to this very moment. Lord, he's been in different places, different churches, different countries, but the mission and the gifting you've given remains the same, and that is to teach the word of God.

So, Lord, I pray that today you will speak through him. I pray, Lord, that there will be nothing else, no other words from himself or from anyone else, but from you alone.

And, Lord, I want to ask everyone to put their hands on their hearts as we listen to the word. God, I pray for open hearts, open ears, open spirits to receive the truth that you are telling us.

Let us not be those who, where the word falls on deaf ears. Let us listen. Let us live out. Let us obey and be the gathering and the scattering that this city desperately needs.

[1:06] So, we lift up this gathering to you, this service the next hour as we read and study your word and learn from your word. We pray for the kids to receive the same truth, the same teachings, because it's from the same word.

Lord, we thank you for all the teachers. And, Lord, we thank you for every single person here. We love you. We praise you. We ask all these things in the mighty name of Jesus. And everyone said, Hey, good morning, everyone.

Wow, we are pretty tight on space. Thank you for those who are willing to stand. Thank you for those who are willing to sit on cushions. I want to challenge you now, because when we read the word of the Lord, something that we've loved to do is actually stand for the word of the Lord.

Because we truly believe that this is not just a book. It's not just the best-selling book of all time.

This is the word of God. So, can I invite you to stand for the word of God?

We're going to have Ellen and Aidan, the theologian, read it for us. What a ring. That's a good ring. Is that inhale, exhale thing really yours? I don't know.

[2:14] That's good, dude. That's good, dude. That's good. Who's first? Is it Ellen? I'm not sure.

Oh, Revelation 1. We're in the book of Revelation, so if you have the book as well, you can have it opened up.

Spread it in half. Just one to... Why don't you do one to eight, and then Aidan does the rest. Okay. One to eight. A reading from the book of Revelations.

Revelations 1. 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 the 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.

Blessed are those who hear, and who keep that what is written in it, 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 the kings of the earth.

[3:43] To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priest 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.

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 of 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, 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.

[4:59] 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 felt at his feet as though dead.

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 in Hades.

Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. As for the mystery of the seven stars you saw at 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.

This is the word of the Lord. Thank you. Please take a seat. Amen. Amen. Amen. I didn't sleep well last night because there's a lot of anxiety.

[6:16] I woke up maybe a few nights just having a dream about someone, fighting someone, chasing someone. I'll tell you, it's been exciting, but anxiety-induced.

Can you all see me? I was told, we did some market research, and they said there's no difference whether I'm standing or sitting. Sorry. So, I'm sorry if you can't see me.

This is all it is. We've been asking this question, Christina and I, and then, of course, Joe and Alex. Actually, what do we do as a family? How do we disciple each other as a family?

What does that look like in this city, in this day and age? Is it just attending church at that point, Saturday evening, 5.30 service? Was that all it is? What is church? And then we started looking into what is the definition of church, and it's the ecclesia.

It's in Acts 2. It's people who are confronted with the gospel, undone by the gospel, cut to the heart, and then they can't help but devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread and prayers.

[7:17] And so then we started thinking, okay, so what does that look like here for us? What does that look like for Kongfok? What does that look like as we're trying to disciple our kids in this city?

This is just the next stage.

Actually, those of us who have been going through it in the summer, we've been going through Exodus, and just watching God just lead his people, lead his people just going from one thing to another. It's nomadic.

It's uncertain. And yet they just keep going. And I've had all of those uncertainties in my mind. I was like, how are we going to fit everyone? I was talking to Deacon David. I was like, I don't know how we're going to fit everyone into this place, and thank you for those who are standing.

And I'm like, we don't even know. And I was asking God, what are we going to do? We've got two groups of people who we love dearly. What does that look like? There's the KFCI that's been around for years. And then you've got the gathering, which only started this time last year.

And then we're going to put them all together. And my encouragement to all of us is, let's just drop all of those and just go, actually, Lord, this is the English gathering of Kongfok Church. The Kongfok Church has a Mandarin district.

[8:21] It has a Cantonese congregation. And now it has an English gathering that meets here in Admiralty Center. And that's what we do. But then I was thinking, but what does church look like for us now? I'll tell you what it looks like.

It looks like there's going to be a table tennis tournament happening after church. Alex Lee is the self-declared champion. So I put a target on his back and go for him. But I don't know.

And actually, I was praying with a mentor of mine the other week, and there was someone who prayed in a foreign language. They were praying in tongues. And it's not something that I've really been used to or exposed to much.

And this person, who I didn't know, was just praying in this language. And then after she prayed, she didn't know what she prayed. Then someone else stood up and actually translated what she

prayed. And the prayer was, you're anxious.

You're anxious. You don't know where you're going. But I've already given you the destination. Just follow me for the next step. And then she repeats it again. But I've already given you the destination.

[9:20] Just follow me for the next step. I can't tell you how much encouragement that was for me. Why? Have you seen the words back there? She did not know that was there.

It literally says destination. And I'm like, oh, my goodness. That's weird. But the truth is, this isn't even the destination, right?

This isn't it. Let me tell you right now, this is not it. And actually, from the beginning all the way to the end, this has always been about one thing, one destination. And that is Jesus. And so as we start this new season together, I was like, you know what will be really cool?

What sermon series should we start? And realizing we're part of a wider thing now, I had Bonnie ask me, what's your sermon series going to be about? I'm like, I don't know. I usually decide on Wednesday. And then it was, let's start with the end in mind.

Let's start with the end in mind. Who's read the book, Seven Habits of Highly Successful People? Stephen Covey, right? It's start with the end in mind, right?

[10:27] If we're going to start this thing, I'd like to know where we're heading. But I'd like to know what's at the end there. Because I don't want to get to the end and then Jesus go, oh, you got it wrong. Do you remember those maths equations that you did at school and you make one mistake and then it messes up the whole quadratic equation?

I don't want to do that. Let's start with the end in mind. And what does Jesus say about the church? So that's what we're going to start. And that's what we're going to really go through, I hope, in these next few weeks.

If you're part of KFCI, you've actually been through the letters to the church only a few years ago. We called it Dear Church. I don't know if you remember that. But we're just going to go through it again because no doubt, well, actually, I forgot what I preached at that point. So you definitely will have forgotten.

So we're just going to go through it together. So the book of Revelation, right at the end, filled with imagery, filled with prophecy, complicated. We don't usually start there.

We should have started in the book of John. But we're not. We're starting with the end in mind, the book of Revelation. Who wrote the book of Revelation? Sorry, we've been doing something slightly differently. Agnes is putting the hand up.

[11:27] Were you that student in class that put the hands up for answers? Agnes, who wrote the book of Revelation? John, the apostle John. Does anyone know where he wrote this letter?

Someone said it. Patmos. Patmos is an island. Was John an old man or a young man? He was a very old man. He was a very old man.

If you look at, I mean, if you look at my Bible, I'm sure your Bible has the title of it as well. It's the Revelation to John. A couple of things, just a note here. Actually, this is just, there is, there's going to be a lot of things that we see, a lot of prophecies.

But there's only one revelation. It's not revelations. Revelation. The Revelation to John. Now, if I was to expand the title, just to be more accurate as to what it actually is, it's the Revelation to John of Jesus Christ from Jesus Christ to the church.

The Revelation to John from Jesus Christ of Jesus Christ to the church. Okay? So that's what this is about. This is Jesus writing to the churches through John, and he's revealing himself.

[12:33] And I'll tell you a little bit what's happening around there. The church at the time, this is AD 96. So this is towards the end of the first century. John, as you just said, is in Patmos.

He's actually, it's a prison. He was sent there a few years before that. Because after Jesus died, persecution started to really happen against the Christians. By the time AD 67 came, Emperor Nero was starting to really build up the pressure.

Christians were getting dragged out of homes. They were getting murdered and killed using horses, ma fancy, everything. It wasn't pretty. And it kept building up, building up. To the point where actually in AD 70, Jerusalem is completely destroyed.

It's wiped out. And Nero wasn't even the worst. You fast forward another two decades in AD 92, then another emperor comes, Domitian. And he's super insecure. So he does this thing where every single person in the Roman Empire must worship who?

Worship me, worship him. So what they'd have to do is when they go to the temple, they would have to take a bit of incense and they would have to spray it onto the altar. And then they would have to say the words, Caesar is Lord. So he was so insecure.

[13:38] He was like, you know that person who's just insecure? Just tell me how good I am. Tell me how much you love me. Tell me that you worship me. So then he makes everyone do this. Everyone has to do by law. Of course, John, the one whom Jesus loved, couldn't do that.

He managed to survive all the way till now, but he couldn't do that. So then he refuses to. And what happens then? He gets arrested. He gets taken away. But they can't martyr him. They can't kill him. Why can't you kill John?

Ellen, why can't they kill John? Because he knows he's loved. Because he knows he's loved. And everyone knows that he's loved. He's the leader of the church. He's one of the biggest members. What happens if you kill one of the key leaders of a movement?

You martyr them and you just keep pushing the can down the road. In fact, you start up something that actually you may not be able to contain.

So they don't kill him. They do something else. And it's quite smart, actually. They take him away to a small island and let him die there. And on this island, that's where he gets the revelation. This is where he gets what Jesus does something.

[14:44] You see, now, verse 10, and I think it was Aidan who read it. You can follow along as I skip around this chapter. Verse 10, this is John saying, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day.

I was in the spirit. So he's praying. He's in the island. He's praying. What's he praying for? The persecution is happening. So no doubt he's praying for the churches. He's praying for all the people. He's like, help them, protect them, guide them, be with them, bless them.

And he's just praying. And you can imagine there's pain in that. Because there's people that he knows. There's people that he loved. In fact, John was a pastor of a church for a longer time that we're going to talk about next week. And so he's praying in the spirit.

And then Jesus decides to respond to that pain. He decides to respond to John's request. And how does he respond? He peels back the curtain.

He opens up. He's like, actually, it's time for you to see what's behind the curtain. Reality isn't quite as you think it is. You may think you're stuck on this island with all these things happening.

[15:40] And my kingdom is going to fall because they're killing all of us. Let me show you something else. John, you were with me 60-something years ago. You know I loved you. You saw an image of me.

You remember an image of me. But I want to see you as I am now. Isn't that terrifying, that thought? So Jesus decides, John, now is the time for me to show myself to you.

We're going to go through the book of Revelation. And some of the imagery is jarring, to say the least. Some of it is like, what? But this is the word of God. This is the end in mind. This is the destination.

I've told you about one of my habits that I am very embarrassed about a lot. It's often when I watch movies, I like to read the Wikipedia plot beforehand. Because I get all anxious.

Are you just like judging? Are you just shocked? Everything. Even Barbie. Does she die? What happens to Ken? I'm like, do you know why?

[16:41] Because I don't like investing in characters that go bad. Only for me to then be disappointed. And if someone's really bad, I'm like, oh, but there's hope in him. Because I've read ahead. And I know that at some point, accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

And it'll be okay. So I have that. And it puts my mind at ease. And I'm just like, oh, I can watch this whole movie now. Oh, I know he's dying. It's okay. They'll win in the end. Revelation does the same thing for me.

Someone once described Revelation as, sum up this whole complicated book. And he says, I can do it in two words. Jesus wins. That's it. Jesus wins. So we start with the end in mind.

Because in the coming weeks, we're going to find out Jesus actually speaks to his church. He speaks to us. Wouldn't you want to know what that is about? Because one thing I'll tell you, I don't know the reason why you came today.

But I hope it's for Jesus. Actually, because even church, whether it's KFCI, whether it's the gathering, whatever it might be, it's not really just for the community. It's not just for the teaching. It's not just for the singing. There's only really one person you should be here for.

[17:40] As I was praying to God, going, tell me, what should I be talking about to us today? What about, what is community going to look like? What's scattering going to look like?

And I felt the Lord just tell me one thing. Bring them to me. Bring them to me. Not you. Not Kong Fu. Not the gathering. Not Amruti Center. Bring them to me.

It's all about him. Everything is about him. But the question is, do we know him? That Jesus that Aidan read from verse 13 to 16, that's not the Jesus I remember.

That's not the Jesus in Sunday school. That's not the blonde hair, blue eye Jesus, let all the children come to me, give them a hug. This Jesus looks terrifying. My challenge to us today is, which Jesus are you worshipping?

Is it this one here? Jesus pulls back the curtain and says, John, I need you to see something. I know that you're hurting. I know you're worried. I know you're going to die soon, but I need you to see something. Because once you see the ending, you're going to be okay.

[18:48] You're going to be okay. So we're going to go through this. And there's only really two things that I wanted to point out from this passage. And if you go with me here, verse eight. Okay, verse eight. I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Something that you need to know about Jesus is he's the beginning and he's the end. Later in verse 17, he says, I am the first and the last. Alpha and Omega are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. He's saying everything.

Everything involves me. Everything comes from me. Why do you even have church? Forget the gathering of one years old. Kongfuk Church of 30 old fashioned. Nearly 40 years. Is that right? 40 years?

Tony, are we nearly 40 years for Kongfuk? Kongfuk Church was not started by anyone but Jesus. The church itself started from Jesus is. We are the body.

He starts it. He's the head. And the beginning and the end. I'm the Alpha and Omega. Everything starts from me. The fact that you can even wake up. The fact that you can even breathe. The fact that you can even know who I am comes from me.

[19:55] Do you realize that? Or do you think you're sat there? Do I think I'm sat here because of the good stuff that I've done? Because I'm a kind of a good person. So God's shouted blessing onto me. And no.

Jesus says, I'm the beginning and the end. Genesis 1. In the beginning, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters. John chapter 1. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was flesh. And he came and he dwelt among men. Jesus was up there at the very, very beginning.

You fast forward to Revelation 21, 22. He's there at the very end. And he's going to wipe away every tear. Do we recognize that? Even when we do church. Even when we do church.

Do we realize that it's actually all about him? When he told me. When he said, bring them to me. I had a conviction there. Because I think some people who walk into a church.

They're like, oh, that's a really good church. Such nice people. Such good community. Oh, I love the singing. Love the teaching. But then they walk out.

[20:54] And actually, they never really met Jesus. In fact, as a pastor, I'll tell you. And I've shared this before as a confession. I can go through a whole week. Preach a sermon.

Lead worship. Meet people. Do Bible studies. I can go through a whole week and completely ignore Jesus. Have you done that? You can go about your day. Go about your way. You can be in church. You can be here right now. And you don't know that Jesus is right next to you. He says, I'm the beginning and the end. I'm the Alpha. I'm the Omega. Everything starts from me. Everything is for me.

Everything is through me. And everything will end. With me. The question is. Do we have that in our minds? The church that he was writing to had really two things going on.

One was persecution. And the other was complacency. And we'll read that as we see the different letters. Because some churches were just suffering so much because they were constantly getting hunted down. And there were other churches that were starting to give in to the Babylon of the day.

[21:54] The Rome of the day. The Hong Kong of the day. The comforts. The luxuries. We have a nice space. Look at that view that we have. And you can come in. You can enjoy the song.

Because you love karaoke. Because you're Chinese. And we are going to have a karaoke by here, by the way. That's something that we think is a great. Gabriel Wong is the head of the Karaoke

Association of Kung Fu.

That's happening. And he's so proud. And he's so proud of it. Taylor Swift. Here we come. So. My fear.

My fear is that we come here. Do this. And then we leave. And we completely ignore the Alpha and Omega beginning and the end. The first and the last.

That's my fear. Because we can get sucked into all the things of this city. All the things of this church. Jesus, the first thing he says. I am the Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the end.

[22 : 52] Everything. Everything. Is about me. Do you understand that? I think I struggle to understand that sometimes. The other thing about beginning and the end is.

If he's the beginning and he's the end. Guess who's the middle? Him. That's kind of the point. We know that he came.

We know that he will come back. But what about just in the middle? What's that like? I think a lot of us. A lot of us in the church. We live as though Jesus came. And. It's he.

He was pretty cool. He did some cool stuff back then. And we. It's not in our minds that he's coming back again. Verse 7. He says. I am coming. Behold. He is coming with the clouds. And every eye will see him.

Do you live as though every. Do you live as though. He's coming back. Another confession. When I was 20. How old are you, Kibon? 20. 24. Recently just got married.

[23 : 52] But still. A child inside. At heart. I would go to work. Because I was a teacher. I'd go to work. And I'd come home early. Because teaching. I got to come home. Around 3 or 4. Christina.

My hard working wife. Would come back. Around 6. Or 7. So I had 2 hours. I had 2 hours. To play as many games of FIFA.

As I possibly could. Back then. I didn't have. Find my iPhone. That would have been really helpful. So I could track. See when she's coming back. To see if I could play one more game. But I always. I always had that. Like I know she's coming back. So I got to live accordingly. That's a terrible analogy. By the way. Because it really is trying to.

No. But don't do that. That's what I'm saying. But it was on my mind constantly. Fast forward a couple of years. It didn't get any better. We had a child. We had a child. Well the first few years.

[24 : 48] Carrier. You'll find this Alex Lee. Carrier. You can bounce around. While still playing. That works. And then we got to take them into nursery. And they were there from eight till six. That's a long time for a one year old.

Actually Ruben was 11 months. When we dropped him off at nursery. From eight till six. It was a long time. And Christina would be like. Oh well you finish early. Why don't you go and pick him up. I was like. Yeah yeah yeah. Sure.

I'll go pick him up. Of course I get home from school. I could play two games. I could play two games at least. But I always have that. I'm living. I know that. I know that something's coming. Of course.

Flip that. There's a much better analogy somewhere. But do we live. As though he is actually coming back. Or have we actually forgotten. Do we live as though. Actually. We can do whatever we want.

But one day he's going to come. And every eye will see him. Every tongue will confess. And every knee will bow. Maybe a better analogy is the typhoon. As my brother said. When we knew.

[25 : 43] The typhoon 10 was coming. We prepared. And as Hong Kongers. We cleared the supermarket shelves. But I'll be preparing. I'll be living with the end in mind.

I'll be living with eternity in sight. Because if eternity is in sight. Then actually. It should impact how we're living today. Right now. Right. Here's the beginning and the end. And then.

We see Jesus. I'm not going to put an image of this picture. But actually. I think the kids might actually be trying to draw this. In their Sunday school class. Because my brother's teaching them. Which is another plug.

For why we need more helpers. Do not let my brother teach them. For that much longer. So John's praying. He's like. God.

My heart is breaking. From what I'm hearing outside. Is there any hope? And then Jesus peels back the curtain. And John. Verse 12. And then I turned to see the voice.

[26 : 40] That was speaking to me. And on turning. I saw seven golden lampstands. We're going to find out more about lampstands. They're the church. They symbolize. They picture the church.

Verse 13.

And in the midst of the lampstands. Stop there. In the midst. We're going to talk about more of this later. Jesus is standing right in the midst. In the middle of his church. He's actually there. He's not above. He's not outside. He's not behind. He's not beneath. He's in the midst. He's standing right in the middle. With his church. And he's standing there. And then we start to see a picture.

Now bear in mind. When John describes this. Now imagine John's just praying. And then suddenly he's zapped away. And then he sees his vision. Imagine you now. Well some of you might be falling asleep.

But in some of you. Imagine that you're going about your way. You're going to the toilet. And then suddenly boom. Jesus shows you this vision. And he shows you what he looks like.

[27:35] And he shows you something. That is completely incomprehensible to you. You've never seen anything like it. We've heard that term before right. I've never seen anything like it. We can.

Maybe a different species. Maybe my dog Walter. If I took Walter to a different place. And introduced him to something. He wouldn't be able to. He doesn't have the word. Well he doesn't have words anyway. But he wouldn't have the terminology. To describe what he's looking at. To his canine friends. He doesn't have any friends by the way. It's really sad. But he literally is just him. He thinks we're like dogs as well. That's all we have.

So when John describes Jesus. I need you to understand. This may not be the exact picture of Jesus. He says he's like a son of man. Like white wool.

His eyes were like a flame. He's like. He's just trying to grasp the words here. He's like. I just need something to help you. You understand what I'm seeing here. And what I'm seeing is out of this world. So the first thing is. Jesus is the beginning and the end.

[28:32] He's the alpha and omega. He's the first and the last. The second thing is. He is out of this world. If you. If the Jesus that you have. Is someone that you can truly understand.

And be comfortable with. Maybe he does. Have blonde hair. Maybe he is just friendly. If that's the Jesus that you have. The Jesus that you pull out of your pocket. Whenever you have an exam. That you need to do. That you're worried about.

The Jesus that you pull out of your pocket. Whenever you're stressed. I've got to tell you. That might not be Jesus. If your Jesus is a bobbling head. Just saying yes to you.

Caring for you. Looking out for you. That might not be it. Because the Jesus that we see here. The one that is peeled back behind the curtain. Is very. Very different. And so he goes.

He's in the midst of the lampstands. Verse 13. Like a son of man. We've seen that word before. Which book have we seen that before? There's a prophecy from the Old Testament. Where have we seen it? Isaiah.

[29:27] There's definitely one in Isaiah. There's another one. Daniel. Daniel. In the book of Daniel. In chapters 7 and 10. Daniel sees lots of visions. And he's describing someone who looks like a son of man.

Jesus. He sees a vision of Jesus as well. And John knows this. So he's describing something. He's like. This must be something similar to what Daniel saw. He's like a son of man.

And then he starts to give a description. He starts to describe what he looks like. Because you can tell a lot from the way someone dresses. Right? Aaron's got a nice flowery shirt on. What does that tell us about you, Aaron? What's one trait?

That he likes flowers? Do you like flowers? He's a flowery kind of guy. Says his wife. There you go. He's a flowery kind of guy. If you saw what I wear.

It's usually black, navy, khaki, and white. That's all I wear. I'm a very kind of simple kind of guy. Because I'm a very boring kind of guy. And Jordans. And Jordans and Ultraboosts. Yeah, exactly.

[30:27] But Christine will tell you. If you leave me. If you leave me to decide where I'm going to eat. There's only a few places. There's a handful. And it's the same every time. Because I'm that kind of person. Loyal. Is the word. Loyal.

Loyal. Loyal. And faithful. Yes. So from Jesus' attire. You see a couple of things. And I want to break them down a little bit. He's clothed in a long robe.

So clothed in a long robe. There's different explanations. Maybe the first one. There could be. Is actually kings wore long robes. Maybe it's the same robe that Jonathan put around David.

Represents. Actually, we know that Jesus is both king. And priest. Actually, and prophet. And so maybe this is Jesus in all his glory as a king. Because in verse five.

And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. The firstborn of the dead. The ruler of kings on earth. Jesus is now king. So he comes in this long robe. But it's more than just a robe of a king.

[31 : 26] There is more than that. Because around the robe. On top of the robe. Is a golden sash around his chest. Who wore a golden sash? Does anyone know? I just gave you a clue.

It begins with P. Priests. Priests would wear a golden sash. And so we talked about this in the book of Exodus. Where at the end, they create the tabernacle.

And this inner sanctuary called the Holy of Holies. That one person. The high priest would go in there one day a year. And it's only him. He would wear the robe. And he would wear the sash. And who is the priest?

The word priest is actually engineers, I believe, have a similar word. It's called pontifex. Which is the bridge builder. The one who connects two.

The one who connects two things. So Jesus wearing this robe is king. Wearing this sash. He is also the high priest. The same robe that the great priest Aaron would have worn as well. And he's saying, I have given the sacrifice.

[32 : 26] I have made the way. I have interceded between two parties that were separated. They had no way to get back to each other. But I stand in the middle and I connect the two. I am the bridge. Jesus introduces himself as the king and as a priest.

The hairs of his head were white. Like white wool. Like snow. He's again using the words from Daniel here. Daniel chapter 7 verse 9. He talks about someone called the ancient of days.

Who had this white hair that was just like snow. What does that say? That says Jesus is completely ageless. He is there at the beginning. He is there at the end. He was there when Assyria rose. When Persia rose. When the Greeks rose. When the Romans rose. Every empire that rises and falls. Jesus. The one with the white hair. The ancient one. The ancient of days.

Ageless. His kingdom stands above them all. Whatever you're going through here. Is a blip. In eternity. He wins.

[33 : 27] And he's completely in control. He is ageless. The other thing about wool and snow. Is that he was pure.

He was. He was the lamb. He was the sacrificial lamb. The pure. How was he the priest? Was because he gave himself up. The sinless one. The one who had. Not sinned at all.

Who knew no sin. Was placed on the altar for us. Like snow. Like wool. Pure. But he wasn't just pure.

His eyes were like a flame of fire. So he wasn't just pure. He was purifying. Fire we know purifies. It refines. They say that your eyes are the windows to yourself.

Can you imagine if someone looks at you. I mean. Paul you've got quite nice eyes. I see. It's nice. But if I imagine Paul's eyes.

[34 : 23] Look to the person next to you now. Just for a second. It might be a little bit awkward. And imagine they had fire in their eyes. My wife sometimes has fire in her eyes.

Usually when I leave the toothbrush on the right. And not on the left. It's on the right. Imagine if you saw someone who had fire in their eyes.

Piercing straight through to your soul. He's got white hair. So he's pure. But he's also purifying to you. Imagine the fear that that would come with.

Purifying. Carry on. We're on verse 15 now. His feet were like burnished bronze. Refined in a furnace. Commentators think he's referring here to.

Actually in the book of Daniel. In chapter 2. There's another vision. There's another vision that King Nebuchadnezzar has. Where actually he sees this statue. And it represents the kingdoms that are falling. And the feet were made of iron and clay.

[35 : 30] Partly iron and partly clay. And he's saying. Actually that's what makes it brittle. That's what makes it weak. And that's why your kingdom will fall. That's what Daniel's telling the king in that time.

But here we have feet that are burnished bronze. Refined in a furnace. But these feet are tested. They are made of bronze. And they are steadfast. And they are unshakable. His kingdom.

Is ruling forever. Cannot be moved. As I'm describing these traits to you. Just picture this image of Jesus. Who he is.

And do a spot the difference with your Jesus. Do a spot the difference with the Jesus that you hang out with. That you pray to. That you talk to. And if you're like. Oh I don't quite know what kind of Jesus I have.

Well. Have a think about the way you talk to him. Your prayers. That'll tell you a little bit. About who you think Jesus is. How you think about it. Jesus can you do this for me.

[36 : 26] Can you do this for me. Jesus is okay. Should I go for this girl. Jesus should I do this. Should I do this. That Jesus. I have a feeling. Is not the same as this Jesus. Jesus. And so here we are.

His feet were burnt like burnished bronze. Refined in a furnace. Tested. And his voice was like the roar of many waters. Again. The version in Daniel. The vision that Daniel sees.

Is very similar. There's lots of parallels here. And that one. His voice was like the sound of a multitude. Can you imagine. Waters. Those of you who like to be in waters. When you buy the waters.

And you hear the water crashing on the rocks. And the waves. You hear how big the water sounds. How all encompassing it is. Or maybe another more recent analogy is. The typhoon.

When you walk out. And you just feel the wind. In all his force. His voice. Is all encompassing. Like roar of many waters.

[37 : 24] It drowns out the empty. Rhetoric. Of the lies that we have here. It drowns out the distractions that we have. It drowns out.

Other people's voices. That's his voice. When he speaks. You can hear. The whole room. Is filled. With his voice. That's the Jesus.

That we worship. And then finishing off here. Verse 15. 16. In his right hand. He holds. He held the seven stars. Which one. Is the seven angels. That we'll read about.

In the next couple weeks. But actually. Back in those times. Seven stars. Also represented. The known universe. They had at the time. So this is the Jesus. That holds the universe. In his hands. Holds the whole.

Cosmic universe. In his hands. This is the Jesus. That is introduced to us. Not the same Jesus. Well actually. He is the same Jesus. That John hung out with. 60 years ago. But this Jesus. Looks very different.

[38 : 19] In his right hand. He held the seven stars. And from his mouth. This is where it gets really. If you wanted to draw this out. From his mouth. Came a sharp. Two-edged sword. The words that he speaks. Would pierce.

Your very soul. And not a. Long. Fencing kind of sword. This is a close combat. Kind of dagger. Jesus comes right up to you. Right up to us.

And pierces to the very depths. Of our soul. With his truth. It's very close combat. And finally. And his face. Was like the sun.

Shining in full strength. I mean. That's easy to imagine. We're in Hong Kong. Today's sun. If we go out now. After the service. At 1230. If you tried to look up. At the sun.

It wouldn't be good for you. It doesn't end well. At full strength. We. In the summer. We try and hide from the sun. Try and stay in the shelter. Away from it.

[39 : 14] Because we know that. If we spent too long here. We would disintegrate. Let alone look at it. And so. What's John's response to that? As he sees his image. As he's trying to describe to us.

This. Terrifying image. Of who Jesus is. Right now. Verse 17. And when I saw him. I fell at his feet. As though dead. That is the.

Right response. Imagine. If you saw. This Jesus. What would you do? He falls at his.

Feet. As though dead. He doesn't die. Even though we know. In the old testament. That the glory of the Lord. God has that power. He is that holy. That when someone touches the ark. And they shouldn't be. They're gone.

God says to Moses. You can't hang out with me. You can't. Be in my presence. Because you would die. And so. John falls at his feet. As though dead.

[40 : 11] And this is where I'll finish. Because Jesus does something. That's actually very interesting. That is very different. To actually. The book of Daniel. When Daniel sees this vision. In Daniel chapter 10.

He also says. I had no strength. It was only me that saw it. And I was just terrified. And I had no strength. But then it was an angel. Actually. That came and touched him. The angel touches Daniel. And says. Fear not. Oh loved one. Fear not. He says it twice. I always find it fascinating. Whenever God speaks. Or whenever there is a supernatural interaction. To the natural world. Even when. The heavens opened up. At Jesus' baptism. What did God say? I mean. He doesn't speak much. In the New Testament. But when he speaks. What does he say to Jesus? This is my son.

With whom I am well pleased. This is my beloved son. With whom I am well pleased. This is the one whom I love. And then Daniel. When he gets. When he's. When he's weak. And just terrified. An angel touches him.

[41:09] And says. Fear not. Greatly loved one. Do we recognize that? How loved we are. Like John realizes. Now that's the book of Daniel.

An angel touches him. Because if. If God touched him. It still wouldn't be good. But in this one. In the book of Revelation. When I saw him. I fell at his feet. As though dead. But he laid his right hand on me.

Saying. Fear not. I am the first and the last. And the living one. He laid his right hand. On John. Because something's different now.

Jesus has made the way. He's the king. He's the prophet. He's the priest. That has paved the way. He's the bridge. That then now allows. Someone like John.

To be touched. By Jesus. And so he says. Fear not. And the first. And the last.

[42:04] He's basically saying. Don't be afraid John. Everything's going to be. Okay. Everything. Don't we all need. That person sometimes.

To come and just tell us. Everything's going to be alright. In the end. Everything will be alright. And if things are not alright. It's not the end. That's what Jesus comes.

And just says. I am the first and the last. I have the first say. And I will have. The final say. So whatever persecution. Is happening. Whether you're going to die today. Or whether you're going to die. In another ten years.

It doesn't matter. I am the first. And I am the last. I am the living one. I died. And behold. I am alive. Forevermore. And I have the keys.

Of death and Hades. I recently had a friend. Who's father. Who's not been well. And we were just praying. Together. And preparing.

[42:58] Preparing for this rollercoaster ride. Of when is it going to happen. And as we were praying. Just felt so. Just great comfort. In those words. That Jesus said. Fear not. I'm the first and the last.

I hold the keys. No one else. I hold the keys. And I'm alive forevermore. Is that image of Jesus. In your mind. As we go about church. And he's going to talk to the church. More terrifying. Is this being. That comes. Introduces himself. Peels back the curtain. Then starts talking to John. And saying.

Tell the church this. Tell my body. This. I want to find out. What he says. And I hope you do too. Because this.

Isn't about. Just us doing church. In a nice. Cozy. Warm. Fuzzy way. If he is coming back. If he is real. Are we.

[43:54] Preparing our hearts. For him. In the right way. And do we fall. At his feet. Recognizing. That he is so much bigger. He is beginning. And the end. He is also. Out.

Of. This world. Beyond what our minds. Can comprehend. That humbles me. I don't know whether it is for you. If anyone you meet. Any. Church worker. Any pastor. Any congregation. Anyone who. Makes you feel as though. They have got Jesus sussed. And oh. Actually we understand Jesus. I know what Jesus likes. Oh. Jesus doesn't like that. Oh. Jesus doesn't like you dyeing his hair. Your hair. Jesus doesn't like you doing this.

Jesus doesn't. I don't know. I look at this Jesus. And I can just do what John says. And I think he was like this. But there's something about it. That makes me afraid.

But there's something about it. That also gives me comfort. That he has the final say. That he truly does. Win. Does that fill you with faith?

[44:51] I hope it does. Does that fill you with. Okay. I need to reorder my life. A little bit. Because my. If he came now. If this guy came now. That sword is coming straight in.

I'm not trying to strike fear in you. Because the first thing he says. Is fear not. It's not about fear. It's not about getting you to the point. Where you're afraid of this being. So that you would get your life in order.

It's not that. Because every time. Heaven comes down. The message is always the same. Love. Love. Love. Do you realize how much you are loved?

Perfect love drives out that fear. Love. It covers a multitude of sins. And maybe for me. The most important verse in all of this. I want you to turn to it. I want you to look at it. I want you to highlight it. And scribble on it.

Is chapter one. Verse five. To him who loves us. And has freed us. From our sins. By his blood. That's it. You're going to take anything from today.

[45:49] That's the verse. To him who loves us. And has freed us. From our sins. By his blood. And made us a kingdom. He is king.

Prophet. And priest. He is the alpha. And omega. He is the first. And the last. He was dead. But now he is alive. Forevermore. Do you know that Jesus?

I pray that. When people walk in here. When you walk in here. When I walk in here. We will meet Jesus. I think that's why he says.

Bring them to me. Don't bring them to church. Bring them. To me. I have a final question for you. Those of you who have been in church.

Who's been in church here for more than. Who's been a Christian for more than. 10 years. 15. 20. 25.

[46:50] 30. Going strong Albert. 35. 40. 40. 45. 50. Albert.

Then you'll have heard this. Will you accept Jesus. As your Lord and Savior.

You'll have heard that. And many of you. Yeah I do. Yeah. I want us to pause and just finish there. Just for a second. Think about that question again.

Will you accept Jesus as your Lord. And Savior. This isn't. will you accept Jesus to be the guy who will help you through your exams and that tough relationship?

The one who's going to help you have a comfortable life where you'll feel fulfilled and happy. No, that's the genie from Aladdin. It's a different guy. He's not the beginning and the end.

[47:48] He's not the first and the last. Will you accept Jesus as your Lord? In every other context, when we think of the word Lord, we think this is serious.

That guy, when you give someone the permission to be your Lord, he is in control of your everything. And yet we so casually go, yeah, he's my Lord. Which part of your life tells me that Jesus is your Lord?

Which part of your life tells me that Jesus is your Lord? I ask myself that question. Often it's no part. Because he's my Lord, but now he lets me do whatever I want.

He doesn't micromanage. So my whole day, my whole week doesn't really have anything to do with him. Then he's not your Lord. Which part of our lives show us that Jesus really is our Lord and our Savior?

He loves us and he freed us by his blood. He saved us. We were drowning. We were dying. We were blind. We were lost.

[48:53] But he saved us. He saved you. So what Paul says to the church in Ephesus is that remember at one time you were separated from Christ.

You were strangers to the covenants of promise. You didn't have hope and you didn't have God in the world. But Christ, because of what he did, now in Christ Jesus, he came and preached peace to those who were near and to those who were far off.

He broke down that dividing wall of hostility. He became the priest, the bridge builder for us. He made a way so that we would be households and members in the household of God.

Now he's the cornerstone and we are the stones that circle around him. We are the living stones that he puts around him. But he's the head. Will you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

Will you recognize that you need saving? Would you submit to him and allow him to be your center? Because if this book is to be believed, if this is what is coming, and I'm not an end times kind of guy, repent because Jesus is coming tomorrow and sell everything.

[50:06] Move to Hawaii. Sorry, that's my own personal dream. Move to Hawaii. But I'm just like, God, but if this is you, then I need to move my furniture around in my house.

Because everything is centered around me right now. But if this is truly who you are, I will accept you as my Lord and Savior. Would you give me grace and mercy as I slowly move my furniture around to put you in the center of everything.

I'm going to invite Paul, Alex, and the worship team to come up. I just want to, we're going to finish with a song which is familiar to all of us. But that song that we sang earlier, I bring you more than a song.

You're looking right into my heart. I'll encourage you. Don't sing this if you're still holding on to your version of Jesus, to your bobblehead.

I like my bobblehead Jesus. Well, you keep your bobblehead Jesus. But I'm here to tell you, he's not the Alpha and Omega. He's not the first and the last.

[51 : 19] He cannot be contained. Tim Keller said, there is only really one way to respond to Jesus. And that is radically.

That is extremely. He's either your Lord or he's not. There is only one way to respond to him. You either ignore him, run away from him, or you kneel down before him and make him the center of everything.

Anything in the middle is not appropriate. It doesn't work. You can't live moderately for a Typhoon 10. You can't, oh, I'm going to kind of go about my way.

Still do the things. Typhoon's going to sweep you up. He's the center. May he be our Lord and our Savior.

Let's pray. Jesus, we come to you and we respond to your message to the church.

[52 : 25] Thank you for revealing yourself to us. Gotta say, it's a little bit scary. Freaks us out a little bit. But Lord, we work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is you who worked in us both to will and to work for your good pleasure. We know that all of this is about love. Because you loved us. You freed us. You made the way for us to be able to connect with you so you can touch us and say, fear not.

I started it all and I will end it all. It will be on my terms. I'm the first and the last. I died when I am alive forevermore.

And I hold the keys. Lord, we take comfort in that. Because often our own lives are just spiraling out of control. We don't know what tomorrow holds but we take great comfort in the fact that we know who holds our tomorrow.

the ancient of days. The Alpha and Omega. The one who was pierced for our sins so that we would live and have life to the full.

[53 : 43] We make you the center, Lord. Every day we choose to take up our cross and we make you the center of our lives. And would you, would you, Lord, be the center of our church?

We don't want to do church if you're not here. We don't want to gather if it's not for you. Thank you, Lord.