

Revelation 1, 2 (Conrad Bowman) (11-25-07)

Norma Bowman passed out the roster and asked everyone to sign in and make sure their contact information was correct.

Revelation chapter 1. We covered pretty thoroughly the first part of it, which is about the first 7, 8, or 9 verses. So, I'm going to start with verse 9, and we'll attack the rest of this and then go from there. Ok.

Mr. Hinkle, as soon as this class is over, remind me, and you can have this copy of the Notes on it (Revelation), this is the first 40 pages or so of what will probably be about 200 pages. That'll catch you up with the other stuff.

Now here's something I want to point out to you. Whenever you go to Scripture study, and you want to get a good handle on things, you can always remember this. You had what was promised in Genesis, and all of the commitments that need to be made to man were made in Genesis. There you had Adam and Eve and the fall, and we're all familiar somewhat with that story, and God's promise of a redeemer to Eve. Ok. That Redeemer would be redefined later as the Kinsman Redeemer of Israel. But it's the Redeemer. And that was to Eve and Adam. Then you move the story up to Abraham. And Abraham, God chose a family through which He would bless all people. And to Abraham, the head – the patriarch of that family, He promised real estate. He promised the land. That land would be reaffirmed a little bit later to the nation. Because out of Abraham grew Jacob. And then from Jacob – Jacob had 12 sons and those were the 12 Tribes of Israel. And the promise that was made to Abraham was reaffirmed to Jacob and to his progeny – to his children. Alright. The rest of Scripture, up until the gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – it's the record of God acting on that promise, attempting to get those people into the land, and their absolute refusal to go. They said they wanted to go, but they absolutely refused to abide by the things He told them they had to do in order for Him to put them in there. So, you come up to the gospels, and the gospels kind of wrap up the offer of real estate and the Kinsman Redeemer, and all of that. It's kind of a cap on all that God had promised from Genesis 1 right on up to the end of Matthew. Now you remember, at the end of Matthew you have the – at the end of the gospels you have the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. So, that was the cap on all that He had promised from the beginning up to this point. The Church was not in there yet. So you go to Acts chapter 2 and you read in Acts chapter 2, then God's dealing with Israel and His promises and the blessing He intended for all mankind from beginning. And you go to Acts chapter 2, and it has this amazing

event that occurred when the Holy Spirit came down ten (10) days after Christ ascended, the Holy Spirit descended, and you have the birth of the Church. Now this should pique your interest, because this is where you are today. You enter the scene of God's providence in His promise in Acts chapter 2. And now the Church is born, and you have this period during which the Church is developing and representing God, and God is pouring His blessings to all of mankind. But He's not doing it through that nation any longer, He kind of turns His back to them, and He's doing it through the Church, who we learn a little bit later is the Bride of the Son. So, you have this whole other story that inserts itself into the history of God's dealing with His promises to Israel all of this time. And that's a lot, that's all of the OT, all of the prophets, all of the patriarchs, the Psalms, the Proverbs, all the rest of it, deals with His delivering His promises to Israel. And now you have this story about the Bride. Now, if you think about it, that's kind of logical. It's kind of logical. Because as you were growing up, you grew up growing in logic and grabbing all the information you could as a person, and then you got to be in your teenage years, hormones kicked in. And new things began to happen in your life. And then in just a short period of time, usually from late teens to the mid-20's, this urge to unite with somebody just overtook you and drove your life. That's kind of the way the Church is. When God began to woo the Church through the Son, and secure in the Church a Bride for His Son, the Bride acted like the brides of every age act. We turn to the Son as He presents Himself in adoration, we forget everything else, and His image becomes our full focus. Well, that's what the Church Age is. It's an interlude in the middle of God's dealing with His people that He committed things to by covenant. Now, He doesn't make a covenant with His Bride – that's a prenuptial agreement. There's no such thing in God's sight. Ok. Man adopts those sort of things to protect assets. Well, the Bride doesn't have any assets. She's presenting herself as a pauper to a Billionaire. And she's going to marry a Guy who has all the assets. So, she doesn't need a pre-nup. You know. There's nothing to protect there. That's our position relative to God.

So, here's this interlude of budding romance and learning adoration of the Groom on the part of – eventually that culminates, and the Groom comes and takes the Bride away to a wedding ceremony, after which He's going to have a celebration. They're going to have a little honeymoon period for a thousand years or so. And then He's going to take His Bride to the Father's house where they will live forever. When that happens, the Father turns His attention around to these recalcitrant Jews who rejected everything that He offered them and He says, OK, now let's wrap that part up. And so Revelation deals with the way the Father wraps up that business that started in Genesis. Now, if you understand

that simple story, Revelation is the end of that. Well, you go back and find out He hinted at some of the things that were going to happen in the prophets. See, He told Jeremiah, He told Isaiah, He told several other prophets exactly what was going to happen if they kept on their hard-headed adolescent ways. So, Revelation is the unveiling of how God ends up this whole plan of dealing with the Jew, and finally getting them into the land, and are organizing the rest of mankind around them, so that they could live on an earth that is not in rebellion forever.

And, at the same time, takes the Bride and the Son, and they're in the Father's house, overlooking and overseeing all of this. Are there any questions on that? Because that's the story of Scripture, and that's what we're looking at here. We're looking at this last thing. In Revelation, we're not looking at Revelation to define the end of what He does with the Church. Part of it is in here, but a very small part of it. And then the bulk of Revelation is how God turns His attention again to Israel and how He's going to bless the earth and the nations through Israel. And so most of Revelation is going to be about them. So we're going to spend more time in the front end of this Book than we do in the back end of it. Because, the back end is all about His dealings with Israel to bring them to Himself. Now, ironically, that's what people are fascinated with. Why? Is because they don't really realize, we're not here. We're out of here. Ok. We have been taken from here to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and the extended celebration, and that's where we are when all these things take place. They doesn't affect us. Ok. So, we're going to spend most of our time talking about the things that do affect us. Then we'll cover – we'll spend enough time in the rest of it to satisfy your issues. Ok. So if you have a particular thing that interests you, and you want to cover it in some detail, just let me know, or let Phil know, and we'll spend whatever time is necessary to satisfy and answer your questions. And that seems to be a fair way to do this. And we'll go from there.

Now, here is the opening shot, now, of Revelation, and we've covered that. This is the Revelation of Christ and He's sending it to John. To a man. That's different. In the past, He sends His revelations, usually He's been sending His revelations to – directly to His Body. But He's not doing that, He sends it to John, the Apostle, and he's on the Isle of Patmos. Look at verse 8. He announces that:

I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, Who is, Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty. [That's who He is]. I John, your brother, fellow partaker, and the tribulation and kingdom

and perseverance which are in Jesus was on the Island called Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

That's the reason he was there. He understands he's in exile on Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Christ Himself who came.

I was in spirit....

"The" is not there. So it does not mean that he was in "the Spirit," the Holy Spirit, but I was "in spirit." I was in a state of spiritual life,

On the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud like the sound of a trumpet.

The Lord's Day to John was the first day of the week. The Sabbath, was the seventh (7th) day, or the last day of the week. The Sabbath was what had been practiced by Israel under the Law, because it represented God's rest at the end of the week. Creation week. He worked six days, and on the seventh day, He rested. Ok. Now that's what the Sabbath means, because that Sabbath was their time and place of rest.

Where's the believer's time and place of rest? It's in Christ, isn't it. He is our rest. He is our peace. So, our rest is in a person. Their rest is in a time and place. Our rest is in a person. The time of rest is forever. It's unbroken. The place of rest is in Christ. And you'll see me do it often. Put that line on the board, put the cross up there, draw that circle around the base of that cross. When God saves us, He moves us from the ground of hostility between ourselves and God to the ground of peace with God. Which means, He does not hold us any longer accountable for the Law. Or to sin. Or to the penalty for sin. That we are at perfect peace with the Father. Now this is a blessed thing to know. It's even more blessed if you can grasp that and live on the basis of that, Ok, because we continually move off the ground of peace in our expectations. We think, because of something we have done, that God is aggravated with us. Well, God never gets aggravated with us. He's not mad at us, not ever. The discipline that we run across in our life is the discipline of a child. Ok. Your anger at your child is abnormal. Ok. You can be displeased with a child, and then take action with that child, but it always is with a view of moving them from where they are into a more productive position so that you can just love them all the more. Well that's the way God does us, see. He disciplines us. What does it say, He skins alive with a whip every son He sees unto Himself. That's what it says. Now, we don't skin our children alive with a

whip – any more. There was a time when that was pretty close, pretty descriptive. But we don't do that anymore. We talk them to death. Heaven forbid. You remember when your relationship with you parents changed from one of physical discipline to one of getting talked to. Gosh. The day you realize that, you hate that. We had all boys in our family. Man. I was the first one to learn that. I remember the last spanking I ever got by Mother. She did her best, boy, she did her best.

Evelyn Wamble. How old were you?

Conrad Bowman. We don't need to [Laughter]. But I was taller than she was.

Evelyn Wamble. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. And I asked her if she was through. And that's the last one of those I ever got. From then on it was conversation. Ok. Don't you think God does that same thing to us. There's a point at which He quits physically moving us from one place to the another, and He starts whispering. And He still expects us to hear, and to learn, from that as we grow. And that's the whole point of this. So,

John says I was in spirit on the Lord's day [that first day of the week], and I heard behind me a loud voice and it sounded like the sound of a trumpet say, saying write in a book what you are to see.

In the Notes, I made a note in there. I grew up in a band. I didn't learn to read music or anything. I was a drummer, with all the badness and reputation that goes with that. But, I learned to appreciate the sounds of music. And the cornet behind you has just a sweet, mellow sound to it. A trumpet will split the air. When it gets in the air in those upper registers, the sounds are sharp and have an edge to them, and that's what's being described here.

I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet [it cut through other sounds], and it said, write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven (7) churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.

And each one of those words, and each one of those churches, are very different. There are some that look at this thing, and William Kelly was one. William Kelly looked at it and said you could see in that arrangement of churches the metamorphosis of the Church from the very first beginning, in the upper room at Pentecost, you can see the Church march through it's ages in the sequence for Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea – that that's a picture of the Church as it ages from it's very beginning at Pentecost to – you know how long it took them to do that? Pentecost happened around 33 A.D. By 95 A.D., they had gone through everyone of those phases. Everyone of them. Because by the time John saw this Church, and he saw the road to the church at Laodicea, the whole aging process of the Church had taken place. That's 50 years. That's 50 years. Everything had taken place inside of 50 years. And the Church had gone from birth to ruin in 50 years.

Now, we have been studying for a long time in the Pauline epistles – and just to remind you, in the Pauline epistles everyone of those epistles came with a caution or warning by Paul. As he told Timothy in the Pastoral Epistles, in 1st and 2nd Timothy, and told it to Titus too, be very careful that you do not let the Gospel that I have delivered to you and you have learned from others, do not let that Gospel slip away. And that Gospel was the Gospel of Grace. Freedom from works, and grace, the freedom to walk in the steps of the Spirit as He unfolded His work in front of them. By 100 A.D., by 95 A.D., or a 100 A.D., they had already forgotten that, and they were not walking in the works of the Spirit, they were trying to walk in their own works. They're working to impress God. Now, see, they forgot. God didn't call them to do great works. He called them to walk in the great works He had already done from before the foundation of the world. And they're trying to do works to impress God. That's pitiful. That's pitiful. They didn't have the assets to do that. I mean, God has all the assets in the world. He did the work, and He wants to continue to do the works. Who's the Evangelist in the world? It's not us. The Evangelist – it's the Spirit who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Now if He's out there doing that, all we've got to do is find out where He's doing that and jump in there and walk in His footsteps so that when He brings one to Christ, we'll be there to receive that one and invite that one into the Body, just like the Spirit did, and the Spirit moved in there, and melded his heart, and molded it, and He's got us there to deliver what he needs to know. That's what our operation is. To grow Christians up in Christ. In the knowledge of Him and what He's done. Not to try to do works that impress Christ, and then impress others. Ok. To be like us. That's not what we're doing. We're supposed to be growing them up in knowledge of the

Word. In knowledge of Him. In knowledge of His character, and His attributes, and everything.

So, when you look at that list of churches, and we'll cover those in detail in chapter 2 and 3, because they tell a fine story. That seven (7) churches rotate in a circle right there in Asia Minor, in Ephesus, Greece, and Smyrna, and Pergamum, and the rotation starts with Ephesus properly so. Because Ephesus was a church who lost their first love. They lost their infatuation with Christ and got infatuated with themselves and their own work, and charged off to do those and it didn't impress God at all. In verse 12, we'll come back to that. In verse 12,

I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me, and having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands.

And a lampstand not only is a burner, but it's an oil reservoir with a wick. And it has another supply of oil to continually fill that reservoir. In other words, it's everything. It's complete, it has everything that's necessary to support the light. Ok. It's everything necessary to support that light. The light is always the Gospel, the core of the message, the ministry. That's what the light is. And this is everything that is necessary to support that light. That's what a lampstand is. There's seven golden lampstands. Gold speaks of righteousness and deity. So, this is a light coming from this lampstand that represents God, His character, and His attributes. And in the middle of the lampstands, here they are, seven (7) of them. In the middle of them, one like son of man. One like a son of man. Now you remember in the Greek there is no indefinite article. So there's no "a" there. In Greek it just says, in the middle of the lampstands, one son of man, is what the Greek would say. That calls attention to the Son of Man. The character of the Son of Man. If it's going to talk about the specificity of the one that's there, it says "the Son of Man." But in the absence of that, if it wants to underscore the character of that, it leaves that "the" off and just says "son of man." And that causes you to think in these terms. It's difficult in English somewhat, but it's a – if I would say it, it would be "such a son of man." With emphasis.

In the middle of the seven lampstands stood one, such a son of man.

And it causes you to concentrate on the quality of the Son of Man. The character of the Son of Man. The attributes of the Son of Man. Not just the fact that He's standing there, but who and what it is that's standing there. So, that's the impact of that small little statement, and it all comes from the absence of an "a."

In the middle of the lampstands, one like such a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast, with a golden girdle.

The importance of this “clothed in a robe that reached to His feet” is this. When a man got ready to do battle, or to go to work, he took his robe, and he caught it up in a wad and pulled it up over to about mid thigh, and then tucked it under his belt. So, the robe is out of his way. It’s not going to trip him. He did that when he went into battle. He did it when he went into service, if he went to work on something. He’d just catch that robe up. So, the Son of Man that we see here is not clothed for work. His work is finished. He’s clothed for a priestly duty. So He leaves His robe hanging free, and it goes all the way down to His feet. Ok. Now, He takes His girdle, and His girdle, it says, His girdle is not wrapped around His hips and thighs to guard His lower body. That would be his leather – it’s a leather girdle, and he would wear it to protect his lower parts. Well, that’s not what this girdle is. This girdle is pulled up around His chest. Ok. Now there you use girdle to guard the heart, Ok, and it usually is worn there like something that signifies righteousness. If you are going to go into battle, you put that girdle down, and wear it down around your hips. It’s like that, it’s like that Roman girdle made out of leather with all kinds of flaps that would hang down to protect you from a sword shot, or something like that. Well, this is pulled up here. So, it guards this part of the body. Now remember that the Greeks considered that the upper organs of the body, from the heart up, from the diaphragm up actually, was the center of where a person thought. So, this girdle is not protecting a physical body in an attack, but it’s protecting the center of a person’s thoughts. Now that’s what’s important here, because as a man thinketh in his heart, so he is. Right. That’s what we have in view. So, now that we know where the center of this thing is going, let’s see how it unfolds.

Girded across His breast, this girdle is golden. And His head and His hair was white as white wool, like snow.

We’re getting there. The next class, the 9:15 class, there’s a lot of that. A bunch of old codgers in there. [Laughter]. You know it’s true. If you get out in the sun, and you ...

John Young. Nothing but young ones in this one. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. That’s right. That’s right. We’re hanging in here.

Now, in the middle of the lampstands, one like a son of man clothed in a robe reaching to His feet, girded across his breast with a golden girdle, His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow. And His eyes were like a flame of fire. [burning with fire. Piercing]. And His feet were like burnished bronze.

Now brass, all the way across the OT, and into the NT, represented testing by judgment. Whether it was humanity or whatever. It representing testing by judgment. That's what brass represented. You have a brazen altar. Remember that. In the courtyard of the tabernacle, you had this great huge brass altar, and inside that altar was where you put the wood. And you put the sacrifices inside that altar, and that's where it was consumed. Well the altar was made of wood to start with, and overlaid with brass. And, that brass represented judgment of the offering, or judgment of sin, and that's His feet. His feet are like burnished brass. So you see that where this image that John saw, where He touched the ground, He touches the ground with brass feet. And it's burnished brass that has been subjected to fire. And when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and

His voice was like the sound of many waters. And in His right hand He held seven stars. And out of His mouth came a sharp two mouthed sword. And His face was like the sun shining in it's full strength [or like mid-day].

This was a terrible looking image. I looked at a number on the internet when I was looking for that – I looked at a number of pictures to try to find one that really satisfied me. And I finally ended up with this black and white one. [Conrad holds up Image]. Now, if you've got a copy of this, you'll be able to see it. Otherwise you won't be able to see much of it from here. But this is just a black and white image, and here's this figure sitting up here on this throne, and it has these radiating rays from up here, and the stars in His right hand here, and that sword coming out of His mouth here, and the seven lampstands arrayed around the throne, and that's what John saw. This was drawn by Albrecht Durer. For those of you who know, I have probably mispronounced his name, but Albrecht has done a number of drawings, and that's his drawing of John. And it gets in the Notes, so when you look at them, you can find that in there. And you remember out of His mouth came that sword that had those two open places on it – it's a very offensive weapon, and it's made to do battle.

And when I saw Him, I saw this image, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me saying, "do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, and the living one and I was dead. And behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and Hades. Write therefore the things that you've seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things."

And there you have the three categories of things that the Book of Revelation, this letter, is going to address. It's going to address things that are, things that shall be, and the things that are going to take place after those intermediate things are finished. And that's the threefold division of the Book of Revelation.

As for the mystery of the seven stars, which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels or messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

So you see here depicted the purpose of a church. It's to support a message, the Gospel. Everything to support that light ought to be present in the Church. The oil is the oil of the Spirit that powers the light, because it's always the Spirit who powers the light. And, it's our job to keep the wick trimmed, to keep the oil supplied, and to let that light shine. We are not the light. The light is the message itself, the Gospel. Ok. We are the support for the Gospel. The power of the Gospel is the Spirit himself, the oil. And we are the supporting mechanism for that. Any questions on chapter 1? There's so much there. I mean we could spend weeks on that, but I want to move through because we'll cover – you'll find out that as I go through this stuff, I'll make an advancement and go back, and fold back on it and pick it up, integrate it and move forward, and then fold back and pick it up and integrate it. So, we'll revisit chapter 1 from time to time.

Let's go to chapter 2.

To the messenger, the angel of the Church in Ephesus [he starts right out with these letters to the churches]. The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this. "I know your deeds, and your toil, and your perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles and they are not, and you found them to be false, and you have

perseverance and have endured for My namesake, and you haven't grown weary, but I have this against you."

My heavens. Look at what they were doing. I know your deeds; and I know your toil – you're working hard; and I know your perseverance; you're patient and you're enduring; and you're continuing to work; and you cannot endure evil men, so you've got some righteousness about you – might be self-righteousness, but you've got it; and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, so you're not taking people just on their word, you're testing them to see if what they're saying is true, and they are not and you have found them to be false; and you have perseverance – you stick to it, you don't back off; and you have endured for my namesake; you're holding up under trial; there're some hard times that have come on you and you're still enduring; you have persevered and have done it for my namesake; and you've not gone weary. Man, that sounds like a pastor's dream, doesn't it, to have a congregation like that. But this guy says,

I have something against you, that you have left your first love.

And the word for love there is *agape*. It's not brotherly love, but it's love that comes straight from the will and the heart of man. Not from his emotion. He doesn't love because he feels like he has to love. He loves because it's a decision to love. *Agape* always comes from the will. And it's a decision to declare something the object of your affections. Remember ... yes. Yes ma'am?

Mary Ann Jacobsen. You said 50 years or less?

Conrad Bowman. Yes.

Mary Ann Jacobsen. Ok. These are the only churches, or are they the seven main churches? I mean in 50 years, they just have 7 churches?

Conrad Bowman. Oh no. William Kelly says, William Kelly said these are 7 representative churches. By 50 years, there're probably thousands in small groups. Remember, they were all house churches – small groups meeting in homes. And there were thousands of them. Remember, the first day after Pentecost, and the second day, you had 5,000, you had 3,000, you had perhaps 10,000 people right there in Jerusalem who became solid believers, within a week.

Mary Ann Jacobsen. So these weaknesses are representative in each one of these churches.

Conrad Bowman. In fact, when we get through with the seven (7) churches, you can look at your own church, we don't have to look across the street, we can look right here, and we can find every weakness that's listed in any of the seven churches right here at BridgePoint.

Evelyn Wamble. So, we're in every one of them?

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. Yes ma'am. There's no cause for anybody in Christendom to look at this and put their nose in the air and think they're breathing air that the rest of us are not breathing. It's just not so. In fact, you go to your own life as a believer. You don't even have to go to the church. Just go to your own life as a believer, and look at your reaction and action to different things in your life. And one minute, you're acting like Ephesus, and the next minute you're acting like Philadelphia, and the next minute – that's the way it is.

John Young. You're meddling again, Conrad. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Well, I didn't come up with that. Phil told me that. [Laughter]. But, isn't it true? Isn't it true? Every management course I ever took, and I'm not going to dawdle on this, but every management course I ever took, and Phil will tell you the same thing, starts out by saying, what kind of manager are you? Do you do this, this, this, this and this? Ok. Well, yeah, I do that. Well, then this is what kind of manager you are, aren't you? And you look at that thing and say, yeah, I'm that kind of manager. I use good humor, and Phil is a bad manager, he's just a hard-nosed old driver. You know. And this guy over here, he's going to compromise with everybody, and so you identify all these people. And then you get to the next day in the course, and the guy says, let's look at your behavior in light of this first characteristic. And you find out that everyone of those characteristics are present in your daily behavior. It just depends on what kind of mood you're in. Or whether you're under pressure. And you'll find out that you're guilty of all this stuff. So – and that's true. John and I have enough conversations about this. It doesn't matter if you're in a courtroom before a judge, or whether you're behind the wheel in a traffic jam. Everyone of those behaviors are characteristics of you in a given situation. Now, if that's true, we look at this thing, and we learn what believers are like by looking at these letters to the seven (7) churches. Here to Ephesus, he says, I've got something against you. You've lost your first love. Now, when we first got married, you know,

there was nothing that she could do wrong. It just – I adored her for everything. I still do. [Laughter]. I still do [Conrad looking over to Norma!]. But it's easy in the press of things – we discover, why do, why do you always – I burn the toast. I'm a notorious toast burner and set the alarm off. It's not bad enough that I burn the toast, but we've got a smoke alarm right over it, and I continue doing that. And she says, why do you do that? Well, I like burned toast. It's as simple as that. I forget about that thing. You see, when the bloom of that first adoration starts to wear off, we lose that and our focus starts to turn to other things, doesn't it? And I start to think, well, I can spend my time doing this, because I really love to do this. And if I just pick this thing up that she likes, I can buy off her approval – you're laughing, Marilyn, aren't you? [Laughter]. I can buy off her approval with some thing that I can give her, and then I can go ahead and do what I want to do. That's losing your first love. That's it. That's when she is not any longer the total – she doesn't occupy all of my adoration as the object of my affection. But I start to split that off and give her pieces of me. Alright. God won't tolerate that. That's not what the Lord – He said, husbands love your wives, as Christ has loved the Church, and gave Himself for her. Now that's the way I'm supposed to love her. Anything short of that and I've fallen off of the goal of that Church in Ephesus. That's it. Now that's the Church at Ephesus applied to me. You can apply it to you in the same fashion. We can do it as a church the same way. If we lose our focus as a church and begin to do what we do as a church in order to get bigger, or grow and get more prominent, or become more prosperous or more famous among churches, we have lost our first love, and our focus has drifted and we're no longer satisfying the Lord of the Church at Ephesus. Ok. It's just that easy. Just slide away. We don't want that to happen. Now, later on it's going to talk about how do you prevent that from happening. Actually, if you want to know how to prevent that from happening, you go to the Pastoral Epistles, you go to 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus. And there, the prescription for preventing that from happening is given by Paul fifty (50) years before this is written. So, they had the information. Now, there's another principle. God always gives the information before He gives the test. He never gives you a test in order to teach you something. He's already taught the lesson. He gives you the test in order to prove Himself. Ok. So, we get in difficult ways and we get in difficult times and we start looking at God and say, God, why are you doing this? When the question ought to be, when did You teach me about this? I know the lesson has already come through here, I missed it. I missed it. The "why" has already been answered. We just need to go back and look at those past lessons. So, in difficult situations today, just go back and look at the lessons He laid before you 6 months ago. Or a year ago. Or 2 years ago. And find out where you've been – when you

grabbed the reins and decided you're driving the boat. You know, boats don't have reins, do they? [Laughter]. I've mixed my metaphors one more time. Ok.

Billie Wales. But we know what you mean.

Conrad Bowman. You know, don't you? You've grabbed the reins of your boat too. Ok.

Remember, therefore

Look at what he says.

Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen.

He doesn't say, listen, here's the answer. He says, remember. Go back and remember where you were when you fell, and repent.

And repent, and do the deeds you did at first, or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place – unless you repent.

Change your mind and direction about the things you're doing, and, do the deeds you did at first. Or else, I'm coming to you and remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you do that. Unless you repent. Isn't that amazing. Repent. Change what you're doing. Remember from where you've fallen, and do the deeds you did at first. And, what you did at first was nothing but adore the Son that drew you to Himself and walk in His steps. That's what you did at first. You weren't trying to do anything to appreciate Him. You were loving Him for everything He did to draw you to Himself. That's the deeds you did at first. So, it's a call to that first love. *Agape* love. It's the love that comes to Him because He's the object of your affection, and you've declared Him to be so. Ok. So, there we are. It's time to wrap her up. Thank you, Phil.

Closing Prayer by Conrad Bowman. "Father, we thank You for the – we just thank You so much for the clarity of the Word, for the consistency of it, for just the way it flows into us and over our lives, and fills us up with Your character, and love for the Son. We thank You for it, and appreciate it. In His name, we pray. Amen."