

Revelation 17

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Date: 09 August 2020

[0 : 00] and we read the Word of God found in Revelation chapter 17. John records for us, Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, Come here, and I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.

And he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality.

And on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.

When I saw her, I wondered greatly. And the angel said to me, Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

The beast that you saw was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast that he was and is not and will come.

[1 : 23] Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are the seven mountains on which the woman sits. And they are the seven kings. Five have fallen. One is. The other has yet to come.

And when he comes, he must remain a little while. The beast which was and is not is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven. And he goes to destruction. The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.

These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. These will wage war against the lamb, and the lamb will overcome them, because he is lord of lords and king of kings. And those who are with him are the called and the chosen and faithful. And he said to me, the waters which you saw where the harlot sits are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.

For God has put it in their hearts to execute his purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast until the words of God will be fulfilled. The woman whom you saw is the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.

[2 : 41] You may take a deep breath and sit down. And it is okay when you read these portions of Scripture just to pause and to breathe in and go, okay, Lord, that was deep.

But we are in the heart of the message of Revelation. And if you remember where we have come to get to this point, then we can stand in wonder and amazement much as John. We understand that John has been seeing the things that are to be.

He has seen in Revelation 1 the one who was, that is, Jesus Christ standing on the island of Patmos on the Lord's day. He has seen the things that are, that is, the letter to the seven churches, Revelation 2 and 3.

So he saw the things that are, the things that are present. And we've seen those letters to the seven churches, how they are really a picture of a healthy church, the full, complete picture of what a healthy church looks like.

And then we get the picture of the church in heaven, Revelation 4. And we are just really overwhelmed with the views of heaven we see throughout the book of Revelation. And then we

begin to see in Revelation 5 the scroll, the lamb that was slain yet is standing.

[3 : 46] And he has in his hand the scroll. And in that scroll is the end of time for all of mankind. It is God's final judgment. We have been through the opening of the seven seals. We have heard the sounding of the seven trumpets.

And in Revelation 16, we've just seen the outpouring of the seven bowls. That is, God's final measure of judgment has been poured out upon man for their rejection of him.

In all of this, we have been reminded of the gracious acts of God in warning people. We have been reminded that not only has he put the church in position in today's time, but he has also called the 144,000 witnesses, which he seals, so that they will live throughout the tribulation time.

He has put the angel in midheaven declaring the eternal gospel, it says. A number of people come to faith and give their life ultimately for their faith in Jesus Christ during the tribulation.

God is giving man every option to repent. And yet, as we saw in Revelation 16, men refuse to repent of their wickedness and their sin because men love darkness rather than light.

[4 : 49] So now we come to Revelation 17 and these things are happening. And the angel, one of them who, one commentator says, is strolling back to heaven carrying the empty bowl he has just poured out upon earth, having completed the task which God sent him to, to go pour out this bowl of judgment, passes by John and says, well, come on, I'll show you why this judgment came.

And we are now introduced in Revelation 17 to Babylon. We remember, at least I hope you do, because it is applicable to this message, that in Revelation 14, where John is giving us a foretaste of these things that are about to come, the angels have already announced that Babylon has fallen. Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great. They have already announced the destruction of Babylon. And now we come to the description of it. And I want you to see this morning, as we look at Revelation 17, really as it references not the city itself, but everything which the city stands for.

And I will give you that in just a moment. I want you to see the rising appeal of Babylon. And friend, as we think about that, I want you to understand that the appeal of Babylon is not rising during the time of tribulation.

It is something that is on the rise today. It is something that has been rising and growing ever since humanity has been walking upon the face of the earth. And it is something that we face probably at a greater extent today than at any other time in past history.

[6 : 17] Probably not any other time in future history or things to come, because we see that by the time we get to the events of the tribulation period, Babylon is appealing to worldwide masses.

But it is the rising appeal to Babylon. If there is something inside of the tribulation time, which we as the church must stand up against and must guard ourselves from, it is this appeal of Babylon.

Because this is the very thing that the people of God have been dealing with since they have been the people of God. This is really a concern that God has dealt with with man from the very beginning.

And we will see it as it is in just a moment. Now, let's get some of the particulars and the details out of the way. Now, these things are not necessarily set in stone, but many biblical scholars believe and accept these things.

We don't want to paint this as being a particular church, though that is something that is cast in some Bible studies. And we don't want to cast this as being a specific group of people, though that is something that many scholars believe.

[7 : 24] But we do know from this vision, I'm giving you all these details in advance so that we can get to the application. From the fact that John sees the woman in the seven hills or the seven mountains, and the angel tells us that the seven mountains is a kingdom.

Rome was always referred to historically as the city built on seven hills or seven mountains. This is where most of your Bible scholars agree with this is the rise of the Roman Empire in the latter days. This is the resurgence of that Roman Empire. And not only is it the mountain or the city built on the seven hills, the fact that we see ten kings is a reminder or should be a reminder of Daniel's vision, which he saw of the man.

And he had the ten toes, right? And those ten toes were intermingled with iron and clay. That that was the coming together of the Roman Empire again that would be represented among ten kingdoms.

And this is that re-arising or reappearance of the Roman Empire in those last days. But it is not Rome itself. It is the spirit of Rome.

[8 : 30] And it is the spirit of the world that really Rome is embracing here that causes this great judgment to fall. To get a full understanding of what is going on, we need to know where Babylon came from.

We need to know where Babylon appears in Scripture. And we need to know what Babylon stands for. Babylon here is not referencing a specific location. Because if that was the case, then it could not be the city of Rome.

Because the city of Rome was in the complete opposite direction than the city of Babylon. You should know something about the city of Babylon if you know your Bibles. Because God sent the Jewish people to Babylon through this king.

I love how Tony Evans refers to him as King Nebi. That is King Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian Empire, right? Nebuchadnezzar came and he carried them away. This is where Daniel had the vision, by the way. And they were in Babylon, which was towards the east, away from the promised land.

Which is really a picture. Now, all of a sudden, let's just stop and pause and slow down for just a moment here. I said Babylon was towards the east. Those with me on Sunday night should have picked up with that, right? There is this theme in Scripture, starting in the book of Genesis, that every time man moves east, he is doing what?

[9 : 42] Moving further away from God. When man rejected God and they took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and yes, it was man. Some of you say, no, Eve ate. Yes, but Adam watched, right?

Adam surrendered his responsibility of leadership. And he was there. He was present. And let Eve eat. Let Eve set the course and it took the fruit and ate of it also. So when man rejected the clear commandment and teaching of God, then God put them out towards the east.

And then we see this thing. When Cain slew his brother Abel, he went towards the east. And we have this common theme that every time you move east, you move further from God. That's why the tabernacle had the entrance of the tabernacle facing towards the east, which means you had to go into it moving towards the west.

That's why it doesn't, right now you can go, that's cool, because the Bible seems to always say the same thing the same way all the time. And if that, let's just stop, because sometimes I think, I speak a little fast, I throw a lot of facts at you, and I know that, and I get excited.

These are the things that get me excited. And if you ever want to know why I get carried away, it's because people want to tell you that the book is just a jumbled together combination of 66 books.

[10 : 52] Just all put together. But it is one story told over and over and over again. The fact that God had the doorway facing towards the east so that man had to walk in a westward direction, signifying coming back into his presence from the east, coincides that he had put man out towards the east.

And that every time man goes east, they move further from God. You say, so I can't travel east? That's not what I'm saying. I'm not talking about points on the compass here. I'm talking about what the Bible is showing us, all right?

Mad guy came from the wise men. In scripture came where? From the east. Now, we're on a complete side note, but guess what? They came to the presence of God in the flesh from the east. So they are always, we have this picture throughout scripture of man coming back to the presence of God. And Babylon is in the east. Now, let's get back on course here, pastor.

Because these things matter. What does Babylon stand for? We can see it keep being repeated all throughout scripture. Does anybody know who built Babylon? You're introduced to him in Genesis 10.

[12 : 03] I think it's Genesis 10, 8, and 9. I'll give you a clue. He was a great hunter before the Lord. That literally means in front of the Lord's face. He was a skillful hunter. And he became great on the earth. By the way, he's one of the descendants of Noah.

So just in case we think God solved all the problems when he flooded the earth, man began to have babies. And babies had problems, right? Because we have a sin nature. So Noah, he's one of the descendants of Noah's children.

We see here there is this great hunter who was a hunter before the Lord. And he slew a lot of animals. He was a great archer. And his name was Nimrod. By the way, I always thought that was kind of an odd name. But his name was Nimrod.

And Nimrod began to be great on the face of the earth. And the beginning, it says in Genesis 10, the beginning of Nimrod's power or the beginning of Nimrod's building campaign was this city called Babel.

Babel is Babylon, okay? Now, Babel should all of a sudden catch your attention because Genesis 11 now fills in the gap. By the way, does anybody know the second city that Nimrod built?

[13:01] It's another good city. That city was Nineveh. Yeah, see, Nineveh. They were wicked in Nineveh. So all of a sudden, now we see a track record. Anybody see a track record? Babel became a train wreck.

So he left there and went and built Nineveh. Nineveh became a train wreck. And God had to send Jonah. And Jonah didn't want to go. So a fish swallowed him up, spit him on the ground. That's just a cool story. But what we see here is the fact that Nimrod, who was gifted in an ability, became great on the earth.

And he became so great, he wanted to build a city. And he built a city. And he named that city Babel. But Genesis 11 tells us that he did more than build a city because he led a movement. And the movement was this.

We are one people. We are great. We know one another. Let's let all the world know who we are, even though they were all the world. Let's not anybody ever forget about us. So let's build a tower. So they began to make bricks. They began to make tar. They used tar as mortar. And they began to make a ziggurat, which was kind of like a pyramid, but it had steps in it. Okay? And the reason that's important, this ziggurat, was man putting himself on a pedestal.

[14:04] They weren't looking to God to reign over them. They wanted to reign over their world. Now that's really a rebellion against God. This is man lifting himself up.

Man promoting himself. Self-promotion. This is man signifying a ziggurat was a sign of your prosperity. It was a sign of your wealth. A sign of your accomplishments.

It was the pinnacle of, you know, worldliness here. And it was man lifting himself up above the clouds. They were going to reach into the heavens. They were building a stairway to heaven. Not the song, but they were literally building a stairway to heaven.

Jacob saw a ladder to heaven, and that ladder is Jesus Christ, right? But they were trying to build a stairway to heaven so that they could reach the throne of God in their own ability. God provided a ladder.

They wanted to build a staircase. And man was exalting himself. God says, I see that. I see what's going on. So he goes down there and confuses their language. And then we have Babel. He disperses them. Nimrod leaves there, and he goes and builds Nineveh.

[15:02] Same problem. City of wickedness. What we need to understand with all of this is Babylon began to refer in Scripture, or began to stand for in Scripture, man seeking his own good, his own well-being, and being centered on himself.

It's really the picture of worldliness and secularism. Babylon was a birthplace of idolatry because man put himself on a pedestal. Nation after nation began to accept Babylonian thoughts.

Wow. Need some water. Give me just a minute. The Medes and Persians, the Medo-Persian Empire, accepted the Babylonian thought. We're the best. We're the greatest. The Greece Empire accepted when they defeated.

Well, let's go back. Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, had this thought. I'm the greatest. I'm going to build a worldwide kingdom. By the way, they did that for just a minute. Read the book of Daniel. You know what God did? Remember the king?

He's standing up there and said, I reign over all the world. He put himself on a pedestal. I am the greatest. I am the man. And God said, you think you're the greatest? You're going to grow hair like an animal and you're going to go into the wilderness and you're going to eat bugs and grass for seven years and you'll come back and honor me.

[16:05] That's exactly what he did. So then you have the Medo-Persian Empire, which takes over Babylon. They walk in, they take over, and the Medo-Persian Empire stands up and goes, I'm the greatest. We're the greatest. So they accept this Babylonian mentality.

Then you have a young man by the name of Alexander the Great who defeats the Medo-Persian Empire. That's Greece. So Alexander the Great comes in and he says, I am the greatest. I'm the man.

That's why my name is Alexander the Great, right? I am the most magnificent one. And suddenly he dies and his kingdom gets divided. And his kingdom gets divided, which leads to what we call the Roman Empire. And the Roman Empire, guess what they did?

They accepted the Babylonian thought. We are the greatest. We are the world power. It's all about us. And their destruction came very quick. But it will arise again.

So before we really get into the text, and I know this is a long introduction, you need to know what Babylon stands for in Scripture. And literally what it stands for is being concerned about you, you alone, only about yourself, looking out for what is best in the world for you.

[17:03] It's worldliness. It's secularization. And it is being consumed with promoting yourself. Now you see the appeal of Babylon. You just look out for you, and you take care of you, and you do all these other things.

Now, now that we know what it is, let's look at three things that pertain to it. Number one, I want you to see the demonic motivation behind it. The demonic motivation behind it.

So John sees this vision. The angel says, come on, I'll show you a vision. So it says that he took him. Verse 2. Let's go back. Let's see here in verse 1. Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, come here, and I will show you the judgment of the great harlot.

The judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters. By the way, many waters, we will find out later, it means it is worldwide. In case you haven't figured it out, worldliness and secularization, that is thinking that this life is all there is, and the desire to make the best of it, and the desire to promote oneself in it, is a worldwide event.

It's not something that is confined to a specific land. It covers many waters. And it says, with whom the kings of the earth commit acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.

[18:17] Now, this is not just really referencing a physical act. It is spiritual idolatry. It is spiritual adultery. It is having an affair spiritually with someone other than the God who created you.

It is being consumed with oneself and one's own well-being. And it says that it goes worldwide and affects those in high places, that is the kings, and it affects those in low places, that is those who dwell on the earth.

So all men are influenced and all men are drawn to it. It says, and he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

So we see that this woman, which is Babylon, has the name on her forehead, and it is this desire to think that this life is all there is. It is this desire to be so consumed with worldliness and secularization that you forget about the God who reigns over you.

Where does it sit? What is carrying it around on these many waters? What is moving it into the palaces of these many kings? What is leading it to the multitudes of the people of the earth? It is the beast that she sits on the back of.

[19:22] And we are told later that this beast is the one who was and is and will not be. That is a direct reference to the beast that has this false resurrection, if you will.

I do not believe that he is literally killed physically and then resurrects himself, but he gives the appearance of dying and being raised again. So it is this resurrected. He is the antichrist. He is the one who is mimicking the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And we know that the beast is one who is influenced by the dragon, and the dragon is Satan himself. So what we see is this idea of Babylon, this idea of worldliness, this idea of being consumed in this life and promoting yourself.

Friend, it is carried on the back of demonic forces itself. This is not from God. And in case we lost track of that, in Genesis 11, man is not moving towards God.

They're moving from God. And then they build Babylon. And what we see here is this woman was clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls and having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality.

[20:34] Let's just go ahead and be honest. Parents, it is good to be honest with your children.

Children, it is good to be honest in the world in which you live in. And parents, it's good to be honest even in the workplace. Worldliness looks beautiful.

Satan is an angel of light, or was, who creates all things magnificent. And the appeal of the world, the things the world offers, the world does not say, come and do this and we promise you nobody will like you.

Come and do this and we promise you everybody will turn away from you. Come and do this and we'll promise you you'll have a terrible time. The appeal of the world is look like us, act like us, dress like us, live like us, and everybody will like you.

Everybody will love you. You'll have the best time of your life. It'll be a thrill. We'll adorn you in scarlet and purple and we'll put a gold chain around your neck. You'll have pearls to wear. What we see is that worldliness is appealing because it looks so good.

And wouldn't you appreciate the fact? It's a question I wonder if so many of us have ever asked. Why does God allow sin to look so good? If we saw it for what it really is, if we took it to its final conclusion, which is what the book of James does, that in the end it leads to death, right?

[21 : 51] If we saw it in its reality, in all of its ugliness, if we could have a vision like John and see it sitting on the back of the beast, then maybe we would be cautious.

But here we see the rising appeal because it looks good. It promises good. But friend, listen to me. It is moved about and it is inspired by demonic forces.

We see the demonic motivation behind it. Number two, something that we need to be aware of, this worldliness, this secularization, this being fixated on this world alone. We see the destruction that awaits it.

We see the destruction that awaits it. I want you to understand, I'm not a doom and gloom pastor. I'm not that guy. I believe that God created the heavens and the earth. I believe he created them in a magnificent way.

I enjoy creation. I enjoy what he has given me to live in. I think creation is beautiful. I think he has given it to us that we can enjoy the works of his hands, that everything testifies to the creator, that his glory is manifested in the things in which we see, but also understand that what I live in is a marred creation.

[22 : 55] It is not as it should be, and it will soon one day pass away. And we see it here. He says, I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus.

When I saw her, I wondered greatly. What he is saying is this attitude of worldliness, this attitude of self-promotion, this attitude of man being the greatest being will eventually come to a point that they are slaying the believers of Jesus Christ.

We've already seen that, by the way. In the 20th century, there was the greatest number of martyrs for the sake of Christ in the other time of history. And I'm sure the 21st century is the same, and we'll move on. In every century, we see an increase of the martyrs, the blood of the martyrs.

Worldliness is running rampant. It is a rising appeal. Stamp out the true believers in Christ, and everything will be okay, right? I don't want any narrow-minded, bigoted thinkers.

They're the only ones being saved. We want everybody to look the same. We want everybody to stand on the same tower. But the Bible says we can't do that because we go through a narrow door, not a wide path.

[23 : 55] What we see here is that this thing is heading to destruction. And he says in verse 8, the beast that you saw was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss. That's a direct reference to Revelation 13, speaking of the abyss, but now, or speaking of the beast, but now we have something that is unique.

Look at what it says. He not only was and is not and is about to come, but he is going to destruction. Now we see the end result of the beast.

Sure, he may give the appearance of being alive and dying and resurrecting, but the Bible says as soon as he's resurrected, he's headed to destruction because God will not be mocked. This is a revelation of Jesus Christ, not a revelation of the beast, by the way.

He says he's headed to destruction, and those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast that he was and is not and will come.

Here is the mind which has wisdom, the seven heads of the seven mountains. We've already referenced that, on which the woman sits. And they are seven kings. Five have fallen. One is, and the one has not yet come. Okay?

[24 : 57] So we see here that the beast will be the seventh king. And when he dies and is resurrected, he will also be the eighth king. So you see, that's why it says that he himself is the

seventh, and he must remain for a little while.

And the beast which was and is not is himself also an eighth king because he died and he came back to life. And it's one of the seven. And he goes, where does he go? To destruction.

The end result of the beast is destruction. And what is carrying around Babylon? The beast. So guess what? It's headed to destruction. This attitude of worldliness, this attitude of man being the pinnacle of creation, this attitude of man being the height of all, it is going to be leading to destruction.

It says these, in verse 14, these will wage war against the lamb, and the lamb will overcome them because he is lord of lords and king of kings. And those who are with him are the called and the chosen and the faithful.

Friend, listen to me. Babylon and the Babylonian mindset opposes the things of the king of kings and lord of lords. It seeks to make man himself the king, and man his own lord.

[26 : 07] I am my own lord. I am the captain of my own ship, as the poem says. I am the one who leads myself and directs my own steps. I will go as I choose, and I will walk as I want to. No one can tell me what to do, and no one can tell me where to go.

Well, one day, that mindset will run headlong into the one who can tell you what to do and will tell you where to go, and he will destroy it because we are not our own.

We do not belong to ourselves, and we do not answer alone to ourselves, but rather, we belong to the Lord and all of creation. You say, well, all of those who have called on the name of Jesus Christ belong to the Lord, and oh, all of creation belongs to the Lord because all things were created by him and through him, and what does the text say?

And for him. And if you are not giving yourself to his purposes now, then you are a tool in revolt. Any of you have a tool in your building or a tool in your toolbox that no longer serves the purpose for which it was created.

Maybe it's broke. This thing had a purpose. It belonged to you because you purchased it, and it was supposed to fulfill its purpose, and the moment that it no longer fulfills that purpose, what do you do with it?

[27 : 17] Well, if you're like me, you put it in the bottom of your toolbox and never use it, right? But what should you do with it? Cast it out. Get rid of it. Cast it away from you because it is no longer fit for you because it no longer does what it was created for for you.

And all of creation was created by him and through him and for him. And when creation fails to allow him to use them and they revolt against his holy purposes, he will bring that to a place of destruction and will cast it out because it is no longer fit for what he created it for.

My friend, there is a destruction that is coming. This world is not all there is, and this world is not the end result of what there is. That Babylonian mindset, let's make ourselves known here.

I would rather be known for eternity in heaven than known for a moment on earth because in heaven I have a name on earth. I'm just one of the multitude. And we need to understand that because that leads us to the third thing, the third and final thing.

Not only do we see the demonic motivation behind it, we see the destruction that awaits it. Now do we want to see some good news? At least it should be good news. We see the description of the believers who oppose it.

[28 : 29] The description of believers who oppose it because it is the calling of you and I to oppose this mindset. This is not something that we have to wait to see during the tribulation period. This is something that is battling against us even today.

Something that is constantly being bombarded. Something that is being pushed into our living rooms by way of those magic computers we carry in our pockets or those magic boxes that have pictures on the screen or the books and the newspapers that we read.

This is something that has been rampant ever since man began to live upon the face of the earth. It is the mindset of thinking that you just take care of you. You do you and let everybody else do them. You promote yourself.

You be worried about yourself. You build your tower. You reach as high as you can. It is this idea of making yourselves at home in this world. But there are those who oppose it and that is the true believers of Jesus Christ.

And in this text we have a description of them. We see first the description in this term of who they are not, those who appeal to this, those who give way to this, are not those, verse 8 tells us, and

those who dwell on the earth.

[29 : 31] Look at this. Whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will wonder when they see the beast that he was and is not and will come. So all of a sudden we see those who give way to the beast, those who give way to the things of this world, are those whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.

So that tells me, by the way, that tells me very quickly, those who oppose it are those whose names have already been written. This is one of those mysteries in scripture that I'm going to leave you with and you're going to wish that I described it to you and you're going to wish that I pigeonholed it for you and made it as clear as I could to you.

But friend, listen, I'm not going to. But the reality is the Bible says that those who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, their name was written in the Lamb's book of life, not the Lamb's book of death. Their name was written in the book of life from before the foundations of the world. Now all I'm going to do is this, I'm just going to be open with you. I'm going to be open and honest.

Now that we're done talking about the doom and gloom, I'm just going to take the next few moments to try to make you fall in love with your Lord and God and Savior all over again. Before he created the world, he wrote your name in the book.

[30 : 45] Think about that. Some people wonder that King Cyrus was named in the book of Isaiah. In Isaiah, Isaiah prophesied that a king by the name of Cyrus would issue a decree that the city would be rebuilt.

And you say, well, that's cool. Well, the thing is that was 200 years before Cyrus was ever sitting on the throne as king. So before Cyrus was born, God moved Isaiah to write Cyrus' name down and give a specific purpose for Cyrus, that Cyrus would issue a decree that the city would be rebuilt, which would send the Babylonian captive Jewish people back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. By the way, it happened just like that. And some say, how in the world that must be false because Isaiah couldn't have done that a couple hundred years before Cyrus was even born. Well, I can blow your mind a little bit more.

Before God said, let there be light, he wrote my name in the book of life. Not just before I was born, but before he created the heavens and the earth. Before he laid the foundations of the world.

And the foundations of the world are the invisible things which it hangs on. Before he began his creative work, he said, there's Billy Joe. And there's Carrie. And there's, I could call you all by name, but you may be a little out of place.

[31 : 59] For those who have accepted him as Lord and Savior, it's one of these mysteries. Just fall in love with him. He has written your name. So we see the first descriptive nature is that theirs is an eternal security.

Eternally secure. I want to go ahead and tell you the things that I have found. You know why I think the Bible is so important? Because God's word will not return void. We see that in scripture. And God's word will not fail.

I can try to convince you of things and I can persuade you of things, but if it is my opinion, somebody else will have a better opinion. But if we can see the truth of scripture, that what God has said, it doesn't matter if we agree with it or not, God has said it, that settles it, and we must have conformed to it, right?

It is right. It is accurate. And when God pins something through the spirit and using the agency of man, and it has that kind of stability, how much more so when he pins your name in the book of life? You were born into a world of destruction. You were born heading towards your death. But before he created a world in which you would die, he had written your name in the book of life. That is cool.

[33 : 02] That causes us to stand back and wonder. So we see the first description of those who oppose it or those who have an eternal security. And then we are introduced to Jesus Christ, the Lamb, the King of kings and Lord of lords on that great day of battle.

And it says, and those that are with him, do you notice that? Those that are with him, by the way, when he comes to destroy Babylon, we're gonna be there. Hallelujah, we will be there. Well, I'll be there. I can't answer for you.

I can only answer for me. Those who know him as their Lord and Savior will be there. We will be with him, clothed in the righteous white robe of the saints. We'll see that later on. But it says, and those who were with him were the called and the chosen and the faithful.

So what we see, not only are they those whose names have been written in the book of life, that once God recorded their name, let the mystery of God, don't try to define God. Don't try to put God in a box in which you can understand God.

If you can understand your God, your God is not big enough. Okay, I'm just gonna go ahead and say that again. If you've got God figured out, and if you know how he operates, and you can understand him, then your God is not big enough.

[34 : 07] Because this world in which I live blows my mind. And I need a God who's bigger than that. I don't understand that if the world was tilted just a little bit this way, things would go out of whack.

If it was tilted a little bit this way, things would go out of whack. I don't understand that the elliptical circle, the circumference around the earth, and all of the seasons, those are in perfect tuning. I don't understand how the gravitational pull of the moon affects the seas, and I know you could probably give me formulas for all of that, but you can't define for me all of that.

You can tell me why it happens, but you cannot tell me how it happens. That if this thing's went off course a little bit, that it would affect all of this. Those things blow my mind, and I need a God who created that, who's bigger than that.

So what I need is a God I can't understand. And what we see here is that when God wrote my name, then God called me by name, and God chose me by name. I am called and chosen.

So think about this just for a moment. It was a prearranged wedding. God loved me while I was yet unlovable.

[35 : 07] He loved me. He wrote my name down in the book of life, and then for 20 years of my life, I pushed against him, and I revolted against him, and I despised him, and I gave him lip service, which by the way, flattery is one of the things that is the most hurtful, right?

Yeah, I love you, God. I love you, God, and I live my life however I want to. Try that with your spouse. I love you, and I love you, and then go live how you want to. That doesn't work, right? But we do that to God all the time. Oh, I love God. God's such a big God. I love Jesus, and then go live my life however I want to.

That's not good, by the way. That is probably flattery, and it's one of the worst sins that I think that you could ever do towards one who loves you enough to have your name written down. But yet, in all of that, when I was treating him like that, he was going, Billy Joe, Billy Joe, Billy Joe.

He was calling me. He was leading me. He was pulling me. So not only do we see that the believers, the description of the true believers are those who have an eternally recorded name, there are also those who have been pursued by a loving God.

He calls them by name, and he chooses them, and he calls them. And just in case we think that that frees us from all responsibility, John puts another little word down there in the bottom.

[36 : 11] The called and the chosen, that's God's side of the work. And then what's the other one? And faithful, that's yours and my side of the work. And faithful. Which means, the God who loved me enough to record my name before the foundations of the world were laid.

The God who loved me enough that while I was unloving, pursued me, and called me, and chose me, surely deserves for me to love him enough to be faithful to him.

When I understand, see this whole thing of, and we'll go ahead and put the word out there because it scares us. This predestination and foreordain, all this stuff, this whole concept of that scares so many of us when I think it ought to be one of the greatest motivations for us.

It ought to be the greatest motivation for us because a God that loves us that much should be easy to love. If God only loves me when I make the right choices, and God only loves me when I choose him and I say the right formulas, and God only loves me when I raise my hand and I say yes, then God's love is fleeting and passing.

One of the hardest things your kids will ever say to me is you only love me when I'm good. We know that's not right, right? Because a father's love and a mother's love, we don't say it's unconditional.

[37 : 37] We would love to. We would say as much as is physically possible for us, it's unconditional. We wouldn't love our children very much if we only loved them when they're good because the reality is we're not good, all of us. We're all bad.

Sometimes I'm bad at loving. Sometimes I'm bad at being good. But what if God only loved us when we're good? Well, God says, I'll take a step further. I loved you before you had the chance to be bad.

I loved you when you were bad. And when you were at your worst, I called you by name because I loved you now in light of that. How can you not be faithful to him? How can you look at a love like that and say, you know what, God?

Today I don't feel like loving you. Because at any moment, he could have done the same towards us. But he recorded our names, he called us, he chose us.

And all he asked, be faithful to me. How are you going to be faithful? Forget about Babylon. Forget about this world system of thinking this life is all there is.

[38 : 40] Don't get caught up in worldliness. Don't try to look like everybody else. Don't worry about acting like everybody else. Whatever God has entrusted with you, enjoy it. If he's not entrusted you with it, then you don't need it, right?

If he's blessed you with it, thank him for it and use it for his glory. If he takes it from you, thank him for it and use it for his glory. I say live open-handedly. You say, well, that's easy, Pastor.

Your life looks pretty easy. I wish you could hang out with me for the 20 years I've served him. He's taken things out of my hands and I celebrate. He's put things in my hand, and I celebrate. He can take things out of my hand anytime he wants to.

It's not easy, but I want to be faithful because he loves me and cares for me. And it's not all about this life and it's not all about this world.

I'm not trying to build a staircase to get to him. I found a ladder that he came to me. And that ladder was Jesus Christ. And he's pursued me and he's called me and he loves me.

[39 : 35] And we see here in this world in which we live the rising appeal of Babylon, but we also see there are the true believers who can resist that. My friend, my encouragement to you is resist it with all of your might.

You're going to walk out this door and it's going to be there in your face going, doesn't this look fun? Look at me in my purple. Look at me in my scarlet. Look at me with my pearls and my gold necklace. Look at this gold cup in my hand.

But did you notice what is in that cup? All the abominations and vileness and wickedness of her deeds. Book of Proverbs tells us don't run to the house of an adulteress because you will be consumed.

Why does it tell us that so much? Because the greatest adultery you could ever do is to fall in love with the world and turn your back on the God who pursues you. It's not physical adultery, it's spiritual adultery.

And God loves you enough to write your name, to call you, and to choose you. And all he asks is be faithful to me. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for your love.

[40 : 39] We thank you so much, God, for that love that we cannot understand. It's incomprehensible to us. Lord, it goes beyond our thoughts and our imaginations.

But Lord, it has to be your love. Lord, we know that you call us to be faithful to you. Lord, we stand here and we ask that you would give us the strength and the desire to remain true to you in this world in which we live.

To resist those things which we need to resist, to flee to those things which you've called us to pursue. And Lord, to live for your kingdom until you call us to your presence. And we ask it all in Jesus' holy and perfect name.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.

[41 : 59] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[44 : 29] Thank you.

Thank you.