



Revelation 17

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Tape 8256

By Chuck Smith

Let's turn to Revelation 17. Let me give you a little bit of historic background that will help you to understand the 17th and the 18th chapters of the Book of Revelation as we see the judgment of God upon the false religious system in chapter 17, and we see the judgment of God on commercialism in chapter 18. Both of them are identified with Babylon.

Shortly after the flood when Noah and his family came out of the ark, they first settled in the Babylonian plain. And there the son of Ham, whose name is Cush, had a son by the name of Nimrod who was called a mighty hunter before the Lord. That, before the Lord, is actually against the Lord. He was a rebel against God. And now we are just a very short time after the flood, but this false religious system under Nimrod began there in Babylon. It developed through the years. His mother, Semiramis, was later called the queen of heaven. He was deified and was called Tammuz. And you have your ancient mystery Babylon religion born—the worship of the mother, the queen of heaven, and her son, Tammuz.

Later Semiramis claimed that Tammuz was virgin born and that he was born on December 25th so that they began to worship and serve Tammuz's birth and celebrate it on the 25th of December. According to this story as he was out hunting wild boar, a wild boar turned on him and gored him. And he lay there dead for three days after which life came back into him and they began to celebrate the resurrection from the dead of this man, Tammuz or Nimrod. It so happened that it took place in the spring and, thus, they began to celebrate a holiday that they called Astarte (also known as Ishtar) in the springtime celebrating the resurrection of Tammuz from the dead. Because an egg is sort of a symbol of perpetuated life, in the celebration they would color eggs. The whole idea behind the Easter, the bunny rabbit and so forth all goes back not to Christian origins but to pagan origins, actually to Babylon.

When Joshua stood before the children of Israel at the end of his life, he challenged them to choose the God that they would serve. He said whether they be the gods that your fathers served on the other side of the Euphrates, or their fathers that worshiped in the Babylonian religion, the mystery religion of Babylon, or whether the gods of the Egyptians in whose land you dwelt, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now dwell, choose! But he said as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

One of the things that Babylon exported to the Jews, and some of them continue to carry it on, was this pagan worship from the Babylon's, the worship of Semiramis, the mother of god, queen of heaven, and her son Tammuz. They followed these pagan practices and brought them in with them into the Holy Land. Joshua is rebuking them for that but telling them they've got to choose whom they will serve. When Jerusalem was conquered by Babylon and the people were taken captive back to Babylon, the Jews there during the seventy years of captivity picked up on the commercialism of Babylon because Babylon was the commercial center of the world. And as you well know, they became very adept in commercialism. When they were taken into captivity, they were basically an agrarian society. During their seventy-year sojourn in Babylon, they became a commercial society. So through the years we see the commercialism as it has controlled the world and so many people become slaves to this whole commercial system. In the 18th chapter, God will judge the commercialism that came from Babylon. In chapter 17, God is going to judge the religious system that arose out of Babylon.

Tonight we're going to be bringing you many interesting facts from history. I really have no intention of bashing the Catholic Church. However, I want to just give you certain basic facts of history that you cannot

deny nor can you change if you are a student of history. The history of the church has not been bright. It has been a disaster. And this false church system is going to be brought into judgment here in chapter 17.

So there came one of the seven angels. (17:1a)

Now, in the 16th chapter these seven angels were given bowls of wrath or judgment of God that were to be poured out upon the earth. And we saw the successions of judgments that came as a result of these bowls of God's wrath poured out upon the earth.

Now, one of those seven angels which had the seven bowls, he talked with me, [John said,] and he said, Come hither; I will shew unto you the judgment of the great whore that sits on many waters: (17:1)

Now, as we get down further in this chapter the many waters is identified to John as the nations and the peoples and the multitudes and the tongues upon which the whore has controlled. Now, in the Bible fornication, whoredom, adultery, are used as symbolisms of false religious systems. In the Old Testament the nation of Israel was to be married unto God, and God looked upon the nation of Israel as His bride. But when the nation of Israel began to worship other gods, God said that they were guilty of fornication. They were guilty of adultery. When they reached out to other gods, he referred to that as their whoredom. And thus the whoredom is the introducing or the worship of gods in an unspecified way or other gods that are an attraction to the people. So the great whore, the false worship, who sits upon many nations, peoples, sort of covers the earth.

With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, [that would be spiritual fornication] and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (17:2)

Let me read you out of Halley's Bible Pocket Handbook in which he gives to us some of the events of the history of the church. He tells us that, "Innocent III who was the pope from 1198 to 1216, the most powerful of all the popes, claimed to be, and this was the first time, the vicar of Christ or the vicar of God, the supreme sovereign over the church and the world. He claimed the right to depose kings and princes and that all things on earth and in heaven and in hell are subject to the Vicar of Christ. He brought the church into supreme control of the state. The kings of Germany, France, and England, and practically all of the monarchs of Europe obeyed his will. He even brought the Byzantine Empire under his control and never in history has any one man exerted more power. He ordered the two crusades. He decreed the transubstantiation. He confirmed Auricular confession. He declared that Peter's successor can never in any way depart from the Catholic faith. He declared Papal Infallibility. He condemned the Magna Charta. He forbade the reading of the Bible in the common languages. He ordered the extermination of the heretics. He instituted the Inquisitions. He ordered the Massacre of the Albigenses. More blood was shed under his direction and that of his immediate successors than any other period in the history of the church except in the Papacy's effort to crush the reformation in the 16th and 17th centuries. One would think that Nero, the beast, had come back to life in the Name of the Lamb." That's just historic fact. "The kings of the earth have committed fornication. When the church was ruling over the kings and the inhabitants of the earth made drunk with the blood of the wine of their fornication."

So the angel carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. (17:3)

Now, the seven heads and ten horns are something that we've already discussed in our journey through the Bible. Going back to the Book of Daniel, as we were talking this morning, he in his vision saw these ten horns that rose out of the Roman Empire that became the ruling powers in the last days (The Federation of European Nations) and how that out of the ten there came an eleventh horn, the Antichrist, who got control over the revived Roman Empire (The United States of Europe) and his reign in the last days. Daniel tells us, "I considered the horns, and behold there came up among them another little horn before

whom the three first horns were plucked up by the roots, and behold this horn had eyes like a man but a mouth speaking blasphemous things. And the ten horns that were in his head and of the other which came up and before whom three fell, even the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows, and the ten horns out of the kingdom are ten kings, [Daniel identifies them] that shall arise and another shall rise after them. And he will be diverse from the first, and he will subdue three kings, and he shall speak great words against the most high. He'll wear out the saints of the most high, and he'll think to change the times and the laws, and they will be given into his hand until time times and the dividing of time are three and a half years. And the king shall do according to his will. He will exalt himself, magnify himself above every god and will speak blasphemous things against the God of gods and will prosper till the indignation, [which is the Great Tribulation] is accomplished. For that which is determined shall be done."

In Revelation 12:3, John said, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven, behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads." Turning to the 13th chapter of Revelation, beginning with verse one, John said, "I stood upon the sand of the sea and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea having seven heads, ten horns, and upon his horns, ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet was like the feet of a bear, his mouth was like the mouth of a lion, and the dragon gave him his power and his authority [or throne] and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death and his deadly wound was healed and all of the world wondered after the beast. And they worshiped the dragon which give him power, and they worshipped the beast saying who is like unto the beast and who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given unto him to continue for forty-two months, or three and a half years. And he opened his mouth and blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven."

So we find that this ten horns, seven heads is identified with the revival of the Roman Empire and identified with the Antichrist that will come out of that federation of nations. Now, the interesting thing is John saw the woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, that is full of the names of blasphemy. And so there will be a tie in between the false church and the Antichrist's system. Full of the names of blasphemy. The pope's claim to hold, on the earth the place of God, to have a supreme authority over the human conscience, to have power to forgive sins, to grant indulgences and obedience to them, is necessary for salvation. The scarlet colored beast, or red, the color of the beast and the harlot and the ten dragons in chapter 13. It is the color of the Papacy. The Papal Throne is scarlet. It's born by twelve men dressed in scarlet. The cardinal's hats and robes are scarlet. Originally, it was Satan's color. It became the color of atheistic communism in Russia. They were known as the Reds, and they have the Red Square and the other red symbols in Russia.

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, And decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: (17:4)

Let me read you a little bit of the history of some of the popes, again out of Halley's Bible Pocket Handbook, his section on church history. Adrian II, 865-872; John VIII, 872-882; Marinus, 882-884. With these popes began the Dark Period of the Papacy. The two hundred years between Nicholas I and Gregory VII is called by the historians, "The Midnight of the Dark Ages." Bribery, corruption, immorality, bloodshed make it just about the blackest chapter in the whole history of the church. Sergius III, A.D. 904-911, was said to have had a mistress, Morozia. She and her mother, Theodora, and her sister filled the Papal chair with their paramours and bastard sons and turned the Papal Palace into a den of robbers called in history, "The Rule of the Harlots," 904-963. Anastasius III and Lando and John X was brought from Ravenna to Rome and made Pope by Theodora for the more convenient gratification of her passion. He was smothered to death by Morozia, who then in succession raised to the Papacy Leo VI, Stephen VII, and John XI, her own illegitimate son. Another of her sons appointed the four following Popes, Leo VII, Stephen VIII, Martin III, Agapetus II, and John XII. A grandson of Morozia was guilty of almost every crime. He violated the virgins,

the widows, high and low. He lived with his father's mistress, made the Papal Palace a brothel, and was killed while in the act of adultery by the woman's enraged husband.

Vicars of Christ, representatives of God upon the earth. And so John writing under the inspiration of The Holy Spirit speaks of these things that the church would be guilty of. The woman arrayed in purple and her joining together in the last days in promoting the power and the reign of the Antichrist.

And upon her forehead was the name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (17:5)

When Constantine was supposedly converted and declared that Christianity would be the religion of Rome, he signed the Edict of Toleration, which ended the many years of great persecution by the Roman Government against the church. Thousands, in fact they estimate as many as six million believers were martyred during the first two hundred fifty years of the church's history as the Roman government sought to wipe out this new sect that they looked upon as a danger to Rome. But when Constantine came into power, he felt that the Lord had given him a vision in one of the crucial battles. He saw the sign of the cross and under it the words in this sign, "Conquer." So when he won that battle and became the Emperor of Rome, he declared Christianity as the state religion. But Rome was pretty much paganized. The Babylonian influence, the religions of Babylon had heavily influenced the Romans. Many of their practices were borrowed from the Babylonian religion.

One of them was this celebration of December 25th, which was the Babylonian holiday for Tammuz. The Romans celebrated it under the name of Saturnalia, and they had many different customs that accompanied the celebration of Saturnalia. But it was basically a pagan holiday. Now, Constantine recognized the difficulty of taking away traditional holidays from the people. And so it was declared that the 25th of December was the birthday of Jesus. And so we'll be celebrating the birthday of Jesus on the 25th of December.

The celebration of Astarte (or Ishtar), the goddess of life who evidently brought life to Tammuz when he was dead, that took place in the spring, and so Constantine said we'll call it Easter, which is very close to Astarte. And we will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus at this time. And so what they did was sort of adapt the pagan holidays, giving them Christian names and allowing the people to go on with the same pagan customs of drunken parties and all during the Christmas season. So we see today how that it is sort of reverted back to its pagan celebrations. Christmas now is a big time for commercialism. It is a big time for office parties, drunkenness and all of the things that take place under the guise of celebrating the birthday of Jesus Christ. It's something that, though they try today Christianize it, it has its pagan roots and it is surely going back to its pagan practices in the world to date.

Under this mystery Babylon religion, the worship of the mother of Tammuz who is known as the Queen of Heaven. In many pictures that they have found from the Babylonian era, pictures that were drawn hundreds of years before Jesus and the birth of Jesus, have the mother and child with the halos above their head, which were representing Semiramis and Tammuz. But these were adapted and the elevation of Mary and the worship of Mary and even being called the Mother of God and worshiped and venerated was stemming from the Babylonian worship of Semiramis. There is a book, a scholarly book, if you are interested in these kinds of things. It's called the Two Babylon's. The author's name is Alexander Hislop, and he goes to great pains to identify and to show the two Babylon's and the similarities between the ancient Babylonian mystery religion and the worship in the Catholic Church today.

Now, all Catholics are not bad. All Mormons are not bad, and all people who go to Calvary Chapel are not bad. There are many wonderful godly people in the Catholic Church, people who truly love the Lord, people who do not know the background or the depths or some of the practices that have been introduced in and by the church. Even as there are many Mormons who are not really aware of what the Mormon doctrine actually is in many respects. You tell the Mormon that the Christ that they believe in is a brother to Lucifer,

and most of them say oh know, we don't believe that. But yet it's a part of the Mormon rituals in the temple in this play-acting thing where Elohim, God, is talking about the redemption of the earth and Jesus presents his program and Lucifer, the brother of Jesus presents his. And when the father chooses the redemption program by Jesus, Lucifer gets angry and decides he's going to destroy the thing. But they make Jesus a created being like Lucifer, a brother to Lucifer. Now, most Mormons don't even know that and yet it's a very part of their practice.

So with the Catholic Church, it speaks of the woman who is red with the blood of the saints. The inquisition by the Catholic church especially at the time of the reformation by Martin Luther, it is estimated that there were some nine hundred thousand believers, followers of Jesus Christ, who were killed by the Jesuits in their holy war in their endeavor to stamp out Protestantism. Red with the blood of the saints.

I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I was astonished with great astonishment. And the angel said unto me, Why did you marvel? 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. (17:6,7)

Now, the angel is going to explain to John the symbolism. We don't have to guess at it. The angel is going to declare it to John.

The beast that you saw was, and is not; and shall assent out of the bottomless pit, [or abusso] and go into perdition: and that they dwell on the earth will wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (17:8)

When John wrote the Book of Revelation, there were five major emperors who had already passed from the scene. Domitian was the emperor at the time of the writing, and after his death there was one more powerful emperors who arose. But the angel identifies the beast as one of the five who had already died. "The beast that you saw was, he is not, he will ascend out of the abusso, he will go into perdition, or Gehenna. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

And here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are the seven mountains, upon which the woman sits [or the seven-hilled city of Rome. I mean he identifies it for us. Through history Rome has been known as the city of seven hills.] (17:9)

There are some, and I think there's a lot of credence; I'm surely open to this, that believe that Caesar Nero could very well be the Antichrist. During his reign he was called by the early church, the beast because of his beastly activities. As you study history, at the beginning of his reign, Caesar Nero seemed to be a fairly good ruler. But there came a time in his life where there was a flip, where he almost, you might say, became insane. The interesting there, as you look at history, this dramatic change in Caesar Nero took place just about the time that Paul had his first appearance before Caesar Nero.

You remember when Paul was getting the run around in Caesarea. He appealed to Caesar. And under Roman law, he had that right as a Roman citizen. And so he was sent to Rome that he might take his appeal to Caesar. At Paul's first appearance before Caesar you know from Paul's record that he no doubt laid on Caesar Nero a very heavy witness of Jesus Christ. Jesus told the disciples you're going to be brought before the kings, magistrates, and so forth. Don't take forethought what you'll say in that hour. The Holy Spirit will give you the words to speak. It will turn to you as an opportunity to give a testimony. Paul believed that. And as you look at the Book of Acts when Paul appeared first after all before the Jews there in Jerusalem and he asked the captain permission to speak, Paul gave to them a testimony of his conversion. When he was taken by the Roman government down to Felix, the governor of the area at the time in Caesarea, when Paul gave his defense before Felix, he witnessed to him about his conversion and about judgment and salvation and the judgment to come. And Felix was visibly shaken by the message, so powerful it was, but he rejected it. When Felix was removed and Festus became the Roman governor over that province, the case of Paul was brought up again. And Paul before Festus gave a very strong witness of Jesus Christ.

When Festus had to send Paul to Rome because of Paul's appeal, he had a problem because he really didn't have legitimate charges, and he knew that he would be in trouble before the Roman Senate because of the miscarriage of justice. He should have released Paul, but he was holding him as a political pawn. And Festus realized that when Paul got to Rome it would be curtains for him because the Roman's prided themselves on Roman justice. So when King Agrippa came to visit him, he said to Agrippa, I've got a prisoner here that the Jews have some things against and he's appealed to Caesar. I've got to send him, but I really don't have any real charges. Would you mind listening to his case and help me develop some charges against this guy so that when we send him to Rome we will have charges? When Paul then gave his defense to King Agrippa, you know that Paul thought if I can convert this guy the influence that he has would be tremendous. So Paul started laying such a heavy witness on Agrippa and started to just really press home the point. Festus stood up and he said, Paul you're crazy. You've studied too much. Your much learning has made you mad. And Agrippa said are you try to go convert me to Christianity? And Paul admitted, you bet I am!

Now, don't you know that when Paul got before Caesar? He thought wow, if I can convert this guy, and he must have laid a witness on Caesar like you can't believe. Caesar released Paul and gave him his freedom. Paul returned to Ephesus for a while, but it was during this period, and perhaps because of Caesar's rejection of the message and that it began to weigh so heavily upon him; his own guilt began to weigh so heavily upon him, he mentally flipped. And he began the arresting and the torturing and the murdering of the Christians. He would put Christians on poles in his garden, cover them with wax and light the fires and drive his chariot under the light of the burning Christian naked and screaming. Of course, we know Caesar mainly for his burning of the city of Rome. He fiddled while Rome burned and then sought to blame it upon the Christians in order to institute greater persecutions against the Christians. And because of the horrible things that he did, the early church called him the beast. He was one of the five Roman emperors who had already passed from the scene when John was writing the Book of Revelation.

John tells us that the beast is one of those that had fallen. Again we read that "the beast you saw was; he is not; he will ascend out of the abusso, the bottomless pit; he will go into perdition, and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundations of the world when they behold the beast that was and is not and yet is it."

Now you say, do you believe in reincarnation? No. I believe that Nero became demon possessed and that same demon that possessed Nero has been incarcerated in the abusso, the place of incarceration for evil spirits.

You remember when Jesus met the men in Gadara, and he said who are you? And the man said, Legion because we are many. And they begged Jesus not to send them to the abusso before their time. So Jesus gave them leave and they went into the swine. You remember the story.

I believe that there is a demon spirit that possessed Nero that will come and possess the Antichrist so that he will be similar to Caesar Nero in his butchery, in his cruelty, in his persecution of those who refuse to worship him or to take his mark. Basically, in Rome the reason why Christians were put to death was their refusal to worship the emperor. They had raised the emperors to the position of God, and the refusal to worship the emperor was looked upon as treason, and thus, they were put to death.

So now the angel begins to explain, "and here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are the seven mountains, upon which the woman sits," the city of Rome.

There are seven kings: five are fallen, one now is, and the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, but he goes into Gehenna. (17:10, 11)

We have here the abusso. We have Gehenna and we have in the scriptures another place of incarcerated spirits and that's known as Hades in the New Testament, the Greek. In the Hebrew it's Sheol--three different places.

Hades is identified as in the center of the earth. Jesus said, when they asked him for a sign of his Messiahship, "No sign will be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah. As Jonah was three days and three

nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Paul said, “He who has ascended is the same one who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth. And when he ascended, he led the captives from their captivity.” And so Hades is identified as a place in the heart of the earth.

The abusso is a bottomless pit, a shaft. Now, it’s an interesting thing, we send rockets out into orbit, little satellites, to orbit around the earth. How do they remain in orbit? By the distance that we send them and the orbit that we put them in, they are constantly falling. The gravitational pull, they are just constantly falling. So they remain in this orbit because of the gravitation causing them to constantly fall. Now, if you were in the center of the earth, the earth as it’s spinning on its axis, you’d be in a place of sort of constant falling, a bottomless pit. Thus the abusso, bottomless pit.

Then there is this third place called here perdition. In the Greek it is Gehenna. Jesus spoke a lot about Gehenna. He identifies it as a place that is in outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

It is interesting how that today the scientists are looking for the edge of space. And the interesting thing is that the more powerful telescopes and all that we develop, the further out we find that space expands. Is there a place out there where there’s the end of space? The furthest galaxy, is there a sign that says “the end”? There are no service stations from this point on. Our poor minds. When you try to think of that, your much learning can make you mad. So don’t try to figure that one too long. Just let it go and smile at it. Our finite minds cannot really comprehend the infinite. Space may not be infinite, and the scientists do not believe that it is infinite. They believe that the edge of space is probably somewhere between 15 and 17 million light years.

Now, Jesus said that Gehenna was in outer darkness. Perhaps so far out beyond the furthest galaxy, as far out into whatever that is out there, that there is no light of the galaxies that even reaches there. Now, Jesus said “This is the condemnation. That light has come into the world, but men will not come to the light because they love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.” And so for a person who doesn’t like the light, what does God do? He accommodates them. He’ll put them out so far, that no light of the galaxies can reach them, and they’ll be in outer darkness. But it won’t be the delight that they’re looking for.

Hades will one day be empty. As we move along in Revelation, we have chapter 20 that we’re coming to. And we’ll find that at that time death and Hades will be delivered up. Hades will deliver up the dead that are in it. They will stand before God to be judged. And they will then be consigned to Gehenna.

Now, in the 19th chapter when Jesus comes back, Satan is taken by the Lord and bound with a great chain and he is cast into the abusso, the place where the beast or the Antichrist comes, out of the abusso. Satan will be cast into the abusso and for the thousand years that Jesus is reigning on the earth, he will be incarcerated in the abusso. When Jesus comes, the beast and the false prophet at that time will be cast into Gehenna. And a thousand years later when Satan is then judged, he will be cast into the Gehenna where the beast and the false prophet are. When men then stand before the great white throne judgment of God, if their names are not written in the Book of Life, they also will be cast into the Gehenna. The end of rebellion against God as they are cast so far out, there is no light, in eternal darkness. So he describes here,

The beast that was, and is not, even he is the eight, and is of the seven, and goes into Gehenna. And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, [Kings that were once a part, according to Daniel, of the Roman Empire nations that were once a part of the Roman Empire, or the United States of Europe; or as is commonly called, the European Community.] these kings have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive the power as kings for one hour with the beast. [So they would be the leaders of these nations that have federated together, but they don’t reign as kings but they receive the power as such, and they reign for one hour with the beast.] These have one mind, and they’ll give their power and strength to the beast. [The power of western Europe] and they will make war with the Lamb, [They will be gathered together, as we read, in the plains of Megiddo for that final conflict as they will seek to thwart the coming of God’s Kingdom through Jesus Christ upon the earth.] They’ll

make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is the Lord of lords, and the King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. (17:11-14)

In the 19th chapter, we will read of Jesus returning to establish His kingdom upon the earth. Coming on a white horse and they that will be coming with Him, His church. Paul said when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory! The prophet cried out, "Behold He comes with ten thousands of His saints to execute His judgment upon the earth." Returning with Jesus to establish God's kingdom upon the earth, those that return, those that are with Him, have been called. They have been chosen and they are faithful. How grateful I am for the call of God upon my heart! How grateful I am for the fact that God has chosen me to be His disciple, to bring forth fruit!

One day Jesus said to His disciples, John records it in chapter 15, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained that you should be My disciples and that you should bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever you should ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you." Chosen! How wonderful it is to be chosen of God!

You say, well I don't think that's fair that God chooses who's going to spend eternity with Him. Well, was it fair that you chose the gal that you'd spend the rest of your life with? Do you think that's fair? Should someone have just said, hey, you take her or you take him? No, we had our choice, and we're thankful for that. Aren't we? After all, you're going to spend the rest of your life with him. You'd like to have a choice in that. You don't want Him to just dump someone on you. You'd like a choice. Now, if you're going to spend all eternity, I would say that it's fair that God chooses who He wants to spend eternity with. I have no problem with that. Because He chose me! Why should I have a problem with that?

Well, we have choice. And the interesting thing is that God has given you a choice, who you want to spend eternity with. It's really your choice. You have the power of self-determination. God has given you that. You can choose to spend eternity with God in the Kingdom of God, or you can choose to rebel against God and find your destiny in Gehenna where Jesus said it was prepared for Satan and his angels. It's your choice! It's one of those interesting anomalies that it is your choice, and yet when you choose to follow Jesus, He says you didn't choose me, I chose you and ordained you that you should be My disciple. You should bring forth fruit. It's something that we can't quite understand. You say but how do I know if he chose me or not? Well, it's very easy to discover. Just choose to follow Jesus. Choose to surrender your life to him and you'll discover that He chose you. That's simple enough isn't it? You say, but what if I don't want to choose Him? Well then, maybe He didn't choose you. But that doesn't take away from the fact that you have the choice. Now, because He is omniscient, He is God, and He knows all things; He knows those that will make that choice. So we've been chosen in Him from the foundations of the world. Names written in His Book of Life from the foundations of the world. And if you will just choose to follow Jesus, you will discover the wonderful truth that God chose you. If you choose not to follow Jesus, then one day you'll come to the horrible realization that you weren't chosen. But you can't blame Him because He chose you from the foundations of the world that we should walk before Him in holiness and love.

So those that are with the Lamb who overcomes are called, and chosen, and faithful. The angel said unto me, The waters which you saw, [Now, remember back in verse one, he said I will show you the judgment of the great whore that sits upon the many waters, or is ruling and having an influence around the world.] The waters that you saw, where the whore is sitting, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw upon the beast, these shall hate the whore,

Though the church will be used to help establish the beast and his reign, once he is established, he'll turn against the church. When he first comes into power, he will make a covenant with the nation of Israel. They will begin to acclaim him as the Messiah. But when he reveals his true colors, then they will denounce him and he will seek to destroy the Jews and they will go through one more great persecution. Jesus talked about that time warning the Jews to flee to the wilderness. We're told that God has prepared a place for them where they will be sheltered for three and a half years, that is the final three and a half years of the reign of the Antichrist.

So they'll hate the whore, and they'll make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God has put in their hearts to fulfill his will and to agree, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. And the woman which thou saw is that great city, [the great city of Rome], which reigns over the kings of the earth. (17:15-18)

So the judgment of God upon the false religious system of the last days. As we move into chapter 18, God will deal with the commercialism, again, that had its birth in Babylon but controls the lives of so many people, holds them in slavery today. The commercialism that we see in the world, the judgment upon it. And then, oh boy, can't wait, we get to chapter 19 and we go to heaven once again with the church, the glorious marriage of the Lamb to his church! So we're getting into the exciting portions of the book as we are closing out our journey through the Bible!

Father we look at the passages of Scripture here, and You said that this is the mind that has wisdom, and You began to explain the symbolism of the chapter. And Lord, we pray that You'll give to us wisdom in understanding these things. Lord, it is our desire to walk before You in all holiness, righteousness, and purity. Lord, we know that in the last days that those that did not have a love for the truth will be given over to a strong delusion that they might believe the lie rather than the truth. But Lord, help us to walk in Your truth. Open up our minds and our understanding to Your plan for the future. And Lord, we do pray again that we will be accounted worthy to escape these things that be taking place upon the earth, and that we might be there with Your church in heaven, around the throne of God worshipping the Lamb forever. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.