

17b REV

Let's resume our study now in the book of Revelation. We've been looking at chapter 14, but we're going to back up into chapter 13 for a moment to clarify a couple of things that we looked at last week, and that will enable us to cruise smoothly through the last part of chapter 14. Back in Revelation 13, we saw John say at the beginning of the chapter, I stood on the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, on his head a blasphemous name.

We find out that in this section of Revelation, we see three different beasts. We have already seen the beast that rises up out of the bottomless pit and goes after the two witnesses. You remember that back in chapter 11? The witnesses finish their testimony in verse 7. The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.

The beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit. Now, who ascends out of the bottomless pit? Who is in the bottomless pit? This would be Satan. There are three beasts here, and this is sort of what's been known as the unholy trinity.

If you ever hear people talk about the unholy trinity, this is how it works. Satan wants to take the place of God the Father, the planner, the one whose throne is above all, you know, I will, I will, I will, Ezekiel 28, Isaiah 14, and so on. So, this is Satan.

He fills the role of God the Father. This beast that we see at the beginning of chapter 13, rising up out of the sea, the sea is not the bottomless pit, is it? The sea represents the chaos of wicked humanity, basically. This is the Antichrist and the government that he puts together.

Now, the beast and the heads of the beast, and the horns on the head, and all of that, there's a little bit of flexibility in how you understand them. Generally speaking, the beast represents world government. That's why it's got these heads, the heads of the past.

This is world government in its Babylonian form, or its Egyptian form, or its Assyrian form, or its Medo-Persian form, or its Greek form, or its Roman form. Now, we also talked last time about this beast that rises up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns. It says, the beast I saw was like a leopard, feet like a bear, mouth like the mouth of a lion.

This harks back to Daniel, who describes this same beast, and we're not going to take a lot of time to go back to Daniel. We'll be seeing it when we go through Daniel, but the first beast that Daniel sees, this is kind of in reverse order, the lion is Babylon, and the lion morphs into a man when you go back to Daniel. We'll get into all the details of this, but that's Nebuchadnezzar, lycanthropy, the whole thing.

Speaking great swelling words, look at this great kingdom, look at what I've done, big mouth, tall hat, no cattle type of thing. Well, of course, he does have cattle, but this is the Babylonian empire. The lion speaks of Babylon, and what does Babylon speak of? The arrogance of accomplishment.

Look at what I have done. I am like the lion. I speak great swelling words.

The middle beast here, the feet like a bear, the bear that Daniel sees rises up and is like Walter Brennan. It's higher on one side than it is on the other. It's got a hitch, and it's getting long.

It's stronger on one side. It's a little misshapen. This is the Medo-Persian empire.

Which part of that was stronger, the Medes or the Persians? The Persians. The Medes, not much. They call it the Medo-Persian, but they also call it the Perso-Median empire.

That's why they turned it around, but the Medes are the weak part. Daniel sees this lion that's hunched up on one side, and he has three ribs in his mouth. What do you think those ribs are? Does anybody have any idea what the ribs in the bear's mouth are? Well, good.

That will give you something to look forward to in Daniel, because I'm not going to tell you. Then he says, he saw it and it was like a leopard. The leopard that Daniel sees has four wings.

It's not just a leopard, but it has four wings. Well, the leopard represents Greece, and the four wings, what happens after Alexander dies? What happens to, gets split up and you've got your Seleucids and all the different parts of the Greek empire. You get the Ptolemies down in Egypt, you've got the Seleucids and you've got the rest of them.

Forget who the other guys are, but it gets split four ways, and those are the four wings. This beast that comes up out of the sea harks back and has characteristics of these old great world empire governments. The beast basically represents human government.

Now, observation, interpretation, application. It's fine that there's going to be a future world government, but why do we care? Why do we care? We're not going to be here, so why do we worry about this? What are we supposed to get out of this? Well, we like, I'm saying we as a society, we as an American culture, we like for the government to come in and fix our problems. We have a hurricane, we want the government to prevent it.

We want the government to mitigate it. We want the government to clean it all up. We want the government to do a bunch of things that maybe we can't do for ourselves.

Some governments in other countries have got socialized health care and you don't have to find a doctor, you don't have to join an HMO, you don't have to worry about insurance.

The government just picks up the tab, go to the doctor, and you have socialized medicine. This is a bad idea.

Government fixing your problems is a bad idea. The bible says so. It's a beast.

Government is the beast. The beast is bad. I can't make it any clearer than that.

How much health care did God's divinely inspired government provide for Israel? What was the health care chapter in Deuteronomy? How much health care did the Israelites get? Lo, the sons of Asher will come down twice a week and have a clinic. Levites will do the worship life, Judahites will rule, and the Asherites will be the doctors. And you'd come down and the sons of Asher, I have given them wisdom in all herbs and the scents.

Didn't happen, did it? No government health care in Israel. None. How much welfare was built into the government of Israel? That would be a big fat goose egg.

Zero. None. The law in Israel encouraged individuals to be beneficent, benevolent, leave the corners of your field uncleaned, pay attention to the widows and orphans, like Boaz did.

And God blessed people who did so. But there was no formal system of support for the poor in the structure of the government of Israel. It was left to the individuals to handle that.

Government is not to be the object of our faith. Now, it doesn't just have to be national government, state government, city government, county government. It can be the government in your company.

It can be the government in your family. It can be the government in your school or in the military. We do not look for our security or our provision or our comfort to government.

Regardless of what its responsibilities are on paper, that's not where we look. When food hits the plate, when we have shelter in a time of storm, we don't say, worthy are you, oh government, to receive honor and glory and power. Where in the Bible does anybody say, hail, oh government, wonderful, beneficent, glory to the government.

What does the Bible say? Pray for the government. Pray for them. Pray for the beast.

Do not depend on it. Do not count on it. Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

But it is not to be our security blanket. So, whenever you see civil government in the Bible, it is generally in an unfavorable light. David screws up government and Uriah dies.

David screws up government and a plague strikes the nation. Solomon screws up government. The son of Solomon screws up government.

All the kings of Judah and Israel end up screwing up government and there's horrible consequences. Cursed is the man that trusts in man, that makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord. He will be like a shrub in the desert and will not see good when it comes.

Government is made out of people. Whatever organization you want to look at, if you're in the Kiwanis club or if you're in the Society for the Preservation of Petunias or whatever it may be, or in your school or in your company, don't expect justice. Don't expect righteousness to flow like honey from the mountaintops in government.

It's a beast. The Bible pictures it all the way through as a necessary evil. Obey those that have the rule over you.

Pray for those who are in authority over you. Pray for kings. But don't look to them for your security.

Look to God. He is the one that is worthy to receive praise. So this beast stands up and it has on his head a blasphemous name.

How many of his heads have a blasphemous name? All of them. Babylon has a blasphemous name and Nebuchadnezzar was a believer and Daniel was the second in command. And the Babylon head has a blasphemous name.

The Medo-Persian Cyrus the Mede, Darius the Mede, Cyrus the Persian, all of those guys helped Israel go back to the land, helped the Judahites come back and rebuild the walls and rebuild the temple. Blasphemous name on the Medo-Persian head. Rome, Pax Romana, and the Koine Greek language that flourished in it, made possible the spread of the gospel.

But the Roman head has a blasphemous name on it. It's a necessary evil. These things must come.

Woe to him by whom they come. The beast, like a leopard, speaks of the Greek. This is the swiftness.

Alexander spread the Greek empire faster than any of the others. He did his conquest more quickly. He was dead by the age of 28.

The guy really moved out. Live fast, die young, burn your candle at both ends. You're like a meteor across the sky.

And 28, I mean, he and Hank Williams are going to be sitting in some hot corner of the hot place, you know, picking and grinning. Because the leopard, the animal itself and the wings that are on it in Daniel's vision speak of speed. This, you think, look at the speed.

Look how quick this is. Look how quick it ought to be. They should have been there for

the hurricane relief faster.

Government can be fast. It'll come in, they'll swoop in and save you. The police, I call 911, I expect them to be there in six minutes.

I call the paramedics. They should be here right away. Christ is the man who trusts in man.

Don't rely on the speed. That's the leopard. That's the Alexander bit.

And, you know, you live fast, you die fast. Feet like the feet of a bear. Stability, that's what I'm after.

I want reliability. I want a concrete six feet in the earth, sunken foundation. That's what I want.

I want the bear. The bear has got the blasphemous name. How about the mouth like the mouth of a lion? I want the authority and the power and to speak and the eloquence and the command and the presence.

That's what I want. I want presence. I want power.

I want authority to come in and fix everything. It's the beast. The beast looks great.

Why do you think it's going to seduce everybody on the planet after we leave? It looks great. Look at this government. It's fast like the leopard.

It's strong and stable like the bear and it has authority and presence and power like the lion. It's the greatest thing we've ever seen. It's the best the government has ever been.

It's a beast. It comes up out of the sea. It comes up out of the swirling chaos of evil.

That's human government. Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength. That's what's going on here at the beginning of 13.

Now, this is important to understand the last part of chapter 14. Dragon gives him his power, his throne and great authority. I saw one of the heads as if it was mortally wounded and his deadly wound was healed.

All the world marveled and followed the beast. They worshiped the dragon. Now, I told you last time that this is somewhat unclear, this wounded head thing.

Is it the individual antichrist who seems to recover from an assassination attempt? Is it his new government that seems to suffer overthrow or a coup or something and then he recovers from that? A lot of people think that the head that gets wounded is head number six, which is the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire fell. The rise and fall of the Roman Empire, all that.

And when the antichrist brings it back, people say, we never thought we'd see the Roman Empire again, but here it is. And that this wound is basically the church age, the time when there is no government. Because when the Israel clock stops, Israel disappears very soon after Rome disappears as a world power.

And now it's back. And so it recovers from this fatal wound. And the revived Roman Empire is the seventh head, which basically springs up as a manifestation of the healing of the wound of the sixth head, so to speak.

That's possible. Maybe that's what it is. I don't know.

But whatever it is, it so impresses the observers that they cannot help but follow the beast. He's fast. He's powerful.

He's authoritative. He's got presence. And look at this.

He's resurrected this thing from fatality to life. And of course, this is what the Lord Jesus Christ represents in the Trinity. We've already talked about Satan trying to emulate God the Father, the power behind the plan, and so on.

The antichrist is the alternate for Christ. Christ seems to be defeated by death and yet rises. The antichrist in some way, shape or form emulates this and seems to be back from the dead, whether it's governmentally back from the dead, physically back from the dead, whatever, historically back from the dead.

He does this life out of death sleight of hand and everybody is amazed and they think he's better than Jesus. Now, they worship the beast. Who is like the beast who is able to make war with him? If the beast represents government, by the way, are these people worshipping the antichrist or are they worshipping the beast? Initially, they're worshipping the government.

We have nothing but great things to say about this government. Remember, you've got heads and you've got the beast. It doesn't say they worship the head.

It says they worship the beast. And they are all, you know, not like now, only, you know, 40% approval rating for the president, 60% think he must be doing a bad job. This is going to be, the antichrist is going to have like a 90 something percent approval rating.

I'll accept 144,000. And everybody's going to say, this government, this is what human history, this is the fruit of evolution. We finally evolved to a higher plane.

It's Star Trek. There's peace in the galaxy. Isn't this great? They worship the beast and they worship the dragon because he's the power behind it.

Well, when you get to chapter 14 now, you have, well, actually, there's, let me cover this third beast in chapter 13, verse 11. I saw another beast. We saw the beast from the

bottomless pit go after the witnesses, right? We saw the beast out of the sea.

He's the seven heads and the antichrist. Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth. One out of the bottomless pit, one out of the sea, one out of the earth.

This is the false prophet. We talked about it last time. This is the pseudo holy spirit.

Jesus says, I'm going away, but the holy spirit will talk of me. He will take of the things of me and communicate to you. His whole message is me.

To blaspheme the spirit is to have no salvation because you're rejecting the message of the gospel. The false prophet is going to be the holy spirit for the antichrist. He's going to be the John the Baptist.

He's going to be the voice crying in the wilderness. He's going to be the witness and the prophet and the testifier. He deceives those who dwell on the earth by signs, which he is granted to do in the sight of the beast.

And the signs and wonders that began the church age were empowered by the holy spirit. Jesus Christ said, the works that I do, I do by the spirit. You blaspheme the spirit when you say I do them by the power of Satan.

I cast out Satan by Satan. You're blaspheming the spirit. So you see the parallel here.

You have the parallel father, parallel son, parallel holy spirit, and Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet. So that is important to see because you have this scenario prevailing when you get to the end of chapter 14. There's one last thing I want to review and we have to go all the way back to chapter 12 to get it.

It's real quick. You remember you had the imagery of the dragon chasing the woman. The woman gives birth to the male child.

The male child is snatched up to heaven. The dragon comes after the woman. She flees to the wilderness.

He goes after her with a great flood. The earth opens its mouth, swallows up the flood, and the woman lives out there where God has provided for her for a time, times and half a time. You remember all that? What is the last verse in chapter 12? What does it say? The dragon was enraged with the woman.

He can't get the woman. The woman is being preserved by God in the wilderness. So what does it say? He went to make war with the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Now, I was scratching my head about this because I thought, well, that's the rest of the... You've got the 144,000. Some have been killed. The rest of them fled.

Do not take your coat. When you see the abomination of desolation, flee to the wilderness and so on. So they do that, and Satan can't get them because they're in the wilderness.

God's providing for them. So he's going to go after the rest of her offspring. I think most of us just say, well, that's other believers somewhere on the earth.

He can't get the ones in the wilderness. He's going to go find somebody in Tokyo or somebody in New York City or somebody in Buenos Aires or London or somewhere. Maybe there's a few in Paris and he's going to get them at the ice skating rink on the Eiffel Tower.

Whatever. I think that's wrong. Think about this now.

The woman represents national Israel. She gives birth to the male child, but she's also sort of wrapped up with the Virgin Mary, right? The Virgin Mary is the literal woman that gave birth to the male child. Now, when you think about the Lord Jesus, he is unique.

He is the uniquely born one of the Father. And there's only one kind of offspring that is spoken of in this chapter from the woman, and that's the male child. Then it says here, the dragon is enraged when he can't get either the male child or the woman, and so he's going to go after the rest of her offspring.

So, the question is, who are the rest of the offspring of the woman? Now, the woman herself represents national Israel. She represents the group that's alive at the time, right? So, it's not like, well, she left her arm somewhere and, well, I can't get her, I'm going to go after the arm. I mean, you're either in the woman and you're Israel, right? The analogy starts to kind of flake away and you have to play loose with it and say, well, that's just some more, it's like a little bit of the woman is somewhere else and it's her offspring.

It doesn't sound right to me. See what you think about this. Remember what we saw in chapter 11, what we just saw in the preceding chapter.

That was the two witnesses who drink the cup and are baptized with the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are the Elisha to his Elijah. They are the double portion of what he did the first time, right? They're operating in his spirit and power.

Jesus isn't there, but the two of them are doing the same thing that he did, testifying. I think the offspring of the woman are the two witnesses. That's what it says at the end of the chapter.

It says he went to make war with the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Who has the testimony in the last half of the tribulation period? It's the last half that we're talking about. The woman goes to the

wilderness for a time, time, and half a time, right? Who's doing the witnessing in the last half of the tribulation? The two witnesses.

They are, in effect, the remaining offspring. They're the only ones from the woman that can still stand in Jerusalem, and for those three and a half years, they can preach, and they can't be stopped. They can call down fire and incinerate people that come after them.

They can perform mighty signs and wonders. They have the testimony. If it's James and John, as I think it is, John has eaten the scroll.

The angel tells him, you must testify. These are the ones that have the testimony. So just as a minor point of clarification or interpretation, or at least my interpretation, I say, I believe, that at the end of chapter 12 there in verse 17, when the dragon can't get the remnant of the 144,000 because they have fled and they're in a place of preservation and safety, he goes after the two witnesses.

They are the remnant. They are the offspring of the woman, and they are the testimony and the power of God on earth for that last three and a half years, and eventually he's going to be given the ability to overcome them, and you have that death in the streets thing. Well, all of that now brings us to chapter 14.

We've already seen the lamb and the 144,000. Now remember, these are seven separate visions. Don't try to take them chronologically.

If you count them up, there are seven visions that you have here. The woman and the child and the dragon, that's a vision. Satan being cast out of heaven, that's a vision.

The beast from the sea, that's a vision. The beast from the earth is a vision. The lamb and the 144,000, that's a vision.

Proclamation of the three angels, and these are not sequential necessarily. So, the dragon going after the offspring of the woman can come after chapter 11, and yet it's talking about the same thing when you get to the end. So, in this next section, beginning in verse 6, I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth.

Every nation, tribe, tongue, and people saying with a loud voice, fear God, give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made heaven and earth the sea and springs of water. Notice the message of the angel.

This is also a vision for the last half of the tribulation period. This message is going to be spoken by this angel, but it's going to be delivered by these two witnesses, these two prophets on earth. In the same way that the law was delivered by angels, we find this out in Hebrews, delivered through the intermediate agency of messengers, and finally

given by human agency.

Angel comes and tells Daniel things. Daniel writes them down. We have the book of Daniel because an angel told Daniel, and Daniel told us.

This angel tells the two witnesses. The two witnesses tell the rest of the earth is the idea. The angel brings the communication from God.

God has spoken. This is the gospel that will be preached, and what is the nature of that gospel? This is important because what if you want to give somebody the gospel, and they say, well, you know, you're wasting your time trying to tell me about Jesus because I don't believe there's a God. I think we evolved.

I think, you know, when you die, that's it. There is no immaterial. There is no afterlife.

It's all just a bunch of Hebrew myths, etc. What is the foundation upon which belief in God is built? We know it from Romans chapter 1. It's repeated here in summary form. Fear God and give glory to him.

That's what the earth is challenged to do. If you're going to give somebody the gospel, you know what the first element of the gospel is? You need to respect God. You need to fear God.

You need to give him some consideration. You can't live your life inconsiderate of God. He won't stand for it.

He's the God of the universe. He made you, and he made everything else, and he's not going to sit up there and ignore you if you ignore him. He will come after you.

There is a judgment. Fear God. That's the first element of the gospel.

Somebody has to be confronted by God the Holy Spirit and by the information through the mouth of a sympathetic human being. Look, there is a God, and he demands to be acknowledged. He's not passive.

He's not indifferent. He's not busy somewhere else. He's not the God of the deists or the theists.

He's an active, engaged God who is paying attention to you and is going to call you to account for your life and for your decisions. Fear God. This is the gospel.

It's the last time it's going to be given to the human race before the millennial kingdom. Fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come and worship him who made heaven and earth a sea and springs of water. Big deal about the water in terms of judgment, isn't it? Water turns to blood.

Things in the water die. A lot of things happen to the water because you have to have water to live. This says God is the source of life.

Same thing in Romans chapter one. What may be known of God is manifest in creation. His eternal power and Godhead are manifest in the things that he has made.

If you want to direct someone's attention to the living God, point to creation. People say, oh, well, you know, Big Bang, it evolved. No, it didn't.

And people know in their hearts that it didn't. They know in their hearts. And they're trying to override that with reason and with science.

But in their heart, God the Holy Spirit is tapping away, chipping away with a little hammer and chisel saying, you know, look around. Design means designer. Complexity doesn't happen by accident.

When you make something complex and you set it in the sun, what happens? It gets more complex. You build a toaster and you come back in 10 years and it's a microwave. You put together a tricycle on Christmas morning and 10 years later, it's a Harley Davidson.

I don't think so. Everything, you know, Paul Simon's song, everything put together falls apart. Second law of thermodynamics, entropy, and they can they can weasel and squirm and try to say anything they want to say.

But nature itself teaches you that where there is complexity and where there is design, there is intelligent agency behind it. Complex things do not arise by accident. And they do not become upwardly more mobile and complex.

They do not develop sentient thought ability if there's no evolutionary reason for it. We should all be leopards. We should all be carnivorous, fastest, sharpest teeth.

Survival of the fittest will lead to something that preys on everything else, a mindless carnivore. That's what evolution will try to get around the issue of fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come. This is the message of God the Holy Spirit.

He will convict this world, sin, righteousness, and judgment. This is ever the issue. This is the gospel.

This is the first foundation stone of the gospel. You want to tell somebody about Christ? You better tell him first there is a holy God and he's not happy with you. And he's not going to be happy with you and he's not going to have relationship with you until the sin problem and the acceptance of Christ as Savior problem is solved.

So, worship him who made heaven and earth. Creation is the prima facie evidence. It's

been entered into the court records.

Here's the evidence of God. It's creation. And don't let anybody tell you any differently.

Creation is not evidence of evolution. I don't care how many layers of sedimentary rock. I don't care how many blue algae they find that are umpteen million years old.

I don't care about any of that. Creation is the evidence of the existence of God. The Bible says it from Genesis to Revelation.

You have it right here. Fear him who made, worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea, and springs of water. You think life came out of the sea? Well, guess who made the sea? You think life came from water? You know, now they're working with lipid bubbles and hot springs and volcanic environments and oh look we can make a fat bubble and that's how cell walls form and see it all just evolve.

Who made the lake? Who made the earth? Who made the universe? God did. It might turn out that we'll find out when we get to glory that God created the planet, spoke a few words, and then hit the fast forward button on his remote and 14 billion years went by in about six days and voila you have the modern world with all of this abundance of life. He says let the sea bring forth.

By his watch it's been one day. On earth somebody's clock says it's been, you know, 600 million years. I am not prepared to say that it didn't happen.

My brain's not big enough to comprehend everything, but what I do know is worship him who made heaven and earth. The evidence for God and the demand that he be worshipped is based on creation. So don't let the scientific evolutionary goofballs take that away from you.

This is the evidence for the existence of God, what you see around you. Now another angel followed saying Babylon has fallen this fall in that great city because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Now Babylon here represents what? Well this beast that came up out of the sea speaks with the mouth of a lion and so on and it harks back to Nebuchadnezzar, it harks back to Babylon, the empire, and what was the capital of that empire? Babylon.

Babylon the empire, Babylon the city. This Babylon, whatever else you want to read into it, is it the United States, is it the Catholic Church, is it the great whore of spiritual apostasy or whatever? Well one thing is it is the capital city of one of the seven heads and it's the most famous. It is the most resplendent.

If you compare the capital city, did Alexander even have a capital city? He was moving around and then he died. I don't think he even had a capital. The capital of the Roman Empire is Rome, but Rome doesn't hold a dim candle to the beauties and the splendors

of Babylon.

Rome didn't have hanging gardens. Rome was industrial. Rome was characterized by iron and might and armies and legions and military conquest.

It is Babylon that is the resplendent center of culture and attainment and military power and all of these others. And so what does Babylon represent here? It is the capital city for the Antichrist. This is where he operates from.

When we're gone, the Antichrist may pop up and run everything out of Washington, D.C. or out of New York City. Wherever he is, that's going to be Babylon. Babylon has fallen to that great city because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

This is the one world government. This is the substitute for God. Trust your government.

Everybody worships the government. Babylon is the capital city of that government and all nations have drunk the wine of this fornication and Babylon has fallen. Now, Babylon has not yet fallen when these words are spoken, but this is the decree of God.

Babylon is doomed, doomed, you could say. Sell your real estate in Babylon. It is over.

I know somebody that lived in New Orleans, but they sold their house and moved north and then the hurricane hit. That was great for them. And that's what anybody with, you know, a home in Babylon better sell it and get out of there because it is fallen because of this fornication.

Then a third angel followed saying with a loud voice, if anyone worships the beast in his image and receives his mark and so on. Now, remember what we just reviewed? I don't want to lose you here. So everybody grab up guts here just for a few more minutes.

What did we look at in these previous chapters? We saw the unholy trinity, right? It was unholy trinity. Satan was the beast out of the bottomless pit. We saw him first in chapter 11.

The antichrist is the beast out of the sea. He's the pseudo son. He's the antichrist.

And then you had the false prophet. Now look here. First angel flying in the midst of heaven has the everlasting gospel and says, fear God and give glory to him.

This angel calls for worship of God, the father. This is the God, the father angel. This is the numero uno in the trinity angel.

And he says, you better forget this whole Satan out of the bottomless pit thing and fear God. He's the one that created everything. And Satan didn't.

It's the first angel calls people back to the true from the false first element of the trinity. Now look at the second angel. Another angel followed saying Babylon is fallen, is fallen.

What's he talking about? The government put together by the antichrist. Even though you haven't seen it fall yet, it's history. It may look like it's there, but it is fallen, fallen.

The great city because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath. This is directed at the antichrist. Now look at verse nine.

A third angel followed them saying with odd voice. What does he say? He's doing the prophet work, the Holy Spirit work, the false prophet work. If anyone worships the beast in his image, remember the false prophet is calling everybody to beast worship and is encouraging everybody to take the mark.

And he's the rabble rouser, the ad man, the PR man, the press secretary. So what does this angel say? He's directing his message at the third false element. If anyone worships the beast and his image receives his mark, he himself shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of his indignation.

He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb and the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever. They have no rest day or night who worship the beast and his image and whoever receives the mark of his name. This is the exact opposite of the message of the false prophet who says, come to the beast.

The beast is good. This is like Satan in the garden saying, eat the fruit, eat the fruit. It's desirable to make you wise.

God knows you'd be like him knowing good and evil. Look at me. I'm a serpent.

Now I can talk. And it's the allure and it's the promise of great things. And this angel comes and says, if you follow that path, here's all the bad things that are going to happen.

So you see this three directional set of messages from these three angels because you have this unholy trinity masquerading in the place of the real trinity. So this sort of makes perfect sense here. This little vision of the three angels, doesn't it? You get the antidote and the cure if people have an ear to hear and will pay attention to the message that is put forward by these angels.

Here is the patience of the saints. Here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, right.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the spirit that they may rest from their labors and their

works.

Follow them. Why does this come here? Why does this message come here? The conflict is reaching its crisis point, isn't it? Satan has been cast to earth. He knows that his time is short.

He's going after anything he can find. What is he specifically going after? Who is he specifically going after? He cannot get to the 144,000. They are protected.

It never says, and behold, then the dragon came back and ate the woman, right? It never says that. Who does he go after? Her offspring. Who is it that's going to die as a result of the attack of the dragon? The two witnesses.

Who are the only people on the planet that you can safely and confidently say are in the Lord? James and John, the two witnesses. I don't know if the 144,000, they are sealed, they are marked, they have an ownership mark of God, but what does it mean to die in the Lord? There are two individuals who are going to die in the Lord and they're going to be blessed. That much you can say for sure.

They're going to rest from their labors, aren't they? That's for sure. Just as Jesus is going to rest from his labors after his earthly ministry when he ascends into heaven. That they may rest from their labors and their works follow them.

Great and mighty works. There's only two people that are spoken of as doing any works. Does 144,000 do any works? Does it say anything in here about the 144,000 getting anything done? Who does works in the last half of the tribulation? Two witnesses.

They do all kinds of works. Do all kinds of mighty signs and wonders, don't they? So at a minimum, I think this refers to them. Could it possibly refer to others? Possibly so.

But those who have done best are those who die in the Lord. The two spectacular deaths that are going to take place at this point are the two witnesses. And why do we need this information here? Why do we need this proclamation? You say, well, this seems like a lot to say about the two witnesses.

They were back in chapter 11. Why would anybody be talking about them now? We are very near the end here. And these are the two stand-up guys.

These are the ones, the people in the hills are tuning in on crystal radios and old TV sets. And they're seeing that, hey, the two witnesses, they're holding up the flame of the light of the gospel of God. And they're putting to flight all of this.

And then everybody there is going to hear that they died. That they've been overcome. How did the disciples feel? How did the women feel at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified? There was abject misery and sorrow and depression and discouragement.

And everybody thought it was all in the tank, right? It's important that at this point there be a proclamation, blessed are they who die in the Lord. It's time for them to rest from their labors. Their works are going to follow them.

This is a part of the plan. Don't be discouraged. Don't worry about this.

These who die in the Lord from now on, it's going to be okay. Those who hear the word of God and take it to heart are not going to be discouraged and not going to be depressed by the death of the two witnesses or the death of anyone else who happens to die from this point forward. Well, this brings us to the point of reaping the earth's harvest.

We don't have time to look at it tonight, so we'll pick this up next week. There are several passages of scripture that talk about this reaping and this harvest. We'll find out exactly what it is and what it means and conclude chapter 14 and move into the preparation for the bold judgments in chapter 15 next time.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the confidence and the encouragement and the direction and the definition for life that your word gives to us. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths in our hearts, help us to see the application in our lives at this point in time, even as we look forward to the unfolding of events in future days.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.